

MARK FELT - THE MAN WHO BROUGHT DOWN THE WHITE HOUSE

by

Peter Landesman

OVER BLACK:

1 **TITLE: WASHINGTON, D.C., 1972** 1

Now a rhythmic, accelerating anthology -- footage, stills --

President Richard Nixon at re-election whistle-stops - As Pennsylvania Ave roils with protest -- scrimmage lines of National Guard and Police -- Washington Monument carpeted in tents -- flames spitting out of Pentagon windows -- placards of jungle trench full of American army dead -- LAPD squad cars pouring smoke and flame --

Accelerating now to a torrent of campaign bunting and bumperstickers and the signage and news feeds of *Palestinian Liberation Organization--Black Liberation Army--Klan--Black September--Red Army--Irish Republican Army--Weather Underground.*

The alphabet of rage. Until we cut to black, and HOLD there on black.

TITLE: BASED ON THE ACTUAL EVENTS

Then--

2 AN ALARM CLOCK BEEPING. 5.15 a.m. A man's hand enters frame. 2
Shuts the alarm, and now--

3 HANDS IN A MIRROR. Perfecting a tie, and now-- 3

4 THE HANDS lay a dress on a bed, across the feet of a woman 4
still asleep, and now--

5 HOT WATER BEING POURED into a cup of Folger's instant. We're 5
in an immaculate kitchen, circa early-70's, and now to--

6 AN ANTISEPTIC LIVING ROOM. Legions of obsessively aligned 6
glass animals. Pictures of two KIDS: young man, around 20, in Airman's Uniform; a young pretty woman. Furniture shrink-wrapped in plastic. A pool out back, vodka-clean. Grass manicured. Now out to--

7 **EXT. STREETS - FAIRFAX, VA. - MORNING** 7

A subdivision of modest split-level lookalikes. The pierced heart of the American middle.

One garage door rises. MARK FELT - immaculate suit, 50ish - strides to the curb, trash in one hand, coffee in the other. Moving with a kind of imperious grace.

The PAPERBOY hook-shots the paper onto the lawn. Jump to the back yard. He has a smoke. He takes a moment with the brightening sky. And as we hold on him, we--

8 EXT. WASHINGTON, DC. - MORNING - FELT'S BUICK (MOVING) - 8
AERIAL

Crossing the Potomac. Past the Lincoln Memorial. While--

9 INT. OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY 9

Felt enters on Asst. to the President JOHN EHRLICHMAN, 45, staring out his window at the bedlam; and Special Counsel JOHN DEAN, 33 and boyish. And Attorney General JOHN MITCHELL, 59.

FELT
Gentlemen.

EHRLICHMAN
Have a seat, Felt.
(as Felt sits--)

CLOSE IN in on Felt's eyes. Which have a rare and trained hyper-awareness. Capturing the smallest details like a camera: a patch of perspiration on Ehrlichman's forehead; a smudge on Dean's shoe.

EHRLICHMAN (CONT'D)
Goddamn Russian Revolution out there. Why aren't we arresting anybody?

FELT
Because that--
(out there)
Isn't a crime.
(which turns him)

MITCHELL
We know why you're here, Felt. But before all that. The President needs your advice.

Dean moves to the side for a better angle.

EHRLICHMAN
Hoover's run the FBI, what, forty years?

MITCHELL (CONT'D)
Fifty.

EHRLICHMAN
Fifty goddamn years! You know Johnson and Kennedy wanted to fire him, don't you? But they didn't have the balls.
(MORE)

EHRlichman (CONT'D)
 (and he looks and waits,
 but--)

Felt is saying nothing. And after an uncomfortable pause--

MITCHELL
 Did you know the President wanted
 to be an FBI G-Man, just like you?
 Hoover wrote him personally what a
 damn fine candidate he was, but
 with budget cuts the FBI couldn't
 afford him.

EHRlichman
 How's that for a lesson in fate?
 Now he's President of the United
 States.

Pause.

DEAN
 If the President were going to ask
 Mr. Hoover to step aside, how would
 you suggest he do it?

And Felt goes still, as a dog will at a sign of danger.

DEAN (CONT'D)
 We know you to be a friend to this
 administration. And we like to see
 our friends get what they deserve--

MITCHELL
 You're next in line.

FELT
 There is no line.

DEAN
 The President is asking.

Pause. A hesitation. Exasperation.

FELT
 Mr. Hoover would want to keep his
 bullet-proof car. And his
 secretary. I'd offer him that.

EHRlichman
 You're a real politician, Felt.

FELT
 I'm a law man.

Polite smiles. Maybe a chuckle.

EHRlichman

As the President likes to say,
there are two kinds of people in
politics - winners and losers. I
knew a loser once and he was a
queer.

(intoning)

Gentlemen, Mark Felt is no loser!

(as Felt stays stoic,
patient)

So okay, Felt, go ahead, fire away.

Felt's errand--

FELT

As you know Mr. Hoover has heard
rumors of the presence of
homosexuals at the highest levels
of the White House.

MITCHELL

Who's the fag supposed to be?

EHRlichman

Is he here in this room?

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

You want to polygraph us?
(and they laugh)

Except Dean. The lawyer. Unamused.

DEAN

Does the FBI really need to spend
resources on this?

(laughter dies)

Do we?

FELT

I can take it from here.

DEAN

Then thanks for popping by.
(and as the show is over,
and they start to focus
on other things--)

FELT

If I may--

(they're annoyed)

There is one thing Mr. Hoover knows
has been on all your minds.

(and just like that he has
their attention again)

(MORE)

FELT (CONT'D)

Whenever the FBI hears a piece of gossip, or information, such as: 'I saw so-and-so out with another woman not his wife. Or a man not his wife'-

(and start a slow push in)

We're supposed to write everything down. And we do. Write it all down. In memos.

(gives that some air)

These memos come to me and I decide what information Mr. Hoover needs to know, and send that up to Mr. Hoover. And Mr. Hoover puts it all away. In his private files.

(--)

To be kept safe. Out of the hands of people without discretion. People who could do harm. Should that information be leaked, for instance. And put before the court of public opinion.

TIGHT on Felt's face until it fills the screen. To these men this face is now the still center of the universe.

FELT (CONT'D)

And then sometimes Mr. Hoover will go, for instance, to the President's closest aides, and say - 'Mr. Ehrlichman, I want you to know that we received that report about you and that other woman, and I want to tell you that there is absolutely no reason for us to take any further action. There is no violation.' You are safe. We, the FBI, all your secrets are safe with us.

Tense silence. The threat lands. Then--

DEAN

How long have you been in the FBI, Felt?

FELT

Thirty years.

DEAN

Thirty years. That's a lot of information. A lot of files.

(yes it is, and)

Thank you, Mr. Felt.

FELT
Thank you, gentlemen.

10

INT. FELT HOME - FAIRFAX, VA. - NIGHT

10

Felt enters. The FBI uniform: trench, hat, briefcase.

AUDREY (O.S.)
There he is--

AUDREY FELT - Felt's kinetic wife, 45, beautiful, in a flamethrower dress, sparkling in a frail crystal kind of way.

Puts a preemptive finger to his lips--

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Let's have a good time, darling?
Can we do that?
(she's drunk, and--)

Kisses him. Deep and sexy. Then hands him a drink. He drains half. Obedient. Thirsty.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Good boy.

Now leads him into the living room to ANOTHER COUPLE: ED MILLER, 40, lean and taut; wife, PAT, slim and attractive.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
I give you the Chief Dragon Slayer
and guardian of the American Dream--

PAT MILLER
Well crack a smile at least, Mark.
(Miller pulls her back)

FELT
(game; John Wayne)
Sorry, ma'am. It's the way they
trained me.

PAT MILLER
Eddie, stop it!--
(because Miller's yanking
on her)

FELT
I like it. She's the best--

And winks at Miller. Audrey clutches him. Her hero.

AUDREY

Now I need a drink.
(and she heads into)

All KITCHEN - where we find Audrey alone in the harsh fluorescence. In that dress. Back to living room, waiting. Until Felt appears and embraces her from behind. What she wanted. Then cut to-- All

11 LIVING ROOM - LATER 11

The room gone smoggy with cigarette smoke, furniture cleared. Earnest tango instrumental blaring from the phonograph.

The Felts and the Millers tango from one end of the room to the other. Felt graceful and commanding, Audrey sexy and liquid. Fabulous dancers.

Now they switch. Natural and loose in new arms, then--

12 SAME - STILL LATER. They're all sauced. Messy rapture. Ed and Pat smoking on the sofa. Audrey hanging on Felt at the piano. 12

FELT

(singing soft and well)
*My funny valentine, sweet comic
valentine, you make me smile with
my heart...*

FELT (CONT'D)

*But don't change a hair for
me. Not if you care for me...*

AUDREY

Kiss me.

And he does. And Audrey rests her head on his shoulder. Nothing in the world but you. Now--

13 SAME - STILL LATER 13

Now it's Pat slinked against Felt at the piano. While Audrey and Ed do a slow dance. Like ass-clutchy high-schoolers.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Kiss her, Mark.

FELT

Stay little valentine stay...

AUDREY

She wants you to. She told me she did.

FELT (CONT'D)

(shakes, No)
*But don't change a hair for
me. Not if you care for me...*

Audrey blows a kiss at Felt. Pat rests her head on his shoulder. As Ed gives Audrey a twirl, and--

PAT MILLER

All the girls love you.

CAROL TSCHUDY, 35, takes Felt's coat and hat.

FELT (CONT'D)
Is the Director in?

CAROL
Not yet.
(--)
Mrs. Felt called.

FELT
How many times?

CAROL
Just once.

FELT
Thank you, Mrs. Tschudy--
(and--)

Felt continues to his inner office. Unholsters his .38, sticks it in a drawer. And pan up to find--

ED MILLER. By the window. He's an Agent. Felt's second-in-command. Hasn't slept and looks it.

Miller hands Felt a folder stamped "PLAN C - TOP SECRET".

It's funny. In this building the warmth has gone. The familiarity and intimacy has gone. It's all business. And we PAN DOWN now to the crime-scene shots in Felt's hands:

The Capitol building, facade blackened, windows blown; then the wreckage inside ... *"Weather Underground Organization bombing, Capitol building"...*

FELT (CONT'D)
How many bombings now?

MILLER
A couple dozen.

FELT
Precise numbers. Mr. Miller.

The formality surprises us. Not them.

Another photo. Four charred corpses.

MILLER
Nails and ball bearings. They blew themselves up. But these kids aren't messing around.

Felt holds up surveillance photos of SUSPECTS. Everyday American Youth. Then a *Weather Underground* pamphlet--

FELT
They're embarrassing the FBI.
(and then, they both
realize it, same time)
They're going to try to hit the
White House.

MILLER
Yes they are.

NOW AN FBI MAN enters. CHARLIE BATES, 40.

BATES
He's dead.

FELT
Who?

BATES
The housekeeper found Mr. Hoover on
the floor. He wasn't breathing.

Felt looks sharply at Miller.

BATES (CONT'D)
It looks like a stroke.

Felt rises to his feet. O.S. we hear Carol gasp.

FELT
Put everything into motion. No
mistakes, gentlemen. Not one.
(Bates crosses and leaves,
then Miller)

And Felt and Carol are left alone. Holding a long look.
Carol's face says, "You're the new director."

20

INT. FBI HQ - DAY

20

BATES & MILLER keep the halls clear, while--

FELT supervises SECRETARIES shuttling file boxes from
Hoover's office across the hall into Felt's.

PUSH IN on the boxes: "Official & Confidential." ONE BOX IN
PARTICULAR, CLOSE: "Personal & Confidential", as--

NIXON/RADIO (OVER)

All Americans today mourn the death of J. Edgar Hoover. His greatness will remain inseparable from the greatness of the organization he created and gave his whole life to building, the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(and cut to--)

21 A MAN BUSTING INTO THE HQ ENTRANCE: small, balding, accountant-like. This is L. PATRICK GRAY, 56. Trailed by three YOUNG JUSTICE DEPT LAWYERS. As Nixon continues: 21

NIXON/RADIO (OVER) (CONT'D)

He made the FBI the finest law enforcement agency on the earth, the invincible and incorruptible defender of every American's precious right to be free from fear.

(and cut to--)

22 A SERIES OF SHOTS ELSEWHERE IN FBI HQ: files, films and recordings being pulled, shredded, shoved in burn bags. And cut back to-- 22

23 GRAY AND MINIONS heading down an endless hallway through prim²³ SECRETARIES and sober AGENTS. Past the stacks and stacks of files and papers on the move, the hushed Kafkaesque bureaucratic constipation. Then back to--

24 FELT. Watching the last box go. 24

CAROL

They're here.

FELT

(marking the time)

Nine-oh-five.

(and as Carol jots that down, we cut back to--)

25 GRAY. Dead-ending, doubling back, disoriented. No one offering directions. Fuming. Finally finding-- 25

FELT, BATES AND MILLER waiting for him outside Hoover's locked office. Gray shakes Felt's hand.

GRAY

Good morning, Felt.

FELT

The Assistant Attorney General--

GRAY

Pat Gray. A complicated morning for all of us.

FELT

Mr. Miller is making the funeral arrangements.

GRAY

I have the Attorney General's instructions on seating and protocol--

MILLER

The funeral will be handled by the FBI.

GRAY

--the Attorney General will sit beside the Vice President--

FELT

Handled by the FBI in its own way, Mr. Gray.

Stop. FBI AGENTS start to collect around them.

GRAY

(less confident now)

I also have instructions on Mr. Hoover's files. I am to take possession of them. And bring them to the White House.

FELT

What files?

Gray turns to one of his flacks. Who shrugs.

GRAY

Mr. Hoover's secret files. The 'Personal and Confidential's'.

(Flack whispers something to him)

'Official and Confidential's'.

MILLER

There are no secret files.

Gray turns to Felt, Felt levels at him a look we will come to know: a poker-faced imperiousness that means 'I don't know' and 'I'm not going to tell you', both and neither.

26

INT. HOOVER'S OFFICE - FBI - DAY

26

Empty, hushed, chapel-like. The desk throne-like on its infamous three-inch platform. Behind, Dillinger's death mask, framed gestures of gratitude from the world's kings.

This is one of two cockpits that fly America.

Felt enters. Shuts the door. Alone. Then the unthinkable: He sits in The Chair. We HOLD, stay with him. Rightfully his. And start to HEAR:

REVEREND EDWARD ELSON (PRE-LAP)

We thank Thee this day for Thy
servant, J. Edgar Hoover, for his
lifelong trust in Thee, his
steadfast devotion to the nation--
(and then we--)

27

INT. CAPITOL ROTUNDA - WASHINGTON - DAY

27

Hoover's casket sits flag-draped under the cavernous dome. Surrounded by NIXON'S CABINET. Ehrlichman, Dean. Standing through a long Quakerish silence.

Hoover's lieutenants to the side, the grieving FBI family. Felt their leader.

REVEREND EDWARD ELSON

--his elevated patriotism, his
commitment to justice and peace in
the nation.

PUSH IN ON FELT: sensing every face in the room. Taking each in. And they him.

The heir apparent. The target.

REVEREND EDWARD ELSON (CONT'D)

We ask that we may be as strong as
he was strong; brave as he was
brave, loyal as he was loyal, serve
as he served, love the nation as he
loved it--
(and now we--)

FIND a face in the crowd: BILL SULLIVAN, 50. Short and unkempt, suit not black but blue, in protest. And now--

EXT. CAPITOL - DAY

[It's raining. A sea of umbrellas slides down the steps to waiting limos.] Felt with Bates and Miller *sans* umbrellas.
[*rain optional]

SULLIVAN (O.S.)

Mark!

Bates and Miller see Sullivan approach, peel off.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

(offers his umbrella)

Share mine.

Rain popping hard overhead. Walking and talking:

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

Bill Sullivan and Mark Felt -
together again. Who would have
thought?

(--)

You know, I think I might be the
one who recommended you to the old
man for your first big promotion.

FELT

You know you were.

SULLIVAN

That's right. Mark Felt doesn't
forget. That's why everyone likes
you. Hell, I even like you, and *I*
don't like anybody.

They stop. Face each other.

FELT

What do you want?

SULLIVAN

You didn't even let me keep my
badge.

FELT

At least it wasn't the gold watch
and handshake.

SULLIVAN

No, you just change the locks on
the doors.

(beat; then)

I had thirty years in the Bureau.
Same as you.

FELT

You were the Director's bag man.
You taped King with other women and
sent the pictures to his wife. Do
you want me to go on?

SULLIVAN

That won't be necessary.

FELT

It was necessary. Those days were
over. You had to go.

Sullivan fingers the edge of Felt's suit.

