

RECOUNT

by

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First Draft

Spring Creek Productions
Property of HBO Films

"It's not who votes that counts, it's who counts the votes."

- Joesph Stalin

"Florida - The rules are different here!"

- official tourism slogan

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE DEMOCRATS

Ron Klain	- Former Chief of Staff to VP Al Gore
Michael Whouley	- Chief Field Operative
David Boies	- Lead Attorney in Florida
Warren Christopher	- Secretary of State to Bill Clinton
Bill Daley	- Campaign Manager to Gore/Lieberman 2000
Mitchell Berger	- Attorney
Jeremy Bash	- Attorney
David Morehouse	- Aide to Al Gore
Mark Herron	- Recount Attorney
Jack Young	- Recount Attorney
Al Gore	- Vice President of the United States

THE REPUBLICANS

James Baker III	- Secretary of State to George H.W. Bush
Ben Ginsberg	- Lead Attorney to Bush/Cheney 2000
George Terwilliger	- Attorney
Joe Allbaugh	- Campaign Manager to Bush/Cheney 2000
Bob Zoellick	- Deputy to James Baker
Margaret Tutwiler	- Deputy to James Baker
Michael Carvin	- Appellate Attorney
Randy Enwright	- Florida Operative
Mark Wallace	- Lead Attorney in Palm Beach County
George W. Bush	- Governor of Texas

THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Katherine Harris	- Secretary of State
Mac Stipanovich	- Republican Lobbyist
Clay Roberts	- Director, Division of Elections
Kerey Carpenter	- Attorney, Division of Elections
Tom Feeney	- Speaker of the House of Representatives
Jeb Bush	- Governor

THE PALM BEACH COUNTY CANVASSING BOARD

Theresa LePore	- Supervisor of Elections
Charles Burton	- County Judge
Carol Roberts	- County Commisioner

...and Wayne Newton as the Vegas Crooner.

A WHITE SCREEN.

Written across every inch of frame in big black letters:

NOVEMBER 7, 2000

SLOW PULL BACK. As the image travel backwards, more words creep into frame above it:

PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

CONTINUE TO PULL BACK:

OFFICIAL BALLOT, GENERAL ELECTION

PULL BACK EVEN FURTHER. Underneath the date is a rectangular box. Written inside it:

(REPUBLICAN)
GEORGE W. BUSH - PRESIDENT 3 >
DICK CHENEY - VICE PRESIDENT

PAN TO THE RIGHT. On the other side of the page is:

< 4 **(REFORM)**
PAT BUCHANAN - PRESIDENT
EZOLA FOSTER - VICE PRESIDENT

PAN BACK TO THE LEFT. Underneath the Republican Box is:

(DEMOCRATIC)
AL GORE - PRESIDENT 5 >
JOE LIEBERMAN - VICE PRESIDENT

Continue to pull back until the entire ballot fills the frame. Ten candidates are listed on BOTH SIDES OF THE PAGE - Libertarian, Socialist, Constitution, Green (Ralph Nader). It's a messy MAZE of names, numbers and arrows that point toward tiny holes that line down the center of the ballot.

In 24 hours, this little document will be known to the world as THE BUTTERFLY BALLOT.

A STYLUS, the knob-like pointer used to punch holes into ballots, hovers between the #4 hole for Buchanan and the #5 hole for Gore...tentative...unsure which one to punch.

PAN UP TO - THE VOTER. An elderly JEWISH WOMAN with a gold mezuzah dangling from her neck stares down at the ballot. She looks a touch confused.

PAN ACROSS THE VOTING BOOTHS.

Filled with mostly ELDERLY VOTERS, they all share the Jewish Woman's slightly confused expression. One man lines the stylus up to Al Gore's name and guides it to the corresponding hole.

A woman leans right up to the ballot to make sure she's about to punch a Gore vote. Everyone is tentative, afraid to punch.

The Jewish Woman finally punches the ballot. Click.

SERIES OF CUTS: Another stylus punches a vote (click) and another (click) and another (click) and another (click)...

BACK TO THE JEWISH WOMAN.

She hasn't pulled her stylus out, still staring down, wondering..."Did I just vote for the wrong person?"

SLOW PAN from her stylus to the corresponding candidate that she just voted for...

Pat Buchanan.

INT. GORE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

A large, turn of the century warehouse that has been converted into a wide open office. Gore/Lieberman posters cover the walls along with a banner that says 'Welcome to Nashville!'

The middle of the room is a giant bullpen that bustles with life - staffers frantically make phone calls, trade off faxes, re-read yesterdays polls. Pure adrenaline pumps the energized room.

In a ring around the bullpen are larger offices filled with SENIOR CAMPAIGN OFFICIALS (Mark Fabiani, Chris Lehane, Donna Brazile...) all working the phones. We hear snippets of:

SENIOR CAMPAIGN OFFICIAL #1
...need to satellite Lieberman to
Nevada and Ariz...

SENIOR CAMPAIGN OFFICIAL #2
...hammer at the undecid...

SENIOR CAMPAIGN OFFICIAL #3
...I haven't read a poll in at
least fifteen minutes.

We travel through the hectic bullpen into THE BOILER ROOM, the election day nerve center that is a maze of computers, TV's and volunteers in headsets rolling out calls:

VARIOUS VOLUNTEERS
I'm calling from Gore Campaign
Headquarters to remind you to get
out and vote toda....

We travel past the volunteers to THE KITCHEN, a small room in the back that used to be the actual kitchen. It's now filled with tiny cubicles where college students and old ladies bustle paper work. Staplers staple.

Crammed in the smallest cubicle against the back wall is RON KLAIN, 39. Casually dressed in a black sweatshirt, Klain is the ultimate overachiever - brilliant, successful, handsome.

He types on his laptop, phone clutched under his chin as reads from the computer screen:

KLAIN
(into phone)
'The foundation of a Democracy...'

His assistant, GLEN ROTH, 22, shouts from another cubicle:

GLEN ROTH
ABC on three. Winning electoral,
losing popular.

Klain clicks over to the other line.

KLAIN
'Rules are rules and Governor Bush
must respect the electoral
process'.
(clicks back)
'...is based upon its citizens...'

Without looking up, he hands off a memo to a passing staffer.

KLAIN
'...right to vote. It is our duty
as Americans to fulfill our
responsibility...'

GLEN ROTH
C-SPAN on one.

KLAIN
(clicks over)
'Rules are rules and Governor Bush
must respect the electoral
process.'
(clicks back)
'...because we must never forget
that every vote counts.'

On the other line is AP journalist RON FOURNIER.

RON FOURNIER
(V.O.)
You're the only press liaison I
know that actually sounds sincere
when you spew that shit.
(then)
Deep background?

KLAIN
Sure.

RON FOURNIER
(V.O.)
If Gore wins, are you going to join
the new administration?

KLAIN
I don't think he's going to offer
me a position, we've barely spoken
since I came back.

RON FOURNIER
(V.O.)
But if he does?

Slight beat.

KLAIN
No.

Glen Roth shouts:

GLEN ROTH
I have a Lester Hyman on two.

Klain's face instantly flips to concern. He knows this means
something has gone wrong.

**FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: RON KLAIN, former Chief of Staff to Vice
President Al Gore**

INT. GORE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS, BOILER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Klain hurries across the Boiler Room, weaving in and out of
desks and younger volunteers. He stops at THE CLOSET, a
converted janitor's shed that only fits a TV, a computer and
the back of a shiny, bald head.

KLAIN
Whouley.

MICHAEL WHOULEY (pronounced Hool-ey), 42, spins his chair
around. He's a gaunt, mean-looking guy who looks and sounds
more like a Boston teamster than the most respected operative
in American politics. He wears a button that says, "The
Trifecta: Michigan, Pennsylvania, Florida."

WHOULEY
(thick Boston accent)
Jesus fuckin' Christ, Ron, I wanna
see the blue suit at least once
before this fuckin' thing is over.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: MICHAEL WHOULEY, Chief Field Operative

Klain smiles, loves Whouley, but the smile instantly fades.

KLAIN
Problem in Palm Beach County.

WHOLEY
Equipment fai...?

KLAIN
(cutting him off)
Ballot configuration.

Whouley looks surprised, uncharacteristic concern.

WHOLEY
On Election Day?

KLAIN
Some older voters think they voted
for Buchanan by mistake.

Whouley snaps to attention, yells out the door:

WHOLEY
JEREMY!!

Whouley's assistant, JEREMY BASH, 28, a small, baby faced law school grad pops his head in.

JEREMY BASH
Yeah?

WHOLEY
Call that fuckin' chowdahead in...
(to Klain)
Wher' was it?

KLAIN
Pal...

WHOLEY
...Palm Beach County, her name is
Theresa LePore.

Jeremy quickly takes off. Whouley spins back to his computer.

WHOLEY
Nice catch.

Klain starts to leave, then stops, turns back to Whouley.

KLAIN
Michael...are we going to win?

WHOLEY
Yeah, but it's gonna be a fuckin'
squeka'.

Whouley spins back to Klain.

WHOLEY
 If you were still runnin' this show
 we'd be fuckin' murderin' them. I
 mean that.

Klain smiles, truly appreciates it.

WHOLEY
 But since you're not, get me a
 coffee and a fuckin' danish.

Klain flashes him a friendly middle finger as Whouley yells
 out the door to Jeremy:

WHOLEY
 WHERE THE FUCK IS THERESA LEPORE!?!

INT. THERESA LEPORE'S OFFICE - MORNING

The sounds of multiple PHONES RINGING.

THERESA LEPORE, 45, a frail, slender woman with a quiet
 demeanor is on the phone. Her nose is bright red from a
 chronic sinus infection. Teddy bears fill her shelves. A name
 plate on her desk says - Theresa LePore, Supervisor.

Theresa's defeated voice is weakening from the bombardment of
 complaints she's already received.

THERESA LEPORE
 (into the phone)
 I know...I know...I know...

Out the window, she sees a small CROWD of seniors gather
 outside the building. They're upset, a few woman are crying.

Staring at the crowd, her exhaustion shifts to genuine fear.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Klain walks down the hallway of the Loews Hotel. A stocky
 aide with a heavy limp, DAVID MOREHOUSE, hurries past him.

KLAIN
 (re: his knee)
 You icing it?

DAVID MOREHOUSE
 Tomorrow...if I ever wake up.

Morehouse limps on down the hall. Klain walks up to a suite
 that's flanked by two stone faced SECRET SERVICE AGENTS. The
 lead agent holds up his hand for Klain to wait.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
(into ear piece)
Ronald Klain.

He gets confirmation, opens the door for Klain.

INT. SUITE - DAY

Klain sits in a posh suite across from BILL DALEY. Bald head and thick neck, looks like a 1930's Chicago gangster.

DALEY
Look, Ron, I don't want to bullshit
you, so let me get to the point.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **BILL DALEY, Campaign Manager**

DALEY
We're starting to put out feelers
for the transition team and Al
definitely wants you on board.

Klain looks surprised...and pleased.

DALEY
He wants to offer you the lead in
reviewing candidates for high-level
jobs beneath the cabinet.

Klain tries to cover his instant anger, responds formally:

KLAIN
I sincerely appreciate the offer,
but I've been on leave from my law
firm for the past three months and
I need to get back as soon as the
campaign ends.

DALEY
Al really wants you to do this. You
two have a long history together
and I don't think he's going to
understand why you wouldn't.

KLAIN
(contained anger)
Maybe it has something to do with
the fact that he didn't back me
when Coehlo forced me out of the
campaign.

Daley softens, feels bad about what had happened to Klain.

DALEY
Come on, Ron, everyone knows Coehlo
was a big mistake. That's why he's
gone and you're here.

KLAIN
Writing press releases for the
campaign I used to run.

Daley leans forward, sincerely confides to Klain.

DALEY
The first thing I did when I took
over this campaign was bring you
back on board. I did it because I
hate what happened to you, it was
fucking bullshit, and I want to get
you back on the inside. That's why
I think you should take this job.

Klain gets up to leave.

KLAIN
Please tell the Vice President that
I'm not interested in an eight year
demotion at this time, but I truly
appreciate the generous offer.

DALEY
At least think about it. Will you
do me a favor and just think about
it?

Klain walks out of the room...looks like he thought about it.

INT. LOEWS HOTEL ROOM - LATER IN THE DAY

Changing into a plain grey suit, Klain ties his tie so far up
his neck he looks like he's choking himself, still angry
about the 'offer'. His wife, MONICA, 38, intelligent and
warm, takes over the tie, trying to calm him.

MONICA
Warren Christopher called. He said
that if Gore wins you can have the
week off, and if he loses he wants
you back in by noon tomorrow.

Unable to get a smile, she kisses him. Klain leans his
forehead against his wife's forehead. Despondent.

KLAIN
You know what happens tomorrow?

MONICA
What?

KLAIN
I get to go home.

INT. BUSH CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

A plain looking office with cubicles and kitchenettes. If it weren't for the BUSH/CHENEY posters and campaign paraphernalia everywhere, it'd look like an insurance office.

Holding court with a group of early-twenties VOLUNTEERS is BEN GINSBERG, 49, short and bald with a thin grey beard. Ginsberg has a dry, but playful demeanor.

GINSBERG
So we're all seated at dinner, and everyone bows their heads for prayer. Governor Bush grabs my hand, and I'm thinking, what's a Jew from Pennsylvania doing here praying with the Governor of Texas?

Everyone giggles.

GINSBERG
We finish the prayer, and the Governor announces to the room, "It's about time we got some Methodist blood into Ginsberg!"

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **BEN GINSBERG, Chief Counsel**

The room busts out laughing. A few people clap. A young female VOLUNTEER nervously asks:

FEMALE VOLUNTEER
Are we going to win, Mr. Ginsberg?

Everyone anxiously looks up at him. Ginsberg smiles.

GINSBERG
By tomorrow morning the stains of Bill Clinton will be washed away...

Everyone laughs at the use of 'stains'.

GINSBERG
...and dignity and values will finally be back in the White House!

Applause and whoops!! Everyone holds up three fingers in the 'W' salute. They love their candidate.

The campaign manager, JOE ALLBAUGH, a big lug of a guy with a crewcut sticks his head out from his office.

JOE ALLBAUGH
Hey, Ben, did you hear about Palm Beach County?

INT. DIVISION OF ELECTIONS, PALM BEACH COUNTY - DAY

The color completely drained from her face, Theresa LePore is seated in a conference room across from CAROL ROBERTS, 70's, raspy smoker's voice with dyed bright red hair, and JUDGE CHARLES BURTON, 42, a slightly overweight jovial type who seems nonplussed by the day's events.

Out the window the crowd of angry geriatrics has doubled in size. A few people have already made "Re-Vote!" signs.

Judge Burton is examining the Butterfly Ballot.

JUDGE BURTON
This is what all the fuss is about?

An annoyed Carol Roberts snaps at him:

CAROL ROBERTS
Your honor, I've had three friends
call me in a panic because they
think they voted for Pat Buchanan!
(pointing out the window)
They're very upset.

Judge Burton takes another look at the ballot. Carol Roberts shakes her head at the messy design, Theresa LePore looks mortified.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **THE PALM BEACH CANVASSING BOARD**

JUDGE BURTON
So, Theresa, why did you list the
candidates on both sides of the
ballot?

THERESA LEPORE
The font I had to use to fit them
all on one side was so small I was
worried our older voters would have
a hard time reading it.

Out the window, a local NEWS VAN pulls up. The three of them stare at it in silence, a collective realization this could blow up into something serious.

Carol Roberts turns to Theresa LePore:

CAROL ROBERTS
You're going to need a lawyer.

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK WITH TITLE CARD: **RECOUNT**

BEGIN OPENING CREDITS - ELECTION NIGHT NEWSCASTS.

The BLACK flips to STATIC. Anchorman DAN RATHER is heard as the image of his newscast comes into focus (actual footage):

DAN RATHER/CBS
Let's get one thing straight from the get-go. We would rather be last in reporting a state than be wrong, because if we say somebody's carried a state, you can pretty much take it to the bank.

TEXT: 7:49 pm est.

TOM BROKAW/NBC
We're now going to project an important win for Vice-President Al Gore. NBC News projects that he wins the 25 electoral votes in the state of Florida.

PETER JENNINGS/ABC
Florida has gone to Al Gore.

JEFF GREENFIELD/CNN
This is a roadblock the size of a boulder to George W. Bush's path to the White House.

DAN RATHER/CBS
...you can bet that Governor Bush will be madder than a rained-on rooster that his brother the Governor wasn't able to carry this state for him.

TEXT: 9:51 pm est.

BERNARD SHAW/CNN
Stand by, stand by. CNN right now is moving our earlier declaration of Florida back to the too-close-to-call column.

DAN RATHER/CBS
Bulletin! Florida pulled back in the undecided column.

TOM BROKAW/NBC
What the networks giveth, the networks taketh away.

JEFF GREENFIELD/CNN
Oh waiter. One order of crow.

PETER JENNINGS/ABC
Whoever ends up with Florida will
take the presidency.

TEXT: 2:16am est.

BRIT HUME/FOX
FOX News now projects George W.
Bush the winner in Florida.

DAN RATHER/CBS
Florida goes Bush. The presidency
is Bush. That's it. Sip it. Savor
it...

PETER JENNINGS/ABC
Unless there is terrible calamity,
George W. Bush, Govenor of Texas...

DAN RATHER/CBS
...Cup it. Photostat it. Underline
it in red...

TOM BROKAW/NBC
...will become...

DAN RATHER/CBS
...press it in a book. Put it in an
album. Hang it on a wall...

PETER JENNINGS/ABC
...the 43rd President...

TOM BROKAW/NBC
...the 43rd President...

BRIT HUME/FOX
...the 43rd President...

DAN RATHER/CBS
...of the United States.

END OPENING CREDITS

INT. LOEWS HOTEL SUITE - 7TH FLOOR - 2:20AM

Pull away from the TV up to Ron Klain's utterly devastated
face. In a suite surrounded with campaign STAFFERS, everyone
stares at the TV in shock.

A female staffer (Jill Alper) burst out in tears, others
start to follow suit. Klain hugs Jill as he stares at the TV,
his earlier anger washed away. All that's left is defeat.

INT. BUSH CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - SIMULTANEOUS

Ben Ginsberg is crying as well, but these are tears of joy. He bear hugs the enormous Joe Allbaugh.

The entire room is jumping up and down in a joyous celebration. Months and months of excruciating work has turned into victory!

EXT. CAPITAL BUILDING, AUSTIN, TX - SIMULTANEOUS

Up on the massive Jumbotron in front of the Texas Capitol is a news telecast with the image of George W. Bush and '43rd President of the United States' written across the screen.

(NOTE: All images of Gore and Bush will be the actual person. As characters in the film, we will never see their faces.)

Anchorman Tom Brokaw appears on the Jumbotron:

TOM BROKAW/NBC
'We've just gotten word that Al Gore has officially called George W. Bush and congratulated him on his victory.'

Standing in the rain, the crowd SCREAMS in wild celebration! Red, white and blue floodlights beam over the Capitol dome.

EXT. LOEWS HOTEL/UNDERGROUND - NIGHT

A motorcade of limousines are parked in the underground structure of the Loews. The entire Gore team - Daley, Klain, others - hurry into separate cars.

AL and TIPPER GORE (shot from behind) hurry from the hotel into their limo. David Morehouse quickly shuts their door, then limps to the next limousine.

The pain in more than just his knee.

EXT. LOEWS HOTEL - NIGHT

Rain pours down on the motorcade as it drives through the dark and misty night, only penetrated by the flashing reds and blues from the police cars. A funeral procession.

INT. THE BOILER ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Whouley sits in The Closet, stares in disbelief at the official website for the 'Secretary of State of Florida.'

The vote total shows Bush leading Florida by 52,346 votes.

Whouley is stunned, shocked, upset...he just can't believe they lost. He takes off his headset, getting up to leave.

Then...

The number on the screen drops to 47,638.

Whouley looks back at the website. Did that just happen?

The number drops again to 42,091.

