

PRIMARY COLORS

Based on the novel by Joe Klein

Screenplay by

Elaine May

PRIMARY COLORS

FADE IN

CLOSE SHOT - A LARGE WHITE HAND

moving in from frame left, grasping a black hand that is waiting, shaking it, moving on, grasping another black hand ...as the ANGLE WIDENS and A VOICE speaks over the shot.

VOICE

I've seen him do it a million times now, but I couldn't tell you how he does it, the right-handed part of it--I can tell you a whole lot about what he does with his other hand though. He's a genius with it...

The ANGLE has now WIDENED sufficiently for us to see the owner of the white hand, GOVERNOR JACK STANTON, a big, attractive man in a checked jacket, handshaking his way down a line of predominantly black men...

VOICE

He might put that left hand on your elbow, or up by your biceps: like he's doing now. Very basic move. He's interested in you, he's honored to meet you. If he gets any higher up your shoulder--like that, it's not as intimate...

The ANGLE is full now and we see that we are on

A STREET IN HARLEM

the CAMERA traveling down the line with the Governor, who is now clasping the shoulder of a large black man with his left hand. They are both laughing.

VOICE

...He'll share a laugh or a secret with the shoulder grip---a light secret, not a real one, but very flattering like the two of you are in a conspiracy...

The Governor moves on, grasping the hand of a small, older, very black man...

VOICE

If he doesn't know you all that well...but he wants to share something emotional with you he'll lock in and honor you with a two-hander ...he'll flash that misty look. And he'll mean it... Governor!

The CAMERA and Governor Stanton have now arrived at the source of the Voice: HOWARD FERGUSON, a middle-aged, white man in a pink flowered tie standing next to a young, light-skinned black man in a grey suit (HENRY).

HOWARD

Governor Stanton, this is Henry Burton

GOV. STANTON

(giving Henry a firm two-hander)

I met your grandfather once when I was a boy. I hitchhiked to Washington to hear him speak.

(mistily)

He was a great man.

HENRY

Thank you, sir.

Stanton moves on.

HOWARD

He's really glad you're coming on Board, I can tell.

HENRY

No! I didn't say I was coming on board. I said I'd meet with him...did you tell him I was...

HOWARD

No, no, no. Take it easy.

A young woman, also white, (DAISY) hurries up to them.

DAISY

Come on, he's two handshakes away from the librarian.

Stanton is moving toward the steps of a city library building where MISS WALSH, a middle-aged woman with dyed auburn hair, a shin-length dress and high heeled pumps, stands waiting.

HENRY

(as they walk toward him)
What the hell is he doing up in Harlem anyway? He's a southern governor nobody's heard of. He should be down on Wall Street bagging money from the big spenders.

HOWARD

See? Already you sound like a campaign manager.

HENRY

Howard, I said I'm not...

HOWARD

I'm kidding. KIDDING. I suppose if I told you that Jack Stanton is in Harlem because he's really interested in Adult Literacy--you'd tell me I was full of shit.

HENRY

Yes.

HOWARD

You're pretty cynical for a guy half my age.

HENRY

I was a congressional aide for three years. If you think I'm cynical talk to a senate page.

They have arrived at the library steps where Governor Stanton stands waiting for them.

GOV. STANTON

Howard Ferguson, Henry Burton--Miss Marianne Walsh, the very special librarian who is teaching these classes.

MISS WALSH

Well, thank you, Governor Walsh... Governor Stanton. I'm sorry. I'm a little nervous.

GOV. STANTON

(gently steering her up the stairs as he speaks)
How long ago did you start the reading program here?

MISS WALSH

About three years ago...we have no money, very little money and...

He listens, intently, jumping her words with "hm"... "yes"... "I see"... as though he is hearing faster than she can speak. Her voice speeds up trying to satisfy him.

MISS WALSH

...it's the only reading program like it in Harlem...that I know of, of course..there may be others but I don't... don't...

GOV. STANTON

...know of them. Cops.

She suddenly misses a step and lunges forward, her dress flying up to reveal shockingly good legs.

GOV. STANTON

(steadying her)

You okay?

MISS WALSH

(shakily)

Yes. I'm sorry. I'm...alright.

Just behind them, Howard grips Henry's arm.

HOWARD

My God! If it wasn't for the top part she'd be Sharon Stone. I'm kidding. KIDDING. But just barely...

INT - LIBRARY READING ROOM

dark, solemn, a WPA library with oak bookcases almost to the ceiling, a 30's mural of biplanes, locomotives, wheatfields, muscular laborers going to work.

The class is seated at a large round table. Men and women in their 30's and 40's, a few 20's and 50's...neatly dressed, with an impossibly dated attitude of respect.

RUBY

My name is Ruby. I'm a domestic. I been in this class for two months.

A MAN

Jack Mandela Washington. I'm a handyman.

Governor Stanton sits away from the table, against the wall, watching the class. Henry sits next to Daisy, across the room from Stanton, watching him. Howard stands leaning against a bookcase, watching Henry watch Stanton watch the class.

A WOMAN

Tawana Carter. I'm a waitress.

2ND MAN

Anthony Ramirez, carpenter. Free lance carpenter...

Daisy leans over and whispers to Henry.

DAISY

I just wanted to say Welcome Aboard.

HENRY

WHAT! I'm not on board. I'm just...

(he breaks off)

Oh. You're kidding too, right?

DAISY

Yes. We're a madcap little group. Like the guys on Mash. We see so much despair that we have to drive someone crazy to keep our spirits up.

A grossly fat black man is speaking.

DEWAYNE

My name is Dewayne Smith. I'm a short order chef and until I come here I couldn't read a lick. They just kept passin' me up, y'know? I had a... learning disability.

(he glances at Miss Walsh)

MISS WALSH

Dewayne's dyslexic.

DEWAYNE

They just kept a passin' me up-- third grade, fourth grade. I sit in the back and stick to my own self, and it was like no one noticed. I go on all the ways through. I graduate elementary school. They send me to Ben Franklin, general studies. They coulda sent me to the Bronx Zoo. No one ever tell me nothin'. No one ever say, "Dewayne, you can't read--what you gonna do with your sorry ass?" Scuse me.

(to the governor;

Scranton smiles at him)

Anyway, graduation come. My momma come. She take the day off from the laundry where she work. She don't have a clue nothin's wrong; me neither. I been skatin' through. So we're there and Dr. Dalembretti is callin' out the names on the dipomas and what each kid did, like "Sharonna Harris, honors," or "Tyrone Kirby, Regents diploma," and then he come to my name and he says, so everyone hear it, "Dewayne Smith receive a certificate of

(MORE)

DEWAYNE (cont'd)
attendance." You can hear people
buzzin', coupla folks laughin', and
I gotta go walk up there, and get
this...it look just like a diploma,
y'know? Same kind of paper--but
everyone know the truth now. And
I'm thinkin--"sucker, these folks
got rid of everyone else can't
read, they drop out." And my
reward for stickin' around is--I
gotta stand there, just...dyin',
tryin' not to look at anyone,
tryin' not to look too stupid. And
I see Momma out front with her hat
on and her purse in her lap. She
wearin' her good dress and her
white church gloves. She got her
glasses on, and tears comin' down
from behind her glasses, like
someone die.

(X)

Tears suddenly fill Henry's eyes--and he glances around
quickly to make sure no one sees him...then stops as he sees
Stanton.

Stanton's face is red and tears are rolling down his cheeks.
Henry stares at him in amazement and then, suddenly, Stanton
rises, and goes to the table.

GOV. STANTON

I want to thank you for sharing
this with us, Dewayne. I want to
thank all of you for having faith--
the faith that you can overcome the
odds and learn and succeed.

(circling the table)

It takes real courage to do what
you're doin'. How many y'all tell
your friends and family where
you're going today?

There are smiles. No one raises their hand.

GOV. STANTON

Right. My uncle Charlie was a war
hero--second world war. I heard it
from my momma--my Uncle Charlie was
on Iwo Jima--you know, where they
raised the flag? And he took out
four machine-gun nests of Japs...
Japanese soldiers, who had a squad
of his buddies pinned down. He had
one grenade and his rifle and
bayonet and his bare hands. And he

(MORE)

GOV. STANTON (cont'd)
took 'em out. They found him with a
knife in his gut and two bullets in
his leg and his hands around an
enemy soldier's throat.

DEWAYNE

Shit.

GOV. STANTON

Yeah, that's right.

(he sits down with them
at the table)

They gave him the Medal of Honor.
President Truman did. And when he
came home to Grace Junction they
had a parade for him, and the town
fathers came to my parents' house
and said to him, "Charlie, what you
got in mind for yourself now?"
Charlie said he didn't know.
"Well," the mayor said, "maybe
you'd like a full scholarship to
the state university." The banker
said he could understand if Charlie
didn't want to go back to school
after all he'd been through, so
maybe he'd like a management job,
big future, at the bank. The
sawmill owner--we're from piney-
woods country--says, "Charlie, you
may not want to be cooped up in a
school or a bank, come manage my
crew." And you know what? Damned if
Charlie didn't turn them all down.
(there is a pause)

A WOMAN

And...what'd he do?

GOV. STANTON

Nothin'. He just lay down on the
couch, smoked his Luckies. No one
could get him off that couch.

HISPANIC MAN

Was he mess up from the war? In
his head?

GOV. STANTON

Nope. It was just that he couldn't
read.

They stare at him. Someone whistles. Someone says, "No
shit."

GOV. STANTON

He couldn't read, and he was embarrassed, and he didn't want to tell anyone.

A MAN

So...what happened to him?

GOV. STANTON

He finally got a job in my high school years later...as a janitor.

DEWAYNE

No shit. After having all those chances...

GOV. STANTON

That's right. He had the courage to win the Congressional Medal of Honor, but he didn't have the strength to do what each of you has done, what-- each-- of--you--is doing-- right-- here. He didn't have the courage to admit he needed help, and to find it. So I want you to know that I understand, I appreciate what you're doing here, I honor your commitment. And when people ask me, 'Jack Stanton, why are you always spending so much money and so much time and so much effort on adult literacy programs?' I tell them: Because it gives me a chance to see real courage. I am so grateful you've let me visit with you today.

There is a moment of absolute stillness...and then the silent reading room explodes with applause.

Henry watches as the students rise and surround Stanton, clapping his back, shaking his hand, hugging him.

HENRY

(softly to Daisy)

Let's get him out of here.

DAISY

No. He likes it.

He looks at her in disbelief--and then at Stanton, who is leaning into the students, touching them, draping his big arm over their shoulders.

HENRY

I will be damned.

ANGLE - HOWARD FERGUSON

watching Henry watch Stanton. He smiles.

INT. A STUDIO APARTMENT

cheaply furnished. A convertible couch, the bedding neatly folded on a table. Rows of books, pictures of President Kennedy and the Reverend Thomas Burton. Draped carefully over a chair is the grey suit Henry wore at the library. Next to it is a fresh shirt and tie.

An extraordinarily pretty black woman (MARCH) stands, arms folded, leaning against the wall. Henry is visible through the open door of the bathroom. He has a towel around his waist, his hair is wet, and he is shaving.

MARCH

I shifted everything to get tonight off.

HENRY

He's leaving in the morning.

MARCH

You're going to work for him, aren't you?

HENRY

No, I'm not going to work for him. I'm going to meet him at his suite in the St. Regis so we can talk.

MARCH

What about?

HENRY

Well...probably about...going to work for him.

MARCH

How can you walk out on Adam Larkin, who can really do something for black people, and get in bed with some cracker...

HENRY

I'm not getting in bed with...

MARCH

... who hasn't done piss for Blacks in his own state...

HENRY

I could say the same about Adam Larkin.

MARCH

But he will. He's a black congressman. He has to bide his time.

HENRY

I don't like Larkin! And I didn't like working for him. And I don't know what Stanton wants...

MARCH

Well, I do. He wants to use the grandson of a civil rights leader, a black man in politics, as a vote getter...

HENRY

And you tell me you have no sense of humor. That's hilarious. Yes, a black man on the team will really roll in those votes. That's why there are so many black men running the country.

MARCH

If you're really upset with politics work for The Black Advocate. We never feel disillusioned.

HENRY

(coming into the room)
Hand me the shirt, will you?

MARCH

(she picks it up)
You don't want to work with me, do you?

HENRY

(putting the shirt on)
Oh, God!

MARCH

Well, you don't. Dates and week-ends when we're free but not too close...

HENRY

You know, you're beginning to sound just like a woman.

MARCH

And you're beginning to sound just like a man.

HENRY

This is really unfair to say--but
men take that as a compliment.
Hand me the tie, will you?

MARCH

Get your own fucking tie.
(she throws it at him)

HENRY

(looking at the tie; then
in the mirror)
No tie. No suit. Just
leather-jacket-cool.

He opens the closet, takes out a leather jacket.

HENRY

I'll be back in two hours. And
we'll talk about The Black
Advocate.
(he tries to kiss her)
Come on, don't be mad.
(she turns away)
Okay, be mad. But only for two
hours.
(as he goes out)
And wait up for me.

EXT. SHERRY NETHERLANDS - THE DOORMAN

opens the door of Henry's cab as he gets out.

CLOSE SHOT - ARLEN SPORKEN

a fat man with a pleasant Mississippi drawl.

SPORKEN

Oh, my God! My boy! Henry Burton,
I am mighty honored. I'm Arlen
Sporken. I'm the governor's media
consultant.

He yanks Henry's hand, then crushes him in a full body hug
that culminates in a backslap and rib-chucking. There are
other men in the room, working phones, hammering laptops,
eating, chugging Diet Cokes. Howard Ferguson stands beside
Sporken, beaming. Daisy comes up to Henry with a diet coke.

DAISY

Hi, Henry. Non-fat caffeine?

HENRY

No, thanks.

SPORKEN

Well, well, well, I'm just
delighted you're on board.

HENRY

No, I...

SPORKEN

(to Daisy)

Honey, get me one of those sandwiches, will you?

DAISY

Not unless you pinch my cheek and call me sugar.

HOWARD

I'll get it.

(he goes to the table)

We're gonna win this thing, Henry. Isn't that right, Arlen?

SPORKEN

Absolutely. Of course, the big question is Ozio. You think he's got the cojones to run, Henry?

(he pronounces it with the "J")

HENRY

(correcting him)

"Cojones" I don't know Ozio well enough to judge his cojones...

GOV. STANTON

They're big. But they're glass. Hi there, Henry.

The door to the bedroom has opened and Stanton stands there buttoning his shirt, his face very red.

HENRY

Governor Stanton, nice to...

He breaks off as he sees the librarian, Ms Walsh, behind Stanton, arranging her dress.

GOV. STANTON

You remember Ms. Walsh.

Ms Walsh, eyes glazed, edges into the room, whacking her shoulder on the bedroom door as she squeezes past Stanton.

MISS WALSH

Ow...

GOV. STANTON

(putting his arm around her)

You all right, darlin'?

She stiffens, desperately attempting to maintain the appearance of propriety.

MISS WALSH

Fine. Thank you.
(loudly)

Well, Governor, it was good to have... this...this chance to talk...about the program...

GOV. STANTON

Yes. It's a great program. Great.
(to Henry)

Don't you think so Henry?

HENRY

Yes. Wonderful. Excellent program.

MISS WALSH

(moving toward the door)
Thanks so much for...

GOV. STANTON

You take this up with your board--what we were just talking about, you hear?

MISS WALSH

Yes, yes. I will.

He has followed her and now, as she opens the door, he puts his hand on her shoulder and whispers in her ear. She inhales, sharply, then darts out.

GOV. STANTON

(calling after her)
Bye now.

He closes the door, chuckling, then reaches for a sandwich, restrains himself, picks up an apple and bites into it.

GOV. STANTON

(chewing)
Ms. Walsh is on the regional board of the teachers union.

HENRY

Ah. A teacher and a librarian...

A small man, jockey-thin, picks up a phone...then calls:

MAN

The missus.

Stanton starts for the phone, pauses, snags a sandwich, then grabs the receiver.

GOV. STANTON

Hi, darlin'.

(a sharp, distant bark
through the mouthpiece)

Oh, listen, honey, I'm sorry. We
got stuck here. But great news.
Real progress with the teachers...
Tonight? Are you sure? ... I'm
sorry. I had no idea...

(to Charlie)

Did you know we were supposed to
meet the guy from the Portsmouth
Democratic Committee tonight?

(Charlie shrugs; smiles)

Goddamit, Charlie!

(he winks at Charlie;
then into phone)

Honey, tell him I'll come by first
thing tomorr.... Okay, okay, okay!

HENRY

Are you Uncle
Charlie? The Medal of
Honor winner?

CHARLIE Well,
I'm Uncle Charlie. And
what ever else he
says.

(laughs)

He's the master.

GOV. STANTON

(into phone)

...No, no I do want
to. ... yes. If
you'll just stop
poppin' my eardrum
I'll leave right
now. ... No, please
don't go. Susan!
Just stay there!
Susan...

Stanton stares at the phone for a moment...then hangs up.

GOV. STANTON

We better go. Where's the plane?

MITCH

Teterboro.

GOV. STANTON

Shit. All the way out there?
C'mon. We gotta get out of here.

Howard, Mitch, Daisy, and Charlie begin moving, gathering up
papers. Stanton snags another apple then puts his arm
around Sporken. Henry glances at this watch.

GOV. STANTON

See you in DC., Arlen. Daisy, you
come in tomorrow with Howard.
Mitch, Charlie, Henry--let's go.

HENRY

Go?

(he looks at Howard)

I just...I came here to talk to you
about...

GOV. STANTON

We'll talk on the plane. It's only
New Hampshire.

HENRY

I teach classes in the morning.

GOV. STANTON

Call in sick--it's summer school.
The kids won't mind.

HENRY

I...

(looks at his watch)

Do I have time for a phone call?

GOV. STANTON

When we get there. Come on, Henry.
If we're gonna talk, let's talk.

INT. PROPELLOR PLANE

Small, noisy, a four seater. Mitch and Charlie jammed into
the back, Stanton and Henry behind the pilot. Stanton is
snoring. After a moment, Henry gently shakes his arm.
Stanton smiles in his sleep, his head falls on Henry's
shoulder. Henry stares grimly into space.

EXT. MANCHESTER LANDING FIELD - PROPELLOR PLANE

as it's wheels hit the tarmac.

EXT. TARMAC - SUSAN STANTON

She is standing alone in the dark, a parked minivan behind
her. She watches as the four men come toward her.

GOV. STANTON

Hi, honey. This is Henry Burton.
My wife Susan.

SUSAN

(briskly shaking Henry's
hand)

I met you twenty-five years ago. At
your grandfather's, in Oak Bluffs.
You were running under the
sprinkler in little wet underpants.
Your grandfather was a great man.

HENRY

Thank you.

SUSAN

Jack Stanton could also be a great
man if he weren't such a faithless,
thoughtless, disorganized,
undisciplined shit.

Henry freezes. Stanton reaches out an arm to her. She swats it away with a file folder.

GOV. STANTON

Honey, why are you making this into such a big...

SUSAN

Because it is big. First impressions count, asshole. This is New Hampshire! These people don't know you. They probably don't even remember your state. They're waiting to be swept off their feet by Orlando Ozio, who's the governor of a real state. But they came to meet you--and you didn't show. I talked to the head of the Portsmouth Democratic Party about fly-fishing for an hour and 45 minutes. Do you realize how indescribably boring fly-fishing is? Do you realize I've now committed to doing this...this thing with him? I'm going fly-fishing because of you! You asshole! You can not do this to me. We've only been at this a month and already you're fucking up in your old fucked-up way. The only shot--the only shot--we have here is to be perfect. Barely adequate won't swing it. You can't blow off party leaders. You can't embarrass...

She breaks off. Stanton is whistling Primrose Lane. Very softy. Henry's eyes fly open.

SUSAN

Jack!

GOV. STANTON

(in a pleasant tenor)

"Primrose lane,
Life's a holiday on Primrose lane
When I'm walking down that Primrose
lane w-i-i-i-th you..."

She turns and begins walking toward the minivan. Stanton comes up behind her, puts his arms around her, snuggles her neck, and cups her breasts. They stand silently for a moment, swaying slightly to the song.

HENRY

I've got to find a phone.

CHARLIE

When we get to the apartment.

INT. MINIVAN

Mitch is driving and Stanton is sitting beside him. Susan, Charlie and Henry sit in the middle and a state trooper sits in the back with a boxes of groceries.

GOV. STANTON

Honey, this was so great, this reading program today in Harlem. You should have seen those people. And the librarian was just... inspirational...

SUSAN

Gimme a break. Tell me how good the curriculum was, not the teacher. We can replicate a good curriculum.

GOV. STANTON

But you can't sell it without a good teacher.

(to Henry)

This is an argument I always win.

SUSAN

Henry, was the librarian that inspirational?

HENRY

Well, she was...

They all turn to him. We can even see Mitch the driver's eyes staring at him in the rear view mirror.

HENRY

She was...a pretty typical library beauraucrat I thought.

SUSAN

Hah!

MITCH

We're here.

GOV. STANTON

This is it?

He is looking out at...

EXT. A CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - OUTSKIRTS OF MANCHESTER - 4:AM

nondescript pre-postmodern. A sign says Manchester Condominiums - Sale and Lease. In the blue predawn light, a few apartment lights are on, a few early workers are starting their cars.

INT. CONDOMINIUM

Small and grim. Two bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room with rented furniture, a Xerox machine, stacks of leaflets, bumper stickers, stick-ons. Stanton stands looking around as Charlie whisks past with the bags.

MITCH

We got it on a six month sublet.
It's better'n a hotel. Cheaper.
You can keep clothes, we can store
stuff. We have some privacy.

GOV. STANTON

I don't give a shit about privacy.
I'm here to get known. You can't
get known in private. This looks
like the end of the campaign more
than the beginning.

He stalks over to the TV and flicks it on, then clicks the remote past channels featuring static and snow, a rerun of Car 54, Where Are You?...more snow.

GOV. STANTON

Mitch! Goddammit,
Mitch! No cable? You
gotta be kidding, man.
You can't run for
president of the United
fucking States without
CNN! Mitch, what was in
your head? I'm outta
here This is the worst,
two-bit, candy-assed
goddamn...

SUSAN

(to Henry)
Do you have any bags?

HENRY

No, I didn't expect to
come. I'm leaving
tomorrow.

SUSAN

How about something to
eat.... Hey!

She breaks off and in one swift, fluid motion pulls a set of keys out of her bag and whips them--hard--at her husband's head. He breaks off, blinking.

SUSAN

Darling, it's four in the morning.
This is not how you want to be
introduced to the neighbors.
(to Henry)
Come on, I'll make you some coffee.

She starts out, Henry following. Stanton rubs his cheek without anger.

GOV. STANTON

Yeah, well...we're out of here
tomorrow. I know we've got to go
cheap, but not this cheap. Not
loser cheap.

CLOSE SHOT - A CUPBOARD

It is almost bare; instant coffee, a box of White Rose teabags, Fig Newtons. Susan's hand takes out two teabags.

SUSAN'S VOICE

So why did you quit Larkin?

HENRY'S VOICE

What?

The angle widens as she crosses to the fridg, revealing

A STARK WHITE KITCHEN

with flourescent lighting. Inside the frig is a jar of honey, a pint of milk, and fifty Cokes and Diet Cokes. Susan's hand takes the honey. The CAMERA follows as she crosses to Henry at the table, plunks down the honey, then drops the teabags into two cups of just-boiled water.

SUSAN

Why did you stop working for Adam Larkin? Careful. It's hot.

HENRY

Well, I just....

SUSAN

It's all right. I know you can't talk about your old boss to your new boss.

HENRY

I haven't got a new boss yet.

SUSAN

Larkin's very different from Jack. Very cool. Never blinks. A pro.
(Henry gulps some tea;
jumps)

He would never swallow tea without testing it.

(pours him some water)

And that's the real thing experience teaches you, isn't it? How not to get burned.

HENRY

Do you think people ever learn that?

SUSAN

Not the best people.

HENRY

(after a moment)

He...Adam taught me a lot but it was all the same. He never surprised me. We were sort of alike in a way. Careful, neat, just wanted to get the job done. And my job, it turned out, was roping the strays. And that gets old.

SUSAN

When there's no hope of winning.

HENRY

No. We always won. But then we'd give it away in a hundred tiny deals. And I was always looking for that one guy who would step up and vote with us because it was right, without asking for a lulu.