SULLIVAN

Immaculate. Perfect--

(--)

You could be you, Mark, only
because I was who I was. You and I
were an ecosystem. That's how
nature works. Everything in a
balance.

(now)

Now the king is dead. Long live the
king.

(--)

You the new king?

FELT

You tell me.

Sullivan takes Felt in.

SULLIVAN

Mark Felt: integrity--bravery--
fidelity. Ladies and gentleman: the
G-Man's G-Man.

(and tips his head back
for a better view)

Wanna know what everyone really
thinks of you?

(then)

Competent, reliable, loyal--

FELT

What's wrong with that?

SULLIVAN

Nothing. If you're a Golden
Retriever.

(then)

Hoover's gone. You're all alone.

(MORE)

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
 Holding the end of your own leash.
 (and simply walks off)

Leaving Felt standing alone.

29

INT./EXT. FELT HOME - FAIRFAX, VA. - THAT EVENING

29

The antiseptic kitchen a happy wreck. Half-eaten dinner; sink full. O.S., laughter, party murmur. Audrey enters from the pool. Bonfire of warmth and joy, looks her best. We follow her back out to find Felt and the Millers around a table out by the pool. Many drinks and cigarettes in.

AUDREY

(joyous)
 Do you-all remember when Mr. Hoover sent Mark to the Oval Office to roust out the homos--?
 (her best - and fairly good - John Dean)
You're a politician, aren't you Felt?
 (her best - and very good - Felt)
No, Mr. Mitchell, I'm a law man.

PAT MILLER

C'mon!

AUDREY

(her best - and extremely good - Ehrlichman)
Two kinds of people in politics, Felt, winners and losers. I knew a loser once and he was a queer. Mark Felt's no queer.

Audrey's a social genius. They're laughing hard. As Felt quietly blows smoke rings at the ceiling.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Hey, handsome. Where'd you go?

Felt and Miller glance at each other.

PAT MILLER

(to Audrey)
 Let them protect their government secrets. Here it's me and you lady.
 (--)
 How is Mark Jr.?

And leaves the men to their business. Felt obviously worried.

MILLER

What is it?

FELT

When the lion is dead the jackals
come out.

MILLER

You're worried about Sullivan?

FELT

Sullivan is outside our fence.

MILLER

He's with the White House now. He's
one of them.

FELT

The White House is outside our
fence.

And close on Felt, because it's something else, and cut to--

31 **INT. OFFICE STAIRWAY - FELT'S HOME**

31

Where Audrey is loitering near the door. Listening.

32 **INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY**

32

Felt at his desk, we think staring into the middle distance.
We REVERSE TO HIS POV:

Hanging behind his door, in perfect sight-line from the desk
(and desk only), a photo of a striking, almost ethereal YOUNG
WOMAN in her early 20's. Looks a lot like Felt. This is his
daughter, JOAN. (Younger picture of her in the living room.)

CAROL/INTERCOM

The Attorney General.

Felt takes a breath of anticipation, picks up. We hear only
his end of things:

FELT

(into phone)

Dick --

(--)

And I've enjoyed every day of it.
The FBI has been home and duty to
me and my family for thirty years.
(MORE)

FELT (CONT'D)
 (stops)
 Yes?

Eyes make a subtle shift, no more than the dilation of pupils. His hand clenches. Unclenches. Fists. The disappointment is palpable. HOLD, and--

FELT (CONT'D)
 (cold now, neutral)
 I agree. A new day--
 (--)
 Yes, a fresh start. It's what I'd do.
 (can barely get it out)
 Who do you have in mind?
 (then)
 I'm sorry, can you repeat that?
Who?
 (and now SMASH CUT TO)

33

FELT, BATES & MILLER MARCHING shoulder-to-shoulder through the halls of HQ. Closing in fast on a huddle OF FIVE MEN outside Hoover's old office.

33

FELT (CONT'D)
 (hand extended)
 Welcome to the FBI.

The NEW DIRECTOR turns. It's PAT GRAY.

GRAY
 (relieved)
 A friendly face--
 (pumps Felt's hand)

FELT
 Excuse us, gentlemen.
 (and when he and Gray are alone--)

GRAY
 I know the Bureau has its closets and skeletons. You can count on me to keep those doors shut.

Felt stops them by a window. Out the window is Pennsylvania Avenue. And down Pennsylvania: the White House.

GRAY (CONT'D)
 I'll be candid with you--
 (trying to connect, and Felt gives nothing)
 I was a submarine commander in the Navy. I was father, priest and friend to eighteen-year-old boys. Did you know that?
 (--)
 (MORE)

GRAY (CONT'D)

But not a suspicious man by nature,
funny enough. Which maybe makes me
a strange choice to run the FBI.

(still doesn't respond)

In fact, when the President called,
my wife begged me to turn it down.

(and laughs, waiting for a
friendly sign - it
doesn't come)

The President wasn't asking. If you
know what I mean.

(an awkward silence, then)

FELT

Now let me be candid with you, Mr.
Gray. The FBI is the most respected
institution in the world. It is one
of the two cockpits that fly
America. And it is what it is
because no one from the outside
ever got inside. Mr. Hoover's been
old a long time.

*
*
*

GRAY

We all know it's been you running
the FBI, Felt. Your reputation is
stellar.

FELT

Let me finish.

(--)

You have no law enforcement
experience. You're an outsider.
That's your battle to fight--

(now)

But I'm going to help you.

GRAY

I appreciate that--

FELT

Don't. It's not an act of
generosity. This is about this
building and what goes on in here
and what it means to the country.
That's all I care about. As long as
you're for what I'm for, as long as
you keep the FBI first, you'll be
able to count on me.

(long beat; then)

Ready?

Gray, uncertain, drifts away. Miller and Bates cross to Felt.

MILLER

Did you mean it?

FELT
 (turning with fealty
 toward Gray--)
 The Acting Director is ready now.

34

INT. KITCHEN - FELT'S HOME - THAT NIGHT

34

Felt enters. Audrey takes his dinner plate out of the oven. He stands looking at the food. She picks at his tie knot.

FELT
 What did I miss?

AUDREY
 You and Mr. Hoover. You forget why he liked you so much. He always said you and he had the same enemies--
 (--)
 Those men are ugly. Ugly ugly men. Assassins. [All the assassins.]
 (--)
 You're good. Mark Felt is too good.
 (--)
 Too good, that's why.
 (but acid, as)

She turns him slow, sensual, and we think maybe with love and giving. Then--

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 Thirty years. Thirteen transfers, thirteen homes to leave, eleven homes to make. I left behind every friend I ever made. Two children. Cocktails at night. And kept my mouth shut. Like the perfect little FBI wife. Until one day you wake up and you're so different than you used to be you can't remember what the point was in the first place.
 (--)
 And you're still never here. As gone as she is. And then what's left--?

Now he turns to look at her.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 Until there's just one thing left. In my head. The one idea left in my head is at least Mark's going to get that job. At least he'll be Director of the FBI.
 (MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

And that'll make up for everything.

(then)

They don't deserve you.

(--)

They don't deserve everything I gave them. I gave them you. I gave away our daughter.

(and ramping up here--)

And they don't know, do they?

FELT

Audrey--

(not again, please--)

AUDREY

They think Mark Felt is so strong. All the girls think you're so cool. They don't know you.

FELT

What don't they know?

AUDREY

That I'm the fuel--

(--)

They don't deserve us!

(--)

You need to resign.

(he doesn't resist, but--)

FELT

When the Bureau's in better hands.

Then I'll go.

(and after a long beat)

AUDREY

What did you miss. You missed everything. How could you be so goddamn naive?

(and walks out of the kitchen leaving him alone)

CUT TO BLACK.

A35

OMITTED

A35

35

BLACK SCREEN. WE HEAR A PHONE RINGING. Two rings, three.

35

SNAP. Light comes on. Revealing Felt's bedroom. Pre-dawn. Alarm clock reads 5 a.m.

TITLE: SIX WEEKS LATER, JUNE 17, 1972

FELT
 (picking up)
 What is it?

BATES/PHONE
 This is getting complicated. You
 better come down.

36

INT. ROOM 723, HOWARD JOHNSON'S - WASHINGTON - MORNING

36

CAMERA PANS over FBI TECHNICIANS dusting for prints. Evidence of a surveillance nest. Listening equipment, binoculars, notebooks with scribbled time sequences.

Felt alone at the window. Staring directly across the street, into a hotel room, where WE SEE more FBI TECHS.

TITLE: DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE OFFICES, WATERGATE HOTEL

FELT
 Straight into the Democrat offices
 in the Watergate. Who's our spy,
 gentlemen?

BATES with ROBERT KUNKEL, SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE of the Washington Field Office ('captain' of local FBI).

KUNKEL
 Baldwin, Alfred C.. Checked in six
 weeks ago. He says he was more than
 just the look-out. He said he was
 supposed to listen for girlie
 stuff. Guess the Dems are having a
 lot of trouble with their wives.

FELT
 He say where he got his
 instructions?

BATES
 Mr. Felt--
 (and as Felt turns)

KUNKEL
 Baldwin was one of ours. He's ex-
 FBI. He had this on him.

Bates shakes a plastic bag with more devices: antennae, circuit board, transistors.

FELT
 He work under Bill Sullivan?
 (hesitation, so, direct)
 (MORE)

FELT (CONT'D)

When he was in the Bureau, was he
in Mr. Sullivan's group?
(and as Bates nods, Yes)
What about CIA connections?

KUNKEL

No idea. Why?

FELT

Because 30 minutes ago four of
those burglars told a judge they
are ex-CIA.

Pause. That hangs there. All of it.

KUNKEL

What the hell is this?
(and we start to hear--)

NIXON (OVER) (PRE-LAP)

*There is absolutely no White House
involvement in the Watergate break-
in.*

37

EXT. 10TH AND PENNSYLVANIA - DAY

37

Kunkel and SPECIAL AGENT ANGELO LANO hustle from the
Judiciary Building to FBI HQ. Lano is 35, mop of hair,
stocky, unpolished. Bad tie coated in muffin crumbs.

NIXON (OVER) (PRE-LAP)

(news conference)
Surveillance has no place whatever
in our electoral process or in our
governmental process.

38

INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - SIMULTANEOUS - FELT & BATES

38

Felt and Bates watching Nixon's news conference on a TV:

NIXON/TV

As far as the matter now is
concerned, it is under
investigation by the FBI.

INTERCUT KUNKEL & LANO SLALOMING THROUGH THE FBI BUILDING.
Into Felt's office--

FELT

Turn that down.
(Bates mutes the TV)

KUNKEL

Mr. Lano's running street on this.

BATES

(sweeps crumbs off Lano)
Okay now go.

With Nixon's moon-face talking on mutely in b.g.:

LANO

(off a pile of notes)
Two-fifteen Sunday morning, Metro
finds our perps inside the
Democratic National Committee
office. We've I.D.'d the lead. He's
a pro. Five years with the FBI,
nineteen with CIA.

Lano waits. Because that's big fucking news. But Felt and
Bates are transfixed by what they're hearing.

LANO (CONT'D)

Then he left the CIA to run
security for the Attorney General.
Then he ran security for the White
House. For the Committee to Re-
Elect the President.

BATES

The lead burglar ran security for
the Committee to Re-Elect the
President? Is that what you said?

FELT

That's what he said. Keep going.

LANO

Well, it gets crazier. Now the
lookout in here? Three years FBI,
then the Attorney General recruited
him too. As his wife's personal
bodyguard.

(again waits, but--)

FELT

Just keep going.

LANO

The lookout makes a Howard Hunt as
the ringleader.

(here it comes)

Hunt is also ex-CIA.

(MORE)

LANO (CONT'D)

But get this: last year we were asked to do a background check on him for a government job.

BATES

Did we clear him?

LANO

Yeah.

BATES

What for?

LANO

For a job in the *White House*.

(reads from notes)

As a "Consultant on highly sensitive confidential matters."

BATES

That's a job title?

Felt looks right at Nixon on TV now. They wait for him, until-

FELT

White House, Justice and the CIA are going to want to know everything we know. But we aren't going to tell them. Anything.

BATES

The Attorney General already called.

FELT

Nobody talks to the Attorney General.

BATES

We answer to the Attorney General.

FELT

You answer to me.

BATES

(a little quieter)

What about the Director?

FELT
 I'll take care of the Director.
 (and we slowly push in on
 Nixon on the TV, until
 his face pixilates and
 the abstraction fills our
 screen, then--)

39

INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

39

CAROL/INTERCOM
 I have the Director on the phone.
 (and we hear Gray immersed
 in crowd/party hubbub)

GRAY/PHONE (OVER)
 You pulled me out of a speech.

FELT
 I need to fill you in--

GRAY/PHONE (OVER)
 The Watergate thing. Sounds like
 some third-rate burglary.

FELT
 Who told you that?

GRAY/PHONE (OVER) (CONT'D)
 (off phone)
 Be right there! Frank, how
 are ya?
 (and starts chatting
 with someone back there)

FELT
 I'm having all the Democrat offices
 swept for bugs.

GRAY/PHONE
 Uh, what ... hold off on that. I
 don't want this getting political.

FELT
 It isn't political. It's a
crime--

GRAY/PHONE (CONT'D)
 Sounds like something you can
 wrap up quickly, really gotta
 go--
 (and the line goes dead,
 and--)

Felt taps the pen on the page. Thinking. Then:

FELT
 (into intercom)
 Mrs. Tschudy, can you find out if
 Mr. Gray talked to anyone else here
 at the Bureau today?

CAROL/INTERCOM
 I already know. Mr. Gray didn't
 talk to anyone at the Bureau today.

FELT
 Thank you.

CAROL/INTERCOM
 They did put through a number of
 calls from the White House, though.
 From the Committee to Re-Elect the
 President.

Felt gets up and crosses to Carol in the anteroom.

FELT
 Who from?

CAROL
 The Chairman, Mr. John Mitchell.
 I mean Mr. Mitchell's *staff*. I mean
 it couldn't be Mr. Mitchell
 himself.

FELT
 Why not?

CAROL
 Mr. Mitchell is in California. He
 and Mr. Gray are together.

40 **INT. HALLWAY - FBI HQ - DAY**

40

Felt exiting the executive washroom.

Passes John Dean, nodding, "Mr. Felt". Dean's carrying a
 brief case.

Dean goes left into Gray's office. Felt right into--

41 **INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY**

41

FELT
 When did the Director get back from
 California?

CAROL
 (into the phone)
 Hold please.
 (to Felt)
 Fifteen minutes ago.

FELT
 John Dean, the President's Counsel,
 just went into his office. Let me
 know when he comes out.

CAROL
 Yes, Mr. Felt.
 (and--)
 Mrs. Felt called.

FELT
 How many times.

CAROL
 Four.

FELT
 Fine.

CAROL
 I have Bob on the line.

FELT
 Bob?

CAROL
 Just Bob.

FELT
 Send it in. And call for Mr. Bates.

Felt closes the door behind him. Picks up.

FELT (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 We talked about calls at the
 office. You know I don't like it.

CALLER/PHONE
 This thing at the Watergate--

FELT
 I'm very busy--
 (about to hang up when--)

CALLER/PHONE
 But we've done this before.

FELT
This is different.

CALLER/PHONE
What's different about it?

FELT
I'm not going to tell you that.
(and now we INTERCUT--)

A41

INT. DARK ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

A41

Where we find a YOUNG MAN, 27, on the phone. At a desk. In a cone of light. Taking notes.

CALLER
(then, quickly)
Howard Hunt.
(he's got Felt's
attention)
Hunt works at the White House.

FELT
Good.

CALLER
Good?

FELT
But where did you get it?

CALLER
The name's in the address book of
one of the burglars. Next to the
initials "W.H."
(--)
White House?

FELT
And where did you get that?

CALLER
What is this? What do I have?

FELT
The Hunt thing is true. He is a
suspect.
(long tense silence, then)
Now you give me mine, Mr. Woodward.
That's how this works. Who gave it
to you?

This is BOB WOODWARD.

WOODWARD

I saw it myself.

FELT

Then it was the police. They showed it to you.

(--)

You're going to have to do the rest by yourself.

(hangs up, and cut to--)

42 JOHN DEAN LEAVING GRAY'S OFFICE EMPTY-HANDED. Then back to- 42

43 FELT AT HIS DESK 43

CAROL/INTERCOM

Mr. Dean has left.

Felt crosses to his door, to Mrs. Tschudy. Bates is waiting.

FELT

How long was that?

CAROL

Thirty-one minutes, thirty seconds.

FELT

Was he carrying anything when he left?

CAROL

I don't know.

FELT

Find out.