INT. KLAIN'S LIMOSINE - NIGHT

Stewing in silence, Klain hears his cell phone ring, he doesn't want to answer it. It keeps ringing. Finally -

KLAIN

Yes?

On the other end is Ron Fournier, the journalist from the AP.

RON FOURNIER

(V.O.)

It's Fournier.

KLAIN

I have no comment at this tim...

Fournier cuts him off:

RON FOURNIER

Why did Gore concede?

Slight beat, confused (and a little annoyed) by the question.

KLAIN

Because we lost the election, Ron.

RON FOURNIER

Did you know that the Associated Press, the oldest news organization in the Nation, has not yet called this election?

Klain sits up, this is news to him.

KLAIN

No...I didn't know that.

RON FOURNIER

We still believe that Florida remains too close to call.

KLAIN
You do?

RON FOURNIER
Yes, Ron, and to be honest, I don't understand what the hell you people are doing.

Fournier hangs up. Klain thinks for a split second, then dials his cell phone. He gets dumped to Daley's voice mail:

DALEY
(V.O.)
"You have reached Bill Daley, the Campaign Manager for the Gore..."

INT. BILL DALEY'S LIMO - SIMULTANEOUS

Daley stares forward in silence. Oblivious to the fact that someone is trying to reach him.

INT. THE CLOSET - SIMULTANEOUS

Whouley dials a number, gets a busy signal. Glancing at the computer, he sees -

42,091 drop to 38,761.

He screams out the door:

WHOLEY
GET ME NICK BALDICK!!!

INT. KLAIN'S LIMOSINE - SIMULTANEOUS

Klain dials another number, gets dumped to another voicemail.

MICHAEL FELDMAN
(voice mail message)
"Michael Feldman is not avail..."

He hangs up, looks out the window - police cars and SUV's surround Gore's limo. Deep concern starts to build in Klain, feels something could be very, very wrong.

His phone rings, he immediately answers:

KLAIN
Yes?!

WHOLEY
(V.O.)
Ron! The Networks have the wrong numbers!

KLAIN

What?!

INTERCUT BETWEEN KLAIN/WHOLEY -

WHOLEY

They have the wrong fuckin' numbers. I just got off with Baldick. A precinct in Volusia County zeroed out our totals. They had us at negative 16,000 and it added Bush votes. The Supervisor finally caught it.

KLAIN

Jesus. What mistakes weren't caught?!

WHOLEY

I know, it's scary.

(then)

When you re-calculate the entire state, we're down by less than 15,000 votes!

On the computer - the lead has dropped to 14,783.

Klain instantly knows what this means...

KLAIN

It's an Automatic Recount.

WHOLEY

I know! We're still alive!

KLAIN

But he already conceded, I'm in the motorcade righ....

WHOLEY

Are you fuckin' kiddin' me!?

KLAIN

Didn't you see the news?!

Whouley storms into the Boiler Room where all the TV's show live footage of the Nashville War Memorial Plaza with "GORE TO PUBLICLY CONCEDE" written on the screens.

WHOLEY

WHY DIDN'T ANYONE CHECK THE FUCKIN' NUMBERS WITH ME FIRST!?!?!?

Whouley screams to the room:

WHOLEY

GET ME BILL DALEY!!

His staff scrambles to phones.

KLAIN
His cell phone is off!

WHOLEY
THE CAMPAIGN MANAGER TURNED HIS
FUCKIN' CELL PHONE OFF!?!

Klain stays calm...thinking...thinking...he's got it:

KLAIN
(quickly)
Page him through the White House
signal office.

INT. BILL DALEY'S LIMOSINE - MOMENTS LATER

Still stewing in the back of his limo, Daley hears beeping. He pulls out a pager with the message: "CALL SWITCHBD. CALL HOLDING WITH MICHAEL WHOLEY ASAP."

Daley takes out his cell phone and turns it on.

It has to boot up first.

INT. THE BOILER ROOM - NIGHT

Whouley's staff literally watches the motorcade drive up to the Plaza on the televisions. No one can breathe. Helpless.

DAN RATHER
(from the TV)
"...the Vice President is pulling
up for what has to be the most
difficult speech of his career."

Whouley glances at the Website - Bush's lead is now 8,248. He starts punching his door!

WHOLEY
Fuck fuck fuck fuck FUCK!!

Finally...

JEREMY BASH
I've got Bill Daley!

INT. BILL DALEY'S LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Daley can't believe it -

DALEY
The networks got it wrong twice in
the same night!?

INTERCUT - Whouley and Klain

WHOLEY
We're going to Automatic Recount.
You can't let him make the speech!

DALEY
What should we do? We can't just
run out into the street, Secret
Service are everywhere.

KLAIN
Morehouse gets the door, right?

DALEY
CALL DAVID MOREHOUSE! CALL DAVID
MOREHOUSE!!

INT. DAVID MOREHOUSE'S LIMOSINE - SIMULTANEOUS

David Morehouse is on the phone, has an ice pack on his knee.

DAVID MOREHOUSE
I'll take him straight to hold.

KLAIN
(V.O.)
Does he always wait for you to open
the door?

DAVID MOREHOUSE
It's Gore, he doesn't know how to
open a car door. Meet us at hold.

INT. BOILER ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

The tension in the Boiler Room has been deflated. People are
starting to breathe again, nervous giggles with "I can't
believe that just happened" glances. Whouley grabs his chest.

WHOLEY
I swear to God I almost had a
fuckin' heart attack.

On the Computer - Bush's lead has shrunk to 5843 votes.

EXT. DAVID MOREHOUSE'S LIMOSINE - CONTINUOUS

Morehouse steps out of the limo, struggling with his knee. Up
ahead he sees...

For the first time in a year and a half, Al Gore has decided to open his own door!

Holding hands with Tipper, they make a fast beeline for the back stage entrance.

Stunned, Morehouse takes off after them with a heavy limp.

INT. KLAIN'S LIMOSINE - NIGHT

About five limos back, Klain sees that Gore didn't wait. He JUMPS out of the car and RUNS full speed through the crowd.

EXT. PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

Limping badly, Morehouse struggles toward them. Right as he closes in on Gore, one of Gore's SECRET SERVICE AGENTS notices him and grabs his arm.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Hold it!

Morehouse quickly sticks out his HARD PIN, a red pentagon shaped lapel pin.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Excuse me, sir.

He lets Morehouse go, but Gore and Tipper are closing in on the back stage door...

CUT TO - KLAIN

He's hauling ass through the crowd, bumping into people, dodging others. He jams past David Morehouse.

Up ahead he sees Gore and Tipper ENTER the back stage door. He makes a dash for the door, but is stopped by a wall of Secret Service. Klain holds out his lapel, but he's forgotten that he doesn't have clearance - no Hard Pin.

Covered in sweat, Morehouse struggles past Klain, flashing his Hard Pin to the Secret Service. Klain screams:

KLAIN

GO! GO! GO!

Morehouse limps to the back stage door and bursts into...

INT. THE HALLWAY TO THE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

A long hallway that leads right on to the stage, Gore and Tipper are halfway down it when Morehouse catches up.

DAVID MOREHOUSE
(breathless)
Mr. Vice President, we need to go
to the holding room.

Gore doesn't slow down, just wants to get this over with.

AL GORE
I'm not going to hold.

Morehouse can't believe it!

DAVID MOREHOUSE
But...but...Mr. Vice President,
Daley and Klain need to speak to
you! They just need five minutes!

Gore keeps walking.

AL GORE
I just spoke to Bush, he's waiting
for me to give this speech, I won't
keep him waiting.
(points forward)
We're going on that stage.

Morehouse's knee finally gives in, he grabs it, STUMBLING
BACK in pain. Gore and Tipper are now a few feet from the
steps to the stage...

Morehouse grits his teeth and goes for broke. He squeezes
past them and JUMPS on to the steps, physically blocking them
with his stocky frame. Sweat pours down his red face.

DAVID MOREHOUSE
Mr. Vice President, there's
something wrong with Florida.
Everything is going to be fine.
They just need five minutes.
(almost in tears)
Please, Mr. Vice President, please,
we have to go to hold!

EXT. CAPITAL BUILDING, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT

The excited crowd stands out in the rain waiting for Bush to
give his victory speech. People look at their watches,
wondering what the hold up is.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT

The entire BUSH FAMILY (minus George W. Bush) sit around the
television in the elegant living room of the Governor's
Mansion, anxiously waiting for Gore to make his concession.

Florida Governor JEB BUSH, a tall, built man with a puckish face stands in the back with Ginsberg and Joe Allbaugh.

JEB BUSH
(whispers to Ginsberg)
My people aren't seeing the same
numbers as the networks.

GINSBERG
Neither are we.

JOE ALLBAUGH
Neither is Karl.

Now they're worried. If Karl doesn't see it, it's serious.

Bush's daughter, JENNY, perks up in front of the TV.

JENNY
Uncle Jeb, when's he going to
concede?

Before Jeb can answer, GEORGE W. BUSH enters the room. Shot from behind, his presence is overwhelming.

GEORGE W. BUSH
Just give him some time, he'll get
there.

INT. BASEMENT OF THE WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA - LATER

The Gore Team (along with family members) are huddled in the dingy basement of the War Memorial Plaza. Excitement in the room as everyone knows something is up, but not sure what. David Morehouse ices his elevated leg, looks like he scored the winning touchdown and is out for the season.

Standing in the doorway to an anteroom, Daley whispers into Al Gore's ear. His back to us, Gore's hand rises to Daley's shoulder, balancing himself from this unbelievable news.

Gore pats Daley on the shoulder and walks into the anteroom, sits down and throws his feet up on a desk, placing his hands behind his head. He wants to savor this moment.

Klain hurries over to Daley.

KLAIN
(whispers)
Is he going to make the speech?

DALEY
I don't know...but this better not
be an internet prank or we're going
to look like a bunch of assholes.

Al Gore yells out from the anteroom:

AL GORE
So what are we thinking?

There is a moment of silence, know one is sure what to say.

Klain steps forward.

KLAIN
Mr. Vice President, I believe our
battle is not yet done. The state
of Florida is too close to call.

The room bolts up, energized by Klain's words.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

Joe Allbaugh whispers into George W. Bush's ear:

JOE ALLBAUGH
Al Gore is on the phone.

The room looks confused/worried, Jeb Bush now knows there's a problem. George W. Bush hops to his feet and grabs the phone.

GEORGE W. BUSH
Yes, Mr. Vice-President?

INTERCUT - GORE/BUSH (their faces always out of frame).

NOTE: This is the actual conversation.

Gore is still seated at the desk, one leg propped on the desk, the other leg on the floor.

AL GORE
Hello, Governor, I'm sorry to keep
you waiting, but circumstances have
dramatically changed since I first
called you.
(then:)
Our battle is not yet done, the
State of Florida is too close to
call.

Daley gives Klain a nod for the phrase.

CUT TO - BUSH.

GEORGE W. BUSH
(stunned)
Are you saying what I think your
saying? Let me make sure I
understand. You are calling back to
retract your concession?

The entire room is shocked.

CUT TO - GORE

AL GORE
You don't have to be snippy about
it.

People cover their mouths in stunned amusement, others try not to laugh. Did he really just say that?

CUT TO - BUSH

He jerks his head back, can't believe Gore just said that.

GEORGE W. BUSH
(getting mad)
My little brother has assured me I
won the state of Florida!

Jeb Bush nods, but he knows it's not 100% true.

CUT TO - GORE

He swings his other foot on to the ground, now he's mad.

AL GORE
Let me explain something to you,
you're little brother is not the
ultimate authority on this!

Everyone in the room nods, 'Yeah!' It's like they're listening to a schoolyard fight.

CUT TO - BUSH

He's stumped, not sure what to say. The room stares at him, waiting for his response. Then -

GEORGE W. BUSH
(icy)
Mr. Vice President, you do what you
have to do.

He hangs up the phone, walks over to the living room.

GEORGE W. BUSH
(a little shaken)
The...the Vice President has
changed...he's withdrawn his
concession.

There is a collective gasp of disbelief. Joe Allbaugh whispers to Ginsberg:

JOE ALLBAUGH
Can he do that?

CUT BACK TO - THE BASEMENT.

Gore walks to the door to the main room. Everyone anxiously waits for him to speak. Then -

He pumps his fist into the air! The room breaks out in a CRAZY CELEBRATION! WHOOPS, CHEERS AND HUGS!! Lazarus has just risen from the dead.

INT. RON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Klain zips up a small duffel bag, Monica sits on the bed.

KLAIN
This thing will be over in a day.
Forty-eight hours, tops.

He kisses Monica goodbye as he heads out.

KLAIN
I love you.

MONICA
I love you too.

Right before he walks out the door...

MONICA
Honey?

He stops.

MONICA
Be careful down there...they have
alligators.

Klain smiles, flicks off the light switch as he leaves.

BLACK.

TEXT: DAY 1

Still in BLACK, the sound of a PHONE RINGING is heard...a hand fumbles around for a light switch...the CLICK of the switch. The room lights up, revealing...

INT. KATHERINE HARRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

KATHERINE HARRIS, 43, energetic, out going, the ultimate hostess, what she lacks in intelligence she makes up with in charm and enthusiasm. Passed out in her party clothes, she mumbles into the phone:

KATHERINE
 (barely awake)
 Secretary of State, Katherine
 Harris speaking.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: KATHERINE HARRIS, Secretary of State, Florida

The angry voice of Jeb Bush is on the other line:

JEB BUSH
 (V.O.)
 Where's Clay Roberts?!

KATHERINE
 I'm sorry, this is the Secretary of
 State of Florida, Katherine Harris,
 Clay Roberts is my...

JEB BUSH
 (yelling)
 KATHERINE! IT'S THE GOVERNOR! I
 CAN'T GET THROUGH TO CLAY!!!

She starts to wake up.

KATHERINE
 Isn't he at a victory party?

INT. DIVISION OF ELECTIONS - NIGHT

An elevator door slides open, in jeans and a T-shirt
 Katherine hurries into the lobby of the DIVISION OF
 ELECTIONS. It's mobbed by frantic REPORTERS that bombard her:

REPORTERS
 Secretary Harris, what are the
 results in Florida!?!/ Who won the
 election?!/ When are we going to
 get the final totals?!

She pushes her way through the press with a huge smile that
 tries to cover her terror.

INT. DIVISION OF ELECTIONS/CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Katherine stands in the middle of a hot and sweaty conference
 room along with a group of angry MIDDLE AGED MEN.

Everyone anxiously stares at CLAY ROBERTS, 35, pudgy, looks
 like the school bully grown up. His face and clothes are
 drenched in sweat as he reads from his notes:

CLAY ROBERTS
Bush received 2,909,135 votes and
Gore received 2,907,351 votes.

Clay looks up, hoping this would make the room happy.

Everyone tries to subtract these massive numbers in their head, Katherine gives up.

KATHERINE
What's the difference, Clay?!

CLAY ROBERTS
Oh, sorry.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: CLAY ROBERTS, Director, Division of Elections

CLAY ROBERTS
Bush took Florida by...
(reads)
...1,784 votes.

There is a collective gasp, no one can believe it's so close. Katherine steps forward, taking control of the room.

KATHERINE
We will now proceed to Automatic Recount.

Slight beat.

CLAY ROBERTS
Actually...the first step is the recanvassing.

Katherine looks at Clay with a huge blank smile.

CLAY ROBERTS
(helping her)
As you know, the recanvassing is when the counties recheck their tally sheets to make sure the amount of people that voted equals the number of votes counted. Then we proceed to Automatic Recount.

A thin, wiry operative, RANDY ENWRIGHT, 49, speaks up, perhaps cueing Katherine.

RANDY ENWRIGHT
Is there anyway we could speed up the process? I think everyone would prefer if this election was certified as quickly as possible.

KATHERINE

Yes, I agree.

(to Clay)

Can we skip the Automatic Recount?

CLAY ROBERTS

No, it's mandatory...but we could skip the recanvassing and go straight to Automatic Recount. That would speed up the process.

Katherine glances around the room, a few people nod.

KATHERINE

Yes, I think that would be best.

INT. BEN GINSBERG'S HOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Ginsberg is in his hotel room quickly packing a suitcase as the sun starts to rise. The TV on in the background:

FOX NEWS ANCHORMAN

"...the world woke up with a shock this morning to discover that the United States has not elected its next President. At this moment, Florida's ballots are running through the counting machines for a second time in what is referred to as the 'Automatic Recount'."

His cell phone rings, Ginsberg answers.

JOE ALLBAUGH

(V.O.)

Today Show.

Ginsberg clicks the remote. Daley is on the TODAY SHOW:

DALEY

(from the TV)

"...there are almost 175,000 ballots that the counting machines registered as 'no-votes'. We believe that the American people want all these votes counted. I also want to add that Al Gore did win the popular vote by over 500,000 votes."

Ginsberg seethes as he watches Daley.

GINSBERG

(into the phone)

They're already trying to steal it. We need to certify this election as quickly as possible.

FROM THE TV:

MATT LAUER

"I understand that former Secretary of State Warren Christopher has been brought in to head the recount for Gore."

A picture of the dignified elder statesman WARREN CHRISTOPHER (the actor portraying him), appears on the screen.

Ginsberg knows they'll need to bring in someone too.

GINSBERG

(into the phone)

Who are we thinking?

INT. LIMOSINE - SIMULTANEOUS

Seated in the back of a limosine is JAMES BAKER, tall and regal with a distinct Texan accent. Seated next to his wife (Susan), Baker exudes pure charisma as he talks to the LIMO DRIVER, theatrically waving his arms.

BAKER

Goddamn trial lawyers are gonna be fallin' out of the sky, paving the streets of Florida in a tempest of litigation hell.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: JAMES BAKER III

White House Chief of Staff (1981 - 1985)

US Secretary of the Treasury (1985 - 1988)

US Secretary of State (1989 - 1992)

LIMO DRIVER

How do you think it's going to end, Mr. Secretary?

As if on cue, Baker's cell phone rings, he answers.

BAKER

Yeah?

(a voice on the other end asks him a question)

Yeah, alright, give me an hour.

Baker hangs up, leans forward to the Limo Driver.

BAKER

We need to go back to the airport.

EXT. PALM BEACH DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Thousands of elderly Jews swarm the single story Democratic Headquarters in Palm Beach County. They line up at a row of tables where lawyers take affidavits from the angry voters.

A group of PRIESTS stand in a circle, bowing their heads in prayer. Two twelve year old BOYS wheel a cooler around selling bottled water (they made \$150 that day). Cars drive by HONKING for both sides. COPS mill about, smiling, amused. Rag tag groups of Democratic and Republican PROTESTORS stand across the street holding up protest signs - "Dummy-crats", "Gore = Milosevic" "Bush is a Drunk", "Count all the Votes".

Near the Headquarters, Klain is SWARMED by Senior Citizens:

SENIOR CITIZENS
I want a re-vote!/ It's not fair!/
Buchanan is a Nazi!

Klain can't move, drowning in a sea of old Jews.

INT. PALM BEACH DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Safe from the geriatric mob, a disheveled Klain is on his cell phone inside the building.

KLAIN
I'm trapped in 'Night of the Living Bubbies'! I'm serious, it's like the embassy in Vietnam, you're going to have to pluck me off the roof with a helicopter!

Klain sees on a TV in the corner that PAT BUCHANAN is on the TODAY SHOW (actual footage). He hurries over.

KLAIN
(into phone)
Yeah, I'm watching.

He hangs up. FROM THE TV:

PAT BUCHANAN
"When I took one look at that ballot on election night, I think one of the networks had it up there, it's very sim...easy for me to see how someone could have voted for me in the belief they voted for Al Gore."

Klain looks surprised that Pat Buchanan flat out said it. The TV cuts to an MSNBC anchor:

MSNBC ANCHORMAN

"Mr. Buchanan went on to say that of the 3400 votes he received in Palm Beach County, he believes only 400 to 500 were intended for him."

THE TV CUTS TO - JESSE JACKSON marching through Palm Beach County with African-American and elderly Jewish protestors waving "COUNT ALL THE VOTES!" signs (actual footage).

MSNBC ANCHORMAN

"Allegations of African-American voters being turned away at the polls has cast a cloud of sus..."