SUSAN

Lulu?

HENRY

New York for artificial sweeteners Anyway--we'd win. Then we'd be gutted in the Senate; we'd settle for their version. And then the White House would veto, which we knew from the start. And then we'd celebrate our great moral victory: we forced a veto.

SUSAN

So you dropped out.

HENRY

Yes.

SUSAN

So why are you here?

HENRY

(after a moment)

Well...I was always curious about how it'd be to work with someone who actually cared about... Well, you know, it couldn't always have been the way it is now. It must have been different when my grandfather was alive... I mean, you were there. You had Kennedy. I didn't. I've never heard a president use words like 'destiny' or 'sacrifice' without thinking

(MORE)

HENRY (cont'd)
 "bullshit". And maybe it was
 bullshit with Kennedy, too, but
 people believed it. And that's
 what I want. I want to believe it.
 I want to be part of something
 that's...history. And this is the
 longest answer to a five word
 question I bet you've ever gotten.

SUSAN
 No, it isn't. The longest answer
 to a five word question I've ever
 gotten is the answer to "Do you do
 much flyfishing?"
 (she sips her tea)
 It's a good answer, Henry.
 History's what we're about, too.
 What else is there?

INT. BLACK ADVOCATE PUBLICATIONS - DAY

Dozens of young workers, mostly black, in shirtsleeves,
 working phones and desktops in their cubicles.

A young man reaches over to the empty desk beside him and
 picks up a ringing phone...then calls:

MAN
 Hey, March! Some guy about an
 automobile insurance scam...

March returns from a filing cabinet a few yards away and
 takes the phone he holds out.

MARCH
 (into phone)
 Yes?

HENRY'S VOICE
 It's me. Please don't hang up
 again.

MARCH
 Fuck you.

HENRY'S VOICE
 March, I'm in New Hampshire in a
 fucking coffee shop and I don't
 know when I'll get to the next
 phone. Now could you just listen
 for two minutes...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - HENRY

talking into a pay phone. Behind him we see Stanton talking
 to the customers, patting a hand, accepting a pickle...

HENRY

(into phone)

Listen, this guy...I think this guy could be the real thing. This guy could be so incredible you'd end up working for him. I mean... this son-of-a-bitch actually likes these...these people. I mean, even Kennedy didn't like these people...

Daisy comes up to him.

DAISY

Help me get him out of here. We have a fundraiser in 20 minutes.

MARCH'S VOICE

You son-of-a-bitch! I waited for you all night.

There line goes dead. Henry stares at the phone.

DAISY

Come on...

Henry follows her to the counter where Stanton is listening to a middle-aged man.

MAN

...but when you've been married for 35 years...and then you just got to sit there and watch her suffer...

GOV. STANTON

You hang on, Sam. We'll change things. All of us. Together. And we'll do it in time to help Margaret, too.

INT. BLACK ADVOCATE PUBLICATIONS - MARCH'S CUBICLE

She is at her computer, typing. The phone rings. She picks it up.

MARCH

March Cunningham's desk.

HENRY'S VOICE

March, listen to me. I'm at some fucking fundraiser so please don't hang up on me. March, I'm talking to you now as a colleague...

She hangs up.

INT. A LIVING ROOM IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Henry in a corner, staring at the phone. Behind him a nervous hostess passes around a tray with cookies and coffee. Daisy stands beside the Senator holding his coat.

GOV. STANTON

I don't want y'all to make up your minds too soon now. Take a look at the field, think about it. You still have a hundred and twenty three days before you determine the fate of the republic...

INT. AIRPORT - SAME TIME - HENRY

at a payphone, listening to the rings on the other end of the phone. There is a boarding call...and Howard appears carrying a small bag.

HOWARD

I bought you some stuff at the drugstore...

HENRY

(hanging up)

I can't. I can't go to Mammoth Falls without clothes, I have no...

HOWARD

Give me your keys. I'll have Daisy pack some things and bring them to Mammoth Falls on Wednesday.

HENRY

Why can't I bring them to Mammoth Falls on Wednesday.

HOWARD

Because by Wednesday you'll be in Mississippi...and we've got to set up a campaign quarters in Mammoth Falls before we leave.

Susan Stanton walks up to them, smiling.

SUSAN

Hey--you're supposed to be telling us to hurry.

HENRY

Sus...Mrs. Stanton, I don't...I'm not sure...I mean, I've never helped run a presidential campaign before.

SUSAN

Well, neither have we. But that's how history is made, Henry--by the first timers.

EXT. MAMMOTH FALLS

The CAMERA MOVES past a mall, a cineplex, downtown streets with hard, new, ugly brick buildings...and stops

OUTSIDE A USED CAR DEALERSHIP

with a big plate glass window. TWO BOYS are just hoisting a brand new sign above it that says: STANTON FOR PRESIDENT HEADQUARTERS.

INT. HEADQUARTERS - CAMERA PANNING THE STAFF

About fifteen older women, fanning themselves slowly, and three young people, PETER GOLDSMITH, 22, JENNIFER ROGERS, 20, TERRY HICKS, 19.

HENRY

Any of you ever worked in a campaign before.

(no one answers)

Really? None of you. Well, well.

(to the young people)

Any special talents you want to mention?

PETER GOLDSMITH

I speak Hebrew. Does that help?

Henry stares at him for a moment...then takes a deep breath.

INT. HEADQUARTERS -STAFF ROOM - HENRY

wearing a new white tee and stiff new baggy jeans. He bends over an older woman with dyed orange-red hair.

HENRY

Now press delete, Ella-Louise. Now type in the right number.

ANOTHER WOMAN

Why can't I learn this.

ANGLE - JENNIFER

taking notes as Henry speaks.

HENRY

...call the florist and send an Azalea plant to the secretary of every media contact you have.

ANGLE - PETER GOLDSMITH, HENRY - IN THE STAFF ROOM
at a table near the window leafing through the yellow pages.

HENRY
Call only the Orthodox and
Conservative synagogues. Speak
only to the Rabbis. Start off in
Hebrew.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE STOREFRONT - TERRY HICKS

as he pursues a woman down the street, waving a leaflet.
Henry runs out and grabs him. The Woman hurries off.

HENRY
Just hold out the leaflets for
people. Don't stalk them.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE
Hey!

They turn. Stanton has just pulled up in the minivan with
Howard and a thin man with enormous black-frame glasses
(RICHARD JEMMONS).

GOV. STANTON
How y'all doing?

HENRY
Coming...along.

GOV. STANTON
Henry, I want you to meet the most
brilliant political strategist in
the party--Richard Jemmons.
Richard, this is my right arm,
Henry Burton.

RICHARD
I sure admired your grand daddy.

HENRY
Great.

GOV. STANTON
Pick you up for dinner at seven?
We can talk a little policy.

HENRY
Right.

RICHARD
Nice meeting you. Say hello to
Winona for me.

HENRY
Who?

HOWARD

He means Jennifer Rogers. Every girl Richard falls for is Winona Ryder to him.

HENRY

Oh. That's...

He trails off as the minivan guns up and drives away.

HENRY

...psychotic.

EXT. NIGHT - THE BRONCO

bearing the Stantons, Howard, Richard and Henry. It pulls into...

FAT WILLIES BARBECUE

a trailer with a plastic awning and picnic tables outside. Smoke billows from some pit in the rear. FAT WILLIE, wrapped in a white, sauce-daubed apron rushes toward the governor.

WILLIE

Hey, Gov!...

(calling)

Hey, Amalee, the Gov's here.

AMALEE, short and almost as fat as Willie, pops out of the trailer. Stanton wraps them both in a hug.

GOV. STANTON

How's business, Will? You got your mojo workin' tonight?

WILLIE

Ain't no end to it, Gov. Loretta?

Hey, Lo--Gov's here!

LORETTA comes out of the trailer...about 16, destined for obesity but, for the moment, deeply, adolescently luscious. She flashes Stanton a look, then tries to hide it.

SUSAN

Hi, honey, how's it goin'? We sure miss you--but I guess now that school's out you're too busy working for the folks to baby-sit.

LORETTA

(mumbling)

Yes'm.

GOV. STANTON

How you doin', Willie?

WILLIE

Not so good since my mama died. I miss her like a pain.

GOV. STANTON

You got to let that happen. Your ma deserves that. Your pain will heal with time, but you got to give your mama her due.

RICHARD

We got to miss our mamas. Ain't no one ever gonna love us like our mamas.

GOV. STANTON

Is your mama still with you, Henry.

HENRY

No. She's in Beverly Hills with her second husband.

WILLIE

(gravely)
You're a lucky man.

EXT. FAT WILLIE'S - A LONG TABLE IN BACK

Richard and Stanton sit at one end, Howard and Henry at the other. Stanton is eating ribs non-stop.

RICHARD

...next time I see my momma, she's blind--a year later she only got one leg from diabetes, now they tell me she could lose the other one. And she's beautiful my mama. And smart! She coulda done anything, been anything...

WILLIE

(his voice breaking)
God bless the mamas.

GOV. STANTON

My mama worked all her life. Never asked for nothin'...

RICHARD

My mama raised seven of us...

ANGLE - HOWARD, HENRY

Talking quietly at one end of the table.

SUSAN

If Ozio doesn't run, we concentrate on New Hampshire. If he does, we concentrate on the South...

HOWARD

But Ozio might not announce until New Hampshire...

HENRY

(he glances toward)
Shouldn't we...wait for the Governor for this?

SUSAN

No. He's in a mama-thon. That can go on all night in the South. I think we have to figure...

Suddenly, Richard's voice, which has been going on behind them, rises to a crescendo and he leaps to his feet.

RICHARD

...she lived her whole life just givin it up for her family, too busy to take care a'herself...and now they're cutting her up, taking away pieces of her while she's still alive...

He smashes his chair against the ground. It breaks and he burst into tears. Governor Stanton rises and puts his arms around him. Willie and Amalee put their hands on his shoulders.

AMALEE

Oh, it's so hard...

WILLIE

(patting Richard)
"I looked over Jordan,
And what did I see-ee..."...

AMALEE

"Comin for to carry me home..."...

GOV. STANTON

You know Richard's favorite song?
(they shake their heads)
Probably the most American goddamn song I can think of. And a Southern governor wrote it. You know what song I'm talking about?

They look at him, waiting. Even Richard looks up.

GOV. STANTON

(singing)
 "You are my sunshine,
 My only sunshine,
 You make me happy when skies are blue..."

WILLIE

I'll be damned. I didn't know a
 southern governor wrote that!
 (joining in)
 "You'll never know, dear,
 How much I love you..."

AMALIE, RICHARD

(joining in)
 "Please don't take my sunshine away..."

Susan rises, good-naturedly, puts her arm around Stanton and Richard, and begins singing.

SUSAN

"The other night dear,
 As I lay sleeping..."...

Without breaking the song, Stanton leans down and scoops Howard and Henry up from the table. They rise, reluctantly, and stand mute, crushed in his embrace. Willie puts an arm around Henry.

WILLIE, STANTON, RICHARD, AMALEE

"I dreamt I held you in my arms..."...

HOWARD

(suddenly)
 "When I awoke dear I was mistaken,
 And I hung my head and cried..."...

They are all singing now--except for Henry who stands under the weight of Willie's arm, rigid with discomfort.

EXT. MAMMOTH FALL HEADQUARTERS

A little more bustle is visible now through the plate glass window.

INT. HEADQUARTERS

Henry walks past the rows of tables and ringing phones, still in blue jeans and tee shirt. Jennifer Rogers calls:

JENNIFER ROGERS

They've run out of Azalea plants.

HENRY

Send bromelads.

Peter Goldsmith, who is speaking on the phone in fluent Hebrew, puts his hand over the mouthpiece and calls:

PETER GOLDSMITH
These rabbis are putty in my hand.

...and Terry Hicks rushes in, almost too elated to speak.

TERRY HICKS
I started out with two hundred--I
have none left. Know how I did it?
Look!

He turns. On his back is a sign that says Take one--get
one FREE!

HENRY
Terry, I'm...awed.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - HENRY

He is deep in a phone call as Howard Ferguson enters.

HENRY
...the Senator is looking forward
to it. ... Thank you, Reverend.
God be with you.
(he hangs up)
Where the fuck are my clothes.

HOWARD
Daisy got sidetracked to
Washington. She's not a muffin,
you know. She works for Sporken.

HENRY
Howard, what am I doing here? Does
this guy have a chance in hell?

HOWARD
I don't know. I haven't canvassed
hell lately. But if we only worked
for guys who had a chance in hell--

There is a little scream from the other room. Henry leaps
up and runs to the door. Howard is immediately by his side.

POV - THE STAFF ROOM

Richard Jemmons stands at the copying machine speaking to
Jennifer Rogers. His lips and face move with manic
intensity, his arms windmill as he goes on talking, talking. (X)

RICHARD
...got everything, Winona. Got
movies. Got room service. It's
like, like... paradise...

JENNIFER ROGERS
Stop calling me Winona.

RICHARD

...Y'all come back there with me,
we gonna walk the snake...

Henry starts forward. Howard grabs his arm.

HOWARD

Wait! Don't embarrass him.

RICHARD

I mean it. I got a fucking python.
What's that look mean? You don't
believe me?

He begins unzipping his fly. The room stops. Henry
wrestles free of Howard and runs toward them, shouting...

HENRY

Hey!

...but it is too late. Richard's penis is now on the paper
tray of the xerox. Jennifer studies it.

JENNIFER ROGERS

Gee. I've never seen one that...
old before.

There is a beat...and then the entire staff room breaks into
cheers and applause. Richard quickly zips up his pants.
Jennifer curtsies and goes to her desk. Henry follows her.

HENRY

Are you okay?

JENNIFER ROGERS

Fine.

(she looks at Henry)

Don't worry.

(patting his cheek)

I'm fine. Really.

Henry turns...and sees Howard propelling Richard Jemmons
into his office. He walks quickly after them.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - HENRY

walks in. Richard is sitting in Henry's chair, one foot up
on the desk, his hands over his face. Henry slams the door
and knocks Richard's foot off the desk.

RICHARD

Hey! Fuck you!

HENRY

Fuck me? You stupid redneck
sonofa-bitch....

HOWARD

Now, fellas...

HENRY

(to Richard)

You ever hear of Anita Hill? Man, you are so lucky she's cool.

RICHARD

I would'na done it if she wasn't cool.

HENRY

Oh, you know when a muffin is cool? You're sensitive mind tells you when it's time to show her your cock.

HOWARD

Henry...

RICHARD

Where'd you go to school?

HENRY

What?

RICHARD

Hotchkiss, right? I read up on you. You're a tight-assed, preppy elitist from Hotchkiss.

HENRY

Bullshit.

RICHARD

Bullshit it's bullshit. You just called me a redneck--which, I am proud to say, I am. And you, Hotchkiss, are a honky. Y'all ain't but one-half black--and that's the best part of you. Lets you intimidate the palefaces, 'specially lib-blabs, and work that voodoo sexual shit with white girls. I'm probably blacker'n you are. I got some slave in me, somewhere. I can feel it.

HENRY

You...you're crazy.

There is a knock on the door and Terry Hicks stands there.

TERRY HICKS

Henry, you got a visitor.

DAISY

Oh, it's not a visitor. It's me.

Daisy stands there, disheveled her eyes very bright.

HENRY

Where the fuck have you been?
Where the fuck is my suitcase?

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

I got it.

They turn. Stanton stands there. He is wearing a purple shirt and cowboy boots...and carrying a suitcase.

GOV. STANTON

Couldn't let a lady carry a suitcase. Not in the South.

(sets down the case)

But I'm sure glad you got yourself a wardrobe, Henry, cause you and me and Richard are having dinner with a very important person tonight.

RICHARD, HENRY

Who?

GOV. STANTON

Governor Ozio's son.

RICHARD

Ozio's son? What the fuck does Ozio's son want?

GOV. STANTON

Scouting expedition for papa probably. Could be Ozio's looking for someone to endorse.

HOWARD

Jesus! You think so?

HENRY

Wouldn't that be something!

RICHARD

This has to be handled just right.

GOV. STANTON

Just right.

EXT./INT. FAT WILLIE'S

The BRONCO and a LINCOLN TOWN CAR are parked side by side. The Stantons and Henry, dressed in jeans are seated at a long table next to JIMMY OZIO, who is wearing a black suit and gray pinstriped tie.

GOV. STANTON

Hope you don't mind eating with your hands.

He swipes a rib off Susan's plate. Henry winces.

JIMMY OZIO

Is there any other way?

Ozio wipes his mouth and pushes his plate away. Stanton snags a rib from it. Henry grips the table.

JIMMY OZIO

You know, Jack, the Governor's been watching you move around the country. And he was hoping the next time you pass our way, you'd stop in, spend a little time, get to know us better.

GOV. STANTON

Absolutely. We will absolutely do that. I've been really wanting to consult with your fath--with the Governor. Henry, you've got the book. When can we meet with Governor Ozio?

Henry takes a large calendar book out of his briefcase.

HENRY

Let's see...we're pretty booked... but next Tuesday we're in Albany on the way to New Hampshire.

GOV. STANTON

(to Jimmy)
How's Tuesday

Jimmy Ozio reaches into his briefcase and takes out a calendar book even bigger than Henry's.

JIMMY OZIO

Let's see. Hmm. Tuesday's pretty full. Tell me what you're doing on Tuesday. Maybe I can slot you in somewhere.

HENRY

(quick glance at Stanton;
Stanton nods)
Let's see. We arrive at four... then a drop-by at the Teachers' Union cocktail party before their annual dinner at the Sheraton....

GOV. STANTON

Wish I could skip that, but they'd notice. I'm the only candidate invited to the cocktail party.

JIMMY OZIO

I know. The Governor turned it down because he's been invited to speak at the dinner. But, hey-- this is good. You'll both be at the Sheraton at the same time. You can meet right after the cocktail party and just before the dinner. In his suite.

GOV. STANTON

(forcing his voice)

Perfect. I'll see him then.

EXT. BRONCO - DRIVING - NIGHT

Stanton's voice rises over the shot.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

Fuck all, Henry--fuck all! You don't know fuck-all about briefing me. You make me look like a fucking amateur, a rube-ass, barefoot, dipshit, third-rate...

INT. BRONCO - STANTON, SUSAN, HENRY

Stanton is driving with one hand, dialing the cellular phone with the other.

GOV. STANTON

...southern-fried piece of shit Alderman. You didn't know Ozio was speaking at that dinner? You couldn't tell me before I started shootin' my mouth off about the cocktail party?

(into phone)

Hello, Richard?

VOICE

The cellular number you have dialed is not now in operation. Please...

GOV. STANTON

Shit!

(he throws the phone out the window)

What the fuck kind of operation we got here anyway? How do we get scheduled for a drop-in when he's the main speaker. Get me Howard.

HENRY

You just threw the phone out the window.

SUSAN

Stop the car.

There is a skidding sound of wheels on gravel.

SUSAN

Don't kill us. Just stop it.

The car squeals to a stop and Stanton jumps out and hurries toward the trees. Susan and Henry go into the brush.

GOV. STANTON

(shaking a branch)

I'm not going! It's his turf, his time...it's wrong.

SUSAN

You have to go.
(on her hands and knees
in the brush)
He'll know why if you don't.

HENRY

Sir, I think Mrs. Stanton is right.

GOV. STANTON

I don't care what you think. First you fuck me up then you tell me how to handle things?

HENRY

No, I mean I think the phone landed in the brush.

GOV. STANTON

Well, you're wrong. Both of you. It went in the trees. I saw it.
(rattling branches)
I'll look like shit if I go to that cocktail party. I'm Ozio's fucking warm-up act. And don't think he didn't know that. But, somehow, we didn't know that. Get out of the goddamn brush, Henry. I tell you it landed in a tree. And Jimmy Ozio's probably on the phone right now telling his father he's got nothing to worry about.

SUSAN

That would be the case even if
(MORE)

SUSAN (cont'd)
Henry hadn't screwed up.
(she straightens)
Here's the phone. It was in the
brush.

GOV. STANTON
(after a moment)
Well...shit. You wouldn'ta found it
if I hadn't thrown it out of the
car.

The phone suddenly begins ringing. They stare at it,
frozen, as if it is a snake...and then Henry carefully picks
it up.

HENRY
Uh...hello?
(he mouths "are you
here?"; Stanton shakes
his head)
He's not here. I'm...in the car.
With his phone. ... Henry Burton.
Can I take a message? ... I see.
... Right. ... Got it.
(he hangs up)
How reliable is Daisy?

GOV. STANTON
A hundred per cent.

HENRY
Then we just got really bad news.
In the next issue of Manhattan
Magazine there's an interview with
Ozio in which he blasts you,
"What's he done?"..."His state's
last in everything."..."He doesn't
know shit about education."..."He's
trying to racebait on welfare."...

There is a long pause.

SUSAN
Well, you were right about the
meeting.

GOV. STANTON
This is bad.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - MAMMOTH FALLS

(X)

The Stantons, Henry, Howard, and Daisy sit in a tight
circle. Richard is stretched out on the floor.

HOWARD

You have to take him on, Jack.
Define yourself as the anti-Ozio,
separate yourself from him...

SPORKEN

You don't want to define yourself
as too anti-Ozio. Remember, if he
doesn't run you're gonna want his
votes in the primaries.

DAISY

But if you let him get away with
writing you off this way you'll...

GOV. STANTON

...look like a wuss.

SUSAN

Richard? What do you say?

RICHARD

He's ahead of us by 24 points in
New Hampshire--and he's willing to
acknowledge our presence in this
race? I say he has to be the
stupidest fucking Eye-talian since
Nero. I say drop a little some-
-thing about him in a speech and
show him we can play, too.

HENRY

(Eagerly)
And you know where we can do it?
At the New Hampshire forum next
week...

GOV. STANTON

(without looking at them)
No.

HOWARD

Then where?

GOV. STANTON

Nowhere. Any jack-ass can burn
down a barn. I'm not going to go
negative.

SUSAN

Jack, it's not negative. It's
self-defense.

GOV. STANTON

I'm not gonna do it.

INT. HENRY'S STUDIO APARTMENT - ABOUT 3:00 A.M. - HENRY (X)
 He is in bed, watching SHANE on TV, one hand on the phone.

HENRY
 Come back Shane. Run for
 President.

The phone rings. He picks it up, startled and hopeful.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE
 How y'all doin'?

HENRY
 (clicking off the TV)
 Fine. Everything's fine.

INT./EXT- A BRONCO - GOV. STANTON

in the front seat with Mitch, talking on a cellular phone.

GOV. STANTON
 There's been a bender on the
 interstate in Mammoth Falls. I'm
 on my way back to meet with the
 families. I need you to set up a
 meeting for Monday...

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - HENRY

as he scrambles for a pencil, the phone to his ear.
 The following is CROSSCUT. (X)

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE
 ... to figure out how far on
 health... And tell Kasterbaum...

Richard now has a pencil and looks wildly around for paper.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE
 ...I need the figures on those tax
 cuts...

HENRY
 (writing on the wall)
 Right.

GOV. STANTON
 We're doin' okay dontchathink? I
 mean...aside from this Ozio thing.

HENRY
 Well...we were doing pretty good...
 but now...

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE
 Yeah. I think so, too. So what're
 you doin' tonight, Henry?

HENRY

Tonight? I'm in bed.

GOV. STANTON

It's 3:00 A.M. Sunday morning,
What're you doin' after you wake
up?

HENRY

Well, I'm still lining up
volunteers, I'm sending out...

GOV. STANTON

Now, listen, my man, I know how
much I lay on you, I know how hard
you work. I'm honored by it.
Honored. You hear? But I want you
to get your ass out of that office
today. Don't even take my calls.
Crack open a bottle of chablis,
y'hear? Rest. And listen, this is
very important: Do you think it's
at all possible for you to get
yourself laid tonight?

HENRY

Sir?

GOV. STANTON

I'm serious. I don't want you too
horny to think straight. Or too
burned out to kick ass when we
really start rolling. Okay?

HENRY

Okay.

GOV. STANTON

What are you doing Thanksgiving?

HENRY

What?

GOV. STANTON

Thanksgiving. You said your mama's
in Beverly Hills so...I thought if
you don't have any plans...

HENRY

I don't.

GOV. STANTON

...you could join Susan and me at
the mansion, meet our son Jackie...