(then)

And take down this memo. Metro Police is to be shut down on Watergate. No further communication.

CAROL

Would you like to add a reason?

FELT

Stuff is getting out to the press.

BATES

Are they?

(but just--)

GRAY

Let's not get dramatic. We don't even know what this is.

FELT

That's right, we don't. But we're going to find out. That's what we do.

Pause. Gray just sits there. In his golf clothes.

FELT (CONT'D)

You don't work for them. You're the Director of the FBI now.

(waits for that to land, then turns to go)

GRAY

Forty-eight hours--

(Felt stops)

We put the investigation to bed and get on with the rest of our lives in two days.

(and Felt hesitates, then goes, and--)

45

FELT CROSSES THE HALL BACK TO HIS OFFICE.

45

FELT

Was Mr. Dean carrying anything when he left the building?

CAROL

No, Mr. Felt.

Felt continues inside. Bates is waiting.

BATES

What the hell is going on?

FELT

Close the door as you leave, Mr. Bates.

And as Bates exits, Felt reaches for a phone. Then--

46

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - SUNDOWN - FELT'S BUICK - AERIAL SHOT 46

The car leaves the monolithic FBI HQ, passes the illuminated Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial ... joining the river of tail lights crossing the Potomac into Virginia.

SMITH (CONT'D)

I hear the White House gave him some bullshit job until Hoover kicked the bucket. Gray for a little while, keep the seat warm--

FELT

Sullivan wants back in. The President wants him back in. To run the FBI their way.

SMITH

Nixon and Sullivan -- those two were made for each other.

Felt gives Smith a long look. Smith knows the look. He takes out a notebook. Felt shakes, No. Sips at his coffee. Waitress wanders by. Smith waves her to keep going.

SMITH (CONT'D)

(exasperated)

What're we doing out here, Mark?

FELT

I was given forty-eight hours.

SMITH

To do what?

FELT

Wrap up the Watergate investigation.

SMITH

By who?

(no reply; takes a shot)

Gray?

(Felt's not saying no)

Pat Gray, the FBI Director, ordered the FBI to stop its own investigation??

FELT

There are calls we aren't allowed to make, and phone and bank records we can't go near.

And now Felt digs at the pie.

SMITH

(serious as a heart attack)

In all the years I've known you you never gave up a single real secret. Nothing but the company line.

(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)

These are uncharted waters for you.

(then)

So one more time: what're we doing?
You looking for a little help? A
little payback?

FELT

I want the FBI left alone to do its
job. That's all I want.

SMITH

And you want me to light a fire
around the edges. With a story.

(as Felt says nothing--)

Now I see why they didn't give you
the job. They must be terrified of
you. You're their worst nightmare.

A50

INT. FELT HOME

A50

Felt at a window. Stops to look over the fence into the next yard. At his neighbors, a COUPLE. The WIFE comes out and hands the HUSBAND a drink. "Kids asleep?" The mundane normalcy of their everyday life. A He HOLDS there, transfixed, then--

50

INT. JOAN'S ROOM - FELT HOME - NIGHT

50

Felt enters. Clicks on the light.

A girl's room frozen mid-breath, everything like it was -- pile of marijuana ash -- picture of the updated Joan, the hippie version: thin, grim -- stacks of militant lefty books and pamphlets.

A creak O.S. in the hallway.

AUDREY

What about playing some golf on
Saturday?

FELT

We don't play golf.

AUDREY

We'll get lessons. It'll be
something new.

(--)

I miss you. I know I'm not supposed
to say that.

FELT

It's okay to say that.

AUDREY

It's too touchy-feely. I need you too much.

(Felt says nothing)

Did you eat?

FELT

What? Yes, I ate--

(and after a pause)

AUDREY

You two always ate as fast as you could. You two were always racing, always playing. Can't we ever sit around and have a civilized conversation?

(long pause)

Where were you? The switchboard said they didn't know where you were.

FELT

Because I didn't tell them.

AUDREY

What about Mrs. Tschudy? She said she didn't know either. But you taught her to always say that, didn't you--?

FELT

(calm)

Are you making the calls?

AUDREY

I called all her friends. They haven't spoken to her in a year. She disappeared on everybody. It wasn't just you.

(he says nothing)

Are you looking for her? Is the most powerful law enforcement organization in the world looking for her--?

FELT
I can't do that.

AUDREY
Why, is it against the rules?

FELT
We don't know what they'd find, do we?

After a moment, she walks away, saying--

AUDREY
Pack everything up. I can't take the mess anymore.
(and now cut to--)

51 **INT. FBI WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE - DAY**

51

Lano reading the *Washington Post*, feet up on a desk. We're in the sprawling WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE, the local FBI precinct across the street from HQ.

LANO
(re: something in the paper)
Now where the hell did they get that?
(just as--)

52 **EXT. 10TH AND PENNSYLVANIA - SIMULTANEOUS**

52

FELT & BATES crossing Pennsylvania Ave. at a clip. Felt with the *Post* in his hand. Gets a step on Bates, SLAMS into--

53 **INT. FBI WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE - SAME**

53

26 AGENTS ERUPT INTO ACTIVITY at the sight of Felt. Hurrying to desks, slipping on jackets, shoving piles of mess into drawers. As--

Felt and Bates zig-zaging through desks. Kunkel and Lano converging from different coordinates.

LANO
(arriving)
What's going on?

KUNKEL
(spots the Post in Felt's hand)
Let's take this into my office.

54

INT. KUNKEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

54

Felt, Bates, Kunkel and Lano crowd in.

BATES

(waves the Post)

This story says we know who the Watergate ringleader is.

LANO

What's your point?

BATES

How the Post knows we know. Then, this morning our Time Magazine pal Sandy Smith called the Director and said he's prepping a story that the FBI is plotting a whitewash. He said the Director put a 48-hour cap on the investigation.

KUNKEL

Is that true?

FELT

(furious)

Someone in this office is talking to the press. The point, Mr. Lano, is leaks kill investigations.

LANO

Whoa, first of all--

KUNKEL

(eyeing the other Agents pretending to not listen in)

Keep it down, Angie.

LANO

If you want to conduct a leak investigation, be my guest, but two hundred field agents from here to L.A. are chasing leads, so you'll have to ask all them, too.

BATES

Tone, in front of Mr. Felt.

LANO

But I will guarantee it wasn't me or any of the guys in this room.

Stop. Quiet. Felt levels a look at Lano. Cold, paralyzing.

FELT

Give me that memo, Mr. Bates.
(Bates hands him a "TOP
SECRET" folder)
"Donald H. Segretti." You pulled
that name from Howard Hunt's phone
records?

LANO

He called Hunt a few dozen times,
yeah.

FELT

This says Segretti used to be a
lawyer in the Treasury Department.
What about these payments?

LANO

We have a hundred leads we're
tracking.

FELT

This says he was paid out of the
account that funded the Watergate.
(waiting for this to
register)
An account belonging to the
Committee to Re-Elect the
President.
(still waiting)
Who's the head of the Committee?

KUNKEL

John Mitchell.

FELT

Former Attorney General John
Mitchell. Now, paid to do *what*?

LANO

Best we can make out Segretti was a
kind of prankster, spying on the
Dems, sending dirty pictures to
their wives. Bottom-feeder frat boy
stuff.

KUNKEL

Indictable under election laws
maybe--

FELT
 (frustrated)
 Forget the plot of the story, Mr. Kunkel. What's the theme? What's it saying? What does it mean?

KUNKEL
 Like Angie - Mr. Lano - said we're still vetting the leads--

FELT
 All the ugly politics, all the dirty money, all this sleaze - it means the goddamn punks are running the country!
 (coming undone, he catches himself, then, calm--)
 Keep going.
 (and turns to go, but)

LANO
 You might want to ask the White House about those leaks.
 (that turns Felt)

FELT
 Why?

LANO
 'cuz whenever I get lucky enough to get someone over there to actually talk to me, they know what I'm going to ask before I ask it. It's like they already know what I wanna know.

55

INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

55

CAROL/INTERCOM
 I have the White House, Mr. Felt.
 Mr. John Dean.

FELT
 Put him through.
 (then)
 Mr. Dean.

DEAN/PHONE
 I have Pat Gray here with me.

FELT
 Okay.

DEAN/PHONE

The White House is concerned about these leaks.

(pause)

We think the source has to be someone in the FBI.

FELT

Why FBI?

DEAN/PHONE

That's where the information is.

FELT

That story could have come from someone in the White House.

Stop. We HEAR Dean and Gray conferring in the b.g.

DEAN/PHONE

We would like you to do something about it, Mr. Felt.

FELT

Okay.

DEAN/PHONE

Now.

FELT

Okay. But I don't understand.

DEAN/PHONE

Which part?

FELT

The part about you calling me. Since the Acting Director is with you I'm sure he's explained that the White House has no authority over the FBI.

(--)

Or isn't it?

DEAN/PHONE

We can--

FELT

At all. Mr. Dean.

More murmurs on the other end. Then--

DEAN/PHONE
 But we can suggest.
 (Felt says nothing)
 Thank you, Mr. Felt.

FELT
 Thank you, Mr. Dean.

56

INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

56

Gray enters. Sits heavily at Felt's desk. Felt takes him in.

FELT
 You know, you might want to stop going over to the White House. It could give some people the wrong idea. Like they're telling you what to do.
 (Gray just looks at him, nervous)

GRAY
 We got a call from across the river.

FELT
 Which river is that?

GRAY
 The Potomac. The CIA. The CIA is telling us we need to taper off.

FELT
 (calm, almost ironic, disbelief)
 'Taper off'? The CIA?

GRAY
 We're getting too close.

FELT
 Too close to what?

GRAY
 I can't tell you.

FELT
 You can't, or you won't?

GRAY
 It's a matter of national security.

FELT
 (every syllable)
 Na-tion-al se-cur-i-ty?

Gray looks like he wants to shit, or puke. Then holds up a finger, as in "wait".

And spins a pad on Felt's desk and draws five diamonds in a circle. Two more above. Then connects the diamonds with lines. While he's drawing--

Felt's not looking at the drawing. He's looking at Gray.
 Ignoring the spoken word and looking for the tells and ticks.

GRAY
 Can our Watergate investigation be
 contained to just this?

Now Felt's eyes fall on the diagram. HOLD. Then they move from the folder to Gray's eyes and HOLD. A long beat.

FELT
 Let me guess. These five here,
 they're the burglars?
 (Gray nods)
 And those two at the top there, the
 ringleaders, Hunt and Liddy?

GRAY
 (yes yes)
 John Mitchell will take
 responsibility for the whole
 miserable adventure. He's agreed.

FELT
 The former Attorney General has
 agreed. To take the fall.
 (Gray gestures, Yes)
 Take the fall for who? For what?

Gray just sits there. Felt lets him. Then taps the folder.

FELT (CONT'D)
 These are the pawns. We want the
 ones who moved the pawns.

Bates is washing his hands. Another Agent taking a leak.

Felt enters. Waits in the middle of the room for the other Agent to take his cue and split. Felt flashes Bates a scrap of paper.

FELT

I want you to disappear our
investigation on these two names.
Get them off the interview list.

BATES

(reads it)

I don't get it. They're nobodies.

FELT

Just do it. Then make sure you say
you did it in Monday's memo for the
Director.

Felt flushes the piece of paper and leaves.

58

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

58

Bates puts a folder stamped "CONFIDENTIAL" in front of Gray.

GRAY

Thanks, Charlie.

Bates starts to leave. Gray opens the folder. Inside: a
single piece of paper.

GRAY (CONT'D)

How much of what we're getting on
Watergate am I actually seeing?
(Bates turns at the door)

BATES

Mr. Felt gives me the headlines,
and I type it up, give Mr. Felt the
original, and bring a copy to you.

(--)

Mr. Felt doesn't want to waste your
time with details.

Pause.

GRAY

Okay.

BATES

Okay. Mr. Gray.
(and as he leaves, we cut
to--)

59

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVE - DAY

59

Kunkel exits the Judiciary building on foot, heads for the bus stop.

VOICE (O.S.)
Mr. Kunkel!

Kunkel turns to find one of Gray's accountant-like flacks.

GRAY'S FLACK
Director Gray wanted you to know that he understands you and your boys are doing a helluva job.
(Kunkel a little confused, but--)

KUNKEL
Tell Mr. Gray thank you. And not to worry, we'll gather the whole ball of yarn.

GRAY'S FLACK
Mr. Gray also wanted you to know that there is going to be a small change in procedure. In the information flow--
(--)
How, and, more precisely, where it flows. Not just the headlines, but the story itself. The details, as it were--

KUNKEL
Does Mr. Felt know?

GRAY'S FLACK
Of course--
(and cut hard to--)

A60

INT. BEDROOM - FELT HOME - NIGHT

A60

Audrey, depleted, opens her closet. Revealing a row of wig stands. Heads of hair. Red. Blonde. Falls. Bangs. One head empty. She peels back the piece on her head, revealing her own hair. Places the wig on the stand, and then we--

60

INT. BEDROOM - FELT HOME - NIGHT

60

Audrey's eyes pop awake in bed. She reaches for Felt. He's not there. She gets out of bed.

TRACK HER as she sleepily moves from bathroom to hallway in her robe, until she's outside Felt's office. Until she's outside Felt's den. We HEAR the murmur of Felt's voice:

FELT'S VOICE (OVER)
 You're going to have to find that
 out, aren't you?
 (and hangs up, and--)

Audrey opens the door, and goes into--

61

INT. FELT'S BASEMENT OFFICE

61

Felt's seated at his raised desk, in his robe, smoking.

Audrey takes a cigarette from his pack. He lights it for her. They regard each other warily.

AUDREY
 I never questioned anything, Mark.
 I never asked. In thirty years.

FELT
 What did you want to know?
 (and now)
 What do you want to know?

She knows he'd never tell. He knows she'd never ask.

AUDREY
 Who can you talk to? Who do you
 talk to?

Beat. He looks at her. Then, just--

FELT
 I want you to put this desk back
 the way it was.
 (and gets up, and--)

62

EXT. BACK YARD - FELT HOME - MORNING

62

Felt, in his swim suit, faces a patch of forest behind the house. PAINTING on an easel. Felt's picture isn't genius, but it's better than we might think. Impressionistic, passionate.

O.S. a phone inside starts to RING. Now cut to--

63

FELT CROSSING HIS FRONT YARD to the curb, robe over his suit, 63
 paint brush in hand.

Felt climbs into a GOVERNMENT-ISSUE SEDAN. Bates and Miller up front.

BATES

Angie Lano called me last night. He told me he'd called the White House to schedule a round of interviews.

Felt starts tapping on the back of Miller's seat with the brush. Slow, metronome beats.

BATES (CONT'D)

A half hour later the White House called back and said we can't talk to two of the guys because they were taken off the list.

(pause)

It was the two names you gave me.

STOP. Felt holds the brush still.

BATES (CONT'D)

How'd the White House know?

FELT

I guess somebody told them.

BATES

The only people who knew were me and you.

MILLER

And Mr. Gray.

FELT

And Mr. Gray.
(and now cut to--)

64

FOOTAGE OF ROSE GARDEN NEWS CONFERENCE

64

NIXON/FOOTAGE

We are doing everything we can to investigate this Watergate incident--
(continuing over--)

65

EXT. FBI HQ/PENNSYLVANIA AVE - WASHINGTON - DAY

65

Gray exits, joining the flow of federal employees on lunch break, as we're hearing-

NIXON/NEWS CONFERENCE (OVER)

I'm having White House legal counsel John Dean look into it, and his investigation has so far indicated that no one in the White House staff, no one in this administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident--

(cut to--)

66

A REFLECTION IN A WINDOW. The reflection is Felt's. He's in his office, watching Gray disappear below into the crowd. 66

NIXON/NEWS CONFERENCE (OVER) (CONT'D)

--What really hurts in dealing with wrongdoing is if you try to cover it up.

PAN around to find Miller, Bates and Kunkel standing in the middle of the room. After a long and uncomfortable silence--

MILLER

Sit down, Mr. Kunkel.

Kunkel sits, confused. The others remain standing.

FELT

Mr. Bates tells me you've been giving Mr. Gray everything we're collecting on Watergate. All our interviews, our raw files.

KUNKEL

Did I do something wrong?

FELT

Did Mr. Gray tell you to bypass me?

KUNKEL

He didn't say it was a secret or anything.

BATES

No, you just decided it was.

KUNKEL

But he said you knew.

MILLER

How often? Did you give him our files?

KUNKEL
Every day.

MILLER
Did he say why?

Kunkel shakes, No.

FELT
Did you ask?

KUNKEL
He's the Director.

BATES
Acting Director.

Felt and Miller exchange a look.