A hand taps Klain on the shoulder. He turns around to see MYRIAM, the Jewish Woman from the opening of the film.

MYRIAM

(slight German accent)
Excuse me, are you Ron Klain?

Klain nods.

MYRIAM

My name is Myriam Sukerevsky.

She holds out her forearm - there is a faded imprint of BLACK SERIAL NUMBERS. Myriam is a Concentration Camp survivor.

MYRIAM

(unemotional)

I woke up at five-thirty yesterday morning thinking I was going to vote for Joseph Lieberman for Vice President. A Jew. But I think I voted for Pat Buchanan...he said Adolph Hitler was 'a man of great courage.'

(then)

Please, Mr. Klain, there must be something you can do.

Klain stares at her, realizing this is bigger than Al Gore.

EXT. TALLAHASSEE, FL - DAY

Establishing shot of TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA. Flying over the tiny downtown area, we see the states phallic Capitol Building known as 'Eskews Erection'. It towers over the old west themed Adams Street that is crammed with people.

The Florida Supreme Court, the Clark County Courthouse and the Florida Legislature all surround Eskews Erection.

EXT. BUSH BUILDING/ TALLAHASSEE - DAY

A town car pulls up in front of a three story brick building flanked by trees on a quiet Tallahassee street.

Baker walks out of the town car, flanked by his long term associates, MARGARET TUTWILER, 50's, plump, pensive, and BOB ZOELLICK, 50's, intellectual, patrician.

INT. BUSH BUILDING/ CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The imposing trio struts into the posh, upscale conference room of the George H.W. Bush Building. Leather chairs surround a long conference table that is adorned with bottled water, fruit and pastries. Pictures of former president George H.W. Bush ironically cover the walls.

Seated at the table is Ginsberg, Allbaugh and bearded attorney GEORGE TERWILLIGER, along with three other lawyers. Everyone stands for Baker who is instantly unhappy.

BAKER

This is everyone? Five lawyers and Joe Allbaugh?!

They all look nervous, like they already screwed up. Baker turns to Margaret.

BAKER

Tell Austin I want operatives, PR and volunteers down here immediately.

Baker gestures for everyone to sit, gets right to business.

BAKER

Alright people, we need a PR strategy. They already got Jesse Jackson down in Palm Beach holding hands with all those old Jews screaming "COUNT ALL THE VOTES!" Who the hell is gonna be against that?!

(he smiles)

I'm guessing Mr. Jackson is going to keep his "Hymie Town" comments to a minimum this time around.

The lawyers chuckle, their tension quickly deflating. Baker is as charming as he is tough.

BAKER

I want our own protestors in Palm Beach, Tallahassee, Miami...

(to Margaret)

...call Roger Stone...

(MORE)

BAKER (cont'd)
 (back to the group)
 ...Ft. Lauderdale, Tampa, Austin...

Ginsberg chimes in.

GINSBERG
 We should send protestors to Gore's
 Nashville house.

JOE ALLBAUGH
 And DC.

Baker busts out laughing, slaps the table.

BAKER
 Now you're getting it!
 (then)
 I know recounts are a legal game,
 but we're talking about a street
 fight for the presidency of the
 United States. It doesn't get more
 political than this.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

In a small brick strip mall behind a Pier One Imports is a vacant storefront that is nestled between a hair salon for dogs (Bloomingtails) and a hair salon for people (Nu Dimension).

Through a dirty window we see the Democrats seated on cardboard boxes and crates.

INT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Inside the dingy room are papers, trash and uneaten food left over from the previous tenant. Klain, Whouley and MITCHELL BERGER, a high strung Florida attorney sit across from Daley and former Secretary of State WARREN CHRISTOPHER, 76. Wearing an expensive Oxford suit, the dignified Christopher looks more suited for the Opera than this shithole.

Jeremy Bash hands everyone coffee.

CHRISTOPHER
 Gore wants us to pull Jesse Jackson
 out of Florida as quickly as
 possible.

KLAIN
 (surprised)
 He does?

CHRISTOPHER

The Vice-President thinks, and I fully agree with him, that protestors of any kind would taint the dignity of this historic event.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **WARREN CHRISTOPHER**

Deputy US Secretary of State (1977 - 1981)

US Secretary of State (1993 - 1997)

CHRISTOPHER

He wants to proceed as if this is a legal process, not a political one.

Whouley glances at Klain, wants him to argue.

KLAIN

Okay...I'll, uh, I'll have Donna talk to Jesse Jackson.

Whouley bites his lip.

DALEY

What happened to Holland & Knight? I thought we had already negotiated their fee.

KLAIN

We did. They suddenly 'discovered' a conflict of interest.

(gestures to Mitchell Berger)

This is Mitchell Berger, he knows Florida better than anyone. Mitch?

MITCHELL BERGER

The situation is pretty simple, Jeb Bush doles out a lot of business in this state. His chief counsel has already let everyone know the consequences of taking us on as a client.

(then)

No major law firm in Florida will represent Al Gore.

This huge disadvantage lands on the room.

DALEY

This is already fucked.

Klain jumps in, wants to keep the energy up.

KLAIN

As soon as this meetings over I'll start making calls. Kendall Coffey already agreed to come on board, he'll bring Ben Kuehne.

(MORE)

KLAIN (cont'd)
By tomorrow morning we'll have a
team patched together from across
the state.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm assuming our first step will be
dealing with this Butterfly Ballot
situation?

INT. BUSH BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUS

The Bush team have their jackets off, sleeves are rolled up.

GEORGE TERWILLIGER
The constitution says that
presidential elections must be held
on a single day through out the
nation. There isn't a court in the
state that would be crazy enough to
grant them a re-vote.

GINSBURG
And I went through a ballot
configuration dispute on the Connie
Mack recount, there are no legal
remedies. They're just screwed.

Baker marvels at the craziness of the Butterfly Ballot.

BAKER
(a touch condescending)
Looks like Warren Christopher won't
be able to negotiate his way out of
this one.

INT. STRIP MALL - SIMULTANEOUS

Jackets are also off, sleeves rolled up.

KLAIN
We don't have many options,
reapportionment of votes, a new
election. None are really viable.
Local Palm Beach groups have
already filed law suits...

DALEY
We need to stop those immediately.

Beat.

KLAIN
We do?

DALEY
We don't want to go to court.

Whouley shifts in his seat, getting angry.

KLAIN

But if we're pursuing this as a legal process and not a political fight, then aren't we going to have to file lawsuits?

DALEY

Gore doesn't want to send a message that he's suing to be President of the United States.

CHRISTOPHER

(a touch condescending)

We're not going to let James Baker suck us into a football match.

(then)

Absolutely no law suits.

INT. BUSH BUILDING - LATER

Baker leans forward.

BAKER

I want to file a law suit in federal court as quickly as possible.

The lawyers exchange glances, everyone hates the idea.

GINSBERG

It'd get tossed out immediately.

BAKER

I know, but I want to get us on track to the US Supreme Court.

Now the room is just confused, this makes no sense.

GINSBERG

I don't think they'd even hear it.

BOB ZOELLICK

And we'd get crucified by our own people for pushing a state issue into federal court.

JOE ALLBAUGH

That's what they do.

Baker ponders the advice, then...

BAKER

You're right, you're right, it sure doesn't make a lot of sense.

A collective relief in the room, it was a bad idea.

BAKER

But...

Margaret smiles.

BAKER

...as some of you may know, I love
to call turkeys in the spring.

Everyone looks at him, not sure where he's going.

BAKER

As does the previous Govenor of
this great state of Florida, Lawton
Chiles, although I'd contend that I
am the better shot.

He let's this land on the room, building their confusion.

BAKER

Now I know there's no love lost
between Jebbie and Chiles after
'94, but I always liked Lawton
Chiles quite a bit and every year
before he passed on we would have
ourselves a very pleasant time
calling turkeys in the spring.

Baker finishes off his Dr. Pepper, yells out the door.

BAKER

Can I get another Dr. Pepper,
please?!

He casually turns back to the room.

BAKER

As Governor of Florida, Chiles
appointed the majority of the
Justices currently seated on the
Florida Supreme Court. Now I can
confidently say that knowing what I
know about my old pal Lawton
Chiles, he filled that court
with...

(explodes)

...THE BIGGEST FLAMING LIBERALS IN
THE ENTIRE GODDAMN STATE!!!

The room now gets it. Baker stands up to make his point.

BAKER

If we end up in the Florida Supreme
Court we are dead. I know the US
Supreme Court is a long shot, but
Florida is a NO SHOT.

(MORE)

BAKER (cont'd)
 (then)
 So we can drink tea and discuss the
 virtues of federalism or WE CAN
 WIN!

Baker sits back down.

BAKER
 And, yes, I know we'll take a hit
 in the op-eds, but if you can't
 take a little heat, then you should
 leave right now! I don't even want
 to see a copy of the NY Times
 unless it's to wipe my ass.

INT. STRIP MALL - SIMULTANEOUS

Christopher holds up the NY Times.

CHRISTOPHER
 R.W. Apple wrote that we have a
 week to resolve this before the
 American people will lose their
 patience. I think we need to heed
 his advice.

Whouley appeals to Klain with a look, Klain avoids his eyes.
 Frustrated, Whouley jumps in:

WHOULEY
 We need to ask for hand recounts in
 the entire state.

DALEY
 A statewide hand recount? No way,
 it's impossible.

WHOULEY
 Why?

MITCHELL BERGER
 Because we can't even legally ask
 for a statewide. We have to go to
 each individual county. That's
 sixty-seven requests, sixty-seven
 hearings and sixty-seven 1%
 recounts before they even agree to
 hand counts, and most of them will
 deny us.

DALEY
 We could be stuck with sixty-seven
 lawsuits just to get this thing
 started.

MITCHELL BERGER

And if everything goes right,
everything, it would take three
weeks at the minimum to finish a
statewide. We only have five days
until the certification deadline
which Katherine Harris, surprise,
surprise, is refusing to extend.

The bleakness of the situation sinks into everyone.

CHRISTOPHER

I think that perhaps we should
start contemplating an exit
strategy. Some graceful way for
Gore to concede.

Silence. No one can believe he just said that.

Klain jumps in, shifting into finesse/lawyer mode.

KLAIN

Chris, we're only down by 1800
votes. If at the end of the
Automatic Recount we're trailing
by 10,000, then we should probably
concede. But if we're only down,
by, let's say, 2500 votes, then it
would be a tactical mistake to not
ask for more recounts.

DALEY

They control everything, Ron. The
Governor is his brother, Katherine
Harris is the co-chair of his
Florida campaign, the entire
Legislature is Republican
controlled. They'll block us every
step of the way.

KLAIN

Then what about a partial recount?
Palm Beach and Volusia. These were
the main sources of election day
problems, we'd be totally justified
to ask for recounts in those two
counties.

Whouley hates it.

WHOLEY

No! We need a full, statewide hand
recou...!

DALEY

We'll never get it!

KLAIN
 But we could get Palm Beach and
 Volusia.

Without even thinking, the young Jeremy Bash blurts out:

JEREMY BASH
 Both Canvassing Boards have
 Democratic majorities, they'll
 probably agree to hand recounts.

Everyone looks at the intern who flushes red for speaking up.

MITCHELL BERGER
 I think he's right.

Whouley gives Jeremy a subtle nod as Klain turns to
 Christopher for the final plea.

KLAIN
 Katherine Harris already ordered
 the recanvassing skipped to speed
 up a Bush certification. With all
 due respect, Chris, I don't think
 they're too concerned about making
 this a dignified process.

Christopher smiles at Klain with his wise, pensive gaze.

CHRISTOPHER
 The world is watching us. We are
 its last great Democracy. If we
 cannot resolve this in a way that's
 worthy of the office that we seek,
 then what kind of hope can we give
 other countries that wish to share
 our values?
 (then)
 This can be a dignified
 process...if we make it one.

EXT. STRIP MALL/BACK ALLEY - LATER

Whouley and Klain are huddled in the alley behind the strip
 mall. Whouley is ready to explode.

WHOLEY
 'Last great Democracy'?! Are you
 fuckin' kiddin' me?! They're gonna
 come at us with guns and drums and
 swords and Chris is worried about
 being the beacon of fuckin'
 light!?!
 (then)
 He doesn't get it, Ron, he just
 doesn't get it.
 (MORE)

WHOLEY (cont'd)
 There are 175,000 ballots that the
 counting machines registered as 'no-
 votes'. 175,000 uncounted ballots.
 You know why?

Klain shakes his head.

WHOLEY
 BECAUSE PUNCH CARD BALLOTS ARE
 FUCKED! They leave little pieces of
 cardboard hanging on the back of
 the ballots...

KLAIN
 The 'chads'?

WHOLEY
 Exactly. So when the ballot goes
 through the tabulation system...

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTING STATION - ELECTION NIGHT FLASHBACK

Poll workers place batches of ballots into AUTOMATIC
 TABULATION SYSTEMS (they look like bank money counters).
 Thousands of ballots FLIP through the machines in an instant.

WHOLEY
 (V.O.)
 ...the little chad that hangs off
 the ballot gets pushed back into
 the hole.

CUT TO - INSIDE THE TABULATION SYSTEM - SLOW MOTION

As the ballot glides through the counting machine, a chad
 that hangs off the back of the ballot slides back into the
 empty slot. A tiny laser beam strikes the now covered hole.

WHOLEY
 (V.O.)
 The machine reads it as if a hole
 was never punched and it's counted
 as an 'undervote'.
 (then)
 And some of these chads don't hang
 at all, they're just dimpled
 because the voter didn't push hard
 enough.

A ballot with a fully attached chad that PUFFS OUT of the
 ballot slides through the counting machine. The laser strikes
 the indented, but completely covered hole.

EXT. STRIP MALL/BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

WHOLEY
You know who does that? OLD PEOPLE!
They usually vote for Democrats!

INT. AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLLING STATION - ELECTION DAY

An African-American hand pushes a stylus into a ballot.

WHOLEY
(V.O.)
Or sometimes the Votomatics don't
get cleaned out for years.

CUT TO - INSIDE A VOTOMATIC VOTING MACHINE

The interior of the Votomatic is clogged with tiny pieces of cardboard 'chads'.

WHOLEY
(V.O.)
It gets so jammed up with chads
that the voter can't penetrate the
ballot at all, they can only leave
a dimpled chad.

SLOW MOTION - the back of the ballot pushes out as it's
struck by the stylus, but the chad is unable to detach
because it's blocked by all the loose chads.

WHOLEY
(V.O.)
You know where that happens?

EXT. STRIP MALL/BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

WHOLEY
In poor communities where they have
outdated voting equipment! Take a
guess who they vote for?!?

KLAIN
So you think a majority of the
undervotes are Democratic.

WHOLEY
I know so! There could be thousands
of hanging and dimpled Gore chads
hidden in those undervotes and the
only way to get them counted is to
have an actual human being look at
the ballot by hand. It would be
fuckin' insane to concede without
requesting hand recounts! Insane!

KLAIN

Talk to Christopher and Daley, tell them this.

WHOLEY

I don't speak Hawvard, Ron, they gotta hear it from you.

Klain lets this sink in, it's a lot on his shoulders. Whouley goes for broke.

WHOLEY

Everyone knew that you shoulda ran the campaign, but Gore went with that fuckin' prick Coehlo because Tony was a fighter and he proved it when he pushed you out. Now's the time to show Gore what Ron Klain can do. That Ron Klain's not gonna back down from this fuckin' fight because Ron Klain is ready to go down in history as the rock star motherfucker that saved Al Gore's fuckin' ass!

Klain thinks for a beat, then looks Whouley right in the eye.

KLAIN

Has anyone ever told you that you say 'fuck' a lot?

INT. GOVERNORS INN/TALLHASSEE ROOM - DAY

Inside a small conference room at the quaint antebellum Governors Inn Hotel, the two sides of this battle meet. Baker, Ginsberg, Allbaugh sit across from Christopher, Daley and Klain.

Warren Christopher and James Baker III are face to face, both feigning that they like each other.

TEXT: DAY 2

CHRISTOPHER

The world is watching us, Jim. We have a tremendous opportunity to show how a nation of our power can resolve a conflict as great as this through diplomacy and compromise.

BAKER

Compromise? I thought we were here to discuss scheduling.

CHRISTOPHER

Well...yes, but it was my feeling
that you and I should be able to
devise a way to settle this matter.

BAKER

There's nuthin' to settle. If we're
ahead at the completion of the
Automatic Recount then our position
is this: Governor Bush won the
election and Katherine Harris is
going to certify the election. No
negotiations, no compromises, no
extensions. Bush is president. I go
home. End of story.

Silence as his words hammer down on the room. Klain is blown
away by Baker, stares at him in awe.

Christopher knows he's hit a wall, smiles, very friendly.

CHRISTOPHER

It's always great to see you, Jim.

Baker smiles back, very friendly.

BAKER

You too, Chris.

INT. GOVERNORS INN - NIGHT

Klain walks Christopher up to his hotel room, holding
Christopher's arm to help him up the stairs. At 76, Warren
Christopher looks a little too tired for all this.

KLAIN

This is a raw struggle for power,
nothing more and nothing less. If
we don't start throwing swings,
this thing will be over before it
began.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm worried that if Gore appears to
be a sore loser, it could ruin his
career. He's a young man, he can
run again.

KLAIN

But the fight is here, it's now. We
can take Florida.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not so sure we can.

Slight beat, this is hard for Klain to do...

KLAIN

You've been a real mentor to me and
I will always be grateful. But if
we don't ask for hand recounts,
you'll receive my resignation from
O'Melvney & Myers in the morning.

Christopher stares at Klain with a tiny twinkle in his eye.
Before he can respond...

A loud SCREAM emanates from the next room.

VOICE

AHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Scattered SHOUTS are heard through out the hotel. Klain and
Christopher look around, confused, worried.

A door flies open, Mitchell Berger points at the TV.

MITCHELL BERGER

The Automatic Recount is up!!!

Klain and Christopher hurry up to the television -

MSNBC ANCHORMAN

(from the TV)

"To repeat, at the completion of
the Automatic Recount, Bush's lead
has dropped to 327 votes."

Klain grabs his chest in elation, Christopher turns to him.

CHRISTOPHER

Alright, Mr. Klain, alright. We'll
count the two counties.

KLAIN

Four.

Slight beat.

CHRISTOPHER

I thought we agreed on two.

KLAIN

I want to add Broward and Miami-
Dade, they're loaded with
Democratic undervotes. If we're
gonna do this, then let's do it.

Daley has just walked up to the doorway, he doesn't look
happy, hoped the Automatic Recount would have ended this.

DALEY

We won't be able to finish by the
certification deadline.

Christopher turns to him, a little fire.

CHRISTOPHER
I'll talk to Katherine Harris
personally. There's no logical
reason for her to not extend the
deadline. It's absurd.
(then)
I'm sure she'll at least want to
appear to be fair.

INT. SECRETARY OF STATES OFFICE/PRIVATE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Katherine Harris stands in front of a mirror in her private bathroom applying make-up. Her face thick with powder, long false eyelashes are rimmed with heavy black liner, she applies thick blue eye shadow over her lids.

Clay Roberts speaks to her from outside the closed door:

CLAY ROBERTS
(V.O.)
18 of the 67 counties didn't
recount their votes in the
Automatic Recount.

KATHERINE
(confused)
What do you mean they didn't
recount their votes?

INTERCUT with Clay outside the closed door.

CLAY ROBERTS
They didn't run the ballots through
the machines again. They just
rechecked the tabulations sheets as
if it was a recanvassing.

Katherine layers berry-red lipstick over her lips.

KATHERINE
Why didn't they recount?

CLAY ROBERTS
I don't know. Some of the
supervisors are lazy, or they
didn't want their totals to change.
I think a few wanted to cover their
asses in case they made mistakes.

KATHERINE
Should I mention it in the press
conference? Blame the Supervisors?

Clay cringes at the question, she just doesn't get it.

CLAY ROBERTS
No, Katherine. 1.5 million ballots
were not recounted. Since the
difference is only 327 votes, the
Democrats will go apeshit if they
find out.