HENRY

I....would...like that.

GOV. STANTON

Good. Come early and we'll throw the ball around. Be nice. Like family.

HENRY

Okay.

GOV. STANTON

And...Henry...the reason I won't take on Ozio is that I just don't want to give that son-of-a-bitch the power to make me the son-of-a-bitch.

EXT. THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION - THANKSGIVING

It is early afternoon, and the day is bathed in a warm golden glow, the shot slightly overcranked.

The Governor, Henry, and his son JACKIE, ten, are throwing a football. Susan stands near the house, watching, smiling.

After several moments, the game stops and father and son walk arm-in-arm toward the house...then Stanton stops, waits for Henry, and puts his other arm around him. When they reach Susan all four of them link arms and walk inside.

CLOSE SHOT - CAMERA PANNING HALF A DOZEN ROASTED TURKEYS

set on long picnic tables, with all the trimmings. The ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL about TWO HUNDRED GUESTS, most of them with the shy manner and ragged clothes of the homeless.

People loll on the grass. A few couples dance to the MUSIC of The Stones coming over the speakers with amazing clarity. Daisy wanders up to Henry and hands him a drink.

DAISY

Peace?

HENRY

Sure.

(looks around)
Lotta people.

DAISY

They're from shelters. Woman's shelters, homeless shelters...

HENRY

No kidding.

DAISY

Yeah. He invites them every year. That's the good news. The bad news

(MORE)

DAISY (cont'd)
is he also invites his friends.
People he's been collecting since
kindergarten so he can bring them
on board when he sails. And some of
them really suck. And she's got
the same problem.

ANGLE - LUCILLE KAUFFMAN, SUSAN

Lucille is wearing a suit, running shoes and aviators.

SUSAN
Henry, Daisy...this is Lucille
Kauffman, an old friend of mine
from New York. We went to law
school together.

LUCILLE
(to Henry)
You're Jack's co-ordinator. Can't
you do something about his ties.
And the color of the campaign
posters. And Arlen Sporken while
you're at it. Christ, if I wasn't
so swamped I'd take a leave of
absence and join the campaign full
time.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE
Lucille!

They turn. Stanton stands there with a thin man in horn-
rimmed glasses, and a yellow and brown argyle knit shirt.

GOV. STANTON
You remember Randy. Henry, this is
Randy Culligan. I gave him his
first job as a law clerk and I gave
him that shirt.

RANDY CULLIGAN
You admit it! Hi, Lucille.

LUCILLE
How could you use all those years
in Jack Stanton's office to become
the hired hand of a supermarket
tabloid.

RANDY CULLIGAN
You never change, do you, Lucille.

AMPLIFIED VOICE
Folks... Can I have your attention...

A short, colorfully dressed woman with very black hair in a
beehive (MAMA STANTON) stands at an impromptu microphone.

Beside her is a round, bald man with an unkempt beard.

MAMA STANTON

Folks, y'all know me--I'm Jackie Stanton's mama. And I want to introduce you to Jackie's oldest friend, Sailorman Shoreson, who fixes it so's we can hear this fine music every Thanksgiving, no charge.

There are whistles and cheers and cries of "Speech"! Sailorman comes shyly to the mike and hugs Mama Stanton.

SAILORMAN

I just want to say I've known Jackie since grade school. We was together in the 60's, he's the only one kept in touch with me when I was in Canada...

ANGLE - HOWARD, RICHARD

HOWARD

Oh, shit...

RICHARD

It woulda come out. Better we know it now.

ANGLE - SAILORMAN

SAILORMAN

...I think he's one of the finest people I ever met and I'd stop a bullet for him, maybe two. So I'm pretty damned lucky he only wants a sound system.

There is laughter. Mama Stanton takes the mike back.

MAMA STANTON

How bout one chorus of You Are My Sunshine in honor of the Southern governors of America.

Richard leaps up beside her. Stanton rises. The three of them lead the crowd in You Are My Sunshine.

ANGLE - HENRY, DAISY - SINGING

A cellular phone begins ringing somewhere...and Daisy looks down, embarrassed, and puts it to her ear.

DAISY

(softly)
Hello? ... Speak up just a little.
... YOU'RE KIDDING! ...
(several guests turn)
Oh, fantastic! Thanks!
(she hangs up and throws
her arms around Henry)
Ozio just dropped out!

The guests, many of whom are now listening, openly, begin talking, spreading the news. The song dies and a cheer begins...that carries us into

EXT. AN AUDITORIUM IN MANCHESTER - DAY

There are clowns and mimes.

A sign over A HOT DOG STAND reads: Rotary Club for Harris--Free Hotdogs.

A SOUND TRUCK with the words Elect Lyndon Larouche circles the street playing Beethoven's Ninth.

MEN AND WOMEN IN BLACK with Operation Fetus on their tee shirts wave dead fetus posters.

A DIXIELAND BAND waves yellow and pink banners saying Nilson for President.

TERRY HICKS PLAYING A BANJO version of You Are My Sunshine carries a sign that says: Stanton's The One!

INT. DEBATE AUDITORIUM

It is a converted mill with the feel of a loft. There is a live audience, half of which are from the media. Standing in the back are Richard, Daisy, Henry, Sporken and Howard.

DAISY

I'm so nervous I'm sick.

HENRY

Any of these guys a problem?

RICHARD

Maybe Lawrence Harris. He's noble and he can't win. It makes Stanton want to kiss his ass.

LAWRENCE HARRIS sits to the side, checking his notes.

DAISY

Charlie Martin?

RICHARD

Goofy. Young. All over the map. No problem.

CHARLIE MARTIN is around Stanton's age. Attractive, easy.

DAISY

And Bart Nilson

RICHARD

The last of the lib-labs. No one'll even bother takin' him on.

BART NILSON is an older man, with a handsome, serious face.

MAN

Gentlemen...

HOWARD

It's time to rock and roll.

MAN

Mr. Martin, let's start with you--Healthcare.

CHARLIE MARTIN

What I want to say about health care is that although it's vital that every man, woman and child be covered, it's also vital...

RICHARD

...that we fart after eating a whole lot of beans or else we'll blow up and look funny...

Henry suddenly stiffens. Sitting in the last row, with a dozen other reporters, is March. She is listening, impassively, taking no notes. Daisy stares at Henry.

DAISY

What did you just see? The ghost of Christmas Past?

RICHARD

Y'all are missing one of the great ass-holes of our time.

DAISY

For God's sake, who are you looking at?

HENRY

No one. Counting the press, that's all.

BART NILSON

...I can remember a time when being a Democrat meant more than just giving welfare recipients a safety net. It meant giving them a ladder.

RICHARD

Perfect. That's what Americans want to hear. More taxes for welfare recipients.

LAWRENCE HARRIS

Well, I say we can't go on spending money this way. We have to shore up the economy..

RICHARD

Oh what a lunkhead. He's actually going to answer him.

BART NILSON

And who are we shoring the economy up for? Your bond-holding fat cats?

RICHARD

Okay, we've got it knocked now. If Stanton just keeps his mouth shut.

And suddenly Stanton is speaking.

GOV. STANTON

Not just the bondholders, Governor Nilson...

DAISY

No! No!
(she squeezes Henry's hand hard)

GOV. STANTON

...A modest but steady reduction in the deficit will be good for all of us.

DAISY

Why is he doing this.

RICHARD

Because he just has to get on the good side of Lawrence Harris.

GOV. STANTON

Working families will have lower mortgage rates, small businesses will be able to borrow money on better terms...

RICHARD

Okay. Not bad. But shut up.

GOV. STANTON

Of course, Governor Nilson does have a point. We do need to provide jobs for those who need--

CHARLIE MARTIN

Hey, Jack, what, if anything, are you against?

There is laughter. Daisy closes her eyes. Richard grabs Henry's shoulder. Henry looks over at March, who sits, pencil poised.

GOV. STANTON

(suddenly furious)

I am against doing nothing while people are suffering. I am against the style of government that says, Wait-things'll get better. Just wait. I am against that kind of patience. I am impatient when it comes to the people you and I--all of us--have seen up here, the folks who worked hard all their lives, did what they were supposed to do and suddenly the bottom drops out. You've seen their eyes, you've heard their stories, Senator Martin. Are you saying we should do nothing to help?

CHARLIE MARTIN

Well, of course not...

RICHARD

Nailed him!

DAISY

Got him!

HOWARD

He's toast.

EXT. DEBATE HALL - NIGHT

There are television lights, confusion...and then a stir of activity as the Stantons and their entourage come out and head for the van.

VOICES

"Over here!"

"Governor! Over here!"

"Governor, would you consider

Lawrence Harris on the ticket?"

"How do you think you did in the debate?, Governor..."

Stanton waves his hand but does not break his stride. They are all almost to the van when a voice calls:

VOICE

Governor! March Cunningham. The Black Advocate. Were you ever arrested during the Vietnam war?

GOV. STANTON

(stopping)

No.

MARCH

You were never arrested in Chicago?

GOV. STANTON

I was accidentally detained during a protest and released if that's what you mean. But the record was expunged.

MARCH

Do you remember how you were released?

GOV. STANTON

They realized it was a mistake, I guess. It was a long time ago.

SPORKEN

We have to go now, sir...

DAISY

This way. Governor...

HENRY

(to Daisy, softly)

Go. I'll meet you.

Daisy nods. The Governor is in the van now and it pulls away before the door is closed. Henry turns to March.

HENRY

Don't do this. He's just starting to pull ahead...

MARCH

Do you know why he was released? Because he called a United States senator to get him out of jail and he persuaded the mayor of Chicago to have his record expunged.

HENRY

So?

MARCH

"So?" You don't care that this guy was already so manipulative in the 60's that he got in bed with the Mayor of Chicago--the same Mayor who busted the protesters at the Democratic convention, the kids who marched with your grandfather...

HENRY

No. I don't care. Stanton was never a radical. He's a politician. He knew he couldn't get elected with a record so he had it expunged.

MARCH

And that's the kind of man you want to work for? A man who just wants to get elected?

HENRY

No. I want to work for a man who fights the good fight and then watch a Republican get elected.

MARCH

What's the difference? Can you tell?

HENRY

Yes. I can tell the difference between a man who believes what I believe and lies about it to get elected, and a man who just doesn't give a fuck. And I'll take the liar.

MARCH

(staring at him)
How did he do this to you?

HENRY

Do what? What are you talking about? Why are you making this guy into the devil? Why don't you, at least, get to know him. Take some time, maybe spend a few days with us here. I miss you, honey, and we could be together...

MARCH

God, I think you'd fuck me to get some good press for Stanton.

He stares at her for a moment...then turns and walks off.

INT. DAISY'S HOTEL ROOM - AROUT TWO A.M. - RICHARD, DAISY

The door is ajar and they are talking in a sleepless agitated way. Henry slams in.

HENRY

We're in trouble.

DAISY

That bitch! What did she say?

HENRY

(turning on her)

Why is she a bitch? She could've published it without checking. She could've asked the question in front of everyone. I thought she was pretty damned fair.

Daisy's eyes widen...then narrow with realization.

RICHARD

We're fucking flying blind here. We don't know shit. And they're all gonna be comin' after us now. I mean, d'ja see any other president up there on the stage tonight? We're it, man. We're the ball game. Every fuckin flea that ever nipped his ass is gonna want a piece of us, y'knowwhattamean? Gonna be the war thing, the drug thing, the woman thing--that's gonna be the killer. You gotta talk to him.

(X)

HENRY

Me? You're the strategy guy.

RICHARD

Yeah, but you're the body man.

DAISY

Maybe we can talk to Susan.

RICHARD

Are you out of your fucking mind? "Listen, Mrs. Stanton, we have to find out who the governor's been plugging so we can have spin control."

DAISY

Well, then lets quit. If every-one's going to take a bite out of him and we're not going to say anything, let's go work for someone we're not too chicken-shit to protect.

There is a pause.

RICHARD
Alright. We'll set up a meeting.

DAISY
Him or her?

HENRY, RICHARD: UNISON
Her!

RICHARD
(he closes his eyes)
Man, this is going to be tough.

INT. A DINER - MANCHESTER - NIGHT

It is a coffee and hamburger joint, empty at this late hour. Richard, Daisy and Henry sit at a table in the back...facing Susan and Lucille.

SUSAN
So? What's the crisis?

RICHARD
(eyeing Lucille)
It's campaign business. Private.

LUCILLE
Oh, Please! If it's not too private for you...

SUSAN
Lucille is one of my closest friends and part of this campaign. What's the crisis?

There is a pause. Richard swallows...then rises and begins pacing carefully around the table.

RICHARD
Say you're out in the woods, takin' a shit, and a wild boar comes chargin' at you.
(they stare at him; he paces back the other way)
Do you pull up your pants and run? Or do you try to pull up your pants and grab those doves you just shot, and then try to run, all at the same time? Or do you forget the fucking doves and just pull up your pants and run 'cause you don' have time to aim and button your fly. And, if you miss, you don't want to die with your dick hangin' out. Y'knowhattamean?

SUSAN

I think I speak for everyone at the table when I say "no."

RICHARD

Well, I mean...say, you ain't prepared for the boar, and you're caught with your pants down and y'all lose the doves...

DAISY

I think what Richard is saying is if you're caught in the forest with your pants down...

LUCILLE

Don't give us the taking-a-shit-in-the-woods metaphor again. Tell us what you're talking about.

RICHARD

Say this boar is part of a pack of other boars...

LUCILLE

I don't believe this.

SUSAN

Who do the boars represent? The Republicans?

HENRY

The press.

LUCILLE

The press?

HENRY

Yes...

(to Richard)

Don't they?

RICHARD

Yeah. The press. Now we're dealing with these wild boars--and suddenly they're saying things like "marijuana"... "Chicago"... maybe a woman comes forward and says--

LUCILLE

Bullshit! That's not going to happen.

RICHARD

Right.

DAISY

Absolutely not.

RICHARD

I don't think so either. But--
I'm just trying to figure this out
now--if it did happen he ain't
gonna get trapped like Hart, cause
we know the rules. If some bimbo
from a former life comes forward,
we just say--Bullshit.

LUCILLE

Bullshit is right. I don't know
why you're even talking about
this...

SUSAN

(cutting Lucille off)
So what are you suggesting we do?
How would you deal with it?

DAISY

By knowing more than they do. By
being prepared so when a story like
Chicago turns up we can strike
back--with the truth.

LUCILLE

Well, that's impossible. How can
you know what kind of garbage
they're going to come up with?

RICHARD

That's the point, Lucille.
That's the whole ever-fucking
point. We got to hire an
operative to do research. Y'know?
We need someone who can--

SUSAN

Investigate our lives?

RICHARD

Investigate everything. Everything
anyone can make an allegation
about.

LUCILLE

That's ridiculous. We don't play
that game. That's the media's
game. We play the people's game. We
say to them: The media and the
Republicans want the election to be
about trash. We want it to be
about your future. We don't shoot
doves in this campaign, Richard. We
protect them.

RICHARD

What do you mean?

LUCILLE

Well, we...don't the doves
represent the people?

RICHARD

No.

LUCILLE

Then I don't understand who the
doves are.

SUSAN

Forget the doves. Henry, you agree
with this?

HENRY

Yes.

SUSAN

(after a moment)

Okay. We'll do it. I'll tell the
governor. I want Libby Holden.

LUCILLE

Oh, my God!

SUSAN

If we're going to get someone to
dig around and find the dirt, it
has to be someone who knows us.
Someone we trust completely.

LUCILLE

But she's...is she out of the
hospital?

SUSAN

Yes.

LUCILLE

And she's, y'know, okay now?

HENRY

Who is she?

SUSAN

She was Jack's chief of staff in
his second campaign twenty years
ago. She had a breakdown.

LUCILLE

I mean, she just, suddenly, became
incoherent in the middle of a press
conference. It was awful. She's
been in and out of mental hospitals
for years.

SUSAN

She seems very stable now. She's been back in Mammoth Falls for eighteen months. You and Henry can fly back tomorrow and brief her.

RICHARD

Well...it's good...that she's stable.

(a tiny pause)

Because, y'know, you're kind of putting the campaign in her hands.

SUSAN

Yes. I know.

RICHARD

Well.....good.

LUCILLE

(suddenly)

Then are we the doves?

SUSAN

Lucille...

RICHARD

No. No. I think we're the ones taking the shit in the woods.

INT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - MAMMOTH FALLS

Buzzing, filled with staffers, bursting with young volunteers. Ella-Louise, her orange hair now in a business-like updo, walks beside Henry and Lucille, chatting away. (X)

ANOTHER WOMAN

...I'm just thrilled, thrilled y'all came back, Henry...

LUCILLE

Shouldn't there be more posters up? And why is the poster outside faded?

TERRY HICKS

Hey, Henry! How ya doin', man?

He is handing piles of leaflets to new volunteers. At the table next to him, Jennifer is instructing two girls.

JENNIFER ROGERS

...never call them secretaries. Always call them assistants...

TERRY HICKS

Jennifer, look who's back!

Jennifer turns, then throws her arms around Henry with a cry. Lucille stiffens. Peter Goldsmith comes up and holds out his hand. He is wearing a yamalke.

PETER GOLDSMITH

Sholom.

LUCILLE

You're working on Friday and
wearing a yamalke?

PETER GOLDSMITH

Actually, I'm dressed for work.
How'ya doing, H.B.?

VOICE

I'm HERE. Who's talking to me?

Several heads turn. A large woman (OLIVIA HOLDEN) wearing a tan down vest, an orange-and-green tie-dyed muumuu and an Aussie outback hat stands near the front of the room. Her eyes are blue, piercing. Her hair is turning gray, and she is lugging a large leather satchel.

HENRY

Miss Holden? I'm Henry Burton.

LIBBY

Ah-HAH!

ANOTHER WOMAN

Ella-Louise Harriman.

LIBBY

Ah-HAH. .

LUCILLE

Hello, Lib.

LIBBY

Hello, shit for brains. You learned
how to watch your mouth yet? I
will not let you fuck up this
campaign, too! I WILL NOT LET IT
HAPPEN!

The entire room is now watching, frozen. Lucille shrinks back.

LUCILLE

That was twenty years ago.

LIBBY

Yes. I was thinner then. I had a
waist. WHERE IS THIS HAPPENING?

ANOTHER WOMAN

What?

LIBBY
The fucking meeting!

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE

Lucille and Henry are perched on chairs. Libby is perched on Henry's desk.

LIBBY
I will need a house. I know the house. Little. Nice rose garden--call Becky Raymond, 6734982--tell her it's for the governor. She'll know what you mean. Now, staff.

She opens the door slightly and points to Jennifer Rogers, now at the copying machine.

LIBBY
I want THAT one, the one who looks like Winona Ryder--gorgeous. Is she smart?

HENRY
She's smart.

LIBBY
Okay, I want her as soon as the meeting's over. Now Chicago. I need Chicago.

HENRY
A reporter for The Black Advocate dug up the governor's arrest...

LUCILLE
We're not going to be able to stop it...

LIBBY
Why stop it? It's a paper trail. Life's too short and Chicago's not that important. Not half as important as Cashmere McLeod.

HENRY
Who?

LIBBY
Boy, you really don't know shit, do you?

LUCILLE
You mean Susan's hairdresser?

LIBBY
And Jack's porkpie.

HENRY

WHAT?

(his voice breaks, like a
13 year old)

LIBBY

Oh, for Chrissake, whoever-you-are!
Act your age! Jack Stanton fucks
around. And he's got enemies.

HENRY

But what...Susan's hairdresser? Is
that...what can she do to us?

LIBBY

She can sell her story to the
National Flash for a hundred and
seventy-five thousand minus the ten
percent she's giving to the slime-
sucking, down-on-his-luck, shit-on-
his-shoes, night-school attorney--
attorney, HAH!--who's agenting the
deal for her.

HENRY

You know this?

LIBBY

No, I IMAGINED IT IN THE BOOBY
HATCH!

LUCILLE

(after a moment)
It's bullshit.

LIBBY

In your dreams, sweetheart.

LUCILLE

She can't hurt us. She's selling a
story. She has no proof. She has no
credibility. It's bullshit.

LIBBY

She's the tip of the iceberg. Our
Jackie has done some pretty stupid
things in his life. He's poked his
pecker in some sorry trash bins. We
gotta stop them before they stop
us. We gotta CRUSH 'EM, then sweep
'em up. From now on, you can call
me THE DUSTBUSTER!

(she takes Henry's chin
in her hands)

You know, honeychile, I'm stronger
than dirt.

HENRY
(without moving his chin)
I believe you.

EXT. AIRPORT ROAD - NEW HAMPSHIRE - DAISY'S YELLOW FORD -
DRIVING

(X)

DAISY'S VOICE
We could offer her two hundred
thousand not to print it...

RICHARD'S VOICE
And then kill her to make sure?

INT. YELLOW FORD

Daisy at the wheel. Henry and Richard sit beside her.

HENRY
Look, the important thing is he
didn't do anything wrong and he has
nothing to be defensive about.

RICHARD
He should act pissed.

HENRY
But not too pissed. He's running
for president.

DAISY
Right. It's more "Well, it's too
bad, but we don't take it
seriously."

BLACK SCREEN

A wedge of light illuminates it, then there is the sound of
a door and it is dark again.

RICHARD
...it's really more like "this
ain't nearly as frightening as
things that happen to real people,
like losin' your job, gettin' fore-
closed'..."

DAISY
Where the fuck is the light?

HENRY
I'm looking for it.

RICHARD
It's like "Shit happens. But we're
calm in a shitstorm."

There is a click and the lights go on in HENRY'S MOTEL ROOM. Daisy sinks into a chair. Henry falls on the bed.

RICHARD

(lying down beside Henry)
Or maybe it's more "Well, we expected this kind of crap to happen."

(X)

DAISY

Right. The usual media trashbash.

RICHARD

But why did he do it? Did he figure Cashmere McLeod would be so fucking honored that she'd never betray the secret?

HENRY

Hey--we don't even know it's true.

DAISY

What difference does it make?

HENRY

Well...it would be better if it wasn't true.

DAISY

Why? They say Adolph Hitler never looked at another woman after Eva Braun. Does that make him better than Stanton? Or Roosevelt? Or Jefferson? Or Kennedy? Or any of the guys we wish we'd worked for who fucked around on the side?

RICHARD

But that's not the official line for interviews.

DAISY

No, no. Of course not.

CLOSE SHOT - TELEVISION SCREEN - A NEWSCASTER

(X)

ANNOUNCER-ON TV

...the story, as yet unconfirmed, appeared today in the National Flash. There has been no statement yet from the Senator regarding the young woman, Cashmere McLeod...

There is a CLOSE SHOT of CASHMERE MCLEOD from the Flash.

Dark-haired, vulgar. The headline: The Happy Hairdresser is plainly visible beneath the photo.

ANNOUNCER-ON TV
 ...but the accusation, coming right
 after the disclosure of Governor
 Stanton's 1974 arrest in Chicago...

LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - MANCHESTER INN

Howard Ferguson, Lucille, Richard, Henry, Daisy, Arlen
 Sporken, and Susan sit watching the TV.

RICHARD
 Fuckin' Eyewitness News.

DAISY
 Ted Koppel wants someone from the
 team for Nightline.

ARLEN SPORKEN
 And 60 Minutes wants us for Sunday
 night, Brinkley wants us for Sunday
 morning...

As the ANGLE continues to WIDEN we see newspapers, faxes,
 empty Diet Cokes, empty Dunkin' Donuts boxes, and litter.
 Everyone in the room looks rumpled and sleepless--except
 Susan, who wears a new, sleek hairdo and an Armani blazer.

LUCILLE
 Do we just have to take this?
 They're going to dignify this
 garbage, treat it like a real
 story--and we have to go along with
 that?

RICHARD
 Well, we can't ignore it. I mean,
 they mighta given him Chicago, 25
 years ago and all--and they mighta
 given him Cashmere, she's sellin' a
 story and all--but the two right on
 top of each other? Y'knowhattamean?
 Everyone starts askin' "do we
 really want a former revolutionary
 who messes around with hairdr--"

He breaks off. The room is silent. Susan suddenly leans
 forward, her eyes blazing.

SUSAN
 He did not fuck Cashmere McLeod.
 (they look down; they
 look away)
 If you can't handle that simple
 fact, you can leave right now.
 (there is a pause; no one
 moves)
 All right. Now let's think this
 through...