FELT
How much have you given him?

KUNKEL
It's been a coupla weeks.

BATES
Christ.

A long silence. Kunkel knows he's screwed up.

FELT
Did you give the Attorney General
any information about our
investigation?

KUNKEL
I don't talk to the Attorney
General.

FELT
Did you, Mr. Bates?
(Bates shakes, No)
Mr. Miller?
(Miller shakes, No--)
The Attorney General called me this
morning. About something he could
only have heard from the FBI.
(and now)
He's putting a box around
Watergate. We can't touch anything
before the break-in. We have to
stay away from all the White House
corruption.
(in other words--)
(MORE)

FELT (CONT'D)

The crimes that matter don't matter.

(and--)

For the first time in its history, the FBI has been quarantined. Crimes it knows about will go uninvestigated

(after a long pause)

Thank you, Mr. Kunkel.

KUNKEL

Mr. Felt--

BATES

Get out, Bob.

And Kunkel leaves. When they're all alone. Felt sits.

FELT

With everything we have right now - if we could get indictments, in your opinion who'd we get? How high?

BATES

Maybe Attorney General.

FELT

What about the President?

Stop. They look at him.

BATES

What about him?

FELT

If the President's lying?

BATES

Is the President lying?

FELT

They're all lying.

BATES

Then yes. Maybe the President.
(on the gravity of the moment, now cut to--)

67

A TV

67

ABC NEWS AND JIM MCKAY in a Munich beer garden. The start of the Olympics less than a week away. While--

OVER, in PRE-LAP, a distant phone starts to RING--

standing over the horse, now collapsed and struggling for breath. Mark's face sets with an expression we now know well: caged emotion.

As Mark puts a pistol to the horse's temple. Then--

77

YOUNG MARK ON KNEES

77

scrubbing blood off the barn floor and walls. Weeping silently with rage and--

CUT TO BLACK

BLACK SCREEN. AND STOP.

Nothing. No sound. Then:

CRACK! THE GUNSHOT.

SMASH CUT TO:

78

FELT'S EYES RIPPING OPEN.

78

He's lying in bed in the bedroom in the dark. Woken from the memory. He looks to Audrey. She's not there.

The phone is RINGING. (The phone we've been hearing.)

FELT
(picks up)
What is it?
(and smash to--)

79

THAT PENTAGON MAJESTY ... Then:

79

KA-BOOM!!

A giant fireball RIPS through the Pentagon's second floor. Burning glass and debris billow into the sky. Now back to--

80

INT. DEN - FELT HOME - NIGHT

80

Felt on the phone in his robe. At the window, looking out into the back yard.

GRAY/PHONE
(freaked)
What about the White House?

FELT
It's at the top of the
Underground's hit list. I told you
that three months ago.

GRAY/PHONE
 (panicked)
 But can they really hit it?

FELT
 They just hit the Pentagon.

What Felt is seeing outside: poolside, the cherry of a single cigarette surges in the night. The shape of Audrey on a chaise. On the wall behind him, a portrait of Joan.

GRAY/PHONE
 I want us to open files on every member of every counter-culture organization in the country.

FELT
 (watching his wife)
 They're mostly kids. We're looking for killers, not moody teenagers.

GRAY/PHONE
 The President is fighting for the White House--

FELT
 That's not my job. We need better intelligence, not paperwork--

GRAY/PHONE
 (losing it)
 The President needs order! I promised the President he'd have order!

FELT
 I'll go to the Attorney General.

GRAY/PHONE
 I already spoke to the Attorney General.

And there it is. Beat of tense silence.

GRAY/PHONE (CONT'D)
 I hear you and your wife are registered Democrats, Mark.
 (suddenly oddly personal)
 I hope you're not going to let that get in the way.
 (and Gray hangs up, and--)

Felt lowers into the chair. HOLD on him, then we find--

81 **FELT ASLEEP.** Now SNAPPING AWAKE. Heard something. Something 81
sharp. Gunshot.

FELT
Audrey? Audrey?!

He's up. Running for the basement. The door open. Felt bounding down the stairs. STOPPING--

FELT (CONT'D)
Oh no -- Oh no -- OH NO!

We see what he sees:

AUDREY IN A POOL OF HER OWN BLOOD. Felt's service revolver beside her. She's blown her brains out.

He's on his knees. Cradling her body, her head - the mess - in his hands. First the horse. Now her. And now--

82 SCRUBBING the basement floor. Scrubbing the mess away. As he 82
scrubbed the horse's blood. Sobbing. Furiously. Erasing the mess. NOW--

WE HEAR FOOTSTEPS come down the stairs. Felt doesn't.

AUDREY (O.S.)
Mark?
(and now smash to--)

83 **OMIT.** 83

84 **INT. BASEMENT OFFICE - FELT'S HOME - LATER** 84

Audrey slow-steps half-way down the steps to the basement. She stops. Then we HEAR why:

THIS IS THE SOUND OF FELT SOBBING.

It could be that Audrey's never heard him cry before. Come around on Felt, awash in tears. About this and every other thing.

Audrey heads back up. Without going to him. Hoping he doesn't notice.

He hears, turns to look for her just as she withdraws into the upper reaches of the house. Behind him now, no body. Just Felt on his knees in the middle of the floor. Alone. And we go from that human loss to the mechanical clatter of--

A85

EXT. WASHINGTON PARK - MORNING

A85 *

PAN ACROSS A DOZEN YOUNG PROTESTERS waking from a night of sit-in protest, amid their trash and radical signage. *

CAMERA FINDS FELT in his black suit stepping carefully among the kids. Contemplating their faces. *

FELT *

Hey? *

(recognition) *

Hello? *

A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN stirs. A BABY BOY in her arms. *

YOUNG WOMAN *

What the fuck, creep! *

FELT *

I'm sorry. You look like my-- like someone I know. *

YOUNG WOMAN *

You look like an undertaker. *

FELT *

I know what you mean. *

(maybe laughs a little at himself) *

What's your name? *

YOUNG WOMAN *

You a cop? *

FELT *

I'm just someone looking for someone else. *

YOUNG WOMAN *

April. *

FELT *

April. Pretty. How about your son? *

YOUNG WOMAN *

River. *

FELT *

River? Okay. River. Your parents know you're out here? *

INT. INTELLIGENCE UNIT - FBI HQ - DAY

A GIANT COMPUTER SPITTING OUT an endless stream of names. Paper drifts across the floor. Felt watching with the YOUNG AGENT whose sorry job it is to keep an eye on all this.

YOUNG AGENT
(no idea who Felt is)
The Radical Youth List.

Felt now grabs a handful of photos from a two-foot high stack. Mug shots. Surveillance photos. Year book photos. All young. Some children.

FELT
What did these people do?

YOUNG AGENT
Shoplifted. Cut school. Wrote an angry letter to the White House.

FELT
Protestors?

YOUNG AGENT
Them too. Doesn't take much these days.
(now Felt picks up some of the print out and starts to read)

FELT
Where's this data coming from?

YOUNG AGENT
CIA, FBI, NSA, local police, stadies, Time, Newsweek, speeches, anonymous tips, high school yearbooks. Everywhere, nowhere. It's like the machine's out of control. No matter how much data we pour into it it's still hungry.

The photos. The names.

FELT
This could be every kid in America.
(and grabbing an armful of print-out and exiting)

YOUNG AGENT
Looking for someone in particular?

86 INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

86

Felt enters with the print-out.

CAROL

(urgent)

White House twice Attorney General
three times and Mr. Gray's waiting--

Felt DROPS the pile of paper on her desk.

FELT

Shred all this.

(then cut to--)

87 INT. HALLWAY - FBI HQ - DAY

87

Felt and Gray striding together down the hall.

88 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FBI HQ - SIMULTANEOUS

88

Bates and Miller and three others waiting around a long
table. Felt and Gray enter. War Room.

FELT

(nods to Miller)

Go.

MILLER

The Palestinian unit that
slaughtered the Israelis is going
to try to hit us here. Airports in
New York, Baltimore, Los Angeles.

GRAY

This connected to the Pentagon?

MILLER

The Palestinians are talking to the
Weather Underground. Sharing
information. We knew that; we just
didn't know what it meant.

FELT

Now we do. They're combining.
They're multiplying.

All eyes on Felt. Except Felt's. He's staring at Gray.

FELT (CONT'D)

Mr. Gray?

GRAY

(out of his depth)

We sure about this?

(Miller nods)

Dammit. Then hunt them. Hunt them to exhaustion. No holds barred.

FELT

You can tell the President the FBI will give him his order.

GRAY

I'll leave you all to it then.

(and he leaves, and--)

MILLER

We'll never get warrants. Not now.

FELT

Warrants? We're not talking the kids sleeping out there in the parks.

(pointing out there)

We're talking about people who would burn your children alive in their beds. If people die because we stick to the letter of the law, we lose everything. Including the law.

(and so now--)

We're taking off the gloves. Entries, taps. Nothing on paper. No warrants.

(Miller and Bates put down their pens)

Mr. Miller's people report to Mr. Miller, Mr. Miller reports to me--

MILLER

Just like the bad ole' days. Where's Bill Sullivan when you really need him?

FELT

(explodes)

He's over at the White House protecting the nation by spying on Senators and their mistresses! Here, let me give you his goddamn number, and you can go work with him! Instead of here, where we're just trying to keep all this goddamn mess together!

STOP. Long tense silence. Felt never raises his voice. Now--

MILLER

(voice of reason)

Hey, look, we're on your side. All I'm saying is, that was all behind us. Even Hoover knew the dirty stuff was over. That's why Bill's gone.

(--)

All I'm saying is, everyone's watching.

(and Felt turns on him now)

FELT

How many more kids do we have to lose? How many more do we just let vanish into eternity?

(and they all know what he's really talking about, what he really means; then; steel)

[I am not Bill Sullivan.] This is still the goddamn FBI.

All leave. Except Felt. And Miller. When they are alone--

MILLER

I don't want to intrude--

FELT

Then don't.

MILLER

Hear anything? From Joan?

FELT

(softer than we expect)

Nothing in six months. She could be anywhere.

MILLER

You think she's involved? In all this? The Underground?

Felt looks at him. Hit. Internally buckling--

FELT

How could she. She's just like me. Exactly like me.

(and Miller nodding, yes, that's it)

MILLER

She worships you. You are her moon
and stars.

(--)

She's okay. I can feel it, Mark.

And that stops him. "Mark"?

FELT

There's a price to pay for what we
do, Mr. Miller. There's a price to
pay for what we become. We all pay
it, one way or another.

(and turns, and leaves
Miller standing there,
and cut to--)

89

INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

89

Felt shuts the door, sits. Takes a breath. We PAN AROUND and
see he's contemplating that photo of Joan.

CAROL/INTERCOM (OVER)

Mrs. Felt on the phone.

FELT

Take a message.

(and--)

Takes a stack of 50 blank envelopes out of his briefcase.
Taps them to align edges. Pulls out his wallet, and out of
that a folded piece of paper.

PUSH IN CLOSE and we SEE a list of addresses written in
Felt's impeccable calligraphy-like script.

With painstaking precision, Felt starts addressing envelopes.
Each to a different address, but every one in California.

90

INT. FELT'S HOME - LATER THAT NIGHT

90

Indian summer. The air thick. Felt enters in his suit, hat.

FELT

Audrey?

Nothing. Goes deeper into the house. We pick up the SOUND of
ice tumbling in a glass. Felt is stopped in the den, by the
sight of her outside, in the dark, pool lights off. Knows
what that means. Braces himself, and And he heads out to--

EXT. BACK YARD - FELT'S HOME

Audrey's smoking and drinking on a chaise poolside, contemplating the night. Felt approaches. She hands the cigarette up. Felt takes a drag, hands it back. He sips at her drink. Bottle of gin by her foot.

AUDREY

Maybe she's dead. Maybe she just gave up, didn't think anyone cared. Or christ--

(and waves at the woods)

Maybe she never left. Maybe she's right out there, watching us. To see what a man like you does when your daughter just vanishes one night for no good reason.

FELT

Joan had a reason for everything.

AUDREY

Oh, [here we go again] it was my fault?

FELT

You hated her.

AUDREY

Mothers don't hate their daughters! It's just not always easy being one!

FELT

She was beautiful and smart. You dressed her up like a doll. Until she got old enough to look just like you. You were jealous. And you hated her for it--

AUDREY

Mark. Don't--

FELT (CONT'D)

You kept telling her to get out. Until one day she listened to you.

AUDREY

I'm begging you listen to me. I had no mother-

FELT (CONT'D)

But she did--

AUDREY

No. Listen to me!

(and she takes his hands)

My mother was 47 when she had me. And my father just left.

(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

There weren't many ways for a woman
to support herself, to survive--
(and Felt slows; this is
new; hearing this for the
first time--)
--So yes, she did, she gave me up.
To foster homes. She didn't want to
lose her daughter completely. But
then the orphanage. And then she
just stopped coming back--
(and stops herself; this
biblical realization)

Felt lowering to a chair, lights a cigarette. Listening.
Always collecting clues to his wife. As she goes on--

AUDREY (CONT'D)

And when I was eleven, I was placed
in that home, and I loved it. They
told me to call them mom and dad.
But they told me to my face that
they'd keep me only until I went
into puberty. As soon as I had my
first period I was out, because
they didn't want to deal with all
that. All that womanhood, and boys.
So when I got my first period I
didn't want to leave. I hid the
rags. And I had to use rags, to
wash myself, after everyone went to
bed so they wouldn't know. And then
they did find out. And then I was
just gone.

(--)

And then I made it on my own.

(--)

Until you. My white knight. You're
everything to me. The homes we made
were the only homes I ever had.
When you walk into a room you're
the only thing I see.

FELT

You are both mine.

And now tries to embrace her. Mine. The phone starts ringing
inside the house. And just as quickly the moment is lost--

FELT (CONT'D)

Don't (leave)--

AUDREY

I need to get that.

And he watches her cross to the kitchen and then to the phone. Watching her through the window pick up the phone. Chipper. Like nothing has happened.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hello? ... Oh, hi, Margaret ... No
I never made it, I was swamped with
house work...

(and now--)

Felt turns to the pool. Stands there a beat. Strips off his shirt. His pants.

Then slips into the water. Until he's gone beneath a rash of bubbles. And we stay with--

FELT'S POV. Looking from the bottom up at a rectangle of sky.

Audrey in view, wavy through the interference of water.

Felt about to burst. But can't rise. Hungry for the quiet and dark isolation. Desperate for the safety of the coming death.

Until a beat before drowning we rise with him. And he
EXPLODES to the surface, GASPING FOR BREATH.

And lifts himself out of the pool. Dripping and shivering.

Listening to Audrey gossip, we BEGIN TO HEAR in PRE-LAP:

ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD KLEINDIENST

(PRE-LAP)

Three-hundred thirty-three Agents
from fifty-one field offices around
the country developed one-thousand
eight-hundred and ninety-seven
leads...

(and we cut to--)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S TV NEWS CONFERENCE

ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD

KLEINDIENST/TV

...one-thousand five-hundred and
fifty-one interviews, spending
fourteen-thousand ninety-eight man
hours. Watergate was the most
intensive, objective and thorough
investigation in the history of the
U.S. Attorney's office and the FBI.

(MORE)

ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD

The Justice Department has now completed its criminal investigation without implicating any present officials of either the White House or the Committee to Re-elect the President.

LANO (O.S.)

Completed?? What the hell?
(PULL BACK TO REVEAL--)

92

INT. FBI - WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE - DAY

92

Lano and Kunkel watching the TV. Ten Agents crowd the door.

KUNKEL (O.S.)

Somebody get me Felt on the phone.

As the news CUTS TO a SIMULTANEOUS JOHN DEAN NEWS CONFERENCE

KUNKEL (CONT'D)

Hold on-- wait a second.

DEAN/TV

Ties to the White House? Two former White House people, low level, indicted, one consultant and one member of the Domestic Council staff. That's not very much of a tie.

(then)

I understand the FBI's Watergate investigation is in a state of repose and unlikely to be reopened.

(and back to--)

KUNKEL

Anybody tell us this thing was over?!

NEWS ANCHOR/TV (OVER)

Meanwhile, just forty-two days before election day, President Nixon's approval ratings continue to rocket--

Kunkel MUTES the TV.

KUNKEL

Where the hell's Felt? Or Bates. Goddammit get Felt on the phone!

LANO

I can't.

KUNKEL

Why the hell not?

LANO

Because he's right there.

They turn to the shitty little TV. And so do we:

Where Felt is standing like a stone lion on one side of the Attorney General, Gray on the other. Matching bookends of authority. Playing his role. Then cut to--

93

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

93

Felt enters. Disturbed by what he's just done.