The bathroom door swings open. Katherine Harris stands in the doorway wearing WAAAAAAAYYYY too much make-up. She looks like Tammy Faye Baker meets Norma Desmond.

KATHERINE
Then I think we need to keep this
as quiet as possible.

Clay visibly flinches at the sight of his boss.

CLAY ROBERTS
Yeah, that's...what I was thinking.

She hurries past him to the door.

KATHERINE
I believe the press awaits us.

CLAY ROBERTS
Um...Katherine...

KATHERINE
Yes?

He raises a finger to his face, subtly tries to indicate there is a problem in the facial region.

CLAY ROBERTS
...maybe...

KATHERINE
What?

Swirling his finger in a small circle.

CLAY ROBERTS
....you should...um...

KATHERINE
What is it, Clay?!

He can't tell his boss she looks horrible.

CLAY ROBERTS
Nothing.

EXT. OLD CAPITOL BUILDING - NIGHT

In front of the Old Capitol Building, a 19th century mansion that used to be Florida's Capitol, a hundred REPORTERS stare in absolute STUPOR at Katherine Harris' freakish appearance.

She is uncharacteristically nervous, nothing like her normal hostess persona. Very stiff and robotic. Combined with her make-up, it's a surreal press conference.

KATHERINE

The law states that I can not accept returns after the certification deadline unless there is some sort of natural disaster that prevents the counties from turning in their results on time, such as a hurricane.

REPORTER #1

My understanding is that the law gives you the discretion to accept late returns for any reason. That it's up to you. Why won't you accept legally counted ballots when the presidency is at stake?

Katherine's face goes blank. She has no clue.

KATHERINE

The law says...there has to be a hurricane...I have no choice but to follow the law.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER'S LAW OFFICE - NIGHT

The Gore team is moving into their new office, still way too small to conduct such an enormous venture. The entire space is one wide hallway with six individual offices. Aides have set up desks in the hall.

Klain, Whouley and Daley are in the kitchenette watching the Katherine Harris' press conference on a tiny 13 inch TV. They are stunned by her incompetence.

From the TV:

REPORTER #2

"But Secretary Harris, since the absentee ballots won't be tallied for another ten days, shouldn't you accept late returns, at least until the absentees have been counted?"

That same blank expression covers Katherine's face.

KATHERINE
 "I simply have no authority to
 extend the deadline...unless of
 course there was a hurricane."

Whouley turns to Klain:

WHOLEY
 Does her face count as a hurricane?

INT. BUSH BUILDING/LOBBY - SIMULTANEOUS

The entire Bush team (including Randy Enwright from Katherine Harris' office on election night) stand in the common area of the Bush Building. A dozen offices shoot off of the main corridor, computers in every office. They have 4 times the space as the Democrats.

Watching the press conference on a 35 inch TV, they too are stunned by Katherine's incompetence.

KATHERINE
 (from the TV)
 "...there will be absolutely no
 communication with either campaign.
 I've instructed my staff to place a
 firewall around my office."

Baker turns to the room.

BAKER
 This woman is not acceptable.

INT. LATIN CLASS/FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY - DAY

A female LATIN PROFESSOR stands in front of a classroom filled with early twenties college students.

LATIN PROFESSOR
 Victum, ego victum...

The students repeat each conjugation.

STUDENTS
 ...vos victum, is victum...

Seated in the back of the class is a man about thirty years older than his fellow students. A full head of grey hair, neatly trimmed grey goatee and muscular build for his fifty one years. This is Mac Stipanovich.

MAC
 (genteel southern accent)
 ...they victum, nos victum...

His cell phone flashes. He looks down at it, annoyed.

EXT. LATIN CLASS/FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Mac is outside the class on his cell phone. He's pissed.

MAC

Come on, now. You know I don't like
calls when I'm in my class.

A muffled, MYSTERIOUS VOICE (it was probably Randy Enwright)
asks him a question.

MYSTERY VOICE

(V.O.)

I'm just curious, Mac, are you
going to sit around and parse Latin
verbs all day or are you going to
get into this fight?

Mac smiles from ear to ear, he's been waiting for this call.

**FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: MAC STIPANOVICH (aka 'Mac the Knife'),
Florida's leading Republican Lobbyist**

MAC

(Latin)

Qua operor vos volo mihi?

MYSTERY VOICE

What the hell does that mean?

MAC

It means... 'Where do you want me?'

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM - LATER

Baker holds a press conference, standing at a podium in front
of a mob of press and cameras.

BAKER

Al Gore isn't interested in
'counting all the votes', he's only
interested in counting Al Gore
votes! That's why he only requested
recounts in the four most liberal
counties in the entire state!

INT. KLAIN'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Klain, Baker and Daley watch the press conference on a TV.

BAKER
(from the TV)
'This isn't Democracy, it's a
fishing expedition for Al Gore's
constituents!'

Christopher looks shocked that this was Baker's response,
Klain knows that they made a mistake.

KLAIN
We should've asked for a statewide.

BAKER
(from the TV)
"Hand counts are chaotic. They are
unreliable and they lead to
mischief."

Daley can't believe Baker just said that.

DALEY
He's attacking the process of hand
recounts! Un-fucking-believable!

BAKER
(from the TV)
"This is exactly why we moved on to
machine counting, it's the most
accurate way to count ballots!"

Klain suppresses a smile, digging Baker's chutzpah.

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Baker finishes up:

BAKER
Florida's votes have been counted
and recounted, and in some cases
three and four times.
(with dramatic flair)
In every case Bush was the winner!

INT. SECRETARY OF STATES OFFICE/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Mac is seated in the conference room with Katherine and Clay
Roberts. Cardboard is taped over the windows.

MAC
The world is in chaos, Katherine.

KATHERINE
I know, Mac, I know.

MAC

And there's only one person on this entire planet that can bring this chaos into order.

KATHERINE

Who?

Slight beat.

MAC

You, Katherine. You. And I thank my lucky stars that someone with your keen political instincts is in charge during this time of crisis.

KATHERINE

I just go with my gut, you know that.

MAC

Of course I do! That's why I backed you when everyone else ran over to Mortham, because you are a woman of action.

Katherine nods in martyrdom agreement.

KATHERINE

I know, I know.

(then)

I've been reading the Bible quite a bit lately and I've felt this incredible kinship with Queen Esther. She sacrificed herself to save the lovely Jewish people and that's exactly what I'm doing right now.

(trying not to cry)

'If I perish, then let me perish!'

Clay bites his lip to keep from laughing.

MAC

Exactly, Katherine, you are Queen Esther, a leader! And we need the world to see that you're in charge!

KATHERINE

Yes! I agree!

(then)

So what do I do first?

MAC

It's very simple.

(slowly)

You need to bring this election in for a landing.

KATHERINE
Bring it in for a landing?

MAC
Bring it in for a landing with George W. Bush in the cockpit. No extensions, no negotiations and absolutely no hand recounts. Deny requests for hand recounts in all four counties. Flat out deny them.

KATHERINE
Can I do that?

MAC
You're the Secretary of State, the final arbitrator of Florida election law. If the lord Jesus Christ said that you have to count those four counties, I'm sure we could show him why you couldn't.

Katherine thinks about it. Then -

KATHERINE
Hypothetically, if I were to deny hand recounts, on what grounds would we justify such a decision?

Mac grins.

MAC
Just follow the law.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE - DAY

Klain and the legal team are crammed into his small office huddled around one copy of the Florida Election Statute.

JEREMY BASH
(reading the statute)
It says hand recounts are allowed...if there is "an error in the vote tabulation which could effect the outcome of an election."

Everyone exchanges glances, not sure what that means.

MITCHELL BERGER
It's vague.

WHOLEY
It's fuckin' archaic.

KLAIN
The key is interpreting 'error in the vote tabulation'.

Everyone turns to Klain, a known legal genius.

KLAIN

(figuring it out)

If there are undervotes, you know, ballots that the machines were not able to read because hanging or dimpled chads blocked the holes...then that would be an 'error in the vote tabulation', because a voters intent could be discerned through a hand recount.

INT. BUSH BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUS

Ginsberg and co. are in the conference room, everyone has their own copy of the statute. Ginsberg pops up, he's got it.

GINSBURG

By 'error in the vote tabulation' it means 'how the votes are tabulated.' So the only way a hand recount can proceed is if there is a problem with the tabulation systems. Meaning the hardware or the software has to fail on election day for there to be an 'error in the vote tabulation.'

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Back to Klain:

KLAIN

No. That's incorrect. Later in the statute it refers to the counting machines...

(points to a line)

Right here. It specifically says, "vote tabulation systems" and here it says "automatic tabulating equipment". So if the Legislature wanted "vote tabulation" to mean "vote tabulation systems", it would have said it, since it uses that exact language later in the statute.

INT. SECRETARY OF STATES OFFICE/CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Katherine is eyeing the statute.

MAC

As you can clearly see, Katherine,
there has to be an error in the
systems, to justify a hand recount.

KATHERINE

If that's what the law says, then I
have to follow the law.

MAC

Of course it's your call, but as
always, I think you're right on the
money.

KATHERINE

So what now?

MAC

Clay writes up an Advisory Opinion
telling the Canvassing Boards that
they can't hand recount unless the
machines or the software broke down
on election night.

CLAY ROBERTS

We can't do that. The only way we
can issue an Advisory Opinion is if
one of the counties requests
one...but if they do request an
opinion...

MAC

Then it binds the entire state?

Clay nods. Mac smiles wide. Katherine is still processing:

KATHERINE

So let me get this straight. If one
Canvassing Board requests an
Advisory Opinion, then every county
is forced to follow it?

CLAY ROBERTS

Exactly.

KATHERINE

But what if no one requests an
Advisory Opinion?

Mac doesn't seem so worried.

MAC

They will.

INT. CLAY ROBERTS OFFICE - DAY

Clay sits across from KEREY CARPENTER, a very attractive strawberry blonde attorney in her late thirties. He slides Kerey a black leather wallet.

CLAY ROBERTS
We want you to go to Palm Beach
County.

Kerey opens up the wallet - clipped inside it is a shiny SHERIFF'S STAR (like out of the old West). Engraved across the bottom of the star is - "**DIVISION OF ELECTIONS**".

INT. KEREY CARPENTERS HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Kerey stands in front of a full length mirror wearing a navy business suit. She flips open the badge, practicing:

KEREY CARPENTER
Kerey Carpenter...

INT. PALM BEACH GOVERNMENT CENTER/TABULATION ROOM - MORNING

Kerey Carpenter is flashing her badge to Judge Burton:

KEREY CARPENTER
...Division of Elections.

Judge Burton slumps in relief.

JUDGE BURTON
Thank God.

He points through a set of glass windows where a huge CROWD fills the packed lobby of the Government Center.

JUDGE BURTON
This is..a...it's just a nightmare.

Reporters and camera crews surround the building, pointing cameras into every window space they can squeeze into. Rows of tables are filled with counters, prepping for the recount.

KEREY CARPENTER
Have you ever ran a recount before?

JUDGE BURTON
Are you joking?! I didn't even know
what a Canvassing Board was until
three months ago when they asked me
to head this one!

Kerey smiles, pure charm.

KEREY CARPENTER
That's exactly why the Division of
Elections sent me here...to help
you in any way I can.

INT. CLAY ROBERTS OFFICE - MORNING

Clay Roberts sits at his desk, holding a sheet of paper. He
speaks directly into camera:

TEXT: **ADVISORY OPINION DE 00-13: Manual Recount Procedures**

CLAY ROBERTS
Dear Judge Burton, This is in
response to your request for an
Advisory Opinion...

INT. JUDGE BURTON'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Seated at his desk, Judge Burton reads the Advisory Opinion.

CLAY ROBERTS
(V.O.)
"An 'error in the vote tabulation'
means a counting error in which the
vote tabulation system fails. Since
this opinion is binding..."

His jaw drops, he didn't know the opinion was binding.

CLAY ROBERTS
(V.O.)
"...county Canvassing Boards are
not authorized to hand recount
ballots in the entire state."

INT. MITCHELL BERGER'S LAW OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Klain and Whouley are reading the Advisory Opinion. From a TV
in the corner, they hear:

ABC NEWS
"With this Advisory Opinion,
Katherine Harris has shut down the
recount."

They're speechless, can't believe what just happened.

KLAIN
Looks like Madame Secretary isn't
so concerned about the appearance
of fairness.

WHOLEY
What are Chris and Daley thinking?

KLAIN
Daley's leaving. He's going back to
DC to stay with Gore.

WHOLEY
(pleased)
Really?

KLAIN
He's getting too much heat for his
old man and JFK.

CUT TO - SENATOR BOB DOLE on GOOD MORNING AMERICA (actual
footage).

BOB DOLE
"It's always good to hear from Bill
Daley from Chicago, where even the
dead vote on a regular basis for
Democrats."

CUT BACK TO - KLAIN AND WHOLEY.

WHOLEY
Ya think Mayor Daley really stole
the election for Kennedy?

KLAIN
I don't know...probably.

WHOLEY
Too bad he's not alive, we could
use him down here.

Klain grins.

KLAIN
I'll work Chris, you hit Palm
Beach. We have to at least get this
fucking thing started.

WHOLEY
Language, Ron, language.

EXT. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER/PARKING LOT - DAY

The Palm Beach County Canvassing Board holds an outdoor
meeting in the parking lot of the Emergency Operations
Center. A huge crowd swarms their table on all three sides.

An MSNBC reporter speaks into a news camera:

MSNBC REPORTER

...the Palm Beach Canvassing Board is listening to arguments from both parties on how to proceed with Katherine Harris' Advisory Opinion. In accordance with Florida Law, all meetings must take place in public.

Whouley is up at a microphone in front of the Board. Judge Burton seems conflicted. Theresa LePore wears sunglasses, looks medicated. Carol Roberts is pissed.

WHOLEY

The ballots counted in the 1% recount show that the Butterfly Ballot cost Al Gore a minimum, minimum, of 6000 votes with some estimates as high as 9000.

Theresa LePore stares forward in quiet shock. Whouley glares at her with murder in his eyes.

WHOLEY

Based on this error in the system alone, we feel Palm Beach County must proceed with the hand recount.

CAROL ROBERTS

I agree. I think we should just ignore Katherine Harris and start counting immediately.

Republican lawyer, MARK WALLACE, 32, very charming and very arrogant, quickly hops up to the microphone.

MARK WALLACE

The Chief Elections Officer of the state of Florida has told you that you cannot conduct a hand recount. It would be illegal for you to disobey her Advisory Opinion.

CAROL ROBERTS

What happens? Do we go to jail? Because I am willing to go to jail!

The crowd cheers! Someone shouts -

BYSTANDER

YOU GO GIRL!!!

Judge Burton drops his head into his hands, this is a complete fucking nightmare.

INT. CYPRUS RESTARUANT - NIGHT

Klain is at dinner with Christopher at the trendy Cyprus Restaurant. Bright water color paintings on the walls.

KLAIN

I strongly believe it's time to
take Katherine Harris to court.
It's the only way we'll be able to
get the count up and running.

CHRISTOPHER

I think you're right, I'll talk to
Al about it immediately.

Klain is pleased, that was easier then he thought.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm afraid I have some bad news.
(then)
Marie's best friend just passed
away.

KLAIN

Oh. I'm so sorry.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm thinking that I might need to
go back to Los Angeles. I would
never abandon Al, but I don't think
I'll be less effective there then I
would be...

Klain cuts him off, seizing the moment.

KLAIN

Chris, if you're concerned about
leaving, you shouldn't think twice
about it.
(confides)
I know your daughter is quite sick.

Christopher nods. He's got a lot going on.

KLAIN

You'll only be a phone call away.

Christopher smiles, very fond of Klain.

CHRISTOPHER

You don't mind running Tallahassee
on your own?

KLAIN

(casual)
I'll be fine.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE/CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Klain stands in front of his team, energized, wears his blue Armani suit from his Chief of Staff days. Commands the room.

KLAIN

We're going to start doing things a little differently now. We've been getting our asses kicked for the last six days, and it's time for us to take the gloves off and start punching back!

Everyone nods in agreement, digging the new energy. Klain dramatically holds up a sheet of paper.

KLAIN

In my hand I hold a state election code which states...

(reads)

"A hand recount shall be conducted in preference to an electronic recount." It also says that dimpled chads should be counted in any hand recount.

The excitement quickly deflates with a collective 'so what?'

MITCHELL BERGER

It's great, Ron, but we can't use another states election code.

KLAIN

We can if it was signed into law by its current governor, George W. Bush.

Mouths drop in shock. No can believe it.

KLAIN

This is now talking point number one.

Everyone claps. Finally a break. Klain turns to Jeremy Bash.

KLAIN

Jeremy, I want you to look into these allegations of black voter suppression. I have a lot of rumors and very few facts.

Jeremy nods, he's on it. Klain turns to MARK HERRON, a slightly overweight grey haired lawyer.

KLAIN

For those of you who don't know, this is Mark Herron, he's a Florida election law specialist. Mark is going to write up a memo detailing the exact standards that overseas absentee ballots have to meet to be counted. My gut tells me that some of these last minute arrivals were sent after election day.

MARK HERRON

I think so too.

KLAIN

And everyone should know Mark's law firm fired him for coming on board with us.

WHOLEY

On his birthday.

People pat Mark on the back, a few thank you's.

MARK HERRON

I've been to better office birthday parties.

Everyone laughs, the mood has visibly lightened.

KLAIN

As some of you may know, Volusia County ignored Katherine Harris' fraudulent Advisory Opinion and have almost completed their recount, compliments of Jack Young.

Everyone turns to JACK YOUNG, 52, gruff and loud.

JACK YOUNG

It looks like we'll pick up about a hundred votes.

KLAIN

Since Katherine Harris has stated she won't accept the results if they come in one minute after tomorrow's deadline...unless, of course, there's a hurricane...

Everyone laughs at the absurdity of it all.

KLAIN

...Volusia County is going to sue her to accept their late returns.
(then)
We are going to join the lawsuit.

The room looks surprised.

MITCHELL BERGER
I thought Gore was adamant against lawsuits?

KLAIN
The Vice-President just told me that since Bush is dragging us to federal court, we can drag him to state court.

(then)
It's time to sue Madame Secretary!

The room breaks out in excited applause, people pound the tables. They've finally found their leader.

Whouley leans over to Klain and whispers:

WHOLEY
Nice suit.

INT. BUSH BUILDING/ CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Baker sits at his desk reading a motion, surprised. He's surrounded by the lawyers.

BAKER
Looks like Warren Christopher just joined the Volusia County law suit.

RANDY ENWRIGHT
Christopher went back to LA. Ron Klain is running Tallahassee now.

BAKER
Who's Ron Klain?

GINSBURG
Gore's former Chief of Staff.

BAKER
Former?

GINSBURG
I haven't heard his name in over a year.

Slight beat.

BAKER
Can someone please explain that to me?

INT. KLAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Klain is on the phone, his feet up on the desk like Gore in the anteroom. He's clearly in charge.

KLAIN
(into phone)
Look, Bill, if Judge Burton doesn't
count dimpled chads, then we're
going to take him to court too.

Behind him is an eraser board with the current status of the four county recount:

VOLUSIA - counting
BROWARD - not counting
PALM BEACH - not counting
MIAMI-DADE - not counting

Written across the bottom is: **BUSH LEADS BY + 327.**

Whouley hurries into the room, looks giddy.

WHOLEY
James Baker is on line four.

Klain is surprised, and a little flattered.

KLAIN
(into phone)
I have to call you back.

DALEY
(V.O.)
Wait, I don't think Gore will...

Klain hangs up on Daley. He takes a breath, steels himself for Baker, then picks up the phone:

KLAIN
What can I do for you, Mr. Baker?

INTERCUT WITH BAKER -

He's surrounded by his team.

BAKER
I'm sorry to bother you, Mr. Klain,
but I was surprised to see you
joined Volusia County's law suit.

Klain glances at Whouley, not sure what this is about.

KLAIN

Well, Mr. Baker, I figured it would be the easiest way to get your autograph.

Baker grins from to ear to ear.

BAKER

Unfortunately, Mr. Klain, I will not be attending the hearing.