As they speak Henry walks to the window and looks out...

SUSAN'S VOICE
...Who has thoughts about Sixty
Minutes?

HENRY'S POV - DUNKIN DONUTS COFFEE SHOP

It is across the parking lot, a glass enclosed, fluorescent-lit bubble, empty except for a single customer being served by a single waiter.

SPORKEN'S VOICE
I think it's very important that
you project a soft, feminine image.
I'd change the hairdo...

The CAMERA begins pushing in toward the coffee shop and the VOICES FADE and are overtaken by a COUNTRY SONG on a jukebox. As the shot DISSOLVES THROUGH

INT. DUNKIN' DONUTS COFFEE SHOP

we see that it is Stanton who sits there alone, red-eyed, talking to the waiter. He looks up as Henry walks into the shot.

HENRY
Hello, Governor.

GOV. STANTON
Henry, my man. Sit down. Have
some coffee.

HENRY
(sitting)
Going to get some sleep tonight?

GOV. STANTON
Absolutely. Don't you worry about
me. Just running some ideas by
Danny.

(he indicates the waiter)
Danny Scanlon--like you to meet my
friend Henry Burton.

DANNY SCANLON, the waiter, limps over. He is about 20, perhaps younger, with just enough physical impairment to officially be called "crippled".

DANNY SCANLON
(with a slight slur)
Hi. Can I get you something Mr.
Burton? Apple fritter?

HENRY
No, thanks.

GOV. STANTON

Danny works here every night.
Twelve hour shift. Makes
five-twenty-five an hour.

DANNY SCANLON

But like I was saying to the
Governor, I don't mind. I would
mind if I couldn't work. How
about an apple fritter?

HENRY

Not for me.

GOV. STANTON

What's the best game you saw all
year Danny? College not pro.

DANNY SCANLON

Utah State versus San Diego State.

GOV. STANTON

That was great, wasn't it? I saw
that. Great ground game.

DANNY SCANLON

Yeah. You got to have a good
ground game. Apple fritter?

HENRY

No, I...

GOV. STANTON

Thanks, Danny. Just one.

Danny limps away. Stanton takes a swig of coffee.

HENRY

You look very tired, Governor.
Maybe it's time to go home.

GOV. STANTON

(shakes his head)
They're going to kill me with
trash, Henry.

HENRY

Not if you don't let them.

GOV. STANTON

It's my fault. It's my own god-damn
fault.

(he bows his head)
I didn't keep it together.

HENRY

Look, you can't stop a woman from trying to get rich. We can still win this thing. We're going to win it. We just have to get over this rough patch. The... the hits you're taking are nothing compared to what average folks are going through, losing their jobs, getting foreclosed.

(X)

(Stanton looks up)

Keep that in your mind. Keep the folks in your mind.

GOV. STANTON

Yes. It's about them, isn't it?

HENRY

It's about them. It's about history.

GOV. STANTON

You know, that's truer for Susan than for me. I think for me it's more about them. This boy Danny Scanlon? Worked since he was fourteen, couldn't get insurance, couldn't get his leg fixed right, doesn't complain, never done any harm, achin' to do good... God, if you let a boy like that go down you don't deserve to take up space on the planet, do you?

HENRY

We won't let him go down.

CLOSE SHOT - TELEVISION SCREEN -GARY HART IN 1987

overwhelmed by reporters. Over it the voice of Ted Koppel

KOPPEL'S VOICE

Is this the sort of feeding frenzy that Jack Stanton will be facing now?

The ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL the

STANTON SUITE - MANCHESTER MOTEL

Camera pans the faces of Richard, Daisy, Howard, Henry, Susan, Lucille...as Koppel continues O.S.

KOPPEL'S VOICE

Is it possible for any candidate to survive this sort of treatment? Is it fair?

RICHARD

See, Koppel's no scumbag gossip reporter, he's a media analyst. He ain't reporting the trash, he's just reporting on how other people are reporting the trash...

KOPPEL'S VOICE

We'll be joined by top Stanton adviser, Arlen Sporken, and the media critic for The New Yorker. Mr. Sporken what is the difference, if any, between the Gary Hart fiasco and what's happening to Jack Stanton.

ANGLE - SPORKEN ON TV

ARLEN SPORKEN

Well, Ted, unlike Gary Hart there's no evidence that the governor actually...uh...did anything...

(X)

ANGLE - THE ROOM

RICHARD

WORK FOR US, YOU DORK!

DAISY

He should be outraged at Koppel for legitimizing this...

(X)

KOPPEL'S VOICE

Does anyone ever survive one of these feeding frenzies?

NEW YORKER CRITIC-ON TV

Well, if they've been around awhile--~~maybe~~. But this is the first thing most people will hear about Jack Stanton. You've got to figure he's history.

Richard, suddenly, kicks over a chair. Henry looks out the window, across the parking lot...

POV - DUNKIN DONUTS COFFEE SHOP

lit, almost empty. The tiny figure of Stanton is just walking in. Danny Scanlon limps quickly over to him. They stand talking, animated, as if they were alone in the world.

INT. HENRY'S MOTEL ROOM

It is 2:28, digital time. In the faint red glow of the clock, Henry and Daisy are visible in bed. He is holding her, she is weeping on his chest.

DAISY
I'm getting your chest all wet.

HENRY
I know. Thank you

DAISY
(she stifles a sob)
It's not over yet, right? They'll
be on Brinkley tomorrow, they'll
have a chance....

HENRY
That's right.
(he strokes her hair)
That's right...
(he pulls her closer)

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING - SUNRISE

Henry and Daisy are asleep, naked, in each other arms, the sheet intricately twisted around them. The phone suddenly shrills, shattering the silence. Henry's eyes fly open,

HENRY
(into phone; softly)
Yeah?

LIBBY'S VOICE
BUMMMMMMMER! BUMMMMMERR!

HENRY
(glancing at the clock)
Libby?

LIBBY'S VOICE
She's got tapes.

HENRY
Who's got tapes?

LIBBY'S VOICE
Cashmere, the hairslut, you MORON.
She's going to play them at her
press conference tomorrow. I do not
have TIME for INEPTITUDE. Now, go
tell Jack and Susan the cunt's got
tapes, then get your ass back to
Mammoth Falls.

EXT. MANCHESTER INN - EARLY MORNING

Nothing is stirring. Henry stands outside a door on the second floor, knocking.

INT. STANTON SUITE - SUSAN

opens the door and sees Henry. She has on a Chanel suit, full make-up and no shoes. Her hair is now fluffed around her face. Stanton is in his shirt and trousers, holding a tie, and moving toward her.

SUSAN

Come on in.

GOV. STANTON

Hey, Henry.

(to Susan)

Is this tie okay?

SUSAN

Oh, honey--maybe not one with such big flowers. And maybe not a pink shirt.

(to Henry)

Can your news wait until we make this really momentous decision?

HENRY

No. Governor, I was just on the phone with Libby. She says that Cashmere McLeod has tape recordings of you and her talking on the phone, and she's going to play them at a press conference tomorrow.

There is a frozen moment...and then Susan turns and slaps Stanton across the face. His hand goes up and he massages his cheek, silently. She turns away.

GOV. STANTON

I'm sorry.

SUSAN

How bad?

GOV. STANTON

I don't know.

SUSAN

Did you tell her you...

(she breaks off)

Henry, could you excuse us, please?

INT. AIRPORT BAR - NEW HAMPSHIRE

filled with passengers, passing the time until their plane is called. The TELEVISION is tuned to the Brinkley show.

ON THE SCREEN - A 2/SHOT OF JACK AND SUSAN

Jack is now wearing a white shirt and a somber blue tie.

GOV. STANTON - ON TV

...Yeah, it's cold here, David, but these are friendly people, reminds me a lot of home

A WOMAN

I like her hair that way. It softens her face.

ANOTHER WOMAN

Yes. It could be shorter though.

GOV. STANTON - ON TV

...I think if you hung out with us for a day, you'd see that what the folks are really interested in is the future, what we're proposing to do about jobs and education and--

ANOTHER WOMAN

He's gotten fat.

A MAN

Yeah. And he jogs. Can you imagine how much he eats?

ANOTHER MAN

Can you imagine what he eats?

A few of the men laugh.

GOV. STANTON - ON TV

...Well, yes, Will, I was against the war. But I never broke the law. I wasn't even officially arrested....

A WOMAN

What's he governor of again?

A MAN

Let's see...not Georgia...not Florida...

GOV. STANTON - ON TV

Now, Sam, I'm not gonna dignify that trash--and I'm disappointed that at a time when the American people have an awful lot they're concerned about, and want to talk about, that we'd be distracted by--

A MAN

I saw a picture of the hairdresser. Not bad.

A WOMAN

But very hard looking. Her hair is really unbecoming.

ANOTHER WOMAN

Can you imagine having everyone know your husband slept with your hairdresser...

GOV. STANTON - ON TV

It never happened. It's not true. We did have some tough times in our marriage, but we worked our way through it...

Susan suddenly puts her hand in Stanton's.

SUSAN - ON TV

I don't think this is fair. People suffer and struggle and go through all sorts of crazy things--the important thing is we're still here. And if you want to draw a political lesson from that about Jack Stanton's character--here it is. He will stick. He will work through the tough times. He will wake up every morning and bust his butt for the American people.

(X)

A WOMAN

"Bust his butt"! The mouth on her.

ANOTHER WOMAN

He should just take her in hand.

A MAN

Yeah, but she's honest. They had tough times. Maybe that's when he screwed the hairdresser...

The cellular phone in Henry's pocket rings...and he answers it as several pair of eyes turn to him.

HENRY

(softly into the phone)

Yes.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH - TV STATION - DAISY

sits holding a phone and watching the Stanton's through the glass. They are still sitting hand-in-hand.

DAISY

Are you watching it? It's just going off now...

IN THE STUDIO, Susan pulls her hand away from Jack.

DAISY
 ...and it's over. How'd it play
 where you are? Wasn't she
 fantastic?

INT. AIRPORT BAR

HENRY
 Great. But they'd like to see her
 hair a little shorter.

EXT. PLANE LANDING AT MAMMOTH FALLS

Henry disembarks, yawning, bleary-eyed.

EXT. WHITE CLAPBOARD HOUSE - MAMMOTH FALLS

Henry's rental car pulls up to the house and he gets out and
 walks past the little rose garden to the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

charmingly furnished and filled with papers and equipment:
 newspapers, files, a computer, a printer, a fax machine...
 Jennifer Rogers is hunched over a microfilm viewer rolling
 old Mammoth Falls Gazettes and taking notes. She looks up
 as Libby leads Henry in.

JENNIFER
 Hey! Henry! Hey! You want
 something? Tea? Coffee? Water?

LIBBY
 No time. Gotta move our butts--
 gotta get to Sailor's, and watch
 ol' Cashmere with an expert.

She puts on her outback hat, throws an arm around Jennifer
 and gives her a long, soulful kiss on the mouth. Jennifer
 smiles at Henry, blushes.

LIBBY
 (tenderly)
 You take care of yourself now,
 dear. I'll be home for dinner.
 (to Henry)
 We'll take my car.

EXT. ROAD - RED JEEP CHEROKEE - DRIVING

O.S. we hear the car radio: someone singing a country tune.

VOICE
 "Please, Mr. please,
 Don't play B-17,
 It was our song, it was her song,
 But it's o-o-ver..."...

INT. RED CHEROKEE

Libby at the wheel. Henry beside her.

HENRY

So you met Jack and Susan in Florida, working for McGovern?

LIBBY

Yep.

HENRY

What were they like?

LIBBY

Glorious. Golden, golden.

HENRY

Did they...

LIBBY

Henry, don't you have any respect for the music?

EXT. A ROAD THROUGH THE WOODS - THE RED CHEROKEE - DRIVING

In the distance is what appears to be a cinder-block wall in the forest, whitewashed, with small cameras and wire on the top. There is an ornate wrought-iron gate at the entrance.

The red Cherokee stops in front of the gate, Libby rolls down the window and yells into a speaker box in the ground.

LIBBY

Telegram for Leon Trotsky, you DIMWIT.

The gates swing open.

EXT. A LARGE CABIN - SAILORMAN

stands there, looking just as he did at the Thanksgiving Dinner, blue jeans, bald, long unkempt beard.

SAILORMAN

Libby--good to see you, girl. How was the booby hatch?

LIBBY

A better class of drugs than the old days.

They laugh.

INT. CABIN

A cross between a radio station and a recording studio: dials, levers, big screen T.V., multiple monitors.

HENRY

What a set-up.

SAILORMAN

The world of electronics.
(glancing at his watch)
She's just about on.

(X)

He flicks on the monitors.

TV SCREEN - FULL SHOT - NEW YORK HOTEL BALLROOM

It is a zoo. There are about 200 reporters and 40 camera crews.

2/SHOT CASHMERE MCLEOD, HER LAWYER

The lawyer is wearing a dark jacket. Cashmere Mcleod has on a black suit and too much make-up. She is mostly breasts and legs, abruptly short but sexy in sections.

(X)

LIBBY

I know just what she looked like in school.

CASHMERE-ON TV

(in a tiny, little voice)
Governor Jack Stanton see-dyuced me.

There are clicks and flashes.

SAILORMAN

Judy Holliday.

CASHMERE-ON TV

And I can prove it. I have tapes.

There are gasps, bedlam. More clicks and flashes.

THE LAWYER-ON TV

I am Sherman Presley, Miss McLeod's attorney. I want to make clear that there will be no questions after the tape. This will not be an inquisition.

HENRY

Right. We get the inquisition.

THE LAWYER-ON TV

The tapes were recorded on Miss Mcleod's phone machine. The portion we are about to play was recorded just before Thanksgiving.

The crackly, distant voice of Jack Stanton--and the very

clear voice of Cashmere McLeod--are heard. Cashmere dabs at her eyes as the tape plays.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

I'm on my way back to meet with the family...

(crackling)

CASHMERE'S VOICE

But you said you loved me. You said no one could do the things I did to you. I could come up there.

LIBBY

God, what a whiny bitch.

SAILORMAN

Shhhh...

CASHMERE'S VOICE

Remember that time you had me meet you in Dallas? Ahh, I get hot just thinkin' about it.

HENRY

My God.

There are CUTS TO NEWSMEN, their faces genuinely shocked.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

... so what you doin' tonight...?

CASHMERE'S VOICE

Nothin' now that you're leavin'.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

... Stay at home and crack open a bottle of Chablis...? You think it's at all possible to get..... laid tonight?

CASHMERE'S VOICE

I'd say it's entirely possible if you postpone that trip.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

I'm....too horny to think straight.

CASHMERE'S VOICE

I can take care of that. What about your wife, sugar?

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

We're doin' okay, dontchathink?...

The tape stops. There is a surge of voices.

THE LAWYER-ON TV

We hope that this tape will demonstrate that Miss Mcleod's statements are factual and...

Sailorman turns off the the sound. Henry sits frowning, his eyes narrow and distant. Libby turns to Sailorman.

LIBBY

Well? Is it his voice?

SAILORMAN

Can't say for sure. It sounds real, but he was calling from a cellular, which immediately makes it suspicious. And there were a couple of abrupt cutoffs. Let's replay it.

LIBBY

I'm gonna kill him. How could he be so DUMB? How could he be so completely fucking fucked-up stupid?

The high pitched gibberish of tape in reverse stops, then...

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

I'm on my way back to meet with the family...

(crackling)

SAILORMAN

That's a pretty abrupt cutout.

CASHMERE'S VOICE

But you said you loved me. You said no one could do the things I did to you. Remember that time you had me meet you in Dallas. Ahhh, I get hot just thinkin' about it.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

....so what you doin' tonight?

SAILORMAN

Picked up in midsentence, I think. At least, it's possible.

CASHMERE'S VOICE

Nothin' now that you're leavin'.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

... Stay at home and crack open a bottle of Chablis...? You think it's at all possible to get..... laid tonight?

SAILORMAN

The breakup in the middle might be cellular static, or they might have used it to cover.

HENRY

Wait a second. Wait a goddamn second. Play that line again.

A whir and then:

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

You think it's at all possible to get.....laid tonight?

HENRY

Again.

LIBBY

What?

HENRY

AGAIN, dammit.

Another whir:

GOV. STANTON

You think it's at all possible to get.....laid tonight?

HENRY

Yourself. Yourself.

LIBBY

HELLO? You're not cracking up, are you? Because two of us would be one two many.

HENRY

Un-fucking-believable. You think it's at all possible to get YOURSELF laid tonight! Me! He was talking to me! He said he didn't want me to be too horny to think. It was just before Thanksgiving. Again--from the top. Just his lines. One at a time.

LIBBY

Shit!

A whir...and the tape goes forward again.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

I'm on my way back to meet with the family...

(crackling)

HENRY

There was an accident. A bender
back in Mammoth Falls. He said he
was on his way back to meet with
the families. Go. Next line. His.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

...so what you doin' tonight...?

HENRY

Abrupt cutout, right?

SAILORMAN

Yeah.

HENRY

He said "What you doin' tonight,
Henry." I remember he called me
Henry. I remember that whole
fucking call--it meant so much to
me. Jesus Christ, we got her!

(X)

LIBBY

You got her. WE don't. How do we
prove it?

HENRY

(after a stunned moment)

Oh, no. Oh, NO! They can't get
away with this, Libby. This can't
be a world that lets them get away
with it.

LIBBY

Oh, my. Imagine a black boy saying
that. What a privileged fucking
life you've had. But never mind
the world, baby. I won't let
them get away with it. I WILL FIND
A WAY. Put a call into the boss,
Henry. Sailor, I can get a lead on
where Koppel will be this week-end.
Can you nail the conversations on
his cellular?

SAILORMAN

I'd have to rent a van, track
him...

LIBBY

Good. Let's go, Henry. We got to
change the world now.

EXT. A ROAD - THE RED CHEROKEE - DRIVING

Country music on the radio and Henry's voice over the shot.

HENRY'S VOICE

... Yes, right off the cellular phone. I recognized it almost immediately.

INSIDE THE CAR

Libby driving. Henry with a cellular phone to his ear.

HENRY

...You've got to be much more careful. We can't...

LIBBY

Give me that.

(she tears away and speaks into it)

You ASSHOLE! ... Don't pull that outraged puppy shit with me. It's not like you've suddenly become an innocent because the tape is phoney. God, I wish we'd castrated you when we had the chance.

HENRY

Libby! You're talking on a cellular phone.

LIBBY

OH SHIT. ... Yes, I'm goddamned sure I know who did it. Yes. I'll get it done. Okay. 'Bye.
(she hangs up)

(X)

HENRY

You know who did it?

LIBBY

Oh, yes. Oh, yes, indeedy.

EXT. THE RED CHEROKEE

racing along at illegal speeds down the road, a country song accompanying them on the radio. The car screeches off the road at an exit marked CRANFORD.

HENRY'S VOICE

Where are we going?--if we live.

LIBBY'S VOICE

No QUESTIONS, Henry. Faith or nothing. Faith.

EXT. A RUNDOWN NEIGHBORHOOD IN DOWNTON MAMMOTH FALLS

The car turns into it, driving past large old homes--rooming houses, now--and vacant lots...then squealing to a stop in front of a plantation-style house with peeling white paint.

INT. CAR

Libby is checking her satchel. Henry sits dazed.

LIBBY

I am about to do something crazy.
If it backfires, I can plead non
composwhatsis. And you can say you
had no idea, since I'm not going to
tell you. But still, you might find
yourself in an awkward position--so
I will understand if you don't come
in with me.

HENRY

Let me answer you as my grandfather
would...

(he opens the door)

Let's go.

EXT. AN OUTSIDE STAIRWAY IN BACK - HENRY, LIBBY

quietly climbing the stairs, Libby in front. She stops in
front of a door that says: LAW OFFICES OF RANDOLPH, MARTIN
AND CULLIGAN.

She knocks. There is no answer. She raises her foot and
kicks the door in. Henry swallows.

INT. OFFICE - RANDY CULLIGAN

leaps up from behind his desk, still holding the phone. He
is wearing the argyle shirt we saw him in at Stanton's
Thanksgiving party. The office is tiny, with plywood
paneling, fluorescent lights, and pictures of Randy and Jack
Stanton shaking hands.

RANDY CULLIGAN

What the--

LIBBY

A triumphant day, huh Randy?
Perhaps your best ever! Is that
Cashmere on the line? Oh, let me
say hi.

(X)

RANDY CULLIGAN

No, it's not. It's... not.

LIBBY

Say good-bye to Sherman Presley,
then. We've got business.

She sits down in one of the folding chairs in front of
Culligan's desk. Henry sits gingerly in the other. Randy
hangs up.

RANDY CULLIGAN
It's not Sherman...Presley...
whoever he is.

LIBBY
Well, Randy. You've branched out.
Electronics, now?

RANDY CULLIGAN
I don't know what you--

LIBBY
You've been recording your friend
the governor's private
conversations, haven't you? (X)

RANDY CULLIGAN
What are you... Are you... Come
on! Why would I do that? I'm a
big Stanton supporter. Always have
been. He's putting this state right
on the map.

LIBBY
You know, I've only been here
twenty seconds and you've already
exhausted my patience. (X)

She reaches into her satchel and pulls out a very long,
iron-black, magnum and puts it in her lap.

LIBBY
I'm going to want a signed
confession.

RANDY CULLIGAN
Libby, put that thing away before
you do something stupid and get
yourself into trouble.

She stands up, puts her arms straight out and together, and
points the gun right at his face. (X)

LIBBY
Randy, you wet fart of a human
turd, you ambushed Jack Stanton and
you're gonna admit it, or you're
gonna die.

RANDY CULLIGAN
Libby, you're crazy!

LIBBY
CERTI-FUCKIN'-FIABLY! At last--a
fact!

RANDY CULLIGAN

(to Henry)
You'll go to jail too.

HENRY

I don't know anything about this.

LIBBY

He's shocked. He had no idea. Now, Randy, you gonna write this out in longhand?

RANDY CULLIGAN

I... I don't know what you're talking about.

LIBBY

ENOUGH!

(X)

She moves, with astonishing speed around the desk, gets behind Culligan and puts a choke hold on him with her left arm, pointing the gun straight down at his crotch.

LIBBY

You know what? I'm gonna shoot your NUTS off.

She crushes his head between her breasts, as though they were earmuffs. He screams.

LIBBY

Yes! I'm a gay lesbian woman. I do not mythologize the male sexual organ. Why not?

She jams the pistol into his crotch. He screams again.

LIBBY

Now, now, now. You TINY SCUMBAG, I know you did it. You're on retainer to the Flash, I KNOW that--and you, stupid little shit, you couldn't just make do with the crap Jack actually did, you had to EMBELLISH it. Well, mister--YOU ARE ABOUT TO BECOME MRS.

RANDY CULLIGAN

(hoarsely)
Libby...

She yanks his neck. He gags.

LIBBY

You have a choice to make, and very quickly. You're going to have to decide: just how crazy is Libby?
(MORE)

(X)

LIBBY (cont'd)
And you're going to have to do it
now. One... two... Oh, this is
gonna be fun.

(there is a click)

RANDY CULLIGAN
Okay. Okay, okayokay.

LIBBY
Very good, very wise.

She loosens her grip and moves the gun from his crotch to
his head.

LIBBY
Now I want you to be eloquent about
this letter you're about to write,
and penitent. I want you to be
guilt-ridden about your jealousy
and greed. You could not live with
yourself if you deprived America of
this man.

INT. RED CHEROKEE

Libby at the wheel. A folded piece of paper peeks out of
her pocket. Henry sits staring straight ahead. His lips
sag, numbly. He is barely blinking.

LIBBY
The willingness to be violent is a
force multiplier. That's the reason
the Mafia has been so successful
over the years. Those boys are just
like everyone else, except they're
willing to be violent.

(she pats the letter in
her pocket)

Now all we have to do is wait for
Sailorman to hook up to Ted
Koppel's cellular.

INT. STANTON HOTEL SUITE

Henry, Jack, Susan, Richard, Arlen, Howard...everyone except
Daisy. The familiar Nightline theme is heard.

KOPPEL'S VOICE
Tonight--an aide of Governor Jack
Stanton's who has asked to play a
tape for us.

CLOSE SHOT- DAISY ON T.V.