GRAY

How's home, Mark?

FELT

Why do you ask?

GRAY

That daughter of yours? Jill?

FELT

Joan.

GRAY

I hear she's terrific. Fulbright scholar! First girl in the country! Chip off the old block.

(after a heavy silence)

Have a seat.

(Felt stays standing,
which Gray notes - "okay"
- but just--)

I want you to be the first to hear my statement to the press.

(reading)

'No pressure has been put on me or any of my special agents in the FBI's investigation, and that it strains' -- I thought I would just nip this in the bud -- 'it strains credulity that President Nixon could have done a con job on the whole American people.'

(looks up)

What do you think?

FELT
It's just fine.

GRAY
Our job is done. Tie up the loose
ends. Then shut it all down.
(and after a beat--)

FELT
(simply)
Okay.

94

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FBI WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE - DAY

94

The daily meeting. All 27 Agents.

Felt and Bates against the back wall. All acutely aware of -
and not particularly happy with - their presence.

KUNKEL
(grim)
The Democrats issued a statement
this morning.
(reading)
"The FBI's Watergate investigation
is a whitewash--"

PUSH IN ON FELT while hearing the rest of this. He reddens.
Jaw clenches. Hands clench into fists...

KUNKEL (OVER) (CONT'D)
--"What is involved here is not
only the political life of this
nation, but the very morality of
our leaders at a time when the
United States desperately needs to
revitalize its moral standards--"
(it's killing Felt, like
nothing else could kill
Felt)
That's it.

Despondent silence. Nothing left to say. Then--

FELT
Well, gentlemen, here's what we
know. We know what we've heard out
of the Department of Justice the
last two days is bullshit.
(he has their attention)
We know the men who broke into the
Watergate are not the end of this
thing but the beginning.
(MORE)

FELT (CONT'D)

We know this is the latest link in a chain of illegal covert intelligence operations by the President's re-election campaign. We know we are facing obstruction from multiple fronts. From the White House. From the Central Intelligence Agency. From the Attorney General of the United States. Who is our boss.

(--)

It is not our job to speculate on the involvement of the President. It is our job to follow the bread crumbs. But those bread crumbs appear to be taking us on a tour of the West Wing of the White House, and in the general direction of the Oval Office. We also know we've been ordered to shut down our pursuit of all this as of today. And we know that except for the thirty men in this room no one in the entire country knows any of this, and may never know any of this--

(--)

Unless we tell them.

(and now)

No one can stop the driving force of an FBI investigation. Not even the FBI.

The agents are stunned. Energized. Felt outwardly calm, but as we MOVE IN TIGHTER, we see he is vibrating with rage.

FELT (CONT'D)

So what else?

(and then we find him--)

95

EXT. 10TH AND PENNSYLVANIA - DAY

95

Felt and Bates walking briskly back to FBI HQ.

96

INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

96

CAROL sorting Felt's mail. Comes on one of the envelopes Felt had mailed. It's stamped 'Return to sender'. She adds it to a stack of five just like that.

She walks the envelopes to Felt.

Felt stares at the "return to senders". He pulls out the list of addresses, neatly checks off the ones that have come back. It's almost half of them now.

He unlocks a bottom drawer and lifts out a neat stack of twenty of the same envelopes. Looks up.

Carol has not moved. She is standing in the middle of the room looking at him. Connecting and speaking with her eyes. And, finally, nod. Of knowing. And support.

97

EXT. BACK YARD - FELT HOME - NEXT DAY

97

Felt sits at his easel. Autumn leaves whirlpooling around him. His paint brush an inch away from the surface, frozen mid-air. His EYES FIXED we think on the woods, contemplating maybe the lean of a tree. Now cut to--

98

INT./EXT. DANCE STUDIO - SIMULTANEOUS

98

Through a wall of window glass letting out onto the street, we see Audrey in private class with a YOUNG INSTRUCTOR. He's sexy, virile. She is heavily made up. We stay wide, long. They salsa excellently across the frame. Sultry. Close. Now INTERCUT--

FELT AT HIS EASEL. PAN AROUND and SEE the canvas is perfectly white. And his eyes fixed not on a tree but an idea. And back to--

AUDREY and instructor, gyrating, spinning. Faster like a top picking up speed. Head tipped. Drunk. In both ways. Then cut back to and--

PUSH IN CLOSE ON THE TIP OF FELT'S BRUSH. A bead of paint drops, and we follow its fall ... and as it SPLASHES on Felt's knee--

99

EXT./INT. LAUNDROMAT/FELT'S CAR - NIGHT

99

Felt's Buick pulls up. Stops at a phone booth. Rain drums hard against the windows. Felt's not getting out. He's sitting there watching the rain.

On the seat beside him, and FBI memo stamped "Confidential". PUSH IN on the memo. TIGHT ON: "Shipley ...Segretti... White House ...political espionage...sabotage... Now up to--

Felt. He's thinking about his life and its consequences.

This is very much like that moment in the life of a man who has not yet cheated on his wife, but who is staring at a motel room door, on the other side of which lies a woman with whom there will be no debate. Once he goes through that door life as he knows it will never be the same.

Felt gets out of the car. Steps into the booth. Dimes. Dials.

VOICE/PHONE

(picking up--)

Who's this?

FELT

I'm going to give you the name of a man who was asked to go to work for the Nixon administration in an unusual way.

VOICE/PHONE

What are you talking about?

FELT

I'm talking about political sabotage, crimes conceived in the White House, and run out of the White House.

(pause)

It's all linked.

VOICE/PHONE

To what?

FELT

Watergate.

(now a long quiet, then--)

There is only one way to understand what Watergate really means, and this is it.

(then)

The name is Alex Shipley. Shipley. He lives in Nashville. The man who approached him was a lawyer out of L.A. named Donald Segretti. Segretti. S-E-G-R-E-T-T-I.

(then)

Shipley can tell you everything you need to know.

VOICE/PHONE

Will Shipley talk?

FELT

I guess you're going to have to find that out.

(MORE)

FELT (CONT'D)

(then)

One more thing. This comes from confidential FBI files. The Department of Justice has it. The White House has it. And now you have it.

VOICE/PHONE

Why do you have it?

FELT

You'll have to find that out, too.

(--)

But first I want you to give it to somebody for me.

VOICE/PHONE

Who am I supposed to be?

FELT

You're a government lawyer, aren't you? Just tell them that.

(and we fall back outside,
past the glass)

And watch Felt continue talking for a moment. Then he hangs up, and we smash cut to--

100

INT./EXT. FELT'S BUICK (MOVING)/STREETS - NIGHT

100

Felt slows up to and stops outside the dance studio. He watches the Young Instructor work a class of adults. His hands liberally on the hips of someone else's wife.

101

INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

101

Felt sphinx-like at his desk with an expression of bored hostility. Bates and Kunkel monitoring against the wall.

PAN to the man lowering himself in the chair across from Felt: 27, tweed jacket, earnest, nervous: BOB WOODWARD.

WOODWARD

(flustered)

Mr. Felt--

FELT

A pleasure to meet you.

WOODWARD
 (confused, a little
 panicked)
 I didn't have much time to prepare.

BATES
 The FBI likes to extend courtesy to
 the press whenever it can, and Mr.
 Felt had a sudden opening. So, the
 usual rules. Mr. Felt will only
 confirm or deny. Nothing on the
 record or on background.

Woodward looks to Felt. Felt is imperious and blank.

WOODWARD
 (making it up)
 Okay, so, regarding the break-in at
 the Watergate. We have Hunt
 standing outside the hotel that
 night.

FELT
 I'll confirm.

WOODWARD
 And we have two ex-CIA and two ex-
 FBI agents involved.

Felt nods. Woodward dutifully makes a note.

WOODWARD (CONT'D)
 And this check deposited in the
 account of one of the burglars.
 (Woodward and Felt hold a
 look)
 It was a CIA account, correct?

FELT
 That is true. But I won't confirm.

WOODWARD
 You just said it was true.

FELT
 That doesn't mean we want people to
 know that it's true. So I won't
 confirm it.

WOODWARD
 I need more detail.

FELT
 Get it somewhere else.

Pause. Woodward looks again to Felt for a sign. Nothing.

BATES
(surprised)
That's it? That's what you want?
You know how many people get to sit
in that seat?

Woodward takes a breath, throws what he guesses is the pass he was brought here to throw.

WOODWARD
Just one more thing, I guess.
Someone identifying himself as a
'government lawyer' called my
colleague at the Post, Carl
Bernstein, two nights ago. He gave
us a name.
(reading from notes)
Alex Shipley.

Bates and Kunkel shoot each other an amazed look. Felt's face simply doesn't move.

KUNKEL
Where'd you get that?

WOODWARD
He's the Assistant Attorney General
of Tennessee.

BATES
We know who he is.

WOODWARD
But is Shipley an FBI target? *

KUNKEL
No comment!

BATES
We're not going to comment on
that.

FELT
I'm not going to comment on that.

WOODWARD
Shipley told my colleague--

KUNKEL
You already spoke to Shipley?!

WOODWARD

Shipley was recruited - they tried to recruit him - to perform political espionage on behalf of the Nixon administration. He gave us the name of the recruiter.

(from notes)

Donald C. Segretti.

*
*
*
*

Felt: nothing.

BATES

No comment!

WOODWARD

Segretti we know is a former Treasury Department lawyer--

BATES

No comment!

FELT

No comment.

STOP. Silence. Woodward looks up, bemused. Knows now why Felt brought him here--

WOODWARD

But I haven't asked anything yet.

SMASH CUT TO:

CAROL SHOVING WOODWARD OUT THE DOOR, then back to--

Felt, Bates and Kunkel.

BATES

Jesus christ who the hell's talking to these guys?

KUNKEL

'Government lawyer' could be ten thousand people in this town.

They're semi-hysterical. Felt calm as shit.

FELT

Get Mr. Lano over to the Post. Find out where they're getting their information.

KUNKEL

Gladly.

FELT
And I want all our offices swept
for bugs. Today.

KUNKEL
Who would be crazy enough to bug
the FBI?
(Felt and Bates look at
each other)

BATES
Whoever thinks they need to know
what we know.

102

INT. KITCHEN - FELT HOME - NIGHT

102

Phone rings.

AUDREY
(picking up)
Hello?

FELT/PHONE
(another extension)
I have it.
(she keeps listening; a
silence, then--)
Please hang up.

She won't let go. Then she does. And goes to the sink.

Felt enters.

AUDREY
Are you having an affair, Mark?
(--)
Because I'm starting to wish you
were.

FELT
Are you?
(but didn't mean to say
it, and before she can
answer)
They've unplugged the system, and
the FBI system is beautiful. We all
knew where we fit in.
(--)
We do our jobs and the machine gets
it right.
(--)
There are no heroes. Not now. Not
anymore.

Felt exits, crosses to the driveway to his car in the carport. He gets in, and he backs out, and then we cut to--

103

EXT. LAUNDROMAT - LATER THAT NIGHT

103

Felt in the phone booth.

WOODWARD/PHONE

Summoning me to the FBI like that--

FELT

(into phone)

It wasn't about you. Our conversations have to be protected.

(then)

Where did you get Shipley?

WOODWARD/PHONE

The source won't give his name.

FELT

Shipley's good information. You're on it now ... But we can't do this by phone any more. This is more dangerous than you realize.

WOODWARD/PHONE

How dangerous?

FELT

When we meet you'll have to observe strict rules of counter-surveillance. How do you leave your apartment?

WOODWARD/PHONE

Front door.

FELT

(into phone)

Take the alley. Don't drive your own car. Take a taxi but switch taxis mid-way. Take the time you need. One hour, two hours. I won't care if you're late, but if you're being followed do not come near me.

(he looks at his watch)

2 a.m.

(and hangs up)

104 OMIT

104

105 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

105

A MAN STANDING SUBMERGED IN SHADOW. We're in a parking garage. The man is smoking. It's only when the cherry surges that we see it's Felt.

Woodward approaches.

They stand there in silence. Both anxious, but for different reasons. Then:

FELT

The story isn't moving. Everyone stopped listening to you.

WOODWARD

We're lost in detail.

FELT

That's their plan. They want everyone confused. Confusion is control.

A pause. Woodward is lost.

*

WOODWARD

This is hard.

FELT

Of course it's hard.

(--)

You talk now.

WOODWARD

We found Segretti.

FELT

Segretti's important but don't fall in love with him. He connects the pieces, but it runs all over the map.

(--)

Everything was part of it. It's a monster.

(then)

The truth could ruin the administration, and I mean ruin.

(Woodward just looks at him, then--)

*

WOODWARD
How high. Does it go?

And Felt a sudden recoil of shame, regret--

FELT
I have to do this my way!

WOODWARD (CONT'D)
(flash of anger)
There's no going back now!

A MATCH FLARES. Now we really see why Felt's stretching this out. He's nervous. Afraid. He seems thinner. Worn.

FELT
You still don't understand what I'm giving you.

(--)
Watergate is just a little corner of a massive conspiracy. Campaign spying and sabotage. Everyone and everything - and I mean everyone - is involved.

(Woodward scribbling)
The FBI did its job. It's all in the files. If you put out the right story the public will scream. The Attorney General will have to let me keep going.

WOODWARD
When you do, what are you going to find?

They look at each other, thinking.

FELT
This is dangerous stuff you're playing with. Especially if it's known before November 7th.

WOODWARD
(realizing)
Election day.

FELT

The White House is behind
everything. But if they get past
the election, they're home free.
The President is safe.

And now he realizes.

WOODWARD

The President. That's how high.

Felt turns away. We think for good. Then stops. Leaning
against a car. Bends his knees, slowly lowers. Until he's
sitting on the cold cement. Tired. At the end of something.

Woodward sits on the garage floor opposite him, cross-legged.

WOODWARD (CONT'D)

My editors know. That I'm talking
to somebody.

(Felt looks up sharply)

But not who. They don't ask. [Like
they're afraid to know.]

(Felt looks furious)

I'm not going to tell anyone who
you are. That's the deal, I
understand.

(--)

But they know it's someone deep
inside. Someone who can see
everything. No one understands how
one person knows so much.

FELT

No one can possibly know how much I
know.

He means about everything, of course. Not just this. A pause,
then--

WOODWARD

With all this mystery, there's a
nickname for you at the paper.

(--)

'Deep Throat'.

Felt stares at him. As if not metabolizing. As if not having
heard. Then his look forms a shape: distaste, disgust.

WOODWARD (CONT'D)

They didn't know what else to call
you.

FELT

They shouldn't have to call me anything.

(--)

Take out your notebook. There's more.

(and now we cut to--)

106

EXT. FELT HOME - MORNING

106

Audrey standing barefoot on the lawn, the Washington Post in her hands. She's scanning the front page.

TITLE: OCTOBER 10, 1972

PUSH IN CLOSE ON THE PAPER - HEADLINE: "FBI Finds Nixon Aides Sabotaged Democrats".

AUDREY (PRE-LAP)

(reading)

"FBI agents have established that the Watergate bugging incident stemmed from a massive campaign of political spying and sabotage conducted on behalf of President Nixon's re-election..."

107

INT. KITCHEN - FELT HOME - SAME

107

Felt stirs his Folger's at the kitchen sink. Reading to him from the table.

AUDREY

"...and directed by officials of the White House and the Committee for the Re-election of the President. Nixon knows that something is being done. It's a typical deal, Segretti said. It's don't-ask-and-I-won't-tell."

Felt's spoon STOPS.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

"'There is some very powerful information,' said one federal official. 'Especially if it's known before November 7th.'"

(and looks at Felt)

Election day--

FELT

I know what day it is.

AUDREY
 "The FBI Finds"?
 (--)
 Mark.
 (--)
 This is you--

HOLDING on Felt's calm mask. As he gets up to face everything this day will bring, picks up his hat, briefcase, heads out--

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 What are they going to do to us?
 (then smash to--)

A108

INT. FELT'S BUICK (STATIONARY)

A108

In the driveway. Engine running. Felt's face all wrong. Gripping the wheel. Listening to--

NEWS BROADCAST/RADIO (OVER)
 --The White House is vigorously denouncing the story in the Washington Post this morning accusing the administration of engaging in a secret political war. White House press secretary Ron Ziegler is calling the story a "pack of scurrilous lies and innuendo based on faceless cowardly sources inside the Department of Justice."
 (and now SMASH to--)

108

INT. FBI HQ - DAY

108

Felt steps out of a crowded elevator, having the breezy workaday exchanges a man who runs the FBI would have.

CAR RADIO (OVER)
 White House is calling the story a "pack of scurrilous lies and innuendo based on faceless cowardly sources inside the Department of Justice."