KLAIN

That's a shame, Mr. Baker, I was going to put you right in between my Sandy Koufax and my Spiro Agnew.

Baker starts laughing, he loves it.

BAKER

I hate to tell you this, but I think you're probably gonna lose tomorrow.

KLAIN

That's certainly one of two possibilities.

Baker nods to Ginsberg, he officially likes Ron Klain.

BAKER

Alright, then, just wanted to say hello, Mr. Klain.

KLAIN

Call anytime, Mr. Baker.

Klain hangs up. Turns to a smiling Whouley.

KLAIN

Who's the best appellate lawyer in the country?

WHOLEY

Why do we need an appellate lawyer?

KLAIN

Because we are going to lose tomorrow and I want the biggest gun we got for the Florida Supreme Court.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The brilliant lawyer, DAVID BOIES, 59, tall in a Lincolnesque kind of way, sincere, nicest guy you'll ever meet, is in his kitchen wearing sweat pants scooping ice cream on to a cone. His wife, MARY, yells from the living room:

MARY BOIES

(V.O.)

David! Ron Klain is on the phone!

As he reaches for the phone, the ice cream slips off the cone on to the counter. He tries to scoop it back up, but it keeps sliding off the scooper. Boies is torn, does he answer the phone or go for the ice cream? He goes for the ice cream.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **DAVID BOIES, attorney-at-law**

MARY BOIES

(V.O.)

David! He's waiting!!

Giving up on the scooper, Boies picks up the ice cream with his hand and flops it on to the cone. Not able to spot a towel, he wipes his hand off on his pants, grabs the phone...

BOIES

(professional, friendly)

Hello, Ron, what do I owe this pleasure?

He takes a lick of his well earned ice cream cone.

EXT. TALLAHASSEE AIRPORT - NIGHT

Carrying his bags, David Boies struts through the Tallahassee airport surrounded by reporters and cameramen.

REPORTER #1

How do you think you'll fare with the Florida Supreme Court?

BOIES

Hopefully better than Bush did in federal court. I understand the judge threw the case out without even leaving the bench.

The Reporters all laugh, already in love with Boies.

REPORTER #1

Now that the deadline has passed and the absentee ballots have pushed Bush's lead to 930, is Gore going to change his strategy?

BOIES

The strategy is the same, Al Gore is just trying to get votes counted...

INT. BUSH BUILDING/BAKER'S OFFICE

Baker and co. watch the press conference in Baker's office.

BOIES

"...and Florida's Chief Election Officer is doing everything she can to prevent him from doing that."

Ginsberg preps Baker on Boies:

GINSBURG

David Boies is the best courtroom lawyer I've ever seen. He destroys the witness and makes you think he's a great guy while he's doing it.

TERWILLIGER

His twenty hour deposition of Bill Gates is already legendary.

BAKER

I heard he never uses notes.

GINSBURG

He's dyslexic, so he memorizes everything.

Baker's impressed, sees he has a worthy opponent.

BOIES

(from the TV)

"Our goal is simply to get the Florida Supreme Court to extend the deadline so we can get these votes count..."

Baker turns off the TV.

BAKER

Alright, people, we got a fired Chief of Staff, a lawyer who can't read his own notes and seven Florida Justices to face, who I may have mentioned, I'm not really sure if I did, are all liberal Democrats!

(then)

LET'S GET TO IT!!

Everyone breaks off. Ginsberg walks out last:

GINSBURG

We're on it, General.

Baker tries not to grin...but he liked being called General.

EXT. FLORIDA SUPREME COURT - DAY

Standing with grace and dignity in the windy Florida chill is the Greek Rival architecture of the FLORIDA SUPREME COURT. Six tall columns line the entrance way to a dome that sits atop a rotunda.

Thousands of people fill the streets of downtown Tallahassee, looks like a full fledged MARDI GRAS. A man wears an UNCLE SAM costume with a noose around his neck, others are in Bush and Gore masks. A Vendor hocks "JUST KEEP BILL" T-shirts.

Competing Christian organizations pass out leaflets and Bibles. A hot dog cart sells pretzels, links and skewers. COPS in riot gear carry batons, ready for action.

In a sequined red dress with a crown on her head, ANGELINA THE POLKA QUEEN, plays the accordion and sings:

ANGELINA THE POLKA QUEEN
*"George W.B./Please put the world
 back in order for me/I don't like
 liberals creating such
 confusion/Just want folks to
 respect the constitution."*

Row after row of NEWS WINNEBAGOS with satellite dishes fill every inch of available concrete - MSNBC, CNN, FOX, ABC, CBS, UNIVISION, BBC, JOURNAL FRANCIS. We hear snippets of:

CNN
 ...Gore's last hope...

ABC NEWS
 ...Katherine Harris claims the
 recount can not continue because
 the deadline passed...

MSNBC
 ...the Texas Standard that says
 hand counts are preferable to
 machine counts...

FOX NEWS
 ...can only proceed if there was an
 error in the systems...

UNIVISION
 ...es un circo loco!

Hundreds of Republican Protestors wave blue "SORE-LOSERMAN" signs intermixed with many handmade slogans - "HAND RECOUNTS - A LICENSE TO STEAL", and "DEMOCRATS: TOO STUPID TO VOTE!". A BALD GUY holding up a pro-Bush sign furiously yells:

BALD GUY
Peter Jennings and Tom Brokaw have
bald spots! Peter Jennings and Tom
Brokaw have bald spo...

Baker and Ginsberg hurry out from a black SUV and enter the silver doors of the Courthouse to a round of applause.

Fewer in numbers, Democratic protestors wave their own signs - "HAIL TO THE THIEF" and "COUNT ALL THE VOTES." Pushing through the crowd, Klain and Boies are greeted with 'boos'.

KLAIN
(to Boies)
Having fun yet?

INT. FLORIDA SUPREME COURT - DAY

The high white ceiling of the Florida Supreme Court has an understated elegance, crown mouldings outline the walls. The packed courtroom faces an elevated dark paneled BENCH which seats the seven JUSTICES of the Florida Supreme Court.

TEXT: Volusia County Canvassing Board v. Katherine Harris

Boies speaks at the lectern, simple and concise, no flash:

BOIES
At the completion of the Automatic Recount, the difference between the two candidates was 327 votes. Under Florida law, the trailing candidate in a race this close is entitled to request hand recounts in individual counties. From the moment we made those requests, Katherine Harris has done everything in her power to block these recounts from proceeding.

CUT TO - Bush lawyer, MICHAEL CARVIN, at the lectern. Glancing at his notes, he is rumpled and brisk.

MICHAEL CARVIN
If they had completed the recount by the deadline, then there would be no issue. Unfortunately, they did not, and therefore the recount can not continue.

CUT BACK AND FORTH:

BOIES

Katherine Harris caused us to miss the deadline through her manipulative interpretation of 'error in the vote tabulation' that forced the counties to stop counting.

MICHAEL CARVIN

The Secretary of State was just following the law.

BOIES

We implore the court to set specific counting guidelines as the current 'intent of the voter' standard is too vague for certain counties to implement.

MICHAEL CARVIN

Setting guidelines after election day would be would be rewriting the law. It is impermissible for this court to change the rules in the middle of the game.

BOIES

Dimpled chads should be included in this standard because they represent a voters intent. Ballots simply don't dimple on their own.

MICHAEL CARVIN

These issues of dimples and chads are exactly why we believe that hand recounts are inherently flawed and unconstitutional.

Justice Barbara Pariente is visibly frustrated with Carvin.

JUSTICE PARIENTE

Doesn't the current process in Texas, signed into law by your client, state that hand recounts are preferred over machines and dimpled chads should be counted?

Slight beat.

MICHAEL CARVIN

I don't know what the process is in Texas.

CUT TO - Boies

BOIES

I think the thing that is important for this court to understand is that this is a process that if people will simply get out of the way and let it continue, it can be done. And I am not urging anything that will imperil Florida's letter to real votes...

Klain winces, but Boies keeps going, not fazed at all.

BOIES

...excuse me, electoral votes, what I am asking is that the court use its power to make sure that the votes of the people of Florida actually be counted.

The light on the podium flashes red.

CHIEF JUSTICE WELLS

Mr. Boies, I think your time is up.

INT. FLORIDA SUPREME COURT - NIGHT

A set of feet hurry across the empty lobby of the courthouse. They belong to the court's small, slightly geeky spokesperson, CRAIG WATERS, 44. He holds a sheet of paper.

EXT. FLORIDA SUPREME COURT - NIGHT

Outside the silver doors of the Florida Supreme Court, Craig Waters stands at a podium in front of hundreds of press, cameras and protestors that flow out into the streets.

CRAIG WATERS

I am going to read a statement that was authorized by the court.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER'S LAW OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

The tiny TV has been brought into the hallway so the entire Gore team can watch together. Everyone is very still, holding their breath in anticipation.

CRAIG WATERS

(from the TV)

"In its unanimous opinion the court has reversed the previous ruling."

Everyone JUMPS up in TRIUMPH!

Boies throws up his arms in victory and accidentally PUNCHES Klain in the face. Blood POURS from Klain's nose like a faucet as he COLLAPSES to the ground.

No one notices, still jumping up and down.

INT. BUSH BUILDING/LOBBY - SIMULTANEOUS

The entire Bush team stares in silent rage at the TV. Baker turns to the group -

BAKER
They just gave Gore the steal sign.

CRAIG WATERS
(from the TV)
"The counties are to hand recount their ballots, and to achieve this goal, the certification must be accepted by 5pm on November 26."

George Terwilliger looks down at a calender.

GEORGE TERWILLIGER
5 more days.

Ginsberg is disgusted.

GINSBERG
The Florida Supremes just rewrote the law.

Shifting back to strategist, Baker knows his next move.

BAKER
And I think the US Supreme Court might find that pretty darn interesting.

Zoellick reads the ruling online. Points to the screen.

BOB ZOELICK
Small victory here.

BAKER
What?

BOB ZOELICK
They didn't set counting standards. We can still fight dimpled chads.

Baker grins, knows this is potentially huge.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER'S LAW OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Having discovered their fallen leader, the entire Gore team surrounds Klain who is still on his back.

MITCHELL BERGER
Ron! Are you alright!?

Blood covers his face...between his fingers...soaked into his shirt collar. He's a mess. Klain slowly removes his bloody hands so that everyone can see...

The enormous SMILE that stretches across his bloody face.

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK WITH TEXT: **DAY 15**

EXT. BUSH BUILDING - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Two cars, a Buick and a Ford Explorer, exit the Bush Building at the same time, both with their headlights off. They turn in different directions, heading off into the dark night.

INT. BUICK - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Ginsberg lays in the back seat, hiding from view. Randy Enwright drives.

GINSBERG
Can I get up?

RANDY ENWRIGHT
Not yet.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Randy Enwright drives the Buick across a deserted country road. Ginsberg can't be seen, still lying on the back seat.

EXT. BACK WOODS - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The Buick pulls up to a large cabin nestled in the woods outside of Tallahassee, Spanish moss hangs everywhere. The Ford Explorer pulls up behind them with George Terwilliger in the back seat. They both get out.

The front door to the house opens up. Standing in the doorway is Mac Stipanovich.

MAC
Can I get you gentleman a beverage?

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The group sits in the living room of the cabin that is filled with CIVIL WAR MEMORABILIA. Muskets, confederate uniforms, a framed newspaper with the headline - "FLORIDA SECEDES!"

Seated next to Mac is TOM FEENEY, 42, cut throat with a puggish face. Feeney is enthusiastically relaying his plan.

TOM FEENEY
According to Article II of the US constitution, state Legislatures have the power to award their electors in 'any manner that they see fit.'

GINSBURG
So you're proposing the Florida Legislature award its 25 electoral votes to Bush, no matter what the results of the recount are?

MAC
He's spoken to several constitutional scholars and they all agree that it would be a legal interpretation of the constitution.

TOM FEENEY
We're calling it the 'Nuclear Bomb' option.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **TOM FEENEY, Speaker of the House, Florida**
Ginsberg and Terwilliger exchange glances, they're intrigued.

GEORGE TERWILLIGER
But what happens if the Legislature awards Bush the electoral votes, but the recount shows that Gore is the actual winner?

TOM FEENEY
The whole mess gets thrown in to Congress.

MAC
The House and the Senate will each vote and assuming everyone goes party lines, the House will award Bush the electoral votes.

TOM FEENEY

The Senate will split 50-50 with the sitting Vice-President casting the tie-breaker vote.

MAC

I'm not sure how Al Gore will vote, but I've got a pretty good idea.

GINSBURG

So the Senate goes Gore and the House goes Bush and we're still stuck with no president.

Mac smiles wide.

MAC

This is where it gets really interesting.

TOM FEENEY

If the Senate and the House are divided, then according to the Electoral Count Act of 1887, the final decision would revert to the Governor of the State that is in dispute.

The entire room breaks out in to one enormous smile.

MAC

I'm not sure how Jeb will vote, but I've got a pretty good idea.

GINSBURG

Unbelievable.

TOM FEENEY

Now the only snag with this whole scenario is that the Legislature can't act if the recount is resolved before December 12th. That's the earliest date that federal law says we can designate our own set of electors.

TERWILLIGER

That timetable fits in perfectly with our new strategy.

MAC

Which is what? Try to prevent the counties from finishing before the five day deadline?

Slight beat.

GINSBURG
 I wouldn't say 'prevent'...I'd say
 'delay'.

EXT. PALM BEACH GOVERNMENT CENTER - THE NEXT DAY

The Palm Beach Canvassing Board holds a press conference in the lobby of the Government Center. Judge Burton gestures through the windows to where a dozen teams of COUNTERS sit at counting tables in the Tabulation Room.

JUDGE BURTON
 We will have three counters at each
 table containing at least one
 member of each political party.

Whouley stands near them, anxious to get going.

JUDGE BURTON
 One Republican and one Democratic
 observer is allowed to object to
 ballots they find questionable.
 These ballots will then be brought
 to the Canvassing Board made up of
 myself, Theresa LePore and Carol
 Roberts.

The Bush lawyer, Mark Wallace, whispers to his cohorts.

MARK WALLACE
 All three of them are Democrats.

None of them look too pleased with this information.

JUDGE BURTON
 We would appreciate it if the
 observers use their discretion to
 only object to genuinely
 questionable ballots as we have a
 lot to get through in five days.

Mark Wallace shoots his guys a subtle look.

INT. TABULATION ROOM - AN HOUR LATER.

The counting teams all hold up ballots. The Republican OBSERVERS constantly object with drawn out explanations:

REPUBLICAN OBSERVER #1
 I object to that ballot on grounds
 that it does not meet the
 standards...

CUT TO -

REPUBLICAN OBSERVER #2
 ...set forth in the statute laid
 out by the Legislature that was
 established...

CUT TO -

REPUBLICAN OBSERVER #3
 ...in the guidelines and criteria,
 per the ruling of the Canvassing
 Board that was signed into law...

CUT TO - THE CANVASSING BOARD

Mark Wallace's head is so close to Judge Burton's shoulder,
 he could set his chin on it. Judge Burton holds up a ballot.

JUDGE BURTON
 Gore.

Mark Wallace launches into it:

MARK WALLACE
 I object to that vote on several
 grounds. Four in particular. Number
 one is...

WHOLEY
 Your honor, he is intentionally
 trying to slow down the recount.

MARK WALLACE
 That is preposterous! Nobody is
 trying to obstruct this process!

A clerk sets down another huge stack of ballots into the
 'DISPUTED' pile. From the main floor:

REPUBLICAN OBSERVER #2
 I object to that ballot on the
 basis that it has numerous
 irregularities! It does not...

CUT TO -

Judge Burton holds up a ballot that looks blank.

As he turns it around, the camera PUSHES in on it. All the
 observers lean forward.

CLOSE UP ON THE BALLOT - it's a DIMPLED CHAD in the #5 hole.

JUDGE BURTON
 Dimple for Gore. No-vote.

He sets it in the 'no-vote' pile.

WHOLEY

(frustrated)

I am going to have to object again.
That dimple shows clear intent for
Al Gore.

MARK WALLACE

The Florida Court did not specify
that dimples show intent.

WHOLEY

Miami-Dade and Broward are both
counting dimpled chads, you are
throwing away peoples votes when
you discard them.

MARK WALLACE

Broward County changed their
standard in the middle of the
recount and all of a sudden,
Commissioner Gunzberger never met a
dimple she didn't like.

WHOLEY

They changed their standard because
the more ballots they looked at,
the more they felt that
disqualifying dimpled chads was
discarding legitimate votes. Even
the Republican on the board voted
to count dimpled chads.

Judge Burton hates them equally as much.

JUDGE BURTON

There will be no more discussion of
the standard.

MARK WALLACE

I completely agree, your honor.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE/KLAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Sleeves rolled up, tie loosened. Klain is on the phone pacing
in his office. Very frustrated.

KLAIN

(into the phone)

These allegations of fraud are
absurd! There are news cameras
everywhere! Observers from both
parties!

CUT TO - GOVERNOR RASCIOT press conference (actual footage):

GOVERNOR MARC RASCIOT
 "The hand counting of the ballots
 that is ongoing is not only
 fundamentally flawed...it is
 becoming completely untrustworthy."

CUT TO - SENATOR BILL FRIST ON CROSSFIRE (actual footage):

SENATOR BILL FRIST
 "It introduces the potential for
 human error that the machine does
 not have."

CUT TO - SENATOR BOB DOLE on CNN (actual footage):

SENATOR BOB DOLE
 "...they're not counting votes,
 they're casting votes."

EXT. DOWNTOWN TALLAHASSEE - DAY

Boies sits on a bench with an ice cream cone, he's surrounded
 by cameras and reporters.

BOIES
 It amazes me that these politicians
 are acting as if the Texas standard
 never existed. Accusations of chaos
 and mischief are nothing more than
 a cynical attempt to discredit and
 delay the process to prevent us
 from finishing by the new deadline.

INT. PALM BEACH TABULATION ROOM - NIGHT

A Republican Observer points at an elderly counter as he
 yells at Judge Burton:

REPUBLICAN OBSERVER
 This woman is eating chads!

In the background:

REPUBLICAN OBSERVER #2
 I am sorry, but I am going to have
 to voice my objection again!

INT. KITCHENETTE - CONTINUOUS

Mitchell Berger, Mark Herron and Jeremy are in the
 kitchenette watching on the TV a very odd looking cross-eyed
 man hold a ballot over his head, he takes a really long time
 examining it.

Klain walks in to grab a coffee, notices the TV.

KLAIN
Who the hell is that?

MITCHELL BERGER
Judge Robert Rosenberg, he's the
Republican that replaced Jane
Carroll in Broward.

KLAIN
What happened to Carroll?

MARK HERRON
She quit to take a cruise.

Klain doesn't even know how to deal with that information. He looks back at the TV. Judge Rosenberg slowly examines another ballot, it takes forever.

KLAIN
What the hell is he doing?

INT. BROWARD COUNTY COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

Judge Rosenberg holds up a ballot, taking his sweet ole time.

The other two members of the Canvassing Board, JUDGE ROBERT LEE, 40's, and SUZANNE GUNZBERGER, 70's, stare at him in frustration, they know exactly what he's doing.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **THE BROWARD COUNTY CANVASSING BOARD**

Judge Rosenberg holds a ballot up to the light in a variety of different positions.

CUT TO - Judge Rosenberg shuts his eyes and dramatically squeezes the bridge of his nose, letting the world know how difficult this is.

CUT TO - Judge Rosenberg examines a ballot through a MAGNIFYING GLASS. His eye is enormous through the lens.

A camera's flash POPS.

INT. PALM BEACH COUNTY/BREAK ROOM - DAY

Carol Roberts reads USA TODAY, on the cover is the iconic photograph of Judge Rosenberg looking at a ballot through a magnifying glass.

A County Worker hurries in with a sheet of paper.

COUNTY WORKER
Carol, you need to see this. It's
all over the internet.

She shows Carol a picture of her with Suzanne Gunzburger.
There is a HEART around the seventy year old ladies with the
caption: "COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ARE LESBIAN LOVERS!!!"