DAISY

Right. And I think you're audience should know, Ted, that neither you nor any of your staff has heard this tape in advance. Here we go.

There is a click...then Koppel's voice says on tape:

KOPPEL'S VOICE

What sort of guests should we have?

CASHMERE'S VOICE

What about your wife, sugar?

KOPPEL'S VOICE

Better than Bosnia but...not sexy enough to get it...up.

ANGLE - THE SUITE

RICHARD

Look at his face. Look at that!

KOPPEL'S VOICE

Well, this...obviously...has been concocted. You did this to make a point. Right?

ANGLE- DAISY ON TV

DAISY

Yes. That was a conversation you had on a cellular phone with your producer--in which you chose Israelis over Bosnians but felt neither one was sexy enough to keep the ratings up. Isn't it a stitch? I mean, who'd take it, seriously? And yet the outcome of an American presidential campaign may be influenced by this sort of garbage. Shouldn't you guys in the press be ashamed of yourselves? Don't you owe Governor Stanton an apology?

ANGLE - THE SUITE

It erupts. Richard jumps up and down. Stanton hugs Henry, Howard hugs Susan, Susan hugs Henry...

There is a SOUND outside the door...and Susan opens it.

EXT. MANCHESTER INN

Volunteers and staff and a few guests stand there, babbling excitedly, as the occupants of Stanton's suite come bursting out...greeting the newcomers, shaking hands, embracing. Stanton, one arm around Susan, holds up his hand. His voice is hoarse, his face red, his eyes watery.

GOV. STANTON

I want to thank you all for sticking with us, for working so hard, through all this. Now we have less than two weeks to go before this primary--but I know that with your help and God's grace, we'll do what needs to be done.

(he looks down at Susan)

It's been pretty awful. But--we're--still--here!

INT. HENRY'S SUITE - DAISY

She is flushed with success, parading around in her TV outfit, a skirt and high heels.

DAISY

I just wish I could have seen Koppel's face while the tape was playing.

HENRY

It was awful. At one point he actually cried out, "I'm melting, I'm melting!"

DAISY

Oh, you always say the right thing. And you always smell so good. And you're neat. Look at how you have everything put away...

(she looks in a drawer)

...all your little underpants neatly folded...all your little tee shirts color co-ordinated... everything stored just so...

He suddenly tackles her. She screams.

HENRY

Never call a man's underpants little...

(rolling over on her)

Want to do the Stanton thing?

DAISY

Well, it's...

(she imitates static)

...sexier...than Bosnia...

The phone begins ringing. They stop.

DAISY
Aren't you going to answer it?

HENRY
No.

DAISY
Maybe it's Stanton.

HENRY
Stanton's out of it. She gave him
a sedative.

DAISY
Oh.
(after a moment)
Oh. Want me to leave?

It stops ringing. He stares at it, torn. Then:

HENRY
Don't be silly.

CLOSE SHOT - COMEDIAN ON TV

COMEDIAN
I hear Governor Stanton has post
draft dodger syndrome. Every time
he hears a gun go off he thinks
it's a car backfiring.

ANGLE - ANOTHER COMEDIAN ON TV - A DRUMROLL:

COMEDIAN #2
Number nine: they're having sex
while she's styling it...

ANGLE - THE STANTONS, RICHARD, HENRY, DAISY - WATCHING

HENRY
They just don't care about the fine
points.

SUSAN
No, it would ruin the punchline.

CLOSE SHOT - BRAD LIEBERMAN

He leans into the frame and speaks toward camera.

BRAD LIEBERMAN
Hi. I'm the Governor's new
pollster, Brad Lieberman. We're
drifting down, folks. We reached a
(MORE)

BRAD LIEBERMAN (cont'd)
peak of 37 after the first debate,
34 after Cashmere, 32 after the
Brinkley show, 29 after the second
Koppel show...

CLOSE SHOT - ARLEN SPORKEN

ARLEN SPORKEN
The problem is we're still
perceived as less than credible...

CLOSE SHOT - HOWARD

HOWARD
The money is definitely drying up.

CLOSE SHOT - SUSAN

SUSAN
Jack is sick.

INT. LARGE AUDITORIUM

packed with adolescents of various ages. Stanton stands
onstage in front of the podium.

GOV. STANTON
(in a croaking voice)
Thank you for inviting me to speak
at the drug-free America rally.
Every candidate in this race...
(coughing)
...agrees about one thing...
(coughing; struggling to
speak)
...Excuse me a second...

INT. THE MINIVAN - PARKED

Mitch sits dozing behind the wheel. He straightens as Henry
opens the back door. Stanton falls inside, still coughing,
opens the other door, and vomits. Henry straightens just as
voices are heard outside the car.

HENRY'S VOICE
Hi, guys.

VOICES
"Hey, Henry!"
"How come you left early?"...

Stanton's head falls back, his face is drenched with
perspiration, his eyes roll back. Mitch starts the car.

EXT. PARKING LOT - HENRY

as the minivan rolls away...and the reporters arrive.

QUISTON-AP
What's that? Someone blow lunch?

Henry looks down at the undigested food on the ground.

HENRY
Brad Lieberman. The new pollster.
He's got the the flu.

QUISTON-AP
The governor didn't sound too good.

HENRY
Got a little cough. But he's okay.

CLOSE SHOT - STANTON

out cold. He is lying on the bed as if dead. Susan,
Richard and Henry are undressing him.

GOV. STANTON
Susan...

SUSAN
I'm here, honey. It's okay. I'm
here...

CLOSE SHOT - BRAD LIEBERMAN

BRAD LIEBERMAN
Well, folks, we're cratering. Down
fourteen the last two nights.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAISY, HENRY, RICHARD

Richard and Daisy follow Henry as he threads through the
cars,

HENRY
We've got to take him down for a
couple of days, give him a rest. (X)

RICHARD
Are you crazy? We've only got six
days before the primary. (X)

HENRY
I can't open this damned door.

DAISY
This isn't the car.

HENRY
Then where the fuck did I park it.

RICHARD

And we may not be done dropping yet. Lots of people want to make money from tabloids. Old friends, young girls--these attacks come in clusters.

DAISY

We can't just keep wandering around the parking lot. Let's take a cab to the restaurant.

HENRY

If we're not using my car I'd just as soon sleep. I've got to fly to Portsmouth with him tomorrow.

RICHARD

It looks like just the two of us, Daisy.

(he gives a hideous Dracula laugh)

DAISY

Oh, shut up. I wouldn't go to bed with you again if it meant the election.

Henry stands motionless.

RICHARD

I guess I didn't...
(breaking off)

Oh, come on, Hotchkiss. This was B.Y. Before You.

DAISY

Oh, Henry's not jealous. He understands about campaign sex. It's like college sex--what you do until your real life starts.

INT. HENRY'S MOTEL ROOM - HENRY

He lies on the bed, the TV tuned to CNN without sound. He reaches over and picks up the phone, dials.

HENRY

Hi, March. It's me. Just wanted to hear your voice--even if it's recorded. I miss...

There is a knock on the door. Henry calls:

HENRY

Who is it?

VOICE

William McCollister.

Henry frowns, then hangs up, goes to the door, and opens it.
A large black man in a dark church suit stands there.

FAT WILLIE

Ain't you rememberin' me, Mr.
Burton?

(Henry peers at him)

I figure mos' other folks 'round
here don' remember me, but you a
brother.

HENRY

(after a moment)

Willie...the barbecue place. C'mon
in. What're you doing here.

Willie enters and looks around.

FAT WILLIE

I call you last week over an' over.
An' then I finely jus' come. Don't
you get no phone messages?

HENRY

I get lots of them, but I didn't
remember the name. I'm sorry.

FAT WILLIE

I figure it's easier for me to talk
to a brother than to the Gov. Even
though he like a brother...

(there is a pause)

I flew here cause my daughter,
Loretta...she with child. And she
say Governor Jack Stanton's the
daddy...

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

all plate glass and potted palms. Mitch and Susan stand
looking around...then wave as Henry rushes in.

HENRY

Where is he?

SUSAN

In the Men's Room.

HENRY

Alone?

SUSAN

What do you mean?

Henry shakes his head, then sprints past them.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

It is a two-holer. The Governor is in there alone, urinating and coughing. Henry walks over to him.

HENRY

Governor...

GOV. STANTON

These pills are helping I think.

HENRY

Good...

GOV. STANTON

Lawrence Harris is in the lead, we're second. Actually, undecided is killing everyone...but we've got to remember that this campaign is about Danny Scanlon...

HENRY

Governor, Fat Willie, the Barbecue guy, came to my room last night. His daughter is pregnant. She says you're the father.

GOV. STANTON

(after a long pause)
Who else knows?

HENRY

He says no one.

GOV. STANTON

What does he want?

HENRY

I don't know.

There is another moment...then Stanton wheels and slams the tiles open-handed.

GOV. STANTON

I just can't catch a break, can I?
(he moves away, splashes
water on his face)

I want you to call him... No. I better do it. I need him to understand this is some kind of mistake. How far is she?

HENRY

He didn't say. I don't think he knows. Do you want Libby?

GOV. STANTON

No! This stays with us.

(he coughs, takes a pill)

Too bad the press doesn't know.

They'd cover my speech tonight.

(he turns to Henry)

Henry, you will never be ashamed that you were part of this campaign. Do you understand? You will never have to swallow it, or duck it, or apologize for it. I am not going to let that happen.

The door swings open. It is Howard.

HOWARD

Ready, guys? Let's go.

EXT. UNION HALL

The sign says PORTSMOUTH SHIPYARDS--UNION HALL

Men in bulky jackets, women in curlers and windbreakers.

INT. PORTSMOUTH UNION HALL

It is smallish, cinderblock, jammed. A man in a stained tie and burgundy jacket plays the National Anthem as the crowd sings. When the song is over Stanton moves up to the mike.

GOV. STANTON

I want to thank you for coming out tonight. I know how hard you work and how little time you have to rest...

MAN

Some of us have more'n we'd like.

GOV. STANTON

Right, I understand that. In fact, let me see a show of hands--how many of you are looking for work?

About half raise their hands.

GOV. STANTON

Those of you who have jobs--do you see anyone here tonight who wouldn't work if we gave 'em a chance? Y'see anyone who'd rather stay home and watch the soaps?

CHUBBY WOMAN

I'd rather stay home and watch the soaps.

There is laughter.

MAN

I'd rather do anything than punch
in at Rizzuto's Dry Cleaners.

GOV. STANTON

I'll bet. My momma worked jobs like
that when I was comin' up, after my
daddy died. I remember seeing her
come home from work, just bone-
weary--y'know what I mean? I know
she wanted to talk to me, play with
me, ask about school--but sometimes
you're just too tired to do any-
thing but thaw out a frozen dinner
and blob out in front of the tube.

A MAN

You've got that one right.

GOV. STANTON

And I don't have to tell you how
hard it is to be lookin' for
work. Hey, I don't have to tell
you anything about hard times--so
you know what? I'm going to do
something really outrageous. I'm
going to tell you the truth.

There are cheers and laughter.

GOV. STANTON

Yeah, I know what you're thinking:
he must really be desperate to do
that, but you had to swallow enough
sh-- garbage...

A WOMAN

You can say "shit". We're X-rated.

GOV. STANTON

Me too, if you believe what you
read in the paper,

There is an eruption of applause, an explosion of whistles.

GOV. STANTON

Okay. Here's the truth, folks--
there are two kinds of politicians
in this world. Those who tell you
what you want to hear--and those
who don't come around.

There are cheers and laughter.

GOV. STANTON

Well, I'm here--and you wouldn't believe me if I told you what you wanted to hear anyway, right?

There are nods and applause.

GOV. STANTON

So let me tell you the facts: No politician can bring these shipyard jobs back. Or make your union strong again. No politician can make it be the way it used to be. Because we're living in a new world now, a world without economic borders. Guy can push a button in New York and move a billion dollars to Tokyo before you blink an eye. We've got a world market now. And muscle jobs are gonna go where muscle labor is cheap--and that's not here. So if you all want to compete and do better, you're gonna have to exercise a different set of muscles, the ones between your ears.

They watch him, silently now--not smiling.

HOWARD

He's lost them.

HENRY

Fuck 'em. He's got me.

GOV. STANTON

This whole country is gonna have to go back to school. We're gonna have to get smarter, learn new skills. And I will work overtime figuring out ways to help you get those skills. I'll make you this deal: I will work for you. I'll wake up every morning thinking about you. I'll fight and worry and sweat and bleed to get the money to make education a lifetime thing in this country, to give you the support you need to move on up. But you've got to do the heavy lifting your own selves.

He looks around. They are watching with wide eyes now... like children hearing a ghost story.

GOV. STANTON

Y'know, I've taken some hits in this campaign. It hasn't been easy for me and my family, it hasn't been fair, but it hasn't been anything compared to the hits a lot of you take every day. Hell, I'm lucky--I got my picture on the cover of a national newspaper. Maybe not the one I would've planned on

There is laughter, muted now.

GOV. STANTON

But you know what? My picture there means that someone thinks you're only interested in the ton of garbage they're dumpin' on my head. So this Tuesday--when you go to cast your vote, you think about that, you think about what you're really interested--and then pick your candidate.

INT. MOTEL

Henry lies on the bed beside Daisy, staring up.

HENRY

I don't think I'll be able to take it if he loses.

DAISY

If he does lose...maybe... Want to go away for awhile? Try some non-campaign sex? See if it holds up?

The door opens and Richard comes in, walks over and lies down beside them.

HENRY

Goddamit, why are you always in my room.

RICHARD

Because it's neater.

(he puts his hands behind his head)

You know, when this is over you and I should work together. Set up a consulting firm, tap the black Hotchkiss vote...

HENRY

Look, both of you--stop with the "when this is over"... "we-are-pros" crap. Maybe you're pros but I've gotten emotionally involved.

RICHARD

Can I sleep here?

DAISY, HENRY

No!

RICHARD

(rising)

Okay, okay. See? A pro knows how to say goodbye.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - MORNING

Henry and Daisy are still asleep, the light from the undraped windows streaming across their faces. The phone rings. Both of them sit bolt upright.

DAISY

Oh, my heart.

HENRY

(into the phone)

Yeah?

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

Come down to the lobby with me. They say there's some people waiting to see me and I...

HENRY

Press?

GOV. STANTON

They don't know.

MANCHESTER INN LOBBY - HENRY, STANTON

hurrying out of the elevator...toward a hotel clerk who is standing in front of 5 or 6 people.

One of them pokes her head out and waves to the Governor. It is the chubby woman who led the wisecracks in Portsmouth.

CHUBBY WOMAN

I'm the one who wanted to see you personally, governor--to let you know I was aboard. These other guys are just copycats.

Stanton's looks at her, stunned. Another voice calls:

VOICE

Hi, Governor...

It is Danny Scanlon, holding a box of apple fritters.

DANNY SCANLON

B-brought you some apple fritters.

GOV. STANTON

Danny, hey! Why aren't you at work?

DANNY SCANLON

Took the week off. I'm working for you now.

GOV. STANTON

Well, now isn't that...isn't that something. Here you come to fatten me up for the kill.

DANNY SCANLON

Y-you're gettin' too fat to be a corpse.

And then a 3rd face we have seen much earlier:

MAN

I don't know if you remember me, Governor. We met in The Silver Spoon Coffee Shop... Well, no, you wouldn't...

GOV. STANTON

Sure I remember. How's Margaret? The chemo-therapy working?

SAM

Not so good, not so good. But-- goddam--imagine you remembering that...

(X)

INT. HEADQUARTERS - HENRY

He is addressing several staff members.

HENRY

They all want to sign on, so give 'em leaflets to pass out, envelopes to lick. Some of them can canvas...

STAFFER

How many are there?

HENRY

I don't even know. I mean...it's like a Jimmy Stewart movie on

(MORE)

HENRY (cont'd)
cocaine. People are just streaming
in...in busloads...people from
shelters in Mammoth Falls, people
from his high school, people from
all over...

Henry's voice continues as we CUT TO

EXT. HAMPTON INN - MANCHESTER - A BUS

Passengers dismounting, many of them with suitcases.

INT. LOBBY - MANCHESTER INN

The lobby is jammed with people. Staffers move among them,
trying to organize them into groups.

ANGLE - GOVERNOR STANTON, HENRY

GOV. STANTON
Henry, this is our family doctor,
Dr. Bryant Hastings Beauregard ...

DOCTOR BEAUREGARD
(white-haired and wearing
a cape)
We ahre gon' t'educate these
yawnkehs, Jawneh, y'heah?

GOV. STANTON
Right, doc. This is Mr. Culpepper,
my high school principle. Henry...

MR. CULPEPPER
This won't be half as hard as
beating Bobby Ray for Prom Night
Chairman. Remember?

GOV. STANTON
I sure do ... Hey, Billy...

A tall black man, Stanton's age, grabs him in a bear hug.

GOV. STANTON
Henry, this is Billy Johnson, the
deputy attorney general of Alabama.
I'm sending him right back.

BILL JOHNSON
Hell, if I was good enough to hang
out with in the sixties...
(to Henry)
We met at a speech your granddaddy
(MORE)

BILL JOHNSON (cont'd)

gave.

(clapping Stanton on the
shoulder)

I come to see how you gonna get out
of this hole, so I know what to do
when I get in a hole.

GOV. STANTON

You won't ever be in a hole this
deep.

BILL JOHNSON

Jack, don't go tellin' no nigger
about the depth of holes in
Alabama. Just put me to work.

A VOICE booms out.

LIBBY

PUT HIM TO WORK! If we're going to
shove it up Lawrence Harris' ass,
we need the long arm of the law for
ANAL VIOLATION in extremis. Hello,
Billy. Hello, Henry.

HENRY

Hello, Big Bopper.

GOV. STANTON

Hey, Dewayne!

DEWAYNE

Hey, Gov. You gonna trust me to
stuff some envelopes?

MISS WALSH

They all wanted to come but we
couldn't afford the fare...

GOV. STANTON

I just...can't tell you...

SAILORMAN

Hey, Jackie--I'm up for anything.
Wire-tapping, coffee grinding...

GOV. STANTON

Hey, Sailorman!

ANGLE - RICHARD, DAISY

DAISY

Do you believe this?

RICHARD

Kinda makes "Miracle on 34th Street" seem like a cynical piece of shit, don't it?

DAISY

Maybe...if he does well in the debate...with all these people...

RICHARD

Won't matter. He can't win New Hampshire--but he sure as hell is gonna be popular losin' it.

EXT. MANCHESTER - RAINING

but there are an unusual number of people out and signs saying: Today is Primary Day! Don't Forget To Vote!

INT. STANTON HEADQUARTERS

filled with staffers and volunteers working phones, handing out piles of literature, xeroxing neighborhood maps.

Off to the side is a table with coffee urns and dozens of boxes of doughnuts which Danny Scanlon is passing out. Billy Johnson, Sailorman, and Mr. Culpepper are on the phones. Dewayne is sorting literature. Ms. Walsh is stuffing envelopes along with several members of the Portsmouth audience. Mama Stanton, wearing a flagrant orange and white State U. tracksuit, sits puffing Slims.

VOICES

"How's it goin'?"

"Twos and threes.

"No fours?"

"Shitload of fours. But you gotta expect that. Count every hangup a four."

HENRY

Where's the candidate?

HOWARD

In the street. He's just gonna stay out and work the crowd all day, can you believe it.

There are six television sets tuned to different stations. On all of them, a different political guru predicts Jack Stanton's flame-out.

TALKING HEAD - ON TV

But the biggest upset, Tom, has got to be for Jack Stanton. Like George Romney, Ed Muskey, and Gary Hart before him--

Susan sits at a table in the corner, watching, her eyes steady and bitter. Henry puts his hand on her shoulder.

SUSAN

They can't understand why we don't just quit. Don't we know we're history? Everyone's written it. There's an entire industry of pollsters, experts, political gurus, free lance political advisers and they've all explained why we're finished. If only we'd just get on with it, so they could analyze how it happened in peace. They've told the world he's dead, why doesn't he die already.

ANCHORMAN - ON TV

And later on we'll return with our prediction for the winner of the New Hampshire Democratic primaries!

The staff and volunteers half-watch the sets, their eyes increasingly glazed as the election analysis continues.

RICHARD

Those sons-a-bitches.

HENRY

Why? They're just saying what you've been saying.

RICHARD

Fuck you!

(he looks around at the somber faces, then suddenly calls)

HEY, EVER'body, listen UP! Best lookin' woman in the room got somethin' to say. Go 'head now, Momma. Gwon stand up on this here.

Mamma Stanton springs up and climbs up on a chair, then calls out:

MAMA STANTON

Y'all havin' fun?

There are polite chuckles.

MAMA STANTON

Wal, listen. Ah know you workin' hard foh mah Jackie, an' he's the best a momma could have, and y'all are the best friends our family could have, an' ah ain't got no - highfalutin' talk like Mr. Senator Lawrence Harris...

There are a few hoots and whistles.

MAMA STANTON

...but in mah book, y'all are just EX-CEPTIONAL. With a gang lahk this, we could do serious damage in a roadhouse--y'get me, Jemmons? We could jus' rip up a joint.

RICHARD

Momma, I was thirty years older, I'd be lickin' your ear!

MAMA STANTON

And ah'd be squealing like a pig while you done it.

There are a few whoops and some laughter.

MAMA STANTON

Now ah'm a-gonna set down 'for ah fall down. But ah love ya, and ah'll never forget ya. Win or lose. Wait a second, ah didn't mean to say that. Ah didn't mean the "lose" part. Mah Jackie ain't no loser, and y'all're his friends and you ain't losers either. Ah don't see a loser in this here room. And ah've seen more than a few in mah sorry ol' life. So listen up: we are gonna win this thing. We are gonna steal this thing right out from under Senator Lawrence Harris' nose. Then we gonna go on and whip his sorry butt!

There are cheers.

MAMA STANTON

An in the meantime, come rain or come shine, come up, or come down, come good times or bad--ain't this just GRAND!

She clasps her hands over her head in a victory gesture... and there is an eruption of whoops, screams, and applause. And then Howard's shout:

HOWARD

Here it comes!

A sudden silence comes over the room...as the anchormen come back on all six screens.

ANCHORMAN - ON TV
 And with 15 per cent of the vote in
 CNN is ready to make a prediction.
 We predict Lawrence Harris...

RICHARD
 (leaping up)
 That ain't nothing! This is his
 state, for chris'sake! He's got to
 win here...

ANCHORMAN - ON TV
 ...Governor Stanton--who is still
 campaigning, by the way...

A QUICK CUT TO STANTON:

out in the rain at a red light. He is moving up and down
 the lanes, waving, reaching into car windows that have
 opened for him in order to exchange a handshake.

ANCHORMAN - ON TV
 In fact, according to the exit
 polls, an overwhelming number of
 Stanton voters say the deciding
 factor for them was that they
 actually met the governor. So we
 predict Governor Jack Stanton a
 close second to Lawrence Harris
 with Nilson and Martin way down...

RICHARD
 (screaming)
 I'll be a son-of-a-bitch!

DANNY SCANLON
 (shouting over him)
 D-don't be d-discouraged. We can
 st-still win.

RICHARD
 Are you crazy! Did you hear!
 We're second! We're alive! We're
 a fucking miracle!

EXT - A SMALL PLANE

zooming through the sky to the SOUND of country music.

INT. AIRPLANE - HENRY, RICHARD, HOWARD, SUSAN

are toasting with plastic glasses...singing a Willy Nelson
 song:

ALL
 "On the road again,
 just can't wait to get
 On the road again..."...

INT. PLANE BATHROOM - VERY TINY

Governor Stanton is on the phone

GOV. STANTON

...I know this must be awful for you, Willie, just the worst, but you gotta know I didn't have anything to do with it. ... I know. And you know whatever you need, I'm up for it, just like always. I've got to get through the next couple of weeks...and then we'll work things out, okay?....

EXT. MAINE - A MALL -GOVERNOR STANTON

desperately trying to shake hands...almost crowded out by cameras and journalists.

CLOSE SHOT - T.V. ANCHORMAN

ANCHORMAN - ON TV

And with the final count in, Harris carries Maine, with Stanton second and the other two candidates tied for a distant third. All four candidates are now in Colorado...

EXT. DENVER - LAKESIDE AMUSEMENT PARK - GOVERNOR STANTON

surrounded by the media. Questions are shouted at him:

VOICES

"How can we get a stop sign at the corner of Forest Lane?"