As Felt goes deeper into HQ, Felt's POV (which is our POV) literally warps: hyper-aware of Agents carrying copies of the Post, reading the Woodward/Bernstein story. He imagines every face, every gesture, every set of eyes accusing him.

THEY KNOW IT WAS HIM.

CAROL
 (taking his hat and coat)
 The Director wants you immediately.

SHE KNOWS IT WAS HIM.

109

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - CONTINUOUS

109

Felt enters. The Post sits on Gray's desk. It's been obsessively marked with lines and question marks.

GRAY
 (picks up the paper)
 He's here, Mark, has to be. There's a spy in the FBI.

110

INT. FBI HQ - DAY - A CLOSED DOOR

110

GRAY (OVER)
 (screaming)
 "...FBI agents have *established*"??
 (obviously reading from the story)
 "One *federal investigative official* said ... according to FBI reports..."
 (then)
 THAT'S US, GODDAMMIT!

111

INT. FBI - WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE - DAY

111

Felt, Gray and Bates standing at the top of a conference room. They're facing Kunkel, Lano and the 26 Field Agents of the Washington Field Office.

CLOSE ON FELT

With Gray, raking cold condemnation over the men.

GRAY
 (seething)
 There is information in here that the Bureau only got 72 hours ago!
 Gentlemen, are you goddamn joking??
 (then)
 Mr. Felt, you had something you wanted to say.

FELT

The last few days I've heard various people accuse Mr. Lano of leaking to the press.

LANO

(reddening)

You have got to be kidding me.

Murmurs. Eyes turn on Lano.

FELT

And that he and certain newspaper reporters have been seen together.

LANO

Think I'm gonna be sick.

NOW BATES begins what will become a long escalating stare at Felt, putting something together.

FELT

I wanted to say to you, Mr. Lano, in front of everyone here, that I know these are vicious lies by jealous agents. You're doing a fine job, and no matter what the Director and I will support you.

Felt nods it back to Gray.

GRAY

I may not be a FBI lifer like some of you. I'm certainly no Mark Felt. Since I arrived here I have put up with paranoia, insubordination, second-guessing. Gentlemen, it's Come to Jesus time. Whoever the leaker is, whoever is the Judas among you betraying me, the other good men in this room, his family, God, not to mention the Bureau and the legacy of J. Edgar Hoover, step forward. Right here. Right now.

STOP. A hugely tense and awkward moment.

FELT - outwardly on fire ... But CLOSER: a trace of sweat -- eyes flicking face to face. Who knows? Which ones know?

KUNKEL - staring at his shoes, humiliated.

LANO - fuck you. And back to--

FELT - stronger and safer every second that ticks by. And back to--

BATES - he's staring at Felt. Doesn't want to be thinking what he's thinking. But here he is thinking it.

No one's stepping forward. Gray stalks out.

Bates now absolutely can't take his eyes off Felt. Because Bates REALLY KNOWS.

The room empties. Lano pulls Bates aside.

LANO

(whisper)

Hey, Charlie, we got an office pool going across the street on who the leak is. My money's on you.

112

INT. BATES' OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

112

Bates packing years of memorabilia, files and junk into boxes. Kunkel wanders in.

BATES

What's the body count?

KUNKEL

Eight so far. You, me, a few guys on my team.

BATES

Angie?

KUNKEL

(shakes No)

The guy's a cockroach. He'd survive a nuclear blast.

BATES

Where they sending you?

KUNKEL

St. Louis. You?

BATES

San Francisco.

KUNKEL

At least it's Frisco.

BATES
Yeah? Good.
(tearing up)
Yeah.

KUNKEL
How many years you put in here,
Charlie?

BATES
The whole run. My kids were born
here.

A long beat, then--

KUNKEL
Did you know?
(Bates just looks at him)
About Felt.

BATES
What about him?

A long pause.

BATES (CONT'D)
Do you?

Kunkel seems to sag. Implode. Shrink.

KUNKEL
I do now.

BATES
Some things are bigger than you and
me, Bobby. It has to be that way.

Kunkel waits, but there's nothing else to say, so he just
leaves.

NIXON IN BLACK TIE ON TV ADDRESSES A CAMPAIGN DINNER:

CROWD (TV)
FOUR MORE YEARS!!...FOUR MORE
YEARS!!

NIXON (TV)
Did I hear right, my friends? Are
we not twenty points ahead?!

PULL BACK TO REVEAL the TV's in

113

INT. BAR - NIGHT

113

A cop-and-fireman joint. Felt, Miller and Bates drinking at the bar. Miller brings over beers. *

BATES

I appreciate you taking the time,
Mr. Felt.

Felt looks at him. *

MILLER

(quietly)
Mark-- *

FELT

I always take care of my people,
Mr. Bates. *

(--)

In fact, my father always said to
me, 'Mark, whatever we do, we have
to make our lives vectors. Lines
with force and direction.' *

And makes some stabbing motion with his hand. Forward. Force.
Bates and Miller exchange a glance. Felt's drunk as shit.

FELT (CONT'D)

So he gave me a horse. Yeah, I
hadda horse. When I was a boy. My
daddy gave it to me to teach me how
to protect something, bring it
along, be a man about things. A man
with vectors.

More stabbing. They're nodding. Pretending to understand.

FELT (CONT'D)

Catches sick. Bad sick. I got on my
knees and prayed to God to save
that horse, and to save me. Because
everything I was was on the line,
Mr. Miller.

MILLER

I know. *

FELT

Pride, faith in God, my father's
respect. *

(beat; then)

He put the gun in my hand and said
I had to shoot that horse myself. *

(MORE)

FELT (CONT'D)

And I looked the horse in the eyes
and I shot him looking him straight
in the eyes.

(to Miller)

I destroyed that sick horse the way
you have to destroy anything that
is sick beyond repair. To rescue it
from its agony.

MILLER

Mark--

(and makes a move to take
him away, but--)

FELT

And the agony it causes everyone
else ... Mr. Bates.

(--)

Blood never really comes off wood
plank, you know. Seeps in like
paint.

(then)

Failed that horse ... Failed my
father ... Failed. And so had to
destroy.

CROWD (OVER)

(TV)

FOUR MORE YEARS!!...FOUR MORE
YEARS!!

ANGLE - TV

Nixon flashing his Victory V's.

BATES
That's a sad story, Mr. Felt.

Felt's emotional. Drunker than they thought. Vulnerable.

BATES (CONT'D)
Mr. Felt?

Bates is going to do it, ask him straight out. Miller can
feel it coming. Felt turns, Huh? *

MILLER
(low)
What are you doing, Charlie?
(long excruciating beat) *
Do not-- *

FELT *
(his imperiousness
returns)
What is it, Mr. Bates?

Bates can't do it. Raises a glass:

BATES
Here's to you. Bravo.

They toast.

FELT
San Francisco, Charlie. Plum
assignment. They were going to send
you to Omaha. Wanted you to know. I
watch out for my men and their
families.

114 **INT. FELT'S HOME - LATER THAT NIGHT**

114

Tick-tock go the clocks. The herds of china elephants keeping
watch. Efrem Zimbalist Jr. wheels and fires from the wall of
the den.

115 **INT. BASEMENT OFFICE - SAME**

115

Felt's smoking at his desk, Coltrane playing in the b.g. A
little unsteady, a little drunk. Lets his eyes close. Slowly.

Smoke curling up his face. Deeply listening to the music. The saxophone runs and the controlled chaos of the improv. The gunfire drumming.

His eyes open. Vigilant. He takes out of his briefcase two more 'return-to-sender' letters. Pulls the address list out of his wallet. Been refolded and thumbed up a hundred times now.

Felt checks off these last addresses. Flattens the list on the desk.

WE MOVE IN ON THE LIST: just one address left: *Genesis Commune, Ben Lomand, California.*

Felt picks up the phone. Dials. And we cut to--

116

INT. A DARK BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

116

The phone rings. BATES fumbles for the receiver, turns on the bed light. His wife wakes up.

BATES

Hello?

(now intercutting--)

FELT

One last thing before you leave us,
Mr. Bates.

BATES

Of course. Hold on.
(and reaches for something
to write on)

FELT

Genesis Commune. Ben Lomand.
California.

Bates scratches down the name.

FELT (CONT'D)

Check it thoroughly.

BATES

Do we think the Underground's
there?

FELT

No muscle, Mr. Bates. Nothing in
the files. I want you to handle it
personally.

BATES
I don't understand. What are we
looking for?

FELT
Joan Felt. My daughter.

Long pause.

BATES
Is the morning okay? Or right now?
Tonight?

FELT BATES (CONT'D)
Morning's fine. And Mr. Yes, Mr. Felt?
Bates.

FELT
You can leave what you find with
Mr. Miller.

BATES
Mr. Miller. Good night, sir.

FELT
Good night.
(and hangs up, and--)

117 **INT. FBI HQ - MORNING**

117

Felt comes in. But he's not the first one in this morning.
GRAY'S OFFICE DOOR is open. WE PUSH INTO THE OFFICE. Find
JOHN DEAN talking to Gray.

Dean turns, locks eyes with Felt. Gray closes the door.

118 **INT. FELT'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - LATER**

118

Felt enters. Finds Gray sitting in his chair. (Internally,
drives Felt crazy.)

GRAY
These leaks are driving the White
House crazy.
(and looks up)
The White House thinks it knows who
it is. He's here. In the FBI.
(and then)
Your name came up.

*
*

STOP. Long beat. Felt's head has filled with a low-level HUM,
like static interference.

FELT

Do you have any idea what that would mean?

GRAY

Treason. For one. Betrayal of everything the FBI stands for. For another.

(and then)

Everything you stand for.

The humming crescendoing. What did he miss? Who overheard him? Now Felt EYES the room for a good place to plant a bug.

FELT

So why would I do it?

GRAY

I don't know. I can't imagine their thinking.

FELT

Why don't they fire me?

GRAY

They're terrified of you. You know everything.

(--)

To them, the only thing worse than keeping you is firing you.

THE HUM DOMINANT NOW. Felt's pov pinballing around the room now: Where's that damn bug?

GRAY (CONT'D)

Dean did say something strange. Apparently they know everything going on inside our shop. They have a "source".

FELT

Inside the FBI?

GRAY

He said they hear everything.
(HOLD, then smash to)

A119 FELT FEELING UNDER THE DESK. Gray's left the room. Felt's A119 alone. Eyeballing every surface, every corner.

MRS. TSCHUDY enters with a stack of folders.

CAROL

Can I get you an aspirin?

FELT

Have Mr. Bates sweep our offices
for bugs.

CAROL

Mr. Bates is gone, Mr. Felt.

FELT

Have Mr. Miller do it.

CAROL

We just had your office swept, Mr.
Felt.

FELT

DO IT AGAIN!

And Carol bolts. Felt's staring hard at Joan's picture on the wall. He takes it down, tears the paper backing. Nothing. Now, smash to--

119

FELT IN A SWEAT, BOLTING INTO THE HOUSE.

119

Now running his fingers along the edges and corners of everything.

We're in his house. He's peering behind his posters ... under his desk ... aims a flashlight in the heating grates.

Audrey following him from room to room. He unscrews the mouthpiece of the kitchen phone. She's standing, watching.

AUDREY

Do they know?!

FELT

Do they know what--? What?? What do you think they know? What is there to know?

(explodes at her)

Can you for once in your life just shut up, Audrey!! Just shut the hell up!

And as Audrey freezes, Felt runs. WE FOLLOW HIM to the back, edging the pool, toward the pitch dark of the woods behind, right to the edge of it. Defiance. It's him against the infinite black wall of night.

FELT (CONT'D)

C'mon! Here I am! ... C'MON!

120

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

120

Felt and Miller. Felt back to his composed imperious self.

FELT

I asked Mr. Miller to join us as a witness.

(heavy silence; then)

This is my fault. It is me.

Miller and Gray stare at him, stunned.

GRAY

(confused)

Mark, what are you saying?

FELT

Everything that happens inside this building is my responsibility. If there is a rat, if the White House has someone inside the Bureau, I should know. So it's on me.

(and so)

I want your permission to do a full internal investigation. I'll bring down an inspection team from New York. I want everyone who's been in contact with the Watergate files polygraphed. I'll run it myself.

GRAY

(and throws a glance at Miller)

They'll hate you for it.

FELT

Everything is on the line. We're running out of time.

(and cut to--)

121

ANGIE LANO'S FACE FILLING THE SCREEN, STUCK IN A SNEER.

121

PULL BACK TO REVEAL an interrogation room. Lano's hooked up to a polygraph machine, answering a POLYGRAPHER'S questions.

REVERSE ANGLE - THROUGH A ONE-WAY MIRROR

Is an observation room.

Felt watches with Miller.

FELT (CONT'D)

How many is that?

MILLER
 Fifteen total. Mr. Lano's the last.
 (--)
 And we don't have a thing.
 (troubled)
 Has the FBI ever done this to its
 own?

*
 *
 *

FELT
 I want Mr. Lano to sign a sworn
 affidavit that he has not passed
 information to Woodward or
 Bernstein or any other reporter. I
 want everyone in the Washington
 Field Office to sign one.

Miller looks at him.

MILLER
 You're humiliating them.

Through the glass Lano is RIPPING off the wires and
 electrodes. The Polygrapher steps out.

*

POLYGRAPHER
 Okay are you ready?

*

MILLER
 For what?

POLYGRAPHER
 The polygraph.

*

MILLER
 Never.

POLYGRAPHER
 His own orders. No exceptions.

*

*

Lano has stepped out.

*

LANO
 I'll tell you one thing. It'll make
 all this go down easier for the
 rest of us.

*

*

*

*

Lano glares. Felt imperious, opaque. A long pause. Felt's
 cornered. Nowhere to look. Turns right into it. To Miller.

*

*

FELT
 (the bluff)
 Do it, Mr. Miller. Set it up.

*

Felt at his desk.

CAROL/INTERCOM
Mr. Dean at the White House.

FELT
(picks up)
Mr. Dean.

DEAN/PHONE
Pat Gray was quite taken by the way
you've taken charge. He said you
insisted on having yourself
polygraphed but your own men
wouldn't allow it.
(then)
Lucky for you, I guess.

Beat. Then they both laugh.

DEAN/PHONE (CONT'D)
Nothing like this in the history of
the FBI, I understand.

They both wait for the other to blink. Felt can wait all day.

DEAN/PHONE (CONT'D)
You don't have it yet.

FELT
Progress is slow.

Pause. Tense silence.

DEAN/PHONE
This must be very uncomfortable for
you.
(and holding on Felt--)

CROWD (PRE-LAP)
FOUR MORE YEARS! FOUR MORE
YEARS

NIXON (PRE-LAP)
It was a great victory, but
the greater the victory, the
greater the responsibility,
the greater the opportunity!

The applause CRESCENDOING as we cut to--

NIXON ON TV SPEECHIFYING THROUGH A CONFETTI RAIN.

NIXON/TV
...dedicating ourselves to those
great goals that I have discussed
at such great length throughout
this campaign--
(and now)

123

INT. DEN - FELT'S HOME - NIGHT

123

Felt and Audrey watch TV.

WALTER CRONKITE/TV (OVER)
 (broadcast)
 With a more than 22% margin of
 victory, some are referring to this
 as the greatest victory in American
 political history.

Felt rises, shuts it off.

He leaves the room. We follow him through the house room to room. To the phone. He picks it up but doesn't dial. He just listens a long beat. Puts it down. Crosses to the window and peers out.

STREET - an FBI car sits out front. Two Agents watching the house. We HOLD on this, suddenly not knowing - as Felt suddenly doesn't know - who those agents really are.

The phone RINGS.

FELT
 (picks up; into phone)
 Hello?
 (silence)
 Hello?
 (nothing)
 Hello?

O.S. a door slams. Audrey has gone upstairs. Felt is staring at the phone.

FELT (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Is someone there?

Now we HEAR WHAT HE HEARS: (OVER) A PATTERN OF CLICKS AND HISSES.

Felt hangs up.

TAP TAP. Felt whirls. Jumpy.

It's a tree. Scraping the glass. Nothing.

Back to the window, peers through the curtains.

The street is empty.

FADE TO BLACK.

AND UP TO

124

EXT. 10TH AND PENNSYLVANIA - DAY - AERIAL SHOT

124

Felt's Buick joins the traffic past the Capitol, whirlpooling past the Lincoln Memorial.

The car STOPS past a bus stop along the Potomac. Felt parks, exits, and--

125

EXT. BENCH - STREETS - SAME

125

Felt sits beside a MAN in a trench and hat.

FELT

The knives are out.

MAN

More than you know.

FELT

Am I safe?

MAN

No one is. You're being watched.
The White House is going to
sanitize the entire town.