COUNTY WORKER
Should we release a denial?

CAROL ROBERTS
Well...I don't really care if
people think I'm a lesbian, I just
don't want them to think that
Suzanne is the best I could do.

Everyone in the room laughs.

CAROL ROBERTS
Don't let Hyman see this, he'll
have a heart attack.
(beat)
On second thought, make sure he
sees it.

More laughter.

Theresa LePore sits on the other side of the room holding a
greeting card with a smiling Mickey Mouse on it. For the
first time in weeks, the gaunt Theresa smiles. She opens the
card, written inside it is: **'You're going to die tonight.'**

Theresa screams.

INT. PARKING LOT - THE NEXT DAY

Judge Burton, Theresa and Carol are escorted by ARMED GUARDS
back to their cars.

EXT. FT. LAUDERDALE - NIGHT

Judge Robert Lee drives home, escorted by two police cars.

EXT. CAROL ROBERTS HOUSE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

An exhausted Carol Roberts walks up to her front door, a
police car is parked outside her house.

As soon as she walks in, her husband HYMAN, yells:

HYMAN
Carol, you have to see this!

Carol walks into his office, sees him staring at a website.

CAROL ROBERTS
Hyman, I'm not a lesb...

She stops, sees that Hyman is reading the DRUDGE REPORT. As Carol begins to read, her eyes fill with tears.

INT. TABULATION ROOM - DAY

Carol Roberts holds up a ballot. She is subdued, quiet. Whouley's co-counsel (Dennis Newman) whispers to him:

DEMOCRATIC ATTORNEY
What happened to Roberts?

WHOLEY
(whispers back)
The Drudge Report listed the
addresses of all her grandchildren,
said someone should take them out.

Carol sets the ballot into the no-vote pile.

CAROL ROBERTS
No-vote.

SERIES OF CUTS:

ALL THE COUNTERS HOLD UP BALLOTS - Judge Burton. Theresa LePore. Judge Robert Lee. Suzanne Gunzburger. Carol Roberts. Judge Rosenberg with his magnifying glass.

As the CUTS quicken in tempo, their expressions become more and more bored...frustrated...and finally exhausted.

This is a long, slow, torturous process for the counters.

EXT. JACKSONVILLE, FL - DAY

Wearing a suit, Jeremy Bash walks down the street of a poor suburb. Arriving at a run down house, he knocks on a screen door. An African-American man, JOE TURNER, 50's, answers.

MR. TURNER
Can I help you?

JEREMY BASH
Mr. Joe Turner?
(Mr. Turner nods)
My name is Jeremy Bash and I work
for the Democratic Party. I
understand you were turned away at
the polls on election day?

Mr. Turner smiles, was hoping someone would come knocking.

INT. FLORIDA LEGISLATURE - DAY

The Florida House of Representatives is in session. The floor is packed with state REPRESENTATIVES who listen to their Speaker, Tom Feeney, who preaches from the podium.

TOM FEENEY

If the courts can not resolve this matter by the Safe Harbor deadline of December 12th, then it is our constitutional duty to select who will be awarded Florida's 25 electoral votes.

The majority of the Representatives applaud. Smaller in numbers, Democrats shake their heads in disbelief.

Mac watches from the packed balcony with a tiny grin.

INT. BUSH BUILDING - DAY

Baker is in the conference room with his team.

BAKER

(unsure)

The Equal Protection Clause?

GEORGE TERWILLIGER

By counting votes using different standards, i.e. Broward and Miami-Dade are counting dimpled chads and Palm Beach is not, the recount violates the Equal Protection Clause because some votes are now worth more than others.

BAKER

(to the room)

Thoughts?

GINSBURG

Interesting, but a stretch.

BOB ZOELLICK

Rehnquist and Scalia won't go for it. They've always been very stringent in applying Equal Protection violations.

GINSBURG

And we have to find a victim. The law is designed to prevent women and minorities from having their voting rights taken away.

(MORE)

GINSBURG (cont'd)
 There's a strong counter argument
 that not counting votes is the
 Equal Protection violation.

Terwilliger defends his idea.

TERWILLIGER
 The victims are the people whose
 votes were disqualified in one
 county but would've been counted in
 another.

Baker ponders this all, then:

BAKER
 I kind of like it.

Terwilliger smiles.

BOB ZOELLICK
 Why?

BAKER
 Because this is a multi-front war
 and I wanna play offense. We attack
 through the courts, the media, the
 Legislature and at the Canvassing
 Boards. If we have to reinforce the
 New Law argument with the Equal
 Protection Clause, then so be it.
 (a tiny grin)
 Who knows, Scalia and Thomas might
 just discover their inner liberals.

Randy Enwright pops his head in, holds up a four page MEMO.

RANDY ENWRIGHT
 I'm sorry to interrupt, but I
 wasn't sure if you guys could smell
 this?

GINSBURG
 What is it?

RANDY ENWRIGHT
 The pile of shit Al Gore just
 stepped in.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

Bush Spokesperson, KAREN HUGHES, holds a press conference
 (actual footage):

KAREN HUGHES

It is a very sad day in our country
when the men and women who are
serving abroad and facing danger
are denied the right to vote
because of some technicality out of
their control.

INT. KLAIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Klain is in his office with a pale and sweating Mark Herron,
he's mortified by what has happened. CNN is muted in the
background with "HERRON MEMO" written across the screen.

They talk into the speaker phone:

MARK HERRON

My memo does NOT target military
votes, Senator, it states the exact
standards that ALL overseas
absentee ballots must meet to be
counted.

QUICK CUT TO:

An ABSENTEE BALLOT ENVELOPE with a postmark dated November
8th, another dated November 9th.

MARK HERRON

(V.O.)
344 ballots were postmarked after
election day or had no postmark at
all.

CUT TO - an envelope with no postmark.

MARK HERRON

(V.O.)
93 were lacking witness signatures.

CUT TO - the blank witness signature section on a ballot.

MARK HERRON

(V.O.)
183 ballots were postmarked within
the Unites States.

CUT TO - postmarks from California, Virginia, Utah...

CUT BACK TO - KLAIN'S OFFICE:

Through the speaker comes the voice of SENATOR JOESPH
LIEBERMAN, Gore's VP running mate.

SENATOR JOESPH LIEBERMAN

(V.O.)

I was told that military ballots without postmarks are common because soldiers on tankers usually can't get postmarks.

MARK HERRON

That's correct, which is why I stated in the memo that if the ballot is signed and dated on or before election day...

CUT TO - An ABSENTEE BALLOT with a signature and a hand written date of November 5, 2000.

MARK HERRON

(V.O.)

...this would be acceptable instead of a postmark.

CUT BACK TO - KLAIN'S OFFICE:

MARK HERRON

I'm not pulling this out of thin air, it's what the law says. These ballots shouldn't be counted.

KLAIN

That's our key talking point, Senator Lieberman, the Herron Memo is just stating Florida Law.

SENATOR JOESPH LIEBERMAN

(V.O.)

Alright, I got it.

INT. KITCHENETTE - THE NEXT DAY

The entire Gore team is huddled around the television. They are watching TIM RUSSERT interview SENATOR JOE LIEBERMAN on MEET THE PRESS (actual footage). The room is anxious, leaning toward the TV.

TIM RUSSERT

(from the TV)

"Many controversies swirling in Florida. The most recent, Democratic lawyers challenging overseas absentee ballots."

Tim Russert holds up the Herron Memo.

TIM RUSSERT

"They point to a memo written by Mark Herron, a lawyer who assists the Gore Campaign, telling Democratic lawyers, 'This is how you knock out ballots from military people overseas.'

Mark Herron shakes his head, angry and embarrassed.

MARK HERRON

That's not what it says.

Senator Lieberman addresses the issue:

SENATOR JOESPH LIEBERMAN

"Let me just say that the Vice President and I would never authorize, and would not tolerate, a campaign that was aimed specifically at invalidating absentee ballots from the members of our armed service."

Shock immediately envelops the room, this is the last thing they thought he was going to say.

TIM RUSSERT

"So Democratic lawyers should drop any objections to overseas ballots from armed services personnel?"

SENATOR JOESPH LIEBERMAN

"If I was there, I would give the benefit of the doubt to ballots coming in from military personnel."

Klain's face drops in disbelief.

KLAIN

Oh my god.

SENATOR JOESPH LIEBERMAN

"And if they have the capacity, I'd urge them to go back and take another look."

Klain throws down his note pad.

KLAIN

GODDAMIT!

The room's anger turns to despair as Lieberman continues:

SENATOR JOESPH LIEBERMAN
 (from the TV)
 "Because, again, Al Gore and I
 don't want to ever be a part of
 anything that would put an extra
 burden on the military personnel
 abroad who want to vote."

Klain turns to a red faced Mark Herron who shakes with anger.

KLAIN
 I am so sorry, Mark.

MARK HERRON
 It's my fault, I never should've
 written it.

A STAFFER yells from the hallway:

STAFFER
 Ron, Daley is on line 2.

They all turn to Klain as he picks up the phone.

DALEY
 (V.O.)
 Gore is going ballistic. What the
 hell just happened?

It pains Klain to say this...

KLAIN
 I think Lieberman has moved on to
 the 2004 primaries.

INT. BUSH BUILDING/BAKER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The entire Bush Team is assembled in front of Baker who is
 giddy, energized, doesn't want to blow this opportunity.

BAKER
 The wise Senator Lieberman has said
 that we should take another look at
 these military ballots and I see no
 reason not to follow his sage
 advice.

Lots of grins, nodding heads.

BAKER
 I wanna go back to every military
 county in the state to fight for
 more ballots. I'm talkin' Escambia,
 Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Pasco! It's a
 break in the ranks, people!
 (yells)
 LET'S SEND EVERYONE WE GOT!!!!

INT. SANTA ROSA CANVASSING BOARD - DAY

Lawyers stand in front of a Canvassing Board as the Republican lawyer argues for a ballot.

REPUBLICAN LAWYER #1
Their own Vice-Presidential
candidate said these ballots should
not be discarded because of a
technicality.

CUT TO - THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY CANVASSING BOARD

A Democratic Lawyer tries to fight it.

DEMOCRATIC LAWYER
But that ballot does not have a
postmark or a witness signature.

CUT TO - THE OKALOOSA CANVASSING BOARD.

A Republican Lawyer gets soulful.

REPUBLICAN LAWYER #4
Your honor, if a member of our
military gets shot, that bullet
won't have a postmark either.

The head of the Canvassing Board nods.

CANVASSING BOARD JUDGE
I'll count it.

The Judge crosses out '**REJECTED AS ILLEGAL**' that's stamped
across the envelope.

SERIES OF CUTS:

Judge after Judge crosses out '**REJECTED AS ILLEGAL**' from
envelope after envelope.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Klain stares in disbelief at the dry eraser board where an
aide erases Bush's previous lead of 930 and writes **1104**.

Klain shuts his eyes in pain. Lieberman cost them 100+ votes.

The rest of the board reads:

VOLUSIA - Completed, +98 for Gore
BROWARD - Counting
PALM BEACH - Counting
MIAMI-DADE - Counting

From the TV in the corner Klain hears loud chanting:

CUBAN PROTESTORS
'REMEMBER ELIAN! REMEMBER ELIAN!'

Klain turns to the TV where a CNN Correspondent is in front of a crowd of CUBAN PROTESTORS that wave "REMEMBER ELIAN!" signs. Klain slowly walks toward the TV, sensing trouble.

CNN CORRESPONDENT
"It seems that Miami's Cuban Community still resents Al Gore for the Clinton Administrations decision to send Elian Gonzales back to Cuba."

KLAIN
(soto)
Shit.

Boies yells from the hall:

BOIES
Ron! You need to see this!

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Klain hurries down the hall where the team surrounds Jeremy Bash who has a binder that's filled with LISTS of names.

KLAIN
What is that?

JEREMY BASH
It's the Voter Purge List.

KLAIN
The what?

JEREMY BASH
It's the reason why people were turned away from the polls on election day.

Jeremy points to a list of names.

JEREMY BASH
These are people who have been scrubbed from the voter rolls because they were convicted felons, but I've been taking affidavits of people who were on the list, even though they weren't felons.

KLAIN
So why were they on it?

JEREMY BASH

Because Katherine Harris' office, under Jeb Bush's guidance, instructed the company that was hired to compile this list to cast as wide a net as possible by, quote 'capturing more names that possibly aren't matches'.

(hands Klain a print out)
This is an actual E-mail from Katherine Harris' office.

Klain reads the E-mail, the line '**...capture more names that possibly aren't matches**' is highlighted in yellow.

JEREMY BASH

So the list is comprised of convicted felons and anyone whose name happens to be similar to a felon.

He points to Willie D. Whiting, Jr. and Willie J. Whiting.

JEREMY BASH

Willie D. Whiting, Jr. is a minister, but since he has a similar name to Willie J. Whiting, he was told he couldn't vote.

Points to Deborah Ann and Ann Deborah.

JEREMY BASH

Other people were on the list because their first and last names were switched, or they had the same last name and initial as a felon.

Points to James Washington and J. Washington. Boies immediately puts it all together.

BOIES

Since a majority of felons are minorities, people with similar names will also be minorities.

KLAIN

Which perfectly targets African-Americans who vote 90% Democratic.

JEREMY BASH

The Supervisor in Leon County actually went through his list person by person and found that of the 697 names the state gave him, only 33 were actual felons.

KLAIN

Do you have a statewide total?

Jeremy takes a beat, almost ashamed of the actual figure.

JEREMY BASH
20,000 people were inaccurately
placed on the voter purge list. 44%
were African-American.

This silences the room.

MITCHELL BERGER
Can we do anything with this?

Boies and Klain share a look, they know there's no remedy.

BOIES
All we can do is hand it over to
the NAACP so they can try to stop
it for 2002.

JEREMY BASH
That's it?

KLAIN
We can't get votes back that were
never cast.

A Staffer yells from down the hall.

STAFFER
Ron! Jack Young on one, he says
it's urgent!

Klain grabs a phone.

KLAIN
Yes, Jack?

JACK YOUNG
(V.O.)
Miami is heating up, Ron. We need
more people down here.

Down the hall Klain sees a TV where another network is airing
the footage of the Cuban Protestors outside the Clark Center.

SLOW PUSH IN ON THE TV - Cuban Protestors screaming.

SLOW PUSH IN ON KLAIN - the sense that this is escalating
wildly out of control starts to envelop him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLARK CENTER/MIAMI - DAY

Hundreds of CUBAN PROTESTORS are standing outside the Clark
Center, a forty-story government building.

They wave 'SORE/LOSERMAN' signs intermixed with 'REMEMBER ELIAN' posters. Local Cuban activist EMILIO CEPERO is up on a makeshift stage firing up the crowd through a megaphone:

EMILIO CEPERO
Nosotros must prevenir el robo de
la presidencia por el lacayo de
Bill Clinton!

TEXT: "We must prevent the theft of the presidency by the lackey of Bill Clinton!"

The crowd cheers with anger! They chant:

CROWD
REMEMBER ELIAN! REMEMBER ELIAN!

Intermixed in the crowd are YOUNG REPUBLICANS in ties and pantsuits holding up SORE/LOSERMAN signs.

An enormous RV is parked near the Clark Center. Republican volunteers bustle in and out carrying more 'SORE/LOSERMAN' signs along with fliers and T-shirts with logos such as "HOW TO STEAL AN ELECTION" and "GORE LIES". They pass them out to Cubans and non-Cubans alike.

A tall, well built man in his mid-forties with a thick moustache (we'll call him MISTER X) is coordinating the action outside the RV, talking into a walkie-talkie.

MISTER X
We need people on 1st street.

CUT TO - 1ST STREET.

A small group of fifteen Gore Protestors stand near the entrance to the Clark Center. They are in their early twenties, holding handmade anti-Bush signs.

Twenty young Republicans surround them and scream through megaphones:

MEGAPHONE PROTESTORS
BABY KILLERS!!! MURDERERS!!! BABY
KILLERS!! MURDERERS!!!

CUT BACK TO - THE RV

Mister X gets word through his walkie-talkie:

REPUBLICAN VOICE
The Canvassing Board is moving to
the 19th floor to just count the
undervotes, I repeat they are just
going to count the undervotes!

Mister X is furious, orders into the walkie talkie:

MISTER X
Shut it down! SHUT IT DOWN!

He starts yelling at all the volunteers near him:

MISTER X
Everyone to the 19th floor!

INT. 19TH FLOOR - DAY

The lobby of the 19th floor is a small confined space that is more like a hallway to the elevators than an actual lobby. It's jammed with a group of about 50 young Republicans. They BANG on the walls and pound the doors that lead into the Tabulation Room. Everyone CHANTS:

YOUNG REPUBLICANS
LET-US-IN! LET-US-IN! LET-US-IN!

Intermixed with shouts of -

YOUNG REPUBLICANS
THEY'RE STEALING THE ELECTION!/ WE
WANT TO SEE THE VOTES!/ CHEA-TERS!

Some are genuinely angry, but many are smiling, amused by their rare act of civil disobedience.

INT. TABULATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In a small enclosed area toward the back of the Tabulation Room, the Canvassing Board is examining ballots as Jack Young and the Republican Lawyer (Neal Connolly) stand behind them.

Klain and Jeremy Bash hover in the back, observing.

The County Supervisor (David Leahy) holds up a ballot -

DAVID LEAHY/CANVASSING BOARD
Punched #7 hole. No-Vote.

Klain hands a note to Jack Young, he reads it, nods to Klain.

David Leahy holds up another ballot.

DAVID LEAHY/CANVASSING BOARD
Punched #5 hole. No-Vote.

JACK YOUNG
I object. We have too many
uncounted fives and sevens and I
feel we need to devise a fair
system to count these votes.

Klain nods, exactly what he just told Young to do.

BUSH LAWYER
That's totally absurd. There's no way to determine why voters punched these blank holes and thus no way to determine their intent.

Klain gestures to Jack Young to keep arguing. Jeremy whispers to Klain:

JEREMY BASH
I think people didn't insert their ballots into the machines properly.

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP OF A BALLOT.

JEREMY BASH
(V.O.)
So they punched the blank five and seven holes...

PAN FROM - the #5 hole on the ballot to the #7 hole.

JEREMY BASH
(V.O.)
...instead of four for Bush or six for Gore.

PAN FROM - the #4 hole to the #6 hole.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. TABULATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy heads for the door.

JEREMY BASH
I'm gonna grab a blank ballot and test it out.

Klain nods, it's a good idea. As Jeremy walks out, he passes a sweating COURT CLERK who hurries into the room.

COURT CLERK
Can I have everyone's attention.

The room turns to him.

COURT CLERK
The Canvassing Board should know that there is a full protest out in the lobby and I think it could escalate out of control.

The Republican Lawyer steps forward.

REPUBLICAN LAWYER
I believe there is a concern among
our younger volunteers that the
counting is not going on where they
can see it.

Jack Young whispers to Klain.

JACK YOUNG
All of these kids were bussed in
through Tom Delay's office.

Klain doesn't like the sound of that.

INT. 19TH FLOOR/LOBBY - DAY

Jeremy Bash pushes his way through the protestors, being
smaller than most of the crowd (barely 5'5"), he squirms
under the radar up to the CLERKS WINDOW and yells:

JEREMY BASH
I'm one of the recount lawyers, I
need to get a sample ballot.

The receptionist slides a 'sample' ballot under the glass.

A red headed PUDGY PROTESTOR sees Jeremy slide the ballot
into his jacket pocket. He screams:

PUDGY PROTESTOR
HE'S STEALING A BALLOT!!!!

In this instant, the jokey quality of the protest FLIPS to a
genuine angry mob. The entire crowd SWARMS upon little Jeremy
Bash, grabbing at him to yank the ballot away.

PROTESTORS
ARREST HIM! HE'S STEALING A BALLOT!

Klain bursts through the doors and sees that Jeremy is being
accosted. He shoves his way through the crowd and pulls
Jeremy toward the elevators.

Protestors KICK and PUNCH them as they shove by.

PROTESTORS
THIEVES! ARREST THEM! THIEVES!!!