"How can I get my tax assessment lowered?"

"Are you gonna take our guns away?"

ANGLE - RICHARD, HENRY

RICHARD

How did everyone get to be such a moron. It can't just be the schools.

HENRY

I wonder how Lawrence Harris will sell his academic bullshit to these folks.

CLOSE SHOT - LAWRENCE HARRIS ON T.V.

He is standing in a mountain meadow, wearing a plaid shirt.

LAWRENCE HARRIS

Hi to you, Colorado. My name is Lawrence Harris and I'm running for president. I'm from New Hampshire, a beautiful state, suffering some tough economic times--just like Colorado. I want to do something about that...

RICHARD'S VOICE

But first--kiki.

The ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL Richard, Henry and Daisy in A COLORADO MOTEL ROOM

DAISY

He sure changed his style.

HENRY

Yeah, and he's got me worried.

RICHARD

Me, too. You can't convince Jack to fire off one of our silver bullets?

DAISY

No. He's positive negative'll boomerang.

CLOSE SHOT - GOVERNOR STANTON ON TV

sitting on the edge of a desk and speaking to a group of fascinated actors dressed as high school kids.

GOV. STANTON - ON TV

We're going to have to compete hard for the best jobs--that's why I pledge that education...

ANGLE - LUCILLE, DAISY, SUSAN - WATCHING

Lucille makes a loud snoring sound.

TV SCREEN - BART NILSON

BART NILSON

...am dropping out of the race and endorsing Governor Jack Stanton...

CLOSE SHOT - BRAD LIEBERMAN

BRAD LIEBERMAN

Down another two points. Bad move to have someone as liberal as Nilson endorse you.

CLOSE SHOT - ARLEN SPORKEN

ARLEN SPORKEN
Charlie Martin just dropped out.
He's endorsing Lawrence Harris.

CLOSE SHOT - BRAD LIEBERMAN

BRAD LIEBERMAN
Down two more points. Bad luck to
lose someone as popular as Martin.

CLOSE SHOT - TV

ANCHORMAN - ON TV
And here in Miami Lawrence Harris
celebrates his victory in Colorado.

CLOSE SHOT - TV

ANCHORMAN - ON TV
And here in Tampa, Governor Stanton
celebrates his victory in Georgia.
Although for a Southern governor to
win Georgia by only four per
cent...

CLOSE SHOT - TV ANCHOMAN

ANCHORMAN - ON TV
...and here in Ft. Lauderdale, the
campagn goes on.

CLOSE SHOT - TV SCREEN

Drums and deep horns, pictures of the war in Vietnam, then
flag-waving, then scruffy protesters marching to a drumbeat.

LAWRENCE HARRIS-ON TV
When our country was at war, Jack
Stanton didn't just opt out--he
used "pull" to get himself out. Now
our country is facing another
crisis. It's a silent crisis. An
economic crisis. I'll face that
crisis. I won't run away. It's a
question of character.

There is a dissolve to a meadow. Lawrence Harris is in it.

INT. STANTON HOTEL SUITE

The Stantons, Howard, Lucille, Richard, Henry, Daisy...are
all watching the TV.

GOV. STANTON
He wants to go negative? Okay.
I'm gonna kill the son-of-a-bitch.

INT. CAFETERIA-AUDITORIUM - MOGEN DAVID SENIOR CENTER

More cinder-block. Stanton stands at a long table, under and Israeli flag, surrounded by extremely old people. He wears a velvet yarmulke and speaks into a mike.

GOV. STANTON

...but though I think he is a fine man, and I agree with him about lowering the deficit, I do not agree with Senator Harris' proposal to "study" a reduction, even a freeze, in cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security.

At the words "Social Security" there is a rustling through the room--like a breeze passing through very dry leaves.

GOV. STANTON

I also disagree with Senator Harris about Medicare...

There is another, louder murmur.

GOV. STANTON

And there is one other area where Senator Harris and I disagree--and that is the Middle East.

This time the murmur is hard and vocal. Old backs straighten, old eyes narrow.

GOV. STANTON

When he was a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, my opponent cast a great many votes regarding the security and the future of the state of Israel.

There is an audible gasp. One old woman cries out, "No!"

GOV. STANTON

Now wait--I agree with many of his votes, but there were some... Well, I think it's important to stand with our friends--and our country has no better friend than the state of Israel....

The CAMERA PANS the old faces, listening, some with tears in their eyes, some with alarm, some with anger.

CLOSE SHOT - TV SCREEN - A BOOK

called Saving the Future by Lawrence Harris opens and quotes appear as the ANNOUNCER speaks O.S.

ANNOUNCER-ON TV
(lightly, ironically)
Here are some things Lawrence
Harris says he would like to do as
president. "Will raise gas tax 50
cents"-- Saving the Future, page
7. "Will cut Social Security"--
Saving the Future, page 18....

CLOSE SHOT - BRAD LIEBERMAN

BRAD LIEBERMAN
We're up two points. And climbing.
Finally.

INT. HENRY'S MOTEL ROOM

He is asleep. There is a knock on the door. He stumbles
over to answer it. It is Governor Stanton.

GOV. STANTON
Are you alone?

HENRY
Wha... yeah. C'min...

He stumbles back as Stanton strides in, his eyes bright.

HENRY
Henry, we've got to deal with the
McCollister situation.

HENRY
Deal with it?

GOV. STANTON
We've got a real chance now. I
can't leave here before the primary
and it'll kill us if this gets out,
so tomorrow I want you and Howard
to fly back to Mammoth Falls and
talk to Willie, tell him we have to
resolve this thing, establish
paternity. Tell him I'll have blood
drawn and we want the girl to have
an amniocentesis and explain what
that means, in detail. They're good
people, but not sophisticated. I
want them to know.

HENRY
Why pick me? Because I'm black?

GOV. STANTON
No. Because Willie picked you. I
didn't. Look, you don't have to
(MORE)

GOV. STANTON (cont'd)
say anything. Howard knows what to
say. But you should be there
because he came to you.

HENRY
Governor, if I'm going to do this,
there's something I need to know.

GOV. STANTON
Henry, I am not the father of that
child.

INT./EXT. FAT WILLIES

ANGLE - WILLIE

watching as a WHITE TAURUS pulls in and Henry get out...

WILLIE
Hi, Mr. Burton. Hi, Gov...

He breaks off as he sees Howard.

HENRY
Willie, this is Howard Ferguson. He
works with the governor, too.

Willies stares at Howard, who nods and offers his hand.

HOWARD
Hello.

WILLIE
(shaking it)
Mornin'.
(after a pause)
Well, what...what can I do for you?

Howard says nothing. Willie turns to Henry.

HENRY
Well...could we...uh...sit down and
talk a minute?

WILLIE
Sure. Can I get y'anything?
Coffee?

HENRY
No thanks.

Willie leads them to a picnic table and they sit. In the
silence that follows Howard puts his attache case flat in
front of him, clicks it open, takes out a yellow legal pad
and some official looking papers, then clicks the case shut.
Willie looks nervously at Henry. Henry keeps his eyes
riveted on the attache case.

HOWARD

Mr. McCollister, the governor is very concerned about this situation with your daughter and the possible damage it might cause to his reputation. He wants to see it resolved. He would like her to have an amnio-centesis performed as soon as possible so that paternity can be positively established.

WILLIE

A what?

HOWARD

It is a procedure, performed at the hospital. A needle is inserted in the abdomen and amniotic fluid is drawn from your daughter's womb. Genetic material is analyzed. It can be compared with the governor's blood to determine whether or not he is the father.

WILLIE

I don't--

HOWARD

It's normally used to determine the health of the fetus--and that's what you'll tell them at Mercy Hospital--you want to make sure the baby is healthy.

WILLIE

A needle...?

HENRY

It's a common procedure, Willie...

WILLIE

(not looking at him; to Howard)

They put a needle in her belly?

HOWARD

Look, Mr. McCollister, there are people who would like to destroy Governor Stanton. He doesn't believe you're one of them. But he can't allow this. You can't allow this. I'm sure your daughter is a fine young person, but she's a child, and children are impressionable--and there's been a lot of news about the governor in recent weeks.

WILLIE

She ain't said a word to anyone. I tol' her not to. She's a good girl.

HOWARD

I'm sure she is. And the governor wants to do everything possible to help her, and you, through this time. He is prepared to be very generous. He will cover all pre- and postnatal expenses. He will help your daughter provide for the baby. He will do this because he believes you are his friend. But we must determine to everyone's satisfaction that's he's not the father of that child. I'm sure you understand his position.

EXT. WHITE TAURUS

Henry is driving. Howard sits next to him. They sit in silence. Suddenly, Henry pulls over to the side of the road, narrowly missing a truck, leaps out of the car and throws up.

EXT. A SMALL PLANE - FLYING

Over the shot we hear the SOUND of someone throwing up.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

The bathroom door is open. From inside we hear the SOUND of retching.

DAISY

I don't understand what you want him to do? He's going to pay for the baby, befriend them--and he doesn't even know if it's his yet.

Henry comes out of the bathroom. Wiping his face with a towel.

HENRY

What if it is?

DAISY

Well? What do you want him to do, Henry? Leave his wife and child and marry Willie's daughter? Ruin everyone's life.

HENRY

No. Just the black girl's.

DAISY

Oh, bullshit. What's the great thing that happens to her if Stanton says he's the father? She gets to go on A Current Affair? She gets to be hounded and written up and become a celebrity? She gets to be Cashmere?

HENRY

He wouldn't look at me--Willie--he wouldn't meet my eyes.

DAISY

Well, I don't understand why.

HENRY

I guess it's a little bit too much like having the black overseer help the master.

DAISY

That's the most overblown piece of horseshit I've heard in this campaign. Is everyone just supposed to believe that Stanton's the father? Does Willie even believe it. I just don't get it.

HENRY

I guess...you just had to be there.

CLOSE SHOT - LAWRENCE HARRIS ON TV

LAWRENCE HARRIS

I am very proud to announce that former Florida governor Fred Picker has agreed to endorse my candidacy.

RICHARD'S VOICE

Oh, shit.

INT. MAGIC KINGDOM WEST MOTEL.

A makeshift headquarters. Phones ringing, muffins hustling, Xeroxes and faxes churning. Brad Lieberman, Howard, and Susan work the phones. Henry leafs through flyers. Lucille, Richard, Daisy and Stanton watch the TV.

DAISY

Who the fuck is Fred Picker...

GOV. STANTON

He's a pretty good guy. One of the New Southerners in the 70s. He stood up with your grandfather, didn't he Henry?

HENRY
(without looking at him)
Yes.

GOV. STANTON
There was even a Picker-for-president movment but he quit or...I don't remember why. But when this is over, we should talk to him. I always liked Freddy. What do you think, Henry?

HENRY
(eyes down)
Yes. Good idea.

LAWRENCE HARRIS-ON TV
...and now, ladies and gentleman--
Freddy Picker. (X)

Picker, trim, large, wearing a blue blazer and no tie, steps forward. He scans the assembled press corps.

PICKER-ON TV
You guys are still ugly. (X)

There is laughter.

RICHARD
Pretty good.

LUCILLE
That's okay. We can be folksy, too.

INT. THE ISRAEL ROSENBLATT HOUR

Governor Stanton sits across from Izzy, who is about eighty. Daisy and Henry sit on chairs against the wall.

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
Hello, folks, I'm Izzy Rosenblatt and I'm here with--Schmooze for Jews!.

That's Entertainment plays underneath.

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
...and my guest today is Presidential nominee and J.F.K lookalike--Governor Jack Stanton.

GOV. STANTON
Hi, Izzy.

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
Hi, Jack. Jack, when we were talking before you said your momma liked Vegas. As a tip to our listeners--where does she like to stay there? Which hotel?

GOV. STANTON
Well, she's pretty loyal to the MGM grand.

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
Take a listen all you Vegas fans. Who's her favorite act there? Wayne Newton?

GOV. STANTON
Absolutely.

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
Everybody loves Wayne Newton. He was once on this show. Of course, that was years ago. And just to satisfy the curiosity of the Vegas fans--where does your mother stand pat in Blackjack. Sixteen?

Henry and Daisy look at each other, incredulously.

GOV. STANTON
Well, she's a bit of gambler, Izzy so sometimes she'll go up to seventeen...

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
Governor, excuse me, I'm told we've got Senator Harris on the phone...
(into phone)
Hello. Well, this is an honor.

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE
Thank you.

Stanton turns to look at Henry and Daisy. They stare back at him, non-plussed.

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
Senator, we were just talking about Governor Stanton's mother and how she loves Vegas--does your mother have a favorite vacation spot?

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE
My mother is dead.

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
Oh, I'm sorry.

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE
And Jack Stanton should be ashamed
of the way he's scaring a lot of
other elderly people down here.

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
You mean going up to seventeen?

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE
What?

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
I'm not following you.

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE
He's telling people that I'm going
to cut their Social Security and--

GOV. STANTON
Aw, c'mon, Larry. It's part of
your book...

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE
Everyone knows what you're doing
down here, the sleazy politics
you're playing.

GOV. STANTON
Izzy, okay if I get a word in here?

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
Go ahead, Governor, be my guest.
What am I saying? You are my
guest.
(he laughs)

GOV. STANTON
(chuckles with him; then)
Larry, I'm looking at your campaign
book, page 18, paragraph 3...
(his hands are empty and
he winks at Izzy)
What exactly does it mean when you
say you want to 'study' a freeze in
cost-of-living adjustments?

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE
That's only one possibility. We
might want to rework how they're
calculated....

GOV. STANTON
I can tell you that. Cost of
Living adjustments are calculated
to keep up with inflation. But I
guess you don't think that's such a
good idea.

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE

Now wait a minute, I didn't say that.

GOV. STANTON

Well, it's right here in your book.

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE

I said it has to be studied, Who knows? We might even want to...to spend more on cost-of-living adjustments.

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT

Tell me Senator Harris, do you have a favorite comedian?

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE

What?

GOV. STANTON

I'm telling the folks what my positions are. You're the one who--

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE

You're distorting my positions! This is the reason no one trusts the political process...

GOV. STANTON

You just can't defend your--

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE

Not when you play these games. Ladies and gentlemen, we just can't afford to keep spending money like this.

GOV. STANTON

But you just said you might want to spend more on cost-of-living adjustments. Larry, I think you're confused.

LAWRENCE HARRIS' VOICE

But I... I...

(Harris coughs)

Excuse me... Unh.... Listen, excuse me...

There is the sound of coughing...then a dial tone

GOV. STANTON

What happened? Did he hang up or what?

ISRAEL ROSENBLATT
Yeah. Well... So tell me,
Governor Stanton, who's YOUR
favorite comedian?

INT. STANTON SUITE - FLORIDA - THE STANTONS, ET AL

They all look radiant. There is a platter of food,
laughter, back-slapping.

LUCILLE
The phone hasn't stopped ringing.

HOWARD
It was fantastic. It was a rout.

DAISY
I couldn't believe it when I heard
Harris' voice on the phone...

HENRY
He's fucked now. The only thing
he's got going for him is Picker...

RICHARD
It doesn't matter. We're going to
walk away with Florida...

The door suddenly bursts open and Brad Lieberman runs in.

BRAD LIEBERMAN
Turn on CNN. Quick. Oh, it's on!
He grabs the remote. The sound comes up.

ANNOUNCER-ON TV
According to CNN sources, Senator
Harris suffered two heart
attacks--

CLOSE SHOT - TV - HARRIS ON A GUERNEY
an oxygen mask over his face...as the Voice continues.

ANNOUNCER-ON TV
--the first one immediately after a
phone call with Governor Jack
Stanton during a Florida talk
show...

ANGLE - THE ROOM

GOV. STANTON
Jesus...

HOWARD
Oh, shit. We heard him having it.

ANNOUNCER-ON TV
...remains in a coma. His
condition is listed as critical...

BRAD LIEBERMAN
What do we do? The vote is in two
days.

GOV. STANTON
We go back to Mammoth Falls. Daisy
stays here and pulls the negative
ads.

HOWARD
Jack, I understand how you feel,
but we can still respectfully...

GOV. STANTON
We go back to Mammoth Falls.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - MAMMOTH FALLS

Reporters stand on the lawn like patient vultures.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - STUDY

Stanton, Henry, Howard, Lucille, Richard, Susan.

GOV. STANTON
I was so prideful. I was so fucking
smug...

SUSAN
There was no way you could know
this.

GOV. STANTON
We were going to whip his butt
anyway--I could've been gracious,
y'know? It would have been smarter.

As he speaks, a maid bustles in through the French doors and
whispers to Susan...who rises. Stanton breaks off.

GOV. STANTON
Jackie, okay?

SUSAN
Yes, yes. He's fine. Go ahead.
This is no time to stop the
meeting.

He begins pacing as she goes through the French doors.

GOV. STANTON
Harris is a smart guy--and he was
right on the damn issues--you know
that? Right.

As he speaks Henry's eyes move toward the French doors where Susan's silhouette is visible next to that of a second woman, a large, church-hatted woman. Henry sits, frozen, staring at the doors.

LUCILLE

He was a pompous sonofabitch and he rubbed your nose in it.

Henry's eyes meet Howard's. Howard, too, sits frozen.

GOV. STANTON

Yeah, and I rubbed his nose in it right back--but that's not how you win the big ones.

Richard suddenly looks toward Henry and Howard...and follows their eyes toward the French doors

GOV. STANTON

I don't know what do do now. I guess I'll have to fly back tonight and address the victory party. I'll try Mrs. Harris at the hospital again. She hasn't returned my calls. Can't blame her, can you?

INT. BRONCO

as it pulls out of the mansion driveway. Henry is at the wheel. Richard is beside him.

RICHARD

What the fuck was that in there? Who were you and Howard staring at?

HENRY

Nothing. No one.

RICHARD

Henry, I know "nothing" and I know "no one". That wasn't nothing and no one. Who was that woman with Susan? It looked like Whatshername, Fat Willie's wife. Why is she worth staring at? Henry, what the fuck is going on here?

HENRY

Nothing!

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - MAMMOTH FALLS

Henry sits, head in hands, watching the TV as Governor Stanton addresses his Florida victory party.

GOV. STANTON - ON TV

Tonight our thoughts and prayers
are with Lawrence Harris, and
Martha, and their children...

There is a knock. Henry goes to the door and opens it.
Susan walks in, closes the door, then turns and slaps him
across the face.

SUSAN

You sonofabitch. You heartless
sonofabitch. Amniocentesis? You
motherfucker.

HENRY

Susan...

She raises her hand to hit him again, then suddenly puts it
across her stomach, as if in pain and begins to sob,
convulsively. The sound punctuates Stanton's speech on TV.

HENRY

Susan, I...just...Susan...

He puts his arm around her...then smooths her hair back.
Her face is streaked with mascara, her nose is running. He
takes out a handkerchief and gently wipes her nose...then
kisses her eyes...then kisses her mouth.

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

I think the people of Florida will
understand if I forgo any talk of
victory or defeat and ask them to
join me in a moment of prayer...

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - HENRY

asleep on his back, mouth slightly open, face lit by cold,
early morning light. There is a sharp knock on the door and
he stirs, then frowns in his sleep. The knock sounds again
and Daisy's voice calls:

DAISY'S VOICE

Henry? Hello?

Henry's eyes fly open and he turns, the ANGLE WIDENING with
him to include the other side of the bed. It is empty.

DAISY

Henry!
(she pounds)
Come on!

He leaps out of bed, looks into the bathroom, then the
closet, then runs to the door and opens it. Daisy stands
there holding an overnight bag.

HENRY

When did you get here?

DAISY

Just now. With Stanton on the charter. What are you doing in your skin? It's 8:30. We have a meeting at the mansion at nine.

HENRY

Oh, right. Shit.

DAISY

Get dressed, I'll wait for you.

HENRY

No. You...you go on ahead. Really. I...we shouldn't both be late. Go on. Get out. Go.

He runs into the bathroom. Daisy sniffs, opens the window.

DAISY

Are you using hairspray as an air freshener? Why don't you just open the windows instead....

HENRY'S VOICE

Honey, please go on.

DAISY

How long will you be?

HENRY'S VOICE

Too long. Daisy, please don't wait for me.

DAISY

What's wrong. Are you afraid if we go in as a couple people will think we've been doing it?

HENRY'S VOICE

No, no, I just...it's an important meeting, New York campaign, Harris strategy...

DAISY

Okay, okay. Shall I tell them you'll be along in a few minutes?

HENRY

(sticking his head out)
NO! Don't tell them anything... just go. So you're on time. We don't want them to think, you know, that we were together...and fucking around...and that's why we're late.

DAISY
No. They might tell our parents.

HENRY
(sharply)
I don't want you wait for me,
Daisy. I don't want you to make
excuses for me. I want you to go
to the fucking meeting.

She stares at him for a moment, then turns and walks out.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - STUDY

They are all there--Richard, Howard, Lucille, Daisy, Brad Lieberman, Stanton, looking exhausted from his night flight, and Susan, crisp and groomed, her hair in a new style.

HOWARD
I know New York, Jack. Everything
is driven by the tabloids there--

GOV. STANTON
Where the fuck is Henry?

SUSAN
Brad, do we have New York numbers?

BRAD LIEBERMAN
You're at twenty-two and Harris is
running at eighteen percent
comatose.

The door opens and Henry comes in.

GOV. STANTON
Shit, Henry!

HENRY
Sorry.

SUSAN
(crisp, pleasant)
The Governor wants to get your
input on New York. How do you
think they'll take the thing with
Harris?

HENRY
(trying to find a safe
place to look)
Well...uh...Susan, first I think we
have to see if Harris is still in.

Daisy looks up at Henry, frowning. Richard looks over at Daisy looking at Henry, his eyes suddenly alert.

LUCILLE

If Harris is out, and Ozio doesn't change his mind and jump in--I say the game is ours by default.

SUSAN

(suddenly)

Oh, my God, this poor woman.....

She is looking at Lawrence Harris's wife on

TV - A HOSPITAL LOBBY - PRESS CONFERENCE

MRS. HARRIS

I want to thank you, all of you, for your remarkable outpouring of affection. It's obvious that my husband...

(her voice breaks)

...will not be able to continue his campaign for the presidency.

HOWARD

Fantastic!

(they all look at him)

I mean... You know what I mean.

MRS. HARRIS

...have asked our good friend, former governor Fred Picker of Florida, to carry on for us--to continue to raise the issues in a meaningful, honorable way...

(her voice breaks again)

And now let me turn this campaign over to Governor Picker.

LUCILLE

She's not too upset to give us a poke.

SUSAN

Give her a break. Her husband may be dying and she thinks Jack did it.

Fred Picker is crying too. He kisses Martha Harris lightly on the cheek. There is a scattering of applause.

FREDDY PICKER

I hope you'll excuse me. This is a very emotional time...

REPORTER

Mr....Governor Picker, do you think you can win the nomination?

FREDDY PICKER

I'm not trying to win the nomination. I'm just trying to continue what Senator Harris began, trying to give the American people an honest choice on the issues.

REPORTER

But if you won the nomination--

FREDDY PICKER

It would be premature for me to discuss that, since I haven't thought about it. What I have thought about is the best thing I can do to serve Senator Harris in this campaign--because I know that he believes in actions not words--and I figure the best action I can take is to go down and donate a pint of blood--because that's what he needs right now. And any of you fellas care to give a pint with me--I know the hospital would appreciate it.

There is a groan in the room from

A HOTEL SUITE - CHICAGO, ILL - THE STANTONS, ET AL

GOV. STANTON

Jesus Christ, Henry. We should've thought of that. The blood thing.

HOWARD

Great goddam move!

HENRY

How do we treat this guy? I mean, how do we run against him without running against him?

RICHARD

Well, first thing, you gotta expect he's gonna be the flavor of the week. And it's all gonna be golden. The TV stuff, the profiles. We're just gonna have to be patient and see what he does...

CLOSE SHOT - TV - LARRY KING LIVE

LARRY KING

Lawrence Harris has made several negative 30 second spots. And his pollsters have advised more. Will you keep going in that direction?

FREDDY PICKER

Nope. I won't be doing any spots. And I won't be having any polls. Because I won't be paying any pollsters. I don't want to hire a bunch of folks to tell me what you're thinking and how to get at you.

LARRY KING

Well...what exactly are you going to do?