(then)

The Director of Central
Intelligence will be gone by
morning.

FELT

Why.

MAN

Apparently, he couldn't smoke you
out fast enough.

(Felt looks at him, but
says nothing)

The source. Of those stories.

After a pause.

FELT

Where does the CIA stand?

MAN

The CIA is building a wall. We'll stay out of your way, but if we are forced to protect ourselves we will.

(then)

The FBI will never reach the CIA on this.

FELT

And the White House?

MAN

The CIA's position is, Presidents come and go. The CIA stays. The FBI stays. We are the constants.

Felt up, about to walk away.

MAN (CONT'D)

Almost forgot. Time Magazine's Person of the Year is going to be Richard Nixon. Thought you'd like to know.

(--)

Happy Holidays.

126

INT. FELT HOME - CHRISTMAS DAY

126

UNDER Lawrence Welk's Christmas Carol schmaltz: a Norman Rockwellian gingerbread happiness. A dozen stockings a-hanging. Crackling fire in the hearth. A Christmas tree afloat on a sea of unwrapped toys.

PAN ACROSS the table: Felt and Audrey, Ed and Pat Miller. The Miller's THREE YOUNG CHILDREN. All before their perfect, shiny Christmas dinner. Felt, the patriarch, carves the perfect turkey.

Now Felt is playing with Miller's littlest girl. On his back, giving her a plane ride. The girl screeching with delight.

AUDREY standing in the kitchen doorway, watching. Drinking.

AUDREY

Mark!

(lost in the laughter)

Do you do that on purpose?

FELT

What? C'mon, we're just having fun.

Audrey starts to cry. Pat Miller goes to Audrey.

PAT MILLER
Honey. What are we doing wrong?

AUDREY
He's always playing his games.

PAT MILLER
What games, honey?

AUDREY
He knows--
(and now Ed Miller)
You know.

PAT MILLER
Honey we all care so much.

AUDREY
You blame me, all of you! He does!
(Felt; not explodes)
What do you all want from me! To
laugh and sing? !

FELT
Do you think you're the only one in
pain?! Can't you see anything
except how it affects you?!

AUDREY
No! I can't! It's just maybe I'm a
little more honest about it--
(an awkward quiet, and Pat
pulls her into the foyer,
the two women)
Don't you dare say anything until
you know what it's like to come
home and one of those children is
just gone. Because it'll happen to
you, too--!

Pat, stung, leans in anyway. Eyes moist. Stoic.

PAT MILLER
It's easy to be great when they're
babies, isn't it. Then they become
people, and you have to deal with
them. Just like everyone else.
(and as she goes out--)

Felt stands in the middle of the room. The room is EMPTY,
CLEANED OUT, all signs of human life ERASED. HOLD ... Then--

128 **A SEQUENCE OF TV NEWS SHOTS** 128

THE WATERGATE BURGLARS filing into a Washington DC courtroom, taking the oath...

ANCHOR (OVER)

As the trial of the five men accused of breaking into the Watergate Hotel continues, alleged ringleader G. Gordon Liddy pled guilty to six felony counts.

129 HOWARD HUNT giving a press conference... 129

HOWARD HUNT

No higher-ups were involved in the break-in.

130 THE BURGLARS now standing at a news conference podium. 130

ANCHOR (OVER)

Claiming no connection whatsoever to the White House, the Watergate burglars changed their minds and pled guilty to all eight counts...

131 **EXT. FELT HOME - NIGHT** 131

A limo idles at the curb, in a swirl of snow. The door to Felt's home opens. Felt crosses shrugging on a coat, and--

132 **INT. LIMO** 132

Felt slides in next to Gray.

GRAY

The President told me the unthinkable has happened: he actually misses Hoover. Hoover would have gotten the dogs off him, he said. He'd have everyone scared to death.

Felt staring out the window. Into a fresh snowfall.

GRAY (CONT'D)

The White House is going to make me Director permanently.

FELT

Congratulations.

GRAY

Bill Sullivan will be my Number
Two.

(and waits for Felt's
reaction)

That sits there. Long enough for the ramifications to strike
both men. Felt doesn't so much as blink. Then--

GRAY (CONT'D)

You know what the President said to
me today? He said, 'The Germans had
the right idea during World War II.
If they went through a town and one
of their soldiers got hit by a
sniper, they'd line up the whole
goddamn town and kill everyone'. He
said it's time to clean out the
FBI.

FELT

You know what that will mean for
me.

GRAY

Remember, they're afraid of you.
The President said you know
everything there is to know in the
FBI.

(--)

Mark. If you did know something,
you could come to me. We'd be able
to work it out together. We could
do something about it.

Nothing. Pause. Felt starts to get out--

GRAY (CONT'D)

I can't protect you any more. Just
give them what they want. The
traitor's head on a platter.
(and then we find--)

133

EXT. FELT HOME

133

Felt watches the limo's taillights recede, then to--

134

INT. JOAN'S ROOM - FELT HOME

134

Felt entering. Audrey close behind. Looking for a place to be
alone. Enters here. The one room he knows Audrey won't enter.
Closing the door on her.

AUDREY

Mark?

(stares at the wood, and
now INTERCUT)

FELT ON THE OTHER SIDE. Their foreheads connected by wood.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I know you did it to save us from
those lunatics.

Felt squeezes his eyes. She feels him there, reached for
where his head would be. Then turns. Back against the door.
Guarding him. Then--

135

INT. ELEVATOR - FBI HQ - NEXT MORNING

135

Felt on his way up alone. Doors open. A half-dozen agents
step on. Sullivan among them.

SULLIVAN

Nice to see you.

FELT

What brings you back?

SULLIVAN

Two words. Re-venge.

Sullivan pushes out. The doors close. And we find Felt in--

*

A136

INT. HOOVER'S OFFICE - FBI HQ - DAY

A136 *

His and our first time in since he claimed the throne as his.
Now, it is lost. As he stands there before all he has failed,
we cut to--

*

*

*

Carol waiting for him outside. Until she can't wait any more.

*

CAROL TSCHUDY

Mr. Felt. Mr. Miller is on the
phone.

*

*

*

*

(now cut to--)

136

INT./EXT. FELT'S CAR/FBI GARAGE - THAT DAY

136

Felt emerges from the elevator, crossing toward his parked
car. Loitering around is Miller and an UNDERCOVER AGENT,
plainclothes in his 20's.

Felt passes them without so much as a nod, simply gets in his car, and waits. Miller nods at the agent. They both get in with Felt. Miller up front, the agent behind.

MILLER
This is Special Agent Clarke--

FELT
I don't want to know his name.

MILLER
Tell him what you told Mr. Bates and me.

Agent nervous. Felt's imperious eyes in the rear view mirror study him.

AGENT

I don't think you have anything to worry about, Mr. Felt.

FELT

You don't think?

MILLER

Specific.

AGENT

The commune where the subject, Joan Felt, is--

MILLER

Do not say her name--

AGENT

Copy. Where the target is. Definitely some people of interest in there. Maybe some Weather Underground--

MILLER

But the -- target?

Felt's eyes. Desperate now, almost pleading:

AGENT

If you ask me, just someone's kid looking for a way home.
(and as we PUSH IN on Felt)

To a stranger he gives nothing. But in TIGHTER: his eyes moisten. To us, he's holding back a flood of relief and agony. As Felt nods--

MILLER

We never spoke. No paper. You don't know anything. Get out now.
(and as the Agent goes, withdraws into the shadow of the garage)

Felt and Miller sit in a long silence. Both men looking ahead. Until Felt, barely a whisper--

FELT

Thank you.

Miller pats Felt's hand on the wheel. Holds a beat. The two men. The two fathers. Then leaves him.

137

INT. DINER - RURAL VIRGINIA - NIGHT

137

Felt waits in a booth. The booth we saw him staring into earlier. A violent storm rattles the window.

Eyes SCANNING every face. Everyone a suspect. HIS POV lands on hands, expressions, mouths. Eyes seem to come back to him. His steely glare chases them away.

In slides Smith. Shaking the wet off.

FELT

Bill Sullivan is picking out colors for his new office. He's going to turn the FBI into the KGB.

SMITH

So it's over.
(waitress wanders by)

FELT

Bring coffee
(then, to Smith)
Get out your notebook.
(then)
May 1969. And February 1971--

SMITH

Mark.
(stopping him - yes?)
Are you sure about this?
(he's very fucking sure of this, because--)

FELT

Between those dates White House employees were wiretapped, many of them aides to the Secretary of State. And five reporters. Including the New York Times.

SMITH

You're kidding.
(but Felt's not kidding)

FELT

Some of the names of the targets came down from Henry Kissinger.

Pause. Smith looks at him.

SMITH

This is hard for you.

FELT

What part?

SMITH

All this truth. Truth is hard for you.

(but now that he's started
Felt wants to just keep
going)

FELT

The targets went from Kissinger to the FBI. And the FBI illegally, unconstitutionally, and reprehensibly bugged and taped and secretly photographed and memorialized every move those people made. Them and their wives and their mistresses and homosexual lovers.

SMITH

Who did the wiretaps, Mark?

FELT

Bill Sullivan.

(which now makes perfect
fucking sense)

It became a rogue FBI operation. Sullivan drove it. Sullivan and the White House. By themselves.

SMITH

What about you?

(what about me?)

What did you know?

FELT

About everything else I knew every sordid little detail. But not this. They knew they couldn't tell me about this.

SMITH

They couldn't count on you.

FELT

This is when the darkness started to creep in. This is when the rot started to happen.

(and a long pause now, the
Big Truth coming)

The White House is packing all its crimes in separate little boxes ...

(MORE)

FELT (CONT'D)

Watergate, the spying, the ugliness, the rot. Each thing in a different box so no one can put it together, so no one sees it's all connected ... and no one will care. But it's all the same big thing.

Smith stares. Humbled by all this truth himself now, so--

SMITH

Watergate is just the gateway.

Smith puts down a fork. Or a cup.

FELT

Do you know physics, Sandy? If you tap repeatedly on the post of a building, and the beating is relentless, it creates a rhythm, a resonance-

(Felt starts to tap the table, slowly, repeatedly ... tap ... tap ... tap)

If you do that long enough, and steadily enough, it will feed-back, the frequencies will align ... the molecules will scramble ... and the whole thing - the whole building - will come apart from the inside and collapse in on itself. And all come tumbling down.

(beat)

The molecules are beginning to scramble. The FBI is coming apart. You know where that takes us? You want a country this big, this angry, this confused, without a police department?

(--)

Sometimes we have to betray the thing we love, to save the thing we love.

Which triggers a momentary collapse in Felt. A slow eye-blink. He pats his own head. Then as quickly, embarrassed--

SMITH

This - what you're doing - will bring down the whole house of cards. The President's surveillance mania.

(--)

But then you already knew that.

FELT

(tired)

The White House is a syndicate,
Sandy. It's a criminal
organization.

(--)

Can you get out the story before
Gray's confirmation hearing?

SMITH

One week.

(and Felt gets up, and--)

138

INT. LIMOUSINE (MOVING) - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

138

TITLE: FEBRUARY 28, 1973

Felt and Gray in back. Along with two of Gray's flacks. Gray
pouring over a legal pad of notes.

Felt stares out the window as the Capitol comes into view.

GRAY

Any last-minute advice?

FELT

We've gone over everything. They'll
go easy; you're the President's
man.

GRAY'S FLACK

What about this?

And pulls out the Smith TIME Magazine story. WE PUSH IN on
the lead header: "Secret Wiretapping by the FBI".

GRAY

I don't know what my position
should be.

FELT

It was before your time. Tell the
truth. No one can argue with the
truth.

139

INT. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE - DAY

139

Gray is perspiring. It's going badly. He's like a boxer in
the 8th round taking a serious beating.

Arrayed before him, seven U.S. SENATORS, a dozen PHOTOGRAPHERS, 100 SPECTATORS at his back. CAMERA FINDS FELT in the gallery.

SENATOR 1

(irate; a Woodward/Wash Post clipping in his hands)

And what about the assertion in this article that a White House aide slipped Donald Segretti, a target of the Bureau's Watergate investigation, copies of what the FBI had?

GRAY

(unsteady)

Uh, we didn't look into that.

SENATOR 1

Why on earth not?

GRAY

I'll have to look into that.

SENATOR 1

Did you know the White House had your confidential files?

Gray looks to Felt. Felt glances away

GRAY

I did, yes, Senator.

(and pauses, unfocused; desperately wanting to please)

Um, let me tell you how it might have happened.

SENATOR 1

Please do.

(and as we continue, we quickly see--)

140

EXT. PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY - LONG SHOT

140

Gray and Dean sitting side by side on a bench. Gray carries a briefcase, Dean a big envelope. As we're hearing--

GRAY (OVER)

White House counsel John Dean told me the White House wanted everything the FBI had on Watergate. To help with its own investigation.

(should stop talking, but)

It was the President's wish. So Mr. Dean took all those FBI files

Gray puts the briefcase on the ground. Dean opens. Looks through the contents, closes it again. Now back to

THE HEARING

Close on FELT as--

SENATOR 1

I'm confused. How did Mr. Dean, a potential target of the investigation, come to possess FBI files about that investigation?

GRAY

Because I gave them to him.

Something big is happening. The room can feel it.

SENATOR 1

(grave)

How many Bureau reports are we talking about? How many reports did you give Mr. Dean?

GRAY

I believe it was eighty-two.

SENATOR 1

As Acting Director of the FBI, why on earth would you do that?

GRAY

Because I was told to.

SENATOR 1

By who?

GRAY

The President.

That's it. The room ERUPTS. But we're holding on Felt.

SENATOR 2

So, if I have this right, Mr. Dean purposely mis-led the FBI. Lied to them?

GRAY

(before he thinks--)
I would have to conclude that probably is correct, yes sir.

The room is electric. As we start to intercut with--

141

INT. CABIN - CHRISTMAS DAY

141

A dozen stockings dangle over a fireplace. Gray - in cardigan with reindeers - approaching with an armful of wrapping paper. Tosses it all onto the fire, now contemplating the flames, as we go back to--

THE HEARING

GRAY

I do understand, though, that the materials you're talking about were kept in a safe in the White House.

SENATOR 2

And how would you know that?

GRAY

I know because Mr. Dean gave those and other files to me.
(and now back to--)

THE CABIN. Where Gray is left standing at the fire cradling a small stack of files stamped "TOP SECRET. EYES ONLY." And starts to read. Then wishes he hadn't.

And now simply throws all that into the flames, and now smash back to--

THE HEARING

GRAY (CONT'D)

He told me they should never see the light of day. He told me to 'deep six' the files. To destroy them.

(and then)

I burned them at my vacation home.

There it is. Like a bomb going off, the room explodes. Felt - who set this up all along - is the one still point in the room.

142

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - MORNING - FELT'S BUICK

142

Crossing the Potomac.

TITLE: APRIL 30, 1973

As we follow it past the Capitol, the White House, and into the FBI HQ--

NIXON (OVER)

Today, in one of the most difficult decisions of my presidency, I accepted the resignations of two of my closest associates in the White House -- John Ehrlichman, Bob Haldeman -- two of the finest public servants it has been my privilege to know. The counsel to the president, John Dean, has also resigned.

143

INT. HALLWAY TO ELEVATOR - FBI HQ - CONTINUOUS

143

Felt approaches the elevator doors. WE HEAR footsteps.

SULLIVAN (O.S.)

So the President asks me what he should do--
 (Felt slows, feels Sullivan behind him)
 And I tell him to get rid of everyone. In the interests of the nation. I didn't mean me, of course.

Felt has reached the elevator. He presses the button.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

You don't have many friends left, you know. A bunch of your FBI pals told me I should cut your nuts off.
 (--)
 They gonna let you keep your badge?
 (Felt turns now, imperious)
 You got a lotta people Washington worried. They think you're going to come out and unwrap everything.
 (MORE)

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
 Everything from all the years.
 Everything we [you and I] know.
 (as Felt steps into the
 elevator)

FELT
 Is that what you want to know,
 Bill? This your last little errand?
 To help everyone sleep at night?

SULLIVAN
 Just saying. You open those scabs,
 there's a lot of things underneath.

Doors finally open. And as Felt steps in, and doors close--

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
 Just remember. No one likes
 informers. They only remember you
 as a rat. Even if you were their
 rat.

144

INT. KITCHEN - FELT HOME - DAY

144

Felt enters. Puts down his briefcase. Hangs up his hat and coat. Crosses to Audrey at the table. A day like any other.

Felt sits in front of a tall Manhattan. Pulls at the drink.