A Protestor grabs Jeremy. Klain shoves him off and pulls
Jeremy into an open elevator. They are followed in by a group
of Protestors.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The elevator descends in thick silence as everyone stares daggers of hate at Klain and a very scared Jeremy. The Pudgy Protestor finally speaks:

PUDGY PROTESTOR
The Colonel and I won't let you
leave with that ballot.

Slight beat. Then Klain turns to him:

KLAIN
Who the fuck is the Colonel?

The elevator stops and the door slides open. Klain pulls Jeremy into the lobby, hurrying toward the exit. The Protestors stay right on their tail, pointing at them and shouting to everyone in the lobby:

PROTESTORS
They have a ballot! They have a
ballot!!

A group of thirty Young Republicans swarm them from all directions. Klain and Jeremy stop, they are completely surrounded by angry, very well dressed, young Republicans. The Pudgy Protestor BUMPS Klain with his chest.

PUDGY PROTESTOR
If you push me again I'm going to
have to defend myself.

Klain pulls Jeremy behind him and clenches his hand into a fist, he's ready to punch this guy.

Right before he does...

A dozen COPS descend upon the scene, separating Klain and Jeremy from the mob. The Pudgy Protestor points at Jeremy.

PUDGY PROTESTOR
He stole a ballot! He stole a
ballot!!!

An exasperated Jeremy shows the ballot to the cops.

JEREMY BASH
It's a sample ballot! It's blank!

INT. 19TH FLOOR/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Back on the 19th floor, the Protestors are banging the walls even harder, everyone now filled with RAGE. They chant:

YOUNG REPUBLICANS
NO JUSTICE! NO PEACE!

Banging the wall at the end of each sentence.

YOUNG REPUBLICANS
NO JUSTICE!

BANG!

YOUNG REPUBLICANS
NO PEACE!

BANG!

INT. TABULATION ROOM - DAY

In the tabulation room, the Canvassing Board is still counting ballots, getting more nervous as the glass windows gently shake from each BANG in the lobby.

David Leahy turns to his fellow Canvassing Board:

DAVID LEAHY/CANVASSING BOARD
Maybe we should take a break until
this calms down.

The nervous Canvassing Board nods in agreement.

INT. 19TH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The protestors are now SCREAMING at the top of their lungs.

PROTESTORS
NO JUSTICE! NO PEACE! NO JUSTICE!
NO PEACE!! NO JUSTICE!! NO PEACE!!!

The windows and walls SHAKE and RATTLE!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. 18TH FLOOR - LATER

Thick silence. All of the protestors are now down in the wide open space of the 18th floor.

Covered in sweat, everyone stares at the shaken Canvassing Board who are up on a makeshift stage. The crowd is on pins and needles, waiting to hear what is going to happen next.

Klain holds an ice pack to his head, anxious and nervous to hear what the Canvassing Board has decided. David Leahy speaks into his microphone:

DAVID LEAHY/CANVASSING BOARD
This morning I felt that we could
count the undervotes in five
days...but we are in a very
different situation than we were
this morning.

JUDGE LEHR/CANVASSING BOARD
A radically different situation.

Panic starts to creep into Klain, sees where this is going.

DAVID LEAHY/CANVASSING BOARD
I can not sit here and tell you if
we begin this process it will be
concluded by the November 26th
deadline. Therefore I am going to
have to vote to abandon the Miami-
Dade Recount.

Klain jumps to his feet, tossing the ice pack aside.

KLAIN
I object! This is the presidency of
the United States! We have to at
least try to finish the recount!

JUDGE LEHR/CANVASSING BOARD
Mr. Klain, I wish I could tell you
that we could get this done in
time, but I don't believe we can.
Therefore, I am going to vote to
abandon the recount as well.

JUDGE KING/CANVASSING BOARD
I am also going to vote to stop.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: THE MIAMI-DADE CANVASSING BOARD

The Young Republican Protestors HUG and SCREAM in victory. A
shocked Klain futilely tries to yell over the crowd:

KLAIN
NO, NO, NO! WE CAN DO THIS! WE CAN
GET THESE VOTES COUNTED!!!!

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

Inside the fancy ballroom of the Sheraton Hotel, all of the
young Republican Protestors are being treated to a grand
Thanksgiving dinner. Everyone is smiling and laughing. The
Pudgy Protestor holds up a copy of the NY TIMES with a
picture of their 'protest' on the front page.

PUDGY PROTESTOR
The New York Times is calling us
the Brooks Brothers Mob!

Lots of laughs, several high fives. The moustached Mister X from the RV is up on a make shift stage.

MISTER X
Ladies and gentleman, in honor of all your hard work, Governor Bush has arranged a special surprise for you. It is a tremendous honor for me to introduce one of the greatest entertainers of our time.

Everyone exchanges excited glances, who could it be?

MISTER X
Let's give a huge round of applause for...WAYNE NEWTON!!!!

Thunderous applause as Vegas crooner WAYNE NEWTON hurries from a side door to the stage. He shakes hands with Mister X.

WAYNE NEWTON
(to Mister X)
And thank you, Congressman Sweeney, for that introduction. Let's hear it for Congressman John Sweeney!

Everyone applauds the man who ordered "Shut it down!" Sweeney takes a seat as Wayne Newton launches into his classic:

WAYNE NEWTON
(singing)
"Danke schoen, darling, danke schoen..."

The crowd applauds the standard. Congressman Sweeney whispers to the Pudgy Protestor.

CONGRESSMAN SWEENEY
Do you know what 'danke shoen' means?

He shakes his head 'no'.

CONGRESSMAN SWEENEY
It means...thank you.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Klain and Whouley sit at an empty bar drinking scotch. Their eyes hang to the ground.

From the TV above the bar:

FOX NEWS ANCHORMAN
 "Bush lawyers adamantly deny that
 the so called 'Brooks Brothers
 Riot' was responsible for Miami-
 Dade's decision to shut down the
 recount."

CUT TO - Bush lawyer's press conference (actual footage):

FRED BARTLITT
 "This protest was benign and
 peaceful. There were babies in the
 crowd. There were little kids
 there. There was, in some ways, a
 holiday atmosphere."

KLAIN
 Yeah, like Bastille Day.

A young African-American BARTENDER in an FSU sweater looks up
 from his economics textbook.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN BARTENDER
 If those protestors looked like me,
 they would've hauled us away in
 paddy wagons.

Whouley downs his scotch, turns to Klain.

WHOLEY
 I think I owe you an apology.

KLAIN
 What do you mean?

WHOLEY
 I'm worried that I was right...that
 you are going to become
 famous...famous as the lawyer that
 lost Al Gore the presidency.

Klain already thought about this.

KLAIN
 Monica's worried that if we lose,
 no one's ever going to hire me
 again. In law or in politics.

WHOLEY
 I am too.

He leans over and whispers to Klain:

WHOLEY
 If you went back to DC, no one
 would blame you.

Long beat.

KLAIN
You know what's funny about all
this?

WHOLEY
What?

KLAIN
I don't even like Al Gore.

They both bust out laughing.

WHOLEY
Me neither.

They laugh even harder.

FOX NEWS ANCHORMAN
(from the TV)
"...home to fair and balanced
news."

This snaps Klain out of his moment of levity.

KLAIN
I'm in the middle of a recount
where votes aren't being counted.
The whole thing is so fucking
absurd, and no one seems to care.
No one.
(then)
And maybe I'm crazy, but I would
actually like to know who the fuck
is supposed to be our next
president!

He downs his scotch, slams the glass on the table.

KLAIN
I've got three more days to get
Broward and Palm Beach counted....

His eyes begin to show the traces of obsession.

KLAIN
...and I don't go home until
they're counted.

INT. PALM BEACH EMERGENCY OPERATIONS BUILDING - DAY

The Palm Beach Canvassing Board holds a press conference. A
devastated Judge Burton speaks to the press.

TEXT: DAY 19

JUDGE BURTON
Unfortunately, we will not be able
to complete the Palm Beach County
recount by the 5pm deadline.

Whouley watches in painful disbelief. Mark Wallace has a
dignified gaze.

JUDGE BURTON
We requested that Katherine Harris
extend the deadline a few hours,
but she has decided to shut us down
with only a 1000 ballots left to
count.
(with venom)
Apparently that's how she chose to
exercise her discretion.

INT. STATE CABINET ROOM - NIGHT

Seated up on a stage in front of a small audience is
Katherine Harris. The seal of the state of Florida behind
her as news cameras record this historic moment.

Katherine has a tiny smile, like the cat that ate the canary.
She announces to the room (and the world).

KATHERINE
On behalf of the state Elections
Canvassing Commission and in
accordance with the laws of the
state of Florida...

INT. DIVISION OF ELECTIONS - SIMULTANEOUS

Mac is alone in the conference room watching on a TV.

KATHERINE
(from the TV)
"...I hereby declare Governor
George W. Bush the winner of
Florida's 25 electoral votes."

Mac has a satisfied smile across his face, the completion of
a job well done.

Kerey Carpenter walks into the doorway, watches with Mac.

MAC
Did you know that today's my
birthday?

KEREY CARPENTER
Happy birthday, Mac.

MAC
Thank you very kindly, Ma'am.

INT. BUSH BUILDING/LOBBY - SIMULTANEOUS

The Bush team watches Katherine Harris on the TV, huge smiles on everyone. Lots of hugs.

KATHERINE
(from the TV)
"I wish to point out that our
American democracy has triumphed
once again and this is a victory in
which we can all take a great deal
of pride and comfort."

INT. KLAIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Klain and company watch Katherine Harris. A look of devastation on everyone's faces. Seeing the election actually certified for Bush is a huge blow.

KATHERINE
(from the TV)
"The true winner in the election is
the rule of law. Thank you and may
God bless America."

Written across the TV is: **BUSH WINS FLORIDA BY 537 VOTES.**

Behind them on the eraser board are the results of the four county recount.

SLOW PAN FROM EACH COUNTY TO ITS FINAL TOTAL:

VOLUSIA - COMPLETED, +98 for Gore
BROWARD - COMPLETED, +567 for Gore
MIAMI-DADE - ABANDONED
PALM BEACH - INCOMPLETE

JEREMY BASH
So is it over?

All eyes on Klain. Long beat. Then -

KLAIN
When Broward finished their
recount, they were so convinced
that Katherine Harris would feign
she never received their totals,
they flew a clerk to Tallahassee
dressed up like a tourist...

INT. DIVISION OF ELECTIONS - THE DAY BEFORE

A 'Tourist' wearing a neon orange 'I Love Florida' sweatshirt and green 'Florida' visor walks through the office.

KLAIN

(V.O.)

...so he could sneak into the
Division of Elections to hand
deliver the final totals.

The Tourist hands a confused Clay Roberts a manila envelope.

INT. KLAIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Klain stares at his team with intense determination, still very much in this war.

KLAIN

So, no...it's not over.

EXT. TALLAHASSEE - THE NEXT DAY

Klain, Boies, Berger and Bash strut down Adams Street. Mobs of press surround them, filming their every step. Clean shaven in pressed suits, they've dressed up for the occasion. Jeremy Bash holds a silver brief case. We hear newscasts:

CBS NEWS

"...Al Gore's attorneys are on
their way to file the first ever
contest of a presidential election
in the history of United States."

INT. COUNTY COURT CLERKS OFFICE - DAY

The lawyers stand in front of the clerks desk at the Clark County Courthouse. Jeremy opens the brief case and takes out the motion. Camera crews film them from outside the windows.

FOX NEWS

(V.O.)

"In the contest, Gore will attempt
to convince a judge to force Miami-
Dade to finish their aborted
recount..."

Klain hands the actual motion for contest to Jeremy Bash. Honored, Jeremy slides the motion to the Clerk.

ABC NEWS

(V.O.)

"...and to get Palm Beach County to once again recount their undervotes with a standard that includes dimpled chads."

FLASH BULBS POP!!!! The Clerk types into his computer.

CLERK

Let's see who ya got.

MITCHELL BERGER

(shuts his eyes)

Please, God, let it be Nikki Clark.

CLERK

The wheel has given you...Judge Sanders Sauls.

MITCHELL BERGER

(stunned)

I thought he was on leave.

The Clerk shakes his head. Berger whispers to Klain:

MITCHELL BERGER

Redneck.

INT. KLAIN'S OFFICE - LATER

Everyone surrounds a devastated Mitchell Berger.

MITCHELL BERGER

We can't win, Sauls will never rule for Al Gore.

KLAIN

I thought he was a Democrat.

MITCHELL BERGER

Yeah, a Dixie Democrat. The kind that votes Democratic because that Republican Lincoln freed the slaves. They don't vote for Democrats anymore.

KLAIN

(to Boies)

What do you think?

Boies ponders it all. Then:

BOIES

I think we need to lose this case as quickly as possible.

INT. CLARK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

All of the players are seated in the Clark County Courthouse looking at JUDGE SANDERS SAULS up on the bench. Klain taps his feet, anxious for Sauls to get going. Jeremy Bash stands by the back door clutching his silver brief case.

TEXT: **GORE v. HARRIS**

Judge Sauls reads from his ruling:

JUDGE SANDERS SAULS
The Court finds and concludes the
evidence does not establish any
illegality, dishonesty, gross
negligence, improper influence...

Huge smiles on Baker and company.

Klain nods to Jeremy who bolts out of the courtroom.

EXT. FLORIDA COURT OF APPEALS - MOMENTS LATER

Jeremy hurries across the street (unnoticed by the press) up to the Court of Appeals. The door is locked, so he knocks.

An ELDERLY FEMALE CLERK with a thick Southern drawl sticks her head out.

ELDERLY CLERK
Can I help you, young man?

JEREMY BASH
I'm here to file the appeal of the
Contest ruling to the Florida
Supreme Court.

She looks at her watch, confused.

ELDERLY CLERK
But that trial isn't over yet.

JEREMY BASH
No, ma'm, it's over.

EXT. CLARK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

At a podium set up near the Courthouse, Baker and his team hold a celebratory press conference.

BAKER
We are gratified that the court has
upheld the rule of law.
(MORE)

BAKER (cont'd)
 Governor Bush has won every single
 recount and is the certified winner
 of Florida's electoral votes. I
 implore Al Gore for the good of the
 nation to concede this election as
 soon as possible.

SLOW PULL UP ABOVE TALLAHASSEE -

Rising above city, we see that the entire town swarms with
 news vans, helicopters and protestors. It looks like the
 circus has permanently taken over Tallahassee.

We hear Al Gore:

AL GORE
 (V.O.)
 When do we end this thing, Ron?
 When do we finally stop?

INT. KLAIN'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Klain shaves his face in the bathroom mirror, getting ready
 for the next round of battle. We hear his response to Gore:

KLAIN
 (V.O.)
 We stop when the votes have been
 counted and we know who really won.

CUT TO:

INT. KLAIN'S OFFICE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

Klain is on the phone with Gore...

KLAIN
 Or when you know you can't
 win...even if you won.

INT. KLAIN'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Walking out of his hotel room, Klain sees on the ground the
 headline across the newspaper - **'4th DOWN AND LONG FOR GORE.'**

EXT. DOWNTOWN TALLAHASSEE - DAY

Wearing his dark grey suit, Klain walks down Adams Street of
 Downtown Tallahassee, it's very different from the view of
 Tallahassee we just saw. Now it seems empty. Many protestors
 have left, journalists are seated at outdoor cafes, laughing,
 having a good time. In V.O. we hear newscasts:

CNN

(V.O.)

"During oral argument, the Florida Supreme Court seemed unsympathetic to Al Gore's appeal."

Klain strolls down the street, sees city workers hanging Christmas lights across Government buildings.

MSNBC

(V.O.)

"Legal experts agree that it will be highly unlikely that the Florida court will rule for Gore."

Storefronts have placed candy canes and fake reindeer in the windows. The world is moving on to Christmas.

CBS NEWS

(V.O.)

"Governor Bush met today with his future Secretary of State, Colin Powell, stating that it's time to get to the business of government."

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE - DAY

The once packed and bustling hallway of the recount headquarters is now deserted. Klain stares at the empty hall, realizing that it's almost done.

ABC NEWS

(V.O.)

"There is speculation that Al Gore may concede as early as this afternoon."

INT. LAW LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Klain walks into the Law Library. All the lawyers are eating crabs. Everyone is trading T-shirts and signing court briefs to each other. Lots of smiles, people are laughing. Klain does not like what he sees.

KLAIN

What's going on here?

MITCHELL BERGER

Steve Zack represents Joe's Stone Crab, he had them send these up.

The phone rings. Klain grabs it.

KLAIN

Ron Klain.

It's Gore's assistant (Monica Dixon).

GORE'S ASSISTANT
(V.O.)
Hi, Ron, Gore wanted me to get the
names and numbers of all the
lawyers so...

KLAIN
(cuts her off)
The court hasn't ruled yet.

GORE'S ASSISTANT
(V.O.)
I know, but he wants to have a list
so he can thank them persona...

Klain screams.

KLAIN
TELL HIM HE CAN FUCKING WAIT!!!

He rips the cord out of the wall and HURLS the entire phone
across the room. Everyone stares in shocked silence.

KLAIN
And what the fuck do you people
think you're doing?! This isn't the
last day of school! You people need
to be ready to win, not to lose!
(screams)
THIS ISN'T FUCKING OVER!

Everyone immediately gets up and hurries back to work. They
all apologize as they pass by.

EVERYONE
Sorry, Ron/ You're absolutely
right/ I apologize.

Jeremy walks out last.

JEREMY BASH
Sorry, General.

Klain suppresses a tiny smile...liked being called 'General'.

INT. FLORIDA SUPREME COURT - DAY

The familiar feet of Florida Supreme Court spokesman Craig
Waters, bustles through the lobby with the ruling in his
hand. When he gets to the silver doors, the Security Guard
asks:

SECURITY GUARD
Do you want a bullet proof vest?

EXT. FLORIDA SUPREME COURT - DAY

Craig Waters stands at the podium outside the silver doors as press, cameras and people surround the courthouse.

CRAIG WATERS
The Court today has issued its
ruling in the case of Albert Gore
Jr. versus Katherine Harris.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE - DAY

The entire Gore team watches in the hallway. There isn't the anxious anticipation of the previous announcement. Everyone lounges in chairs, expecting their notice of execution.

FROM THE TV:

CRAIG WATERS
"In the Contest brief, Vice
President Gore requested that Miami-
Dade complete its aborted recount
and for Palm Beach County to
recount their ballots with a
standard that includes dimpled
chads."

Klain stands in the back, focused, he's still ready to win.

INT. BUSH BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUS

The Bush team watches in the conference room. Baker stands in the back, his focused expression similar to Klain.

CRAIG WATERS
(from the TV)
"...he also requested the inclusion
of 168 votes from Miami-Dade
County, 215 votes from Palm Beach
County and 51 votes from Nassau
County. All counted during the
protest phase, but not included in
the final certification."

Ginsberg has his fingers crossed.

GINSBERG
Come on Secret Squirrel, send me
home.

CRAIG WATERS
"In its 4 to 3 ruling, the Court
rejects Vice President Gore's
request to recount Palm Beach
County."

Everyone starts nodding, it's a good start.

BAKER
Now they're getting it.

CRAIG WATERS
"The court also rejects the
inclusion of the 51 votes from
Nassau County."

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Klain's head has dropped, getting ready for the death blow.
Everyone else looks like this is what they were expecting.

CRAIG WATERS
"However..."

Klain's head pops up.

CRAIG WATERS
"...the court does order the
inclusion of the 215 legal votes in
Palm Beach County and the 168 legal
votes in Miami-Dade."

The room JUMPS to life.

JEREMY BASH
Holy shit!

Mitchell Berger has a calculator out.

MITCHELL BERGER
We're down by 154 votes!

INT. BUSH BUILDING - DAY

Anger has quickly enveloped the Bush team.

CRAIG WATERS
"The court also orders an immediate
hand recount of the 9000 uncounted
undervotes in Miami-Dade."

The anger immediately turns to rage.

GINSBERG
This is insane!

EXT. FLORIDA SUPREME COURT - SIMULTANEOUS

Craig Waters takes a quick breath before he finishes with...