FREDDY PICKER

I'm just going to talk straight.

INT. STANTON SUITE - DETROIT MICHIGAN

They are all there. Watching the TV. Riveted. Worried.

DAISY

Jesus Christ. Who is this guy?

RICHARD

Let's not panic. He's as much as admitted he's running--so now we're going to see some tarnish on the golden image. The media giveth...

CLOSE SHOT - TV - THE TODAY SHOW

BRYANT GUMBLE

There are always suspicions raised when a politician leaves office abruptly. Governor, why did you quit politics in 1978?

FREDDY PICKER

It was a lot of things. And there were personal problems.

BRYANT GUMBLE

I know this can't be easy for you to talk about.

FREDDY PICKER

No, it isn't, Bryant. But I guess it's part of the game now, so I'll be candid. What happened was I got too wrapped up in the business of being governor and began to neglect my family, and my wife fell in love with another man.

ON TV Bryant Gumble gasps.

IN A MOTEL ROOM - IN IOWA - THE STANTONS, ET AL

react to the starkness of Picker's words.

PICKER-ON TV

I quit, in part, to see if I could salvage my marriage. But I couldn't so I just...tried to make sure my boys knew that they had two parents who loved them. And I think if you ask them, they'll tell you that we made it through okay. They're in college now--and when Mrs. Harris asked me to do this, they were very enthusiastic. I guess you could say I'm doing it for them, too

RICHARD

Awesome. As good as I've ever seen.

HENRY

What do we do?

RICHARD

Now we panic.

INSERT - NEWSWEEK COVER

with a photo of Freddie Picker and the title Picker Fever!

INSERT - TIME COVER

Picker's photo and the line Make Room for Picker!

INSERT - PEOPLE MAGAZINE COVER

Freddie Picker and the line Pickermania!

CLOSE SHOT - BRAD LIEBERMAN

BRAD LIEBERMAN

Down three points.

CLOSE SHOT - HENRY ON THE PHONE

LIBBY'S VOICE

Hey, Amnio Man.

HENRY

How the hell did you find out?

CLOSE SHOT - LIBBY ON THE PHONE

LIBBY

It wasn't hard. Loretta talked to a schoolmate. A Current Affair just offered the schoolmate's family one hundred thousand dollars. They

(MORE)

LIBBY (cont'd)
 offered the Mcollisters two hundred
 and fifty thousand and Fat Willie
 threw 'em off the property and
 threatened to call the cops. I
 stashed the Mcollisters in a
 fishing shack in Montgomery County.
 I could fucking KILL Jack for this.

HENRY'S VOICE
 He says he's not the father,

LIBBY
 He's probably not. But it doesn't
 matter. Shit begets shit. Cashmere
 made ANYthing possible.

CLOSE SHOT - BRAD LIEBERMAN

BRAD LIEBERMAN
 Picker is up 3 more points. We're
 down 2. Blood donations are up 10.

INSERT - NEW YORK POST HEADLINE

It reads "STANTON'S BLACK LOVECHILD!"
 and below is a picture of Loretta Mcollister.

CLOSE SHOT - NORMAN ASHER

NORMAN ASHER
 Hi. I'm Norman Asher. I'm
 Governor Stanton's new consultant
 for the Apple. And I got to tell
 you folks, you could be fucked.

CLOSE SHOT - BRAD LIEBERMAN

BRAD LIEBERMAN
 We're down five per cent in the
 national polls.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - THE KITCHEN

They sit around the table, in various states of dis-
 hevelment. Coffee cups and half-eaten food is everywhere.

GOV. STANTON
 Can't I tell 'em I gave blood to
 disprove the charge and we're just
 waiting for the results...

RICHARD
 No. I don't like the contrast
 between why you gave blood and why
 Picker gave blood.

NORMAN ASHER

I agree. But it might be a good idea to get on a few TV shows like Oprah or Geraldo...

SUSAN

You mean strip away those last annoying little shreds of dignity and just wallow in trash?

GOV. STANTON

Look, why campaign in New York at all? What's the use?

SUSAN

(without looking at him)
You have to. We can't skip New York.

GOV. STANTON

They'll kill me.

SUSAN

No. It'll just feel like they have. But you'll survive. We all find a way to survive.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - JAMMED

Stanton moves through the crowd like a sleepwalker, a mob of cameras, paparazzi, screechers, reporters in pursuit.

There are feminists dressed as pigs carry placards saying, OINK! OINK! Blacks, Jews, Irish, Spanish...all angry, all shouting. A group of gay radicals call out: "BUGGER, BUGGER, BUGGER, BUGGER!"

ANGLE - RICHARD, HENRY

RICHARD

What the fuck does bugger, bugger bugger have to do with it,

HENRY

I guess it's the nicest thing they can think of to say about him.

A WOMAN

(screaming at Stanton)

You're a phoney! You're a pederast!
You're a sick hetero fuck!

INT. CAR - DRIVING

Stanton, Henry, Richard, Norman Asher.

GOV. STANTON

I don't know how much more of this
I can take.

RICHARD

Tomorrow we start working Connec-
ticut. Picker is speaking at a
rally there and we should hit at
the same time.

NORMAN ASHER

He can't tomorrow. He has to go to
Brooklyn and meet with the
Lubavitcher Rebbe.

RICHARD

What! Who the fuck decided that!

NORMAN ASHER

The Lubavitcher Rebbe. And you
can't win New York without him.

RICHARD

Governor...

GOV. STANTON

I...Norman knows about these things
... You go to the rally. I better
keep the appointment...

EXT. CONNECTICUT RALLY

Twenty thousand people. Booths outside all the entrances to
the stadium selling drop-of-blood lapel pins.

INSIDE THE GATES Richard, Henry, Daisy and Norman Asher are
down front. There is a roar as Picker comes up to the mike.
He waits until it dies down, slightly, then:

FREDDY PICKER

This is kind of overwhelming.

Several VOICES shout, "WE LOVE YOU, FREDDIE!" There are
explosions of shouts, people waving placards. Picker wipes
his face with a handkerchief.

RICHARD

He's nervous now. He's the man now.

FREDDY PICKER

I...I didn't expect this. And all
you folks giving blood in the tents
out back, I want to thank you.

The crowd erupts in a deafening roar of approval. Picker
holds up his hand.

FREDDY PICKER

Look, could you do me a favor and not cheer so loud.

There is laughter.

FREDDY PICKER

No, I really mean it. I really want everyone to calm down. And I guess I mean everyone, the press and the TV folks and my colleagues and the folks who make a living advising my colleagues--I think we all need to calm down.

The shouts and movement gradually slow and soften.

FREDDY PICKER

This is really a terrific country, but we get a little crazy sometimes. I guess that's part of what makes us great, it's part of our freedom. But we have to watch out. If we don't calm down, it all may just spin out of control. I mean, the world keeps getting more complicated and politicians keep having to explain it to you in simpler terms so we can get our little, over-simplified explanations on the evening news. And, eventually, instead of even trying to explain it, we just give up and sling mud at each other--and it's all to keep you folks excited, keep you watching, like you watch a car wreck or maybe wrestling. In fact, that's exactly what it's like--professional wrestling. It's fake, it's staged, it doesn't mean anything. Including the debates. Most of us don't hate our opponents. Hell, we don't even know 'em. We just don't know any other way to get you all riled up...

(looks out, smiles)

So...I guess that's what I want to do with this campaign, sort of calm things down a little, start having a conversation about the sort of place we want America to be in the next century. I want Governor Stanton to know I welcome him into the conversation--and the president, too, matter of fact, if he has the time. But that's what...

NORMAN ASHER
(calling out from the
audience)
Will you debate Governor Stanton
next Tuesday?

FREDDY PICKER
(looks out; squinting)
Are you asking a question or making
an appointment?

NORMAN ASHER
Both. I'm Norman Asher. I work
with the Governor. I invite you to
debate him next Tuesday on tele-
vision in a half hour debate. What
do you think folks? Would you like
to hear the candidates debate?

There is applause, sustained and rolling, but no wild
cheering, no untamed support.

FREDDY PICKER
Well, if you can get a show to give
us a half hour by next Tuesday--
I'll be there.

INT. GERALDO RIVERA STUDIO

A live audience sits out front. Stanton and Picker sit at a
round table drinking Diet coke and iced tea.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SUSAN, HENRY, RICHARD, NORMAN ASHER

Through the window of the control booth we see and hear
Geraldo address the candidates.

GERALDO RIVERA
Well, O-Kay. This show is all
your's. You gentlemen know the
rules. No chair-tossing, no claw
holds, three falls and I come in to
stop the bout.

Stanton smiles, Picker nods, seriously.

RICHARD
I hope he doesn't lose it.
Geraldo's gonna go for him and
Picker is very smooth.

SUSAN
He won't lose it.

NORMAN ASHER
Frankly, folks, he doesn't have
anything to lose.

GERALDO RIVERA

...are the father of a child by a teenage girl. You've denied this, but the girl and her family have disappeared. What on earth is going on?

HENRY

Shit!

NORMAN ASHER

No. It's good it's out there. Now if Jack just keeps the answer short...

GOV. STANTON

...family involved are good people, friends of mine. I spoke with the father just before they went to their undisclosed location, and he apologized for causing me so much trouble and said he was taking his family away until all the craziness simmered down...

FREDDY PICKER

I think that's all we have to know, Jack. Don't you folks?

There is a beat of hesitation...and then reluctant applause.

NORMAN ASHER

This putz is working our street.

GOV. STANTON

Fred, I'd like to ask you a question. I know you and Senator Harris favor an energy tax to help lower the deficit. Have you given much thought to how that's going to affect working people in America-- so they don't get whomped?

FREDDY PICKER

Well, I haven't worked out the details. You know, most of this stuff we have to negotiate out with the Congress. And sometimes we change our minds.

GOV. STANTON

Right, and sometimes we change our minds before we even get to Congress--usually right after a poll.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH

A MAN

Camera two.

There is a CUT to Geraldo, standing off to the side, chuckling. The audience immediately laughs.

NORMAN ASHER

That's not bad. A laugh's not bad.

GOV. STANTON

....In fact, early on, I proposed a middle class tax cut. Senator Harris disagreed with that and, looking back, I think he was probably right. But I've been thinking, Governor Picker--and I'd like to get your feeling on it-- what about a combination of his idea and mine. An energy tax and a rebate to folks at, or below, incomes of fifty thousand. Maybe an increased tax deduction for each member of their family.

FREDDY PICKER

Well, I'd have to work out the details...but wouldn't you be favoring the folks who had more children?

Richard and Henry look at each other, incredulously.

RICHARD

Jesus Christ--he's actually listening to him.

GOV. STANTON - ON TV

....have a deductions-per-family cut off if you like.

PICKER-ON TV

But can you bottom-line that? What would the net revenue gain be? We do need to reduce the deficit.

RICHARD

This is truly bizarre. Picker is just sittin' there havin' a policy discussion with Jack Stanton like there was no audience.

HENRY

Sets must be clicking off all over the country.

INT. STUDIO

GERALDO RIVERA

Hey, guys, you mind if we get some questions from the audience? Yes?

An ELDERLY BLACK MAN rises.

MAN

Well, I can't follow all of what you fellahs are talkin' 'bout, but I been sitting here listenin' to you, and it sure sounds a lot different from the usual. Even I can see you ain't trying to rip each other apart. Maybe you're even tryin' to work things out a little.

GERALDO RIVERA

Excuse me, sir, but do you have a question?

A MAN

Yeah, I guess it's this. Any way we can get you both?

INSIDE THE BOOTH

Susan, suddenly bursts into tears. Norman Asher, bewildered, pats her hand. In the studio Geraldo goes to a commercial. Richard turns to Henry.

RICHARD

I've never seen one quite like Picker before...

HENRY

Maybe he's the only one. Maybe he's the real thing.

RICHARD

You know your problem, Hotchkiss? You've got gallopin' TB.

HENRY

You don't mean tuberculosis, right?

RICHARD

No. I mean True Believerism. You talk like a pro, you act like a pro, but inside you're like...like Libby--who actually goes crazy when her candidate turns out not to be the church her rock was built on. Did you know she was a volunteer for Picker in '74? Wore a button

(MORE)

RICHARD (cont'd)
 that said: "I'm a Picker Person"
 and when he quit the race, she
 didn't even try to get the goods on
 why--she just nosedived.

HENRY
 He told us why.

RICHARD
 What? He wanted to stay home with
 his kids? "I'd rather be dad than
 president." Get the fuck outa here.

CLOSE SHOT - ANCHORMAN ON TV

ANCHORMAN - ON TV
 ...polls taken after the debate
 show that Governor Picker still has
 a substantial lead, but there has
 been an incredible five percent
 increase for Governor Stanton...

There is a SHARP KNOCK...and the ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL
 Henry as he goes to answer the door in

HENRY'S MOTEL ROOM

Daisy stands outside the door, dressed in a coat and gloves.

HENRY
 What are you all dressed up for?

DAISY
 My plane. I came to say goodbye.

HENRY
 What do you mean?

DAISY
 I mean Norman Asher's been pretty
 damned impressive and he's got his
 own people and although no one said
 "get out" it is kind of me or
 him...so...

HENRY
 But...Jesus...Daisy...

DAISY
 So--we can't use this campaign as a
 reason to sleep together anymore.
 And I guess what I want to know is
 what's going to happen with us.
 Any ideas?

HENRY

What do you mean? Nothing will happen with us. I mean, nothing will change...

DAISY

Come on, Henry, everything will change. I won't be in the loop anymore. I won't be living next door. And...I know there was someone else when we started. Is there still?

(there is a pause)

Okay. That's a pretty good answer.

HENRY

Wait a minute...

HENRY'S VOICE

Why? Hey, listen, you don't have to explain. We never had a deal so you're not breaking it.

HENRY

I hate that. I hate that clear-eyed, practical, "We never made a deal"... "This is campaign sex"... "We're pros" shit. It's just... fucking chilling.

DAISY

On the other hand, I wasn't in love with someone else when we went to bed and I didn't screw anyone else after we went to bed--no, DON'T say anything, it'll only be a lie--just don't knock the pros. We make life very easy for you warm-blooded people.

HENRY

Don't do this, Daisy...

DAISY

I'm sorry. All done. Come on down and say goodbye to Richard. You'll see. It won't be hard.

INT. LOBBY - RICHARD, HENRY

RICHARD

Hey, I'm just taking a little leave of absence. I mean I can't stick around here and take marching orders from Norman Asher. We come from different parts of the jungle--so let him have his day. This thing's 'bout gone anyway.

HENRY

I can't believe this.

RICHARD

Why? Look, Henry, I been through this shit a hundred times. That's what these guys do. They love you, they stop lovin' you. They say, "I'm payin' this guy ten thousand dollars a month and he ain't made me God just yet, so fuck 'im" and maybe they're right.

HENRY

But Stanton is different.

RICHARD

Yeah, he is different. He was worth it. Take care of your ass, Hotchkiss. See you next time.

He gives him a quick hug...and walks away.

INT. STANTON SUITE - THE STANTONS, ASHER, HOWARD, LUCILLE, A FEW STRANGE FACES

NORMAN ASHER

I'm very sorry to lose Daisy...and Richard but we're all pros and we know these things happen. Now I want to talk about Picker... something Richard said about Picker. I want to find out--why did Picker quit in 74?

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE - MAMMOTH FALLS - DAY

Bright and beautiful.

INSIDE THE HOUSE

Libby sits with the Stantons and Henry.

LIBBY

The only thing I ever heard about was a condo development named Tidewater Estates... where the state matched money for the county to build a connecting road.

HENRY

And...?

LIBBY

Nothing specific. The project was being developed by a guy named
(MORE)

LIBBY (cont'd)
Edgardo Reyes. And Edgardo Reyes is
the brother of Antonia Reyes who
is--

GOV. STANTON
Picker's former wife.
(he whistles)
Who else knows about this? Has
anybody followed it up?

LIBBY
No.

GOV. STANTON
Well, let's GO.
(Libby does not answer)
What?

LIBBY
I'm trying to decide...

GOV. STANTON
Decide what?

LIBBY
Whether I want to DO THIS for you,
you stupid SHIT. I bust dust. I
protect you. I don't do in the
opponent...

GOV. STANTON
What the fuck is the difference?

LIBBY
All the difference in the world.
All the moral difference in the
world. I'm not too interested in
tearing Freddy Picker down.

SUSAN
And if he's bent? If he's a crook?

LIBBY
It'll out.

GOV. STANTON
Yes, but when? Say he wins the
nomination--and then it comes out.
(he hands her a sheet of
paper)
Look at this, Libby. It's the
results of the blood test Dr.
Beauregard gave me.

LIBBY
(reading it)
Congratulations. This oughta help.

GOV. STANTON

But it won't. And you know it. It won't matter that my blood doesn't match Loretta's baby. It won't matter that I can't possibly be the father. The only way it would matter is if I were the father-- because guilty is what's interesting. Now am I supposed to live by these rules and let Picker slide in on a special pass because you were a Picker Person in the 70's?

LIBBY

You mean injustice for all? That's a stupid fucking argument.

SUSAN

Okay--but this isn't. Picker could be guilty of fraud, or a tax swindle. If he used influence to help his brother-in-law he's not fit to be president. He could be a real shit. You've got to forget who you thought he was, Libby. You've got to find out who he really is.

There is a pause. Then she rises.

LIBBY

(to Henry)
Get packed.

EXT. CAR - FLORIDA CAUSEWAY - HENRY, LIBBY

Libby, now in a pink and red mumu, is driving.

LIBBY'S VOICE

We are in limbo now, Henry. We are...outside the mainstream. We are...in purgatory. We are...lost.

HENRY'S VOICE

Libby, if you don't shut up I'm going to kill myself.

LIBBY'S VOICE

...We are testing our limits. We are in the pits. You remember 'Limbo Rock'? You remember the words? 'How loooooowwwww can you gooooooo?'

The door on the passenger side opens.

LIBBY'S VOICE

Alright, alright.

The door slams shut.

EXT. SOUTH BEACH - L'AFRIQUE HOTEL

Henry and Libby get out of the car and go into

THE LOBBY OF L'AFRIQUE HOTEL

It is like a carnal theme park. The bellboys are beefcake, dressed as native bearers, bare-chested in loincloth and sandals. The lobby is "Afrique", all palms and masks and spears and vegetation and thatch on the walls. There are zebra skins and leopard prints everywhere.

LIBBY

BUMMERRR.

HENRY

Too sedate, Lib?

LIBBY

The guidebook made it sound much more bicoastal.

(she looks at her watch)

Reyes should be here. Let's check the bar.

HENRY

Is there a reason we're meeting him in Neo-bwana land instead of his office.

LIBBY

No recording devices. And I've always wanted to see this hotel.

INT. BAR

Waiters in pith helmets and sarongs drift by. The low, piped-in music is Olatunji and Drums of Passion plays.

Libby, Henry and EDDIE REYES sit at a corner table under an enormous palm frond sipping tall drinks with umbrellas in them. Reyes wears a white suit and an open silk shirt, with a gold cross glittering on his bare chest, a Rolex, and a diamond stud earring.

EDDIE REYES

Yes, my sister was married to the governor when I was in business with her. And, yes, I hired the governor's brother. I thought you knew that, Libby.

LIBBY

...and you were trying to get action from the governor for the Tidewater Estates?

EDDIE REYES

They'll have to prove that.

LIBBY

They don't have to prove anything, Eddie. It's gonna look like shit if they allege it.

EDDIE REYES

I am absolutely heartbroken about that. I had so wished that Freddy would get to be president. But, I must say, if the mother-fucker has to go down, it would be just too fucking perfect if he went down over Tidewater. Yes, I had this business. And yes, I hoped that having the governor as a brother-in-law wouldn't be a...liability. But it was. Money was falling from the clouds in those days. But Senor Recto--Mr. Righteous, Governor Picker--wouldn't cut me any slack.

At his words, the faces of Henry and Libby, illuminated by the pink bar lights, almost seem to glow with religious fire.

EDDIE REYES

I had a fucking consortium ready to roll--and Freddy said, 'No way.' So we did Tidewater straight up, like every other fucking condo--and that motherfucker still wanted to line item veto it. It would be God's little joke if they nailed him for it anyway, wouldn't it?

LIBBY

Are you trying to tell me that Freddie didn't know you hired his wife and brother to get to him.

EDDIE REYES

Know? Absolutely not.

LIBBY

Thank you, Mr. Reyes. My friend and I are more grateful than we can say.

EDDIE REYES

"Know". What the fuck did he know? He was half stoned most of the time.

LIBBY

(after a moment)
Stoned?

EDDIE REYES

Oh, dear, I really have gone and said something I oughtn't. Haven't I? Mr. Recto's staffers don't like to hear that.

LIBBY

Stoned how?

EDDIE REYES

(singing)
"Toot toot tootsie goodbye".
You two look disappointed. You didn't know he was a fucking maricon cokehead?

LIBBY

Wait a minute. Co--

EDDIE REYES

Cocaine. He loved the shit. Hell, we all loved the shit--but he's the only one of us who's a candidate for sainthood.

HENRY

I'm afraid that's a little hard to buy. I mean...it just doesn't fit.

EDDIE REYES

Maybe not now but twenty years ago? Almost everyone was doing everything, right, Libby? You remember when people were saying cocaine was about as dangerous as marijuana. Word was, down here, they were even tooting up in the White House.

LIBBY

But where would Freddie score? How could he keep it that quiet in the governor's mansion.

EDDIE REYES

There was a guy...Lorenzo Delgado, upper-class Cuban--a lawyer. He and the governor knew each other, socially, so, of course, it was perfectly all right. The joke is that Delgado just got out of prison and now lives in a halfway house in Hialeah. And recto Freddy is about to be president.

LIBBY

Yeah. That is a joke. Must get a lot of laughs when you tell it at dinner parties.

EDDIE REYES

Hey, I don't talk about Freddy. I'm talkin' to you cause you're from his campaign. I mean, I get pissed when I think of it because--what the fuck is that--drugs but no deals? But I don't want Freddy to go down because of my sister, who's put her life together okay now, and my nephews. It's just...I'm not the only guy in town knows this, you know. Aah, he shoulda never gotten back into the game. Now he'll go down. This is America. You can bank on it.

INT./EXT - THE CAR - SPEEDING BACK ACROSS THE CAUSEWAY

They sit in silence, then:

HENRY

Libby, let's go home. If Picker didn't swindle anyone and he isn't a crook...why do we have to find out about the drugs?

LIBBY

Because I have to know.

EXT. A HALFWAY HOUSE IN HIALEAH - LATE AFTERNOON

It is larger, older and more austere than the other houses in the neighborhood, which are small, pastel, teeming with children and music and immigrant optimism.

Henry and Libby ring the bell. An answering buzzer sounds.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL

The ceiling is painted dark blue, with small stars and angels. There are two posters on the walls: a flowery One Day at a Time and a photo of a gay pride march, with the words We're Here... Get Used to It. A chunky HISPANIC WOMAN sits in a cubicle, reading a novela.

LIBBY

Lorenzo Delgado?

A WOMAN

On the porch. Through there

They walk through a narrow, depressing hallway

INT. COMMON ROOM

dominated by a big-screen television. THREE MEN sit watching a Spanish soap opera. One has the distinctive purplish festers of Kaposi's sarcoma, another is bundled in a sweater, glassy-eyed and coughing; the third is tethered to an intravenous pole. Past them we can see

A SCREEN ENCLOSED PORCH

LORENZO DELGADO is alone on it, a small man, sitting on a chaise, smoking. He looks up as Henry and Libby enter.

LIBBY

Mr. Delgado? We're here about
Freddy Picker.

RENZO

(in a hoarse, gravelly
voice)

Oh. Are you from the campaign?
I've been expecting you. You can
tell Freddy he has nothing to fear
from me. Nothing. You understand?
This happened after him. I fucked
my brains out in jail, not much
else to do there and there were so
many boys who spent all day in the
gym, working on their bodies. I
like this porch but I can't do it
all the time. Depends on the
weather. It's strange--my body
temperature is always off, one way
or another. Too hot or too cold. It
never feels just right. Sometimes
the tiniest breeze can set me off,
shivering-- and I can't do anything
about it, can't turn it off, just
have to ride with it.

(he smiles at Henry)

So, are you Freddy's friend now?

INT./EXT - THE CAR

Libby driving. Henry beside her.