He takes out his list of California commune addresses now and spreads it out on the table between them. That one address circled now: "*Genesis Commune, Ben Lomand.*"

FELT
 I found her.
 (she goes still; a long
 beat; disbelief--)

AUDREY
 You found her. Alive? Is she in
 trouble?

Felt eyes moisten, grateful. He shakes his head, No.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 How long have you known?

FELT
 A week.

AUDREY
 A week? Mark?? You can play games
 with all of them--
 (MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 (points outside)
 But--
 (she starts to cry)
 I'm her mother.

FELT
 It wasn't safe.

AUDREY
 For who?

Beat. Audrey's silent.

FELT
 Let's just go get our baby.

145

EXT. GENESIS COMMUNE - BEN LOMAND, CA - DAY

145

Empty hills, wild flowers, azure sky.

TWO YOUNG BEAUTIFUL WOMEN sit in a field, completely naked, nursing INFANTS, sharing a joint. We know one from pictures. JOAN FELT, 24.

FRIEND
 Hey look.

A cloud of dust on the horizon. Then a car snaking over the intermeshed hills. A government sedan. We make out a MAN at the wheel, a female PASSENGER.

JOAN
 Oh my god.
 (slowly to her feet)
 It's my parents.

FRIEND
Anti-Christ? Really?!
 (squints)
 How can you tell?

JOAN
 Just promise me you'll remember. No matter what: our bodies are beautiful.
 (and)
 And don't fall in love with him.
 All my friends fall in love with him.

Joan defiant. They half-dress. Car stops. Felt and Audrey get out. He in his FBI suit. She with white gloves and pill box hat.

FRIEND

That's your dad?? He's gorgeous!

Felt can't get to Joan fast enough. Walking first. Then he runs. And without a word or permission he just wraps her and the baby in his arms, just like that. And starts to cry. And by the sheer force of his love Joan relents and collapses into him, just like that.

Audrey holds onto the car door, paralyzed.

WIDE & LONG - THREE HIPPIE MEN jogging out from the commune.

FELT & JOAN

Felt takes off his jacket, trades it for the baby. Felt lifts the baby to the sky, laughing.

They turn and walk to Audrey. Felt holds the baby out to her. Audrey stares at the child. Hands pinned to her sides.

AUDREY

Mark?

FELT

This is your grandson.

Felt presses the baby to Audrey's breast, takes one of her arms and wraps it around the child.

FELT (CONT'D)

Audrey, this is Ludi.

JOAN

You sent the FBI after me?
 (Felt, smiling, shakes,
 No)
 Then how did you find me?

And Felt takes out one of the envelopes he's been addressing.

FELT

One didn't come back.

Felt opens his arms and pulls both his women into him. The two women collapsing against each other.

FELT (CONT'D)

Whatever happened, whatever I did,
 whatever we did - or didn't do -
 I'm sorry - we're sorry. We need
 you. Your mother and I need you
 now.

Felt strolling, contemplative, alone, among the shelters and playing kids. Jacket over his shoulder. Shoulder holster visible but empty. While--

Audrey on a bench. Holding Ludi. With her gloves and pill-box hat. Joan beside her.

She's a little drunk. Joan knows. Joan looks at her a little sadly, then at Felt--

JOAN

I had this feeling when I was little, that I couldn't see into his eyes. That he didn't approve of me. He was always holding me up to some impossible standard.

AUDREY

That was me.

(--)

When you were sick, and you were little, it was your father who climbed into bed with you. In his shoes. His holster. His suit. He'd sit with you for hours and rock you til you fell asleep again.

Joan looks at Felt. As if to ask, what did you do?

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I used to dress you up. Remember how you used to come downstairs and show off your new clothes?

(Felt--)

He adored you. He thought you could be the first female President--

(--)

I wanted you to be [like me][a movie star].

They both watch Felt stroll. Joan touches her mother's knee. Connection. And pity.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

He talks to me. You know how he is. I'm the only one he can really talk to.

(and then--)

147

EXT. GENESIS COMMUNE - BEN LOMAND, CA - DAY

147

Joan gets out of a VW van with DOUGLAS GILLIES: pony tail, beard. 27 but looks 18. Joan leads him toward a converted chicken coop, long and low. Stops at the door. Gillies hesitates, then--

148

INT. JOAN'S BUNK - GENESIS COMMUNE - SAME

148

Joan and Gillies enter to find Felt sitting in the miniature room, an empty chair across from him.

JOAN

Daddy, this is my friend. He's a lawyer.

GILLIES

Douglas Gillies.
(and as Felt takes him in)

FELT

When did you graduate from law school?

GILLIES

Ten months ago.

Felt sighs, stands - has to stoop - shakes Gillies' hand.

GILLIES (CONT'D)

Look, I didn't want to come. You stand for everything I despise. I came because I admire your daughter, and she asked me.
(and Felt, as if he simply chose not to hear that, says--)

FELT

Have a seat.
(when he's down)
I need to consult an attorney.
(and hands him a dollar)
I am now protected by attorney-client privilege. Whatever I say to you, you can never tell a living soul without my permission.

GILLIES

I know that. But why me?

Felt looks at Gillies. His strong, almost Job-like presence. Felt shifts in his chair, more and more uncomfortable.

FELT

Because you are now - as my lawyer -
the only person in America I can
trust.

(and doesn't quite know
how to react to that
strange and terrible
irony)

I've been in the FBI Longer than
you've been alive. I live according
to a code. There are things an FBI
man does and doesn't do. It's black
and white.

(rambling)

But there's loyalty. And then
there's duty. There are things
bigger than ourselves. Can you
understand that?

GILLIES

Yes.

FELT

I've done something - things - that
cannot be undone. But I want to
know what I've done.

(and looks up at him)

Am I the man I think I am?

Pause. Gillies takes in this man in obvious pain.

GILLIES

You want to know about your soul.

(--)

You want to know who is going to
forgive you.

Felt looks through the slats in the barn wall. Catches
fragments of Audrey quietly coming close, trying to hear.

FELT

(realizing)

I don't need a lawyer. I need a
priest.

And now we begin to HEAR in PRE-LAP:

NIXON (PRE-LAP)(OVER)

I have never been a quitter. To
leave office before my term is
completed is abhorrent to every
instinct in my body.

(and cut to)

149

EXT. GENESIS COMMUNE - BEN LOMAND, CA - DAY

149

Felt in the doorway of Joan's coop, watching Gillies' van disappear over the hills. His expression relaxed, unburdened.

NIXON (OVER)
But as President, I must put the
interest of America first.
(continuing over)

Joan stepping into Felt, and Felt puts his arm around her--

NIXON (OVER) (CONT'D)
Therefore, I shall resign the
Presidency effective at noon
tomorrow.
(continuing as we go to--)

150

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FBI HQ - DAY

150

Felt's retirement party, subdued and sparsely attended.

NIXON (OVER)
Vice President Ford will be sworn
in as President at that hour in
this office.
(continuing over--)

Felt shaking lots of hands, smiling with grace. No one making eye contact. Now cut to-

Audrey sits in the corner by herself. Then--

NIXON (OVER) (CONT'D)
But as President, I must put the
interest of America first.

Felt is presented with a plaque, a watch.

Now Felt and new DIRECTOR posing for the requisite hand-shake wall photo. FLASH! And HOLD. Then to black, and, over black--

NIXON (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
I would say only that if some of my
judgments were wrong, and some were
wrong, they were made in what I
believed at the time to be the best
interest of the Nation.
(and up to--)

151

INT. LIVING ROOM, FELT'S HOME - DAY

151

Felt facing the TV. Casual slacks, slippers. Dinner and a high-ball on the TV tray.

TITLE: AUGUST 8, 1974

On the tube is Nixon.

Audrey comes up behind Felt, hands on his shoulders. And as Nixon talks, Audrey holds onto him, forehead against his back, as though to keep him from floating away. HOLD, then cut to--

O.S. LOUD DOOR KNOCK. Felt crosses to the door and opens on--

Angie Lano. Matches Felt's imperiousness with his own.

FELT

Mr. Lano.

LANO

Mr. Felt.
(and then--)

152

EXT. FELT HOME - DAY

152

Felt - now in a suit - follows Lano across the lawn to a waiting car.

FELT

What's this really about?

Lano cocks his head at the irony of the moment.

LANO

You tell me. You were the boss.

FELT

I'll take my car.

LANO

Why don't you ride with me.
(and Felt looks at Lano's
car)

FELT

I'm not getting in there with you.

LANO

I wouldn't be here if you had a
choice.

Audrey appears in the doorway.

LANO (CONT'D)
I'll have him back in a couple
hours.

AUDREY
You have no idea what you're doing!
(she doesn't appreciate
the irony of the moment,
but Felt does--)

FELT
Sure he does.

153

INT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE, WASHINGTON DC - DAY

153

Beyond a rope barrier - *'Restricted - Grand Jury and Witnesses Only'* - the hallway is populated by nervous FBI AGENTS and their LAWYERS. It's quiet and tense.

Felt approaches, marching down the hall. Charlie Bates, nervously smoking, intercepts.

BATES
What are you doing? You shouldn't
be here.

FELT
They're charging you?
(and as Bates says
nothing)
Get out of my way, Mr. Bates.

Felt marches for three FEDERAL PROSECUTORS huddling outside the courtroom. All hungry Top Guns in their early 30's.

FELT (CONT'D)
Which one's Pottinger?

STAN POTTINGER, 33, hip-smart New Yorker turns.

POTTINGER
Jesus, look who's here. Mark Felt.
What are you doing here?

FELT
I'm going to testify.

POTTINGER
We didn't subpoena you.

FELT
 I'm aware of that.
 (looks over at Bates and a
 few others)
 They were following orders. Why
 don't you go after the guy who was
 giving them?

GARDNER
 (Prosecutor BILL GARDNER)
 And who's that, you?

POTTINGER
 Don't answer that!
 (steps closer)
 Where's your lawyer?

FELT
 I am a lawyer.

POTTINGER
 Where is your lawyer.

FELT
 I don't need one.

GARDNER
 You will now.

Pottinger pulls Felt out of earshot.

POTTINGER
 I can wallpaper my house with a
 list of the civil rights the FBI
 violated. If it were up to me you
 and Hoover and Bill Sullivan would
 rot in jail.
 (--)
 But it's in your interests - and
 for some reason the Attorney
 General thinks it's in the nation's
 - to keep you out of it.

FELT
 I was keeping you and your kids
 safe at night. But what you're
 doing--
 (points at the agents)
 --is a witch-hunt.
 (his swagger)
 It happened. I made it happen. Put
 me on the stand. I'll take my
 chances with the jury.

154

INT. GRAND JURY ROOM - DAY

154

Felt ram-rod straight in the witness chair. Alone before the 23 diverse and sleepy AMERICANS of the grand jury.

We're deep into Felt's testimony.

POTTINGER

Counter-espionage expert, Nazi-hunter--

(half-facetious)

You are the G-Man's G-Man, Mr. Felt. A patriot and a hero. And we are a grateful nation.

One or two jurors actually applaud. Gardner stands.

GARDNER

Ladies and gentlemen, for the last few weeks you have heard through testimony the sounds of the bombs of the PLO and Weather Underground ringing in your ears. People died. We were a nation at war, at home and abroad. We don't dispute that. Now we ask you to listen for the sound of the Constitution.

(pauses for effect)

Hear that? It doesn't make quite as much noise as a bomb, does it? It just sits there silent, like our conscience, as it's done for two hundred years.

(turns to Felt)

Mr. Felt, on September 8, 1972, did you instruct 143 FBI agents across the country to break into the homes of relatives of alleged members of the Weather Underground, to wiretap their phones and bug their homes?

FELT

Yes.

GARDNER

Who else?

FELT (CONT'D)

(combative)

Who else what?

GARDNER

Participated in giving those orders?

(Felt says nothing, so--)

Assistant Director Edward Miller.

INTERCUT MILLER leaning against a wall in the hallway. Then--

FELT
I gave the order.

GARDNER
Acting Director L. Patrick Gray
III.

INTERCUT GRAY sitting in his barcalounger at home. Then--

FELT
I gave the order.

GARDNER
Charles Bates.
(INTERCUT Bates at his
desk at the FBI)

GARDNER (CONT'D)
You're going to just take the
bullet for everybody?

FELT
I gave the order.

Pause. Enough. Now Pottinger is up.

POTTINGER
You mentioned you frequently
briefed the Nixon White House
during the case. While we're on
that subject, why don't you give us
a quick snapshot of how that
worked.

FELT
I was in constant contact with the
White House on many matters.

And then this thing happens to Felt. For the first time his
curtain of impenetrability drops. His eyes lose focus. He
begins to sweat. His hands clench. Slacken. Clench, and--

FELT (CONT'D)
In fact, I was in the Oval Office
so often people used to say I had
to be Deep Throat.
(a hesitation-what??-then)

POTTINGER
What did you just say?

FELT

I said I was with the White House -
Dean and so forth - so often people
thought I was the Washington Post
source for Watergate. The guy they
called Deep Throat.

Stop. Pottinger just stares. Confused by what he's heard.
Then, because he's not sure what else to do--

POTTINGER

(to the Grand Jury)
Before we dismiss the witness, are
there any question from the jury?

MIDDLE-AGED JUROR raises his hand.

JUROR

Well, were you?

FELT

Was I what?
(and who are you to ask me
a thing--)

JUROR

Were you Deep Throat?
(and--)

STOP. STAY ON POTTINGER. A long silence. His hands busy with
notes. But Felt isn't answering, so now Pottinger looks up to-

FELT. Who is looking down. His face red. Moist. As--

POTTINGER leans forward now, sensing something--

FELT

(weak)
No.

POTTINGER

WAIT! ... STOP!
(and Pottinger leaps up,
points at the steno)
Off the record!

GARDNER

What the hell're you doing?

POTTINGER (CONT'D)

I'm not sure--

What he's doing is marching straight at Felt. And we're--

CLOSE ON FELT & POTTINGER. Faces three inches apart. A bead
of sweat traces down Felt's forehead.

POTTINGER (CONT'D)

(low; just them)

I'm going to remind you that perjury is a Class A felony. But I also consider the question that man just asked you outside the specific scope of this investigation. So if it is your wish that I have the question withdrawn, and your answer stricken from the record, I will do so. I will make it like it never happened. No one will know.

Felt won't look Pottinger in the eye.

POTTINGER (CONT'D)

(whisper now)

I think I understand what's at stake here now. Do you?

A long excruciating beat. Felt's furious at himself.

FELT

Withdraw the question.

POTTINGER

I need you to repeat that. I need to be sure. Say it again.

FELT

Withdraw the question.

POTTINGER

Jesus christ.

Pottinger stares at Felt. He now knows America's most dangerous and valuable secret. The "Antichrist" is his *fucking hero*. Felt is Deep Throat.

POTTINGER (CONT'D)

(to the room)

Other questions for this witness?

155

EXT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE, WASHINGTON DC - DAY

155

A dozen FBI AGENTS mill about the sidewalk. BOB WOODWARD standing around with a couple of REPORTERS.

Limo PULLS UP. Out steps Felt. Then Miller. Gray. Audrey and Pat Miller already there waiting on the sidewalk. As we hear--

GARDNER (OVER)
 Fifteen counts of conspiracy to
 violate the constitutional rights
 of Americans...
 (and now cut to--)

156 ANGIE LANO LEADING THEM THROUGH FINGERPRINTING, as-- 156

Audrey & Joan (and Pat Miller) behind a slab of glass. Bitter disbelief. Woodward behind them, doing his job.

Audrey's mouth is moving. But we can't hear what with. She's trying to get Felt's attention. Joan trying to calm her. Now we make out - muffled through glass - what she's yelling:

AUDREY
 Tell them who you are! Tell them
 what you did!

Felt turns straight at the camera, defiant.

AUDREY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Tell! Them! Who! You! Are!

157 **EXT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE, WASHINGTON DC - CONTINUOUS** 157

Felt emerges first with Audrey and Joan, Millers next, then Gray and his wife. Long walk down a dark corridor.

To meet 300 FBI AGENTS spilling into the street.

There is no noise. This is eerie. Then they begin to CLAP, in unison, a long string of unending claps. As Felt steps into and through the crowd, across this tableau:

END CRAWL

** Mark Felt was convicted of conspiracy for ordering unconstitutional break-ins against the Weather Underground, fined, and sentenced to 10 years in prison.*

** Newly elected Ronald Reagan pardoned Felt in his first act as President of the United States.*

** Shortly after, Audrey Felt shot herself in the head with Felt's FBI-issue revolver.*

** In 2005, at the age of 92, Felt finally revealed he was the Washington Post source on Watergate known as "Deep Throat".*

** Felt spent his last years living with his daughter, Joan, and her children. He died December 18, 2008.*

END