LIBBY

You just knew it was gonna be GOOD!
You just knew it was gonna be IRRE-
SISTIBLE. And this has EVERYfuck-
ingTHING: SEX! DRUGS! CORRUPTION!
And NONE of it--none of it, Henry,
my man--NONE OF IT is clear-cut
venality. It's all kind of... human
and awful and sad and lovely and
luscious. So now we'll find out.

HENRY

Find out what? We just found out.

LIBBY

Don't play dumb with me, Henry. THIS IS A TEST. Of us and them. Actually, of us and them and us again. We just passed the entrance exam. We did what we do: we got the dirt. Now it's about THEM! About Jack and Susan, What are THEY going to DO with it? I mean, little buddy, isn't that really what we're both after here? I mean, after twenty fucking years, I get to see what THEY're about--not just hypothesize, not just HOPE. This is it. Graduation day. They graduate or I do. Tell the truth, Henry, isn't this what you're really after, too?

HENRY

Watch the road, Libby, goddammit!

LIBBY

Isn't it?

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - THE STUDY

Howard, Lucille, the Stantons watch as Libby and Henry walk in. Libby walks up to Howard and Lucille.

LIBBY

GET OUT! OUT!

Howard and Lucille look at Jack and Susan. Libby catches the look.

LIBBY

Ohhh, KAYYYYY. If it's a contest-- stay!

(she turns to go)

SUSAN

No, wait.

She nods toward Howard and Lucille who rise...and then walk angrily toward the door. Lucille turns to Libby.

LUCILLE

(angrily)
You know, Libby....

LIBBY

Out...OUT, out...OUT.

She barks like a dog. They go out.

SUSAN
Can I stay?

LIBBY
Always.
(she smiles)
Sweetheart.

GOV. STANTON
Is all this really necessary?

LIBBY
(a sudden Scottish burr)
NO! But it's what happens when you
send a LUNATIC to do a mannnn's
work. So here, Governor--feast your
eyes,
(she tosses Stanton a
manilla envelope)
You too, m'lady.
(hands a file to Susan)
Henry...a transcript of our tour.
(hands Henry a copy)

There is a silence as the three of them read...and then
Stanton whistles, softly, and looks up.

GOV. STANTON
Remarkable. How on earth did he
ever think he could get away with
this?
(to Susan)
What do we do with this?

SUSAN
The Times? Or maybe The Wall Street
Journal--more authoritative, in a
way. Through an intermediary.
Someone not associated with the
campaign.

LIBBY
I don't think so.

GOV. STANTON
What do you mean?

LIBBY
I don't think there's anything of
use here.

GOV. STANTON
You've gotta be kidding.

LIBBY
(sliding down on the
floor, knees up)
Nope. It doesn't meet my
standards.

SUSAN
What on earth do you mean?

LIBBY
I mean, madame, Henry and I don't
think the use of this material is
proper. We have a moral objection.
And I have a historical beef.

GOV. STANTON
'Awww c'mon, Libby. If you weren't
gonna use it, why'd you go look for
it?

LIBBY
Because Susan was right. He
could've been a real shit. I didn't
think he would be, and he isn't,
but he could have been. But Jackie,
my dearest—you are off the
fucking point. The point is: WE
DON'T DO THIS SORT OF THING! Oh, I
will be relentless busting dust and
guarding your ass—I'd've even
blown Randy Culligan's weenie off
for you. Well, maybe I would have.
But this is something else again.
This is hurting someone else. This
SUCKS. You want to know exactly
why this sucks? Because YOU TOLD ME
SO. You remember when, Jackie? Let
me refresh your memory.

She pulls three 8 by 10's out of her satchel and passes them
to Jack, Susan and Henry.

INSERT - HENRY'S POV - PHOTOS

of three very young people in the 70's. Jack and Susan,
incredibly beautiful and young with long hair and untouched
faces...and in the middle, libby, towering over both of them,
smiling, proudly...a hundred pounds thinner and wearing a
neat dress and high heels.

LIBBY
Weren't they gorgeous, Henry?

HENRY
Yeah, but look at you.

LIBBY

You little shit, I TOLD you I used to have a waist.

GOV. STANTON

Libby...

LIBBY

Oh hush UP. Don't ruin it. You remember when this was? You don't, do you.

SUSAN

The Miami headquarters in '72.

LIBBY

Yeah. This was taken just after the convention, Henry. I'll never forget that convention--

SUSAN

Libby, for Chrissake, what are you doing? What's the point?

LIBBY

The point is EAGLETON. You remember, Jack? I must have known you what, two days then? We hear that McGovern has chosen a vice president who had electric shock treatments...and for the first time I actually consider the possibility that we might lose to that fuckbrain Nixon. Before that, I was absolutely convinced we would win. Can you imagine, Henry? We were so fucking YOUNG. And this one, this one...

(she nods toward Stanton)

...he takes me out, we go to this little open-air Cuban joint, and I've got my head in my hands. Life has ended. And I say "THEY did it--the CIA. It had to be the CIA." I couldn't believe that Tom Eagleton would really be a nutcase. They had to have dragged him off and drugged him and made him crazy. It couldn't have been that McGovern was just--a COMPLETE FUCKING AMATEUR. No, they did dirty tricks. And I said to Jack, "We gotta get the same capability as the CIA." You remember, Jack? "We gotta be able to do dirt, too." And you said, "No. Our job is to END all that. Our job is to make it clean.

(MORE)

LIBBY (cont'd)

Because if it's clean, we win--
because our ideas are better." You
remember that, Jack?

(Libby's eyes have filled
with tears)

GOV. STANTON

(gently)

It was a long time ago.

SUSAN

Libby, you said it yourself. We
were young. We didn't know how the
world worked. Now we know. We know
that if we don't move on this
Picker situation, two things will
happen. The first is, we're dead.
Everything we've worked for since
Miami twenty years ago dies. And
fast. The second thing that happens
is, someday---very soon--when the
romance dies, when they've gotten
sick of Freddy Picker's quiet,
righteous act, when they want to
pull his wings off, some enter-
prising journalist will stumble
onto this. And if he doesn't, the
Republicans will lead him to it, on
their timetable, next fall. It'll
be another Eagleton-- only it'll be
our fault this time, for letting it
happen. Your fault, Libby.

LIBBY

Honey, you may be right, all of it
may be right...but we can't do it.
Because it just ain't who we're
supposed to be.

GOV. STANTON

(after a moment)

Maybe we could leak part of it, the
Tidewater stuff--we know the
Republicans have that.

SUSAN

Oh Christ, Jack! And you don't
think they're gonna have the rest
any day now? You think Reyes is
only going to tell this story once.
I'm sorry, Libby. There's just no
discussion.

LIBBY

You're right. None. Henry and me
have already decided. This dies
here.

SUSAN

I don't think so.

LIBBY

I'm sorry, sweetheart, but it does.
And here's why.

(takes a manilla folder
from her satchel)

You know what this is? Test results
on Jack's blood and Uncle Charlie's
blood taken over the years.

(takes out one page)

And this? This is the blood test
report Jack gave me that proves
he's not the father of Loretta
McCollister's baby. And you know
what, Jack? It's not your blood.
Isn't that a riot? The blood
sample that Dr. Beauregard took was
not from you--it was from Uncle
Charlie. You sent him to have his
blood tested in your place because
you know good old Dr. Beauregard
loves you and wants to teach "these
yawnkees a lesson". But he's not
gonna love you enough to lose his
license, Jack. Once he knows I
have proof he'll fold like a cheap
accordian. I know that won't prove
you are the father of Loretta's
baby, but it proves you think you
might be, and that proves you
fucked her. And that will kill
you're chances.

SUSAN

(after a moment)

You would do that? You would end
his political career?

LIBBY

See, Jack? She hasn't even heard.
She isn't even upset that you
fucked your seventeen year old
babysitter. You know why? Because
it's never the cheat who goes to
hell, it's always the guy who he
cheated on. And that's why you can
still talk in that tender-hearted
voice about being in it for the
folks... and Susie here can only
talk in that voice from hell about
your political career. Now what
kind of shit is that, Jack? Oh,
excuse me--I forgot. It's the same
old shit. It's the shit that no one
ever calls you on. Ever. Because

(MORE)

LIBBY (cont'd)
you're so completely fucking
SPECIAL. Because everyone was
always so PROUD of you. And me too.
Me the worst. It just makes it a
whole lot easier for me. I mean,
it's totally depressing. What have
I been doing this for, my whole
pathetic fucking life? So, here's
the deal. If you move on Freddy
Picker, who--I think we all agree--
is a flawed but decent man, I move
on you.

(she wipes the tears from
her eyes)

Yes. I will destroy this village
in order to save it.

She turns and runs from the room. Henry starts after her.

SUSAN

Henry...

He does not stop.

INT. CHEROKEE JEEP - DRIVING

Henry at the wheel, Libby beside him, writing furiously,
tears streaming down her face onto the paper.

HENRY

Is that for me?

LIBBY

No, darling. Where are we?

HENRY

Just coming up to my beautiful
condo by the river. Want to come in
for some coffee? Booze? Diet coke?

She shakes her head...and Henry pulls up next to the river
bank. Libby hands him the note and the manilla folder.

LIBBY

Deliver this for me, will you,
darling? I'm not going to use it.

HENRY

You're giving them the blood test
info? You're letting them off the
hook?

LIBBY

Why not? Picker will go down
anyway. We can't save him. The

(MORE)

LIBBY (cont'd)
whole point of this was to see if
they'd turn him in--and they will.
They didn't even fucking hesitate.
(she wipes her eyes)
So that's that.

HENRY
Let 'em swing, Libby. Let 'em
sweat a little.

LIBBY
Oh, honey...
(she blows her nose)
You see that moon?

Henry peers out.

IN THE STILL-LIGHT SKY - A BIG PALE MOON

LIBBY'S VOICE
That's me. Beautiful, huh? Very
impressive to the earthlings...

ANGLE - HENRY, LIBBY

LIBBY
...but, Henry, it's only reflected
light. It needs the sun. And the
Stanton's are my sun. I lived my
life drawing light and warmth from
them. Without them, I'm black and
cold and airless for eternity--and
they don't fucking need me at all.
All they need is to glow. But I
can't hurt 'em. I can't fuck
around with the sun.
(she begins crying again)
You be careful, Henry. You still
have something of an atmosphere.
Don't worry about light. Just find
yourself a life. Okay?

She leans over and kisses him on the cheek. He puts his
arms around her and they remain in an embrace...until she
pulls away.

LIBBY
Go home now. Careful crossing the
road.

He opens the car door, reluctantly.

HENRY
Can you find your way from here?

LIBBY

Oh, sure. From here? There are
only two ways you can go from here.
'Bye, sweetie.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He is asleep. A half-packed suitcase sits on the dresser.
Gradually, the darkness thins until the room is filled with
the blue light of very early morning.

A red light is beating against Henry's window, growing
fainter and stronger, like a spinning sun. Henry opens his
eyes and lies watching it, blankly, for a moment...then sits
bolt upright, fully awake, and shouts:

HENRY

NO!

He jumps out of bed, runs to the window

HI-ANGLE - THE RIVER

Three police cars with spinning red lights are parked by the
river's edge...and a little behind them is an ambulance. All
three vehicles are lined up beside Libby's red Cherokee
jeep.

The CAMERA moves slowly through the window toward the scene
below...and, gradually, we begin to see an hysterical COUPLE
standing beside one of the police cars. TWO POLICEMAN stand
beside the open front door of the jeep where Libby's body is
still visible inside, sitting erect, head cocked, arm
hanging down, as if pulled by the weight of the gun in her
hand. There is a neat black hole in her temple with an ooze
of blood around it.

Henry runs toward her, hands up, as if to ward off what he
is about to see. A POLICEMAN steps in front of him.

HENRY

No, no, please. She's a friend of
mine.

(he looks at the body in
the car)

She's a very close friend of mine.
(he begins to cry)

EXT. A WHITE CLAPBOARD CHURCH - MAMMOTH FALLS

Dogwood trees bloom beneath the yellow, spring sun, and in
the distance there is the sound of a lawnmower, a dog
barking, children's voices.

INT. CHURCH

It is jammed with mourners. A large walnut coffin stands in front of the altar. Henry sits on the left next to Jennifer Rogers. Susan Stanton sits across from him on the right. The windows are open and the trees rustle gently outside. Jack Stanton stands at the altar, speaking quietly.

GOV. STANTON

...a lot of us here today grew up with Libby Holden. She was our friend, and our big sister. She bullied us, and drove us crazy and, worst of all--

As he speaks the CAMERA begins panning the faces near the altar... Lucille, Howard, Sailorman, Susan...

GOV. STANTON'S VOICE

--she remembered everything about us, everything we hoped to be and wanted the world to be. All those young promises we made that get restated with time--Libby remembered in the original wording.

ANGLE - STANTON

GOV. STANTON

Before she died, she wrote me a note. It said...

(he reads from a slip of paper)

"I am so fucking disappointed in you. SHAPE UP!"

There is a gasp...and then soft laughter. He looks up.

GOV. STANTON

I'm so sorry I disappointed her, my friend, my big sister. I'm so sorry that I can't look at her and say "I promise to do better." She came into our lives when we had our highest energy, our best hope...and she lent us her courage and her warmth...and her madness. She had...

(his voice breaks)

...the most amazing heart. The most pure and blazing spirit.

(he controls his voice)

I cannot imagine life without that heart.

EXT. CHURCH

They file out, quietly. Stanton has his arm around Susan, who is weeping aloud, like a child. Daisy comes up to Henry.

DAISY

Are you okay?

HENRY

I will be. I have to fly to Florida with Stanton--to see Fred Picker. And then I'm handing in my resignation. And then I'll be okay.

DAISY

You're quitting.

HENRY

Oh, yes, ma'am. I'm going to do something small and honorable--maybe work for The Black Advocate, or help with voter registration. I am going to become a Stevensonian Democrat.

DAISY

Oh, yeah? My mother used to talk about Adlai Stevenson--and what a good man he was and how his party pressed him into accepting the candidacy--and how he lost the election because he wouldn't stoop to what the other guys did, and how he was appointed UN ambassador and died while defending some shitty U.S. policy. And I always thought--well, he should have lost the election. It's not enough to be a good man--you've also got to want to be president. And if you're such a good man, how come you turn into a mouthpiece for the guy who beat you.

HENRY

(after a moment; coldly)
...And your point is?

DAISY

No point. Anyway...
(holds out her hand)
It will be nice for you--to work for The Black Advocate. I know you have a friend there.

HENRY

That's not why...

DAISY

Hey, it's okay. Whatever.

HENRY

I could just kill you when you do that.

DAISY

Yes, I know. I should be more upset about this other woman so you can explain...

HENRY

No! Shit, no!...maybe just so I know where you stand.

DAISY

Oh, I see. You mean--if I'm upset enough--maybe you'll leave her for me. You just have to know how much I want you in advance...so you don't have to go after me. Or even--God forbid--call me. So corrupt--to actually go after something...

Some of the mourners turn to look as her voice rises.

HENRY

I've never said anything even resembling that...

DAISY

But that's who you are. You have to be pressed into everything. By Stanton. By Libby. By Susan...

HENRY

This is a fucking funeral! Could you lower your voice.

DAISY

The ethical mouthpiece. Well, if you choose me, Henry, it will have to be because you want me. Not because you owe me.

HENRY

Fine.

DAISY

Great.

HENRY

And I happen to think Adlai Stevenson was a great man.

DAISY
Maybe--but it didn't do anyone much
good, did it?

She turns and marches off. Henry starts after her...

HENRY
Wait!...
(softly)
Please...

She continues on. He does not follow her.

EXT. FLORIDA FARM COUNTRY - AN OLD BUICK - LATE AFTERNOON

Henry and Stanton are in the back seat, behind an elderly DRIVER. They are driving down a dirt road flanked by large oaks draped with Spanish moss. Stanton's eyes dart constantly toward Henry. They are curious, wary.

GOV. STANTON
Long trip.
(Henry nods; peering out)
No press that I can see.

HENRY
(glancing at the Driver)
Not yet.

EXT. THE PICKER FARM

They have passed through a white fence onto a vast circular drive with a large plaster fountain in the middle.

The plantation style house is set back, white and elegant. Picker's two sons run around the side, throwing a ball over the head of an excited Golden Retriever. The dog barks and runs toward the car in a goofy, excited welcome.

CLOSE SHOT - THE DOOR TO THE HOUSE

opens and Picker stands there, holding up his hand in a gesture of greeting.

INT. DEN

Bookshelves and plaid wallpaper. Picker sits across from Stanton and Henry, reading the contents of a manilla envelope.

GOV. STANTON

...it's the only copy left. I want you to have it because it might help you to know what others are going to be digging after, and maybe finding. I should never have looked for it. I'm really sorry.

Picker looks up from the papers.

FREDDY PICKER

Fucking cocaine. You know, I was so successful in everything. Business, politics--I could handle anything--except cocaine. But I didn't know that--because of the cocaine. That was really what fucked up my marriage not... anything else.

(a pause; then to Henry)

So is Renzo pretty far gone?

HENRY

He's hanging in there.

FREDDY PICKER

Good. I can't say I ever knew him very well. It was just a coke thing. I mean, since I could do anything--I did that, too. I've been seeing a really nice woman--I suppose I'll have to tell her. A helluva price to pay.

GOV. STANTON

Maybe no one will find out.

FREDDY PICKER

You found out. In a day. I shouldn't have said yes to Mrs. Harris. I just...I liked what Harris was doing and I figured I'll do it for a week. And then it just took off. I mean, once I did the blood thing...

GOV. STANTON

It was great politics.

FREDDY PICKER

Amazing, wasn't it? It was completely unplanned. I just blurted it out...and it got that great reaction. And then...as soon as they put the needle in my arm, it was like an electric shock: Why am I doing this?, I thought. This

(MORE)

FREDDY PICKER (cont'd)

is nuts. And then I began to obsess about the blood. I added up the years since Renzo. Fourteen years. That's a long time, right? I searched my mind: hadn't my blood been tested a dozen times since then? Wouldn't they test for that? But maybe they didn't do it if you didn't ask them to--maybe it was a privacy issue, given gay rights and all. Was it possible that I'd never actually been tested for AIDS? I never even thought about the other things I'd done that the press would consider "scandalous"--the parties, the coke, Renzo--those things were so far in the past--and they had so little to do with who I'd become. It was...silly that I could be destroyed by them. It only hit me when I saw those headlines about you...and the black girl--that those parties I'd been down to in Dade were just crawling with jerks who might give me up. And there was Renzo. All I could think of at the rally in Connecticut was, "I'm fucked. They're gonna find me out, and then they're gonna do to me what they're doing to Jack Stanton." And I tried to calm them down so I could back away...get ready to drop out. And, of course, the exact opposite happened. Every last thing that came out of my mouth got them even more worked up. It was like some stupid fairy-tale curse, a King Midas thing. Everything I tried to do to shut it down only made it bigger, and then it got so big I just couldn't bring myself to end it. It was so much power, so much love. And every day I got up wondering if this would be the day they found me out. It was so consuming that sitting here, looking at you now... I think, how did you wake up in the morning when they were pulverizing you? How did you just get up and face the world, knowing they're going to tear your lungs out today, make you seem a crook and a fool and a liar, same as yesterday? I'm curious because it's a skill I'll probably be needing.

GOV. STANTON

I don't rightly know. But I think that, maybe, aside from lovin' the part you talked about, the power and the game of it and all--I've got a need for all those people. I need to shake their hands and put an arm around them and try and make their lives a little better. I just ...need it.

FREDDY PICKER

(after a moment)

That's a better reason to run than mine, isn't it? Jack, I'd like to thank you for coming here tonight the--the honorable way you did. Henry, if someone had to dig up my past, better you than most anyone else Anyway, you've given me the excuse to finally do what I'd been trying to get up the courage to--I'm dropping out.

GOV. STANTON

Maybe there's a way to hold it back...

FREDDY PICKER

You know there isn't. I was wrong to stay in. I just hope...that when I quit--maybe they won't hit it as hard. My boys...I really don't want them to find out about Renzo. But, probably, the bottom line is...I'm going to be a national joke...and I'm going to have to explain it all to my boys...either way. No matter what I do, those motherfuckers are still going to find the rest of it, aren't they?

GOV. STANTON

(after a moment)

If they think it will sell one newspaper--yes.

Picker looks at him for a moment and then puts his hands over his face and begins to weep. Stanton rises and goes to him, then puts his arms around him, rocking him gently.

GOV. STANTON

Anything I can do. Anything. Anything that will make it a little better...

EXT. THE PICKER FARM - HENRY, STANTON

as they walk toward the station wagon parked at the other side of the fence. Stanton sings a sad country song.

GOV. STANTON

(softly)

"I can still feel the soft southern breeze in the live oak tree/ And those Williams boys, they still mean a lot to me--Hank and Tennessee/ I guess we're all gonna be what we're gonna be/ So what do you do with good ol' boys like me?"

(to Henry)

You know why I love that song? The line about the Williams boys. It's never just Hank. The picture ain't ever complete without ol' Tennessee.

HENRY

Governor, I'm resigning from the campaign.

GOV. STANTON

I don't accept your resignation.

HENRY

Look, I just don't feel comfortable about this anymore.

GOV. STANTON

About whut?

HENRY

This...this line of work.

GOV. STANTON

(after a moment)

I spoke to Richard. He's back on board. And I'm putting him in charge: campaign manager. He's probably in the office now. And I'm bringing Daisy back, too, if she'll come.

HENRY

That's not what this is about.

GOV. STANTON

Then what is it?

HENRY

Libby--Libby's test. You flunked it.

GOV. STANTON

Yeah. But just now I passed it.
So which grade do I get, Henry?
The high or the low.

HENRY

If she hadn't died...

GOV. STANTON

I probably would have leaked the
file to someone---and I'da felt bad
about it, but you know what? I
would'a been wrong not to do it.
What I did just now, I did for
Libby. But it wasn't right. If
Picker hadn't quit he'd've won the
nomination and gone down and taken
the party with him. It was only a
question of when.

HENRY

And how. And who pushed him off
the cliff when he was falling.

GOV. STANTON

That's right. But those are fine
points, Henry. Those are how many
angels-fit-on-the-head-of-a-pin
points. This is hardball. Are you
telling me you've just discovered
that and you don't have the stomach
for it? Come on. I know you too
well for that. We've been through
too much together. This is it,
Henry. This is the price you pay
to lead. You don't think Abraham
Lincoln was a whore before he was a
president? He had to tell his
little stories and smile his
shit-eating, backcountry grin. He
did it all just so he'd get the
opportunity, one day, to stand in
front of the nation and appeal to
"the better angels of our nature."
That's when the bullshit stops. And
that's what this is all about. The
opportunity to do that, to make the
most of it, to do it the right
way--because you know as well as I
do there are plenty of people in
this game who never think about
that, who just want to be able to
say, "I won the biggest thing you
can win." And they're willing to
sell their souls, crawl through
sewers, lie to the people, divide
them, play to their worst fears--
for nothing. Just for the prize.

HENRY

I don't care. I'm not comparing the players. I don't like the game. I want to work for something small, for voter registration....

GOV. STANTON

And after everyone's registered, who will they vote for? In the end, Henry, who can do this better than me? Think about it--is there anyone else out there with a chance to actually win this election who'd do more for the people than I would? Who'd even think about the folks I care about?

In the distance, by the gate where the station wagon stands, a row of cars can be seen driving toward them.

HENRY

Oh, shit.

GOV. STANTON

Is that them? So quick?

HENRY

I knew it! The fucking driver...

GOV. STANTON

We'll talk to 'em together. Come on--don't shake your head. We've worked so hard--together, Henry--to get here. And it's there for us now. It's right there. We can do incredible things. We can change the whole country. I can win this thing, Henry. And when I do--we are going to make history. Look me in the eye and tell me it's not gonna happen. Look me in the eye, Henry--and tell me you don't want to be part of it. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Henry. You want me down on my knees? I can't do it without you. Don't leave me now.

(he looks at him)

You're still with me, aren't you? Say you are. Say you are. Say it.

(he suddenly smiles)

Aw c'mon, Henry. This is ridiculous: you've gotta be with me.

He stands looking into Henry's eyes, his smile big and warm and confident as the scene...

FADES TO BLACK.