CRAIG WATERS
In addition, the court orders a
hand recount of all uncounted
undervotes in the entire state of
Florida.

There is a collective and audible GASP among the press that
echoes across Tallahassee (and the world).

INT. BUSH BUILDING/LOBBY

The entire Bush team stares in rage at the television. Their
anger only unmatched by their shock.

Baker looks like he's just been punched in the stomach. He
slowly sits down, for the first time, he looks his age.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

THE DEMOCRATS ARE JUMPING UP AND DOWN!!!

The most joy they have experienced in the entire recount, it
looks like they just won the Super Bowl.

CRAIG WATERS
(from the TV)
"The recount is to proceed
immediately and must be completed
by December 12th."

WHOLEY
Three more days!

Boies gives Klain a huge hug.

BOIES
We did it, Ron, they're going to
count.

Klain's smile fills the room.

INT. BUSH BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUS

The Republicans are back in action, people reading the actual
ruling, writing briefs, phone calls being made.

JOE ALLBAUGH
(on the phone)
We need all volunteers to
Florida...

Baker huddles with the lawyers, he's already recovered.

BAKER
I want to immediately request a
Stay from the US Supreme Court.

BOB ZOELLICK
It's a long shot. We have to prove
"irreparable harm". On what grounds
would the counting of votes cause
irreparable harm to Bush?

Ginsberg shows them a passage in the ruling.

GINSBERG
This could help.

INT. FLORIDA SUPREME COURT - DAY

Chief Justice Charles Wells sits alone at the bench in the
empty Florida Supreme Court. Furious, he speaks into camera:

TEXT: CHIEF JUSTICE WELLS DISSENT TO GORE v. HARRIS

CHIEF JUSTICE WELLS
The majority's decision to count
all the states undervotes has no
foundation in the law of Florida at
anytime until the issuance of this
opinion.

INT. TALLAHASSEE AIRPORT - NIGHT

Republican VOLUNTEERS in suits and Democratic VOLUNTEERS in
jeans hurry through the Tallahassee airport.

CHIEF JUSTICE WELLS
(V.O.)
I have a deep and abiding concern
that the prolonging of judicial
process propels this state and this
country into an unprecedented and
unnecessary constitutional crisis.

INT. BUSH BUILDING - NIGHT

Ginsberg and Mark Wallace lecture the newly arrived
volunteers, holding up forms and sample ballots.

CHIEF JUSTICE WELLS
(V.O.)
There is a real and present
likelihood that this constitutional
crisis will do substantial damage
to this court...

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE - HALLWAY

The hallway is jammed with people as Whouley and Jack Young lecture their new volunteers.

CHIEF JUSTICE WELLS
(V.O.)
...to our state...

Jack Young holds up a ballot.

CHIEF JUSTICE WELLS
(V.O.)
...and to our country.

INT. LEON COUNTY LIBRARY - DAY

A COUNTER holds up a ballot. The counter next to her leans over to examine it.

TEXT: **DAY 32**

There are four tables of counters who hold up ballots, an observer from each party standing behind each table.

COUNTER
Bush.

INT. CLAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

The Clay County Canvassing Board examines ballots.

COUNTER
Gore.

INT. HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY - SIMULTANEOUS

The Hillsborough County Canvassing Board holds up a ballot.

CANVASSING BOARD CHAIRMAN
Bush.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE/CONFERENCE ROOM

Klain sticks his head into the conference room that has been transformed into a war room. The names of every county are written on the board. The atmosphere is electric.

WHOLEY
(to Klain)
We picked up 2 votes in Madison and
3 in Escambia.

Jeremy crosses out 154 on the eraser board and writes 149.

INT. FRANKLIN COUNTY - SIMULTANEOUS

Franklin County Canvassing Board examines a ballot.

CANVASSING BOARD CHAIRMAN

No-vote.

INT. BUSH BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUS

The Bush Building has a similar war room atmosphere. Ginsberg is updating Baker who paces the room.

GINSBERG

We picked up 3 votes in Desoto and
3 in Swaneee...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Whouley to Klain:

WHOLEY

...2 in Highlands and 18 in Orange.

INT. BUSH BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Ginsberg to Baker:

GINSBERG

...1 in Flagler, 5 in Okaloosa...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WHOLEY

...10 in Okechobee, 7 in
Franklin...

INT. BUSH BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

GINSBERG

...8 in Santa Rosa and Miami-Dade
is looking really strong.

Baker nervously swigs his Dr. Pepper.

BAKER

This thing is going to come down to
a few votes either way.

Ginsberg nods.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Whouley is elated, but trying to keep his cool.

WHOLEY
As of right now we're down by 98
votes.

KLAIN
How many counties still to report?

WHOLEY
Fifty-one.

Jeremy pops his head into the room, he looks pale with shock,
like he just saw a ghost.

KLAIN
(to Jeremy)
What's wrong?

INT. LEON COUNTY LIBRARY - DAY

A CLERK stands up in front of the counters.

CLERK
The Supreme Court has just issued a
Stay, all counting is to halt
immediately.

Everyone immediately stops counting. Half of them look
disappointed, the other half look pleased. One counter
whispers to her table mate.

COUNTER
Good.

EXT. LEON COUNTY LIBRARY - DAY

Outside the Leon County Library, a crowd of fifty Bush
Protestors are cheering in celebration. They chant:

BUSH PROTESTORS
STAY! STAY! STAY! STAY! STAY! STAY!

The chanting continues over a SEQUENCE OF SHOTS intermixed
with newscasts:

CUT TO - Canvassing Boards across the state stop counting.

CNN ANCHORMAN
"In its 5 to 4 ruling, the US
Supreme Court has stopped the
recount."

CUT TO - Ballots are gathered into piles.

FOX NEWS ANCHORMAN
 "The Court will hear oral argument
 on December 11th to determine
 whether the recount should be
 allowed to continue."

CUT TO - Ballots are placed into lock boxes and clamped shut.

MSNBC ANCHORMAN
 "Supreme Court Justice John Paul
 Stevens issued a blistering dissent
 to the..."

INT. SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES - DAY

Seated alone on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States is eighty year old Justice JOHN PAUL STEVENS, he is deeply disturbed by the Stay. Speaks directly into camera:

TEXT: JUSTICE STEVENS DISSENT ON MOTION FOR STAY

JUSTICE STEVENS
 Preventing the recount from being
 completed will inevitably cast a
 cloud on the legitimacy of the
 election. The Florida Courts ruling
 reflects the basic principle that
 every legal vote should be counted.
 (beat)
 The majority has acted unwisely.

INT. JUSTICE SCALIA'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Justice ANTONIN SCALIA sits in his chambers, annoyed, he speaks directly into camera:

TEXT: JUSTICE SCALIA'S RESPONSE TO JUSTICE STEVENS' DISSENT

JUSTICE SCALIA
 I believe a brief response is
 necessary to Justice Stevens'
 dissent.
 (then)
 The counting of votes that are of
 questionable legality does in my
 view threaten irreparable harm to
 the petitioner, George W. Bush, and
 to the country, by casting a cloud
 upon what he claims to be the
legitimacy of his election.

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM - DAY

Klain and Boies are at the podium of the Senate Hearing Room holding a press conference. Klain can't hide his devastation.

KLAIN

Certainly we're disappointed. Particularly that the United States Supreme Court seemed more concerned about the legitimacy of a Bush Presidency than counting the votes that would determine whether that presidency actually deserves to be legitimate.

Boies throws in his two cents.

BOIES

How the counting of votes could cause irreparable harm to Bush is mind boggling. They could've tossed out the totals retroactively if they ultimately ruled that these votes should not have been counted.

A Reporter shouts out a question:

REPORTER

Since the Court set the hearing for December 11th, won't this prevent you from completing the recount by the December 12th deadline and thus allow the Florida Legislature to award Bush the 25 electoral votes?

BOIES

It's the single most disappointing thing about what the five Justices have done. They ran our clock out.

KLAIN

We will take legal action against the Legislature if they decide to subvert the will of the voters.

REPORTER #2

Have you thought about your strategy for the hearing?

EXT. WASHINGTON DC/THE MALL - DAY

A town car zooms down Constitution Avenue toward the imposing marble structure of the UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT. Crowds of protestors swarm the courthouse.

In the back seat is Klain and Boies, making final preparations for the hearing.

KLAIN
Kennedy's never seemed too
impressed with the 'New Law'
argument.

Boies is eating M&M's, nods in agreement.

KLAIN
What about Equal Protection?

BOIES
The Rehnquist Court has always been
extremely stringent in applying
Equal Protection violations.
They've only done it when it was
blatant and incontrovertible.

KLAIN
I don't think Baker has much faith
in it either, he buried it in the
last five pages of their brief.

Boies holds out a handful of red M&M's to Klain.

BOIES
I'm only eating the red ones today.

Klain pops a few in his mouth.

KLAIN
(chewing)
Kennedy is our only shot.

BOIES
I just wish it was Ted Kennedy.

The car pulls up to the curb, Boies hops out with his brief case. Klain sticks his head out the door.

KLAIN
David...

Boies just smiles at Klain...words aren't really necessary.
Klain gets that he doesn't have to say anything.

They both just smile at the insanity of it all.

INT. US SUPREME COURT - DAY

The packed courtroom faces a raised mahogany BENCH where the nine stoic JUSTICES of the US Supreme Court face the audience. Marble patterns encircle the room with engravings of such wise lawgivers as Moses, Solomon and Confuscious.

TEXT: **BUSH v. GORE**

Up on the bench, Justice Kennedy's head is buried in his hands, the pressure of all this weighing down upon him.

Boies sits at a table in front of the room, Klain is in the crowd a few rows behind him. They stare at Kennedy, examining his every gesture.

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **JUSTICE ANTHONY KENNEDY, appointed by Ronald Reagan**

The lawyer for Bush, TED OLSEN, 60, stands at the lectern as Justice Stephen Breyer asks him a question.

JUSTICE BREYER
I understand that you think that the system that's set up now is very unfair, because it's different standards in different places. What in your opinion would be a fair standard?

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **JUSTICE STEPHEN BREYER, appointed by Bill Clinton**

TED OLSEN
Well, certainly one that would...I don't...I haven't crafted it entirely out. That is the job for the Florida legislature.

JUSTICE O'CONNOR
Would the starting point be what the secretary of state, Katherine Harris, decreed for uniformity?

FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: **JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR, appointed by Ronald Reagan**

TED OLSEN
I would agree with that, Justice O'Connor.

Klain's eyes scream, "No!"

Justice Breyer jumps back in, really trying to pin this down.

JUSTICE BREYER
I'd still like to get your view as to what would be the fair standard.

TED OLSEN
Well, certainly, at minimum, the full penetration of the ballot card would be required...because indentations or dimples are no standard at all.

CUT TO - BOIES AT THE LECTERN.

BOIES

I think there is a uniform standard. The standard is whether or not the 'intent of the voter' is reflected by the ballot.

JUSTICE O'CONNOR

Why isn't the standard the one that voters are instructed to follow, for goodness sakes? I mean, it couldn't be clearer. I mean, why don't we go to that standard?

Boies barely hides his frustration at the question.

BOIES

Well, your Honor, because in Florida law since 1917, *Darby v. State*, the Florida Supreme Court has held that where a voter's intent can be discerned, even if they don't do what they're told, their vote is supposed to be counted. For the last eighty years, the Florida Court has always ruled that the right to participate in the Democratic process is more important than the voters ability to follow instructions.

Justice Kennedy chimes in.

JUSTICE KENNEDY

Mr. Boies, would you say that from the standpoint of the Equal Protection Clause...

Boies subtly flinches at the mention of the Equal Protection Clause. Klain instantly looks worried.

JUSTICE KENNEDY

...each county could give their own interpretation to what 'intent' means?

Before Boies can answer, Justice Ginsberg helps him.

JUSTICE GINSBERG

I think what's bothering Justice Kennedy is that the rule to counting dimpled chads varies from county to county, Broward and Miami-Dade were counting them, Palm Beach was not.

(MORE)

JUSTICE GINSBERG (cont'd)
If we were fashioning a response to
a hypothetical Equal Protection
violation, what would you tell them
to do about it?

**FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBERG, appointed by
Bill Clinton**

BOIES
Well...I think that's a very hard
question.

The entire courtroom breaks out in laughter.

JUSTICE GINSBERG
You'd tell them to count every
vote, Mr. Boies.

More laughter.

BOIES
Yes, I would tell them to count
every vote.

Even more laughter, except for Klain, terrified that Boies is
blowing the heart of the matter. Boies jumps back in:

BOIES
I think I would say that if you're
looking for a standard, then the
Texas standard, if you wanted to
specify something that was
specific, gives you a pretty good
standard. It says dimpled chads
should be counted.

Klain lets out a sigh of relief.

JUSTICE KENNEDY
Mr. Boies, let's assume that at the
end of the day, different counties
have used different standards in
making their counts. At that point,
in your judgment, is it a violation
of the Equal Protection Clause?

The red light on the podium lights up. Boies looks at it,
holy shit, he has to answer this!

CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST
I'll extend your time by two
minutes, Mr. Boies.

**FREEZE FRAME. TEXT: CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM REHNQUIST,
appointed by Richard Nixon.**

Boies dives in for his last at bat.

BOIES

I do not believe that would violate the Equal Protection Clause. The distinction between how counties interpret the 'intent of the voter' is going to have a lot less effect on how votes are counted than the difference in the types of voting machines that are used. The entire election would have to be deemed a violation of the Equal Protection Clause because it is impossible to have uniform standards when different types of voting machines and different types of ballots are used from county to county.

Klain nods, it's a perfect answer. He looks over at Justice Kennedy who is still genuinely conflicted.

EXT. US SUPREME COURT - NIGHT

TEXT: **DAY 35**

Five OFFICERS of the court walk out of the building, each carrying stacks of the sixty-five page ruling. The entire press corps RUNS up the steps, forty adults in their 30's, 40's and 50's making a mad dash for the ruling.

CUT TO - TWENTY MINUTES LATER.

The reporters all hold the ruling, trying to explain it into news cameras:

CBS NEWS

It appears the court has issued a victory for Al Gore.

ABC NEWS

The court has ruled partially for Gore and partially for Bush.

CNN

The court wants the entire case sent back to the Florida Supreme Court for clarification.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE/KLAIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Klain is on the phone reading the ruling to Gore from a FAX. The entire team is anxiously huddled around him.

KLAIN

(reading)

"The closeness of this election, and the multitude of legal..."

He stops, turns to Jeremy Bash who is waiting for the next page to finish printing through the FAX machine.

KLAIN

One second, Mr. Vice President.

INT. BUSH BUILDING/BAKER'S OFFICE

The entire Bush team is in Baker's office. Everyone reads their own copy of the ruling. The silence is thick. Then -

GINSBURG

Page twelve!

But he sees that Baker has already finished it and is dialing a number on the phone. Everyone stops and turns to Baker.

BAKER

(into the phone)

I need to speak to the Governor.

He sets the phone down on the desk and switches it to speaker phone. Through the speaker comes the voice of George W. Bush:

GEORGE W. BUSH

(V.O.)

What do ya got, Jim? No one can make sense of this thing.

BAKER

(big smile)

Congratulations...Mr. President-elect.

INT. MITCHELL BERGER LAW OFFICE/KLAIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The entire room shares a look of bitter defeat. Despair has enveloped all except for Klain who's mind is racing.

Through the speaker phone:

AL GORE

(V.O.)

So is this the end?

Boies is on the conference call as well.

BOIES

(V.O.)

I think the ruling is intellectually dishonest, but the point is crystal clear, the recount is over.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
What do you think, Ron?

Everyone in the room turns to Klain, waiting to hear if their General is ready to surrender.

Klain pauses before he answers, not sure what to say. Then -

KLAIN
Mr. Vice President, I still believe
our battle is not yet done.

The depressed room pops back to life...but with confusion.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
How so?

The look on everyone's face begs the same question.

KLAIN
SCOTUS ruled that the recount
violates the Equal Protection
Clause because different counties
are counting with different
standards.

Mitchell Berger shakes his head with disgust.

KLAIN
So let's petition the Florida Court
to set exact counting standards.
Under these circumstances, they
might finally do it, and this would
resolve the Equal Protection
violation.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
David?

BOIES
(V.O.)
I think Ron's lost his mind...

Several people in the room nod.

BOIES
(V.O.)
...but I'll drink the Kool-aid.

Klain smiles, exactly what he wanted to hear.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
What about the Florida Legislature?
(MORE)

AL GORE (cont'd)
They already voted to award
Florida's electors to Bush.

KLAIN
We'll file two law suits! One to
set standards and another to halt
the Legislature. We can do this!

AL GORE
(V.O.)
I don't know, Ron, it seems...

Klain cuts him off.

KLAIN
You can't concede, Mr. Vice-
President, not yet. Please. Just
give me one more shot.

Perhaps Al Gore is smiling on the other end.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
Alright, Ron, I won't concede yet.

INT. BUSH BUILDING/BAKER'S OFFICE

Baker is packing his office up, Ginsberg sticks his head into
the room, he's furious.

GINSBURG
Klain is going to petition the
Florida Supremes to set standards.

Baker is stunned. Then, his face breaks into a proud smile.

BAKER
Sometimes a soldier can't stop
fighting...even when the war is
done.

But Ginsberg is livid.

GINSBURG
I've worked over twenty-five
recounts, and it always amazes me
the extent that Democrats will lie,
cheat and steal to win an election.
If we hadn't of played hardball,
they would've stolen this one too.

Baker laughs, keeps packing.

BAKER
Shit, Ben, I was a Democrat till I
was forty years old.

Ginsberg can't believe it.

GINSBERG
 I had no idea.
 (then)
 Why'd you leave the party?

 BAKER
 My wife died. Cancer.

 GINSBERG
 I'm so sorry.

 BAKER
 Thank you. She was...
 (still painful)
 ...too young.
 (then)
 A close friend of mine, who
 happened to be a Republican, was
 running for Senate, told me to come
 work on his campaign to get my mind
 off my grief. I told him I had
 never worked in politics, and I was
 a Democrat to boot. He didn't care,
 just didn't want me to be so sad
 all the time.

 GINSBERG
 That's a good friend.

Baker gestures to a picture on the wall of George H.W. Bush

 BAKER
 He sure is.

FADE TO BLACK.

TEXT: DAY 36

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Klain is in the law library, proofing the petitions. Written on eraser boards that cover the walls are the names of every court case tried in the last 36 days. They fill every inch of the room.

He stares at the endless list of litigation, troubled at how far this has gone...but also proud.

Jeremy walks in.

 JEREMY BASH
 You wanted to see me?

 KLAIN
 Have a seat.

Jeremy sits down, not sure what this is about.

KLAIN

I just wanted to know what your plans were when this was over.

JEREMY BASH

I'm not really sure.

KLAIN

I've spoken with Warren Christopher and we both agree that if you'd like to join O'Melvney & Myers, we'd love to have you.

Jeremy is surprised and flattered, but hesitant.

JEREMY BASH

Wow. That's...that's quite an honor.

KLAIN

You don't look so sure.

JEREMY BASH

It's just...I don't think I want to be a lawyer anymore.

Klain is surprised.

KLAIN

Why not?

Slight beat. Jeremy isn't sure how to explain. Then -

JEREMY BASH

The Supreme Court ruled that we have to stop counting because we missed a deadline that they caused us to miss through a manipulative interpretation of the law.

(then)

That's what Katherine Harris did to us.

KLAIN

I know, it's indefensible.

JEREMY BASH

And this decision is 'limited to the present circumstances?!' The entire function of the Supreme Court is to set legal precedents for lower courts, but 'Bush v. Gore' only counts once, and after Bush is president, it never counts again.

(beat)

(MORE)

JEREMY BASH (cont'd)
If the umpires aren't going to call
a fair game...then I don't want to
play.

Long beat. Klain isn't sure what to tell him. Then -

KLAIN
When I came back to the campaign,
no one could understand why I was
willing to write press releases for
the campaign I used to run.

JEREMY BASH
So why did you come back?

Slight beat.

KLAIN
Because I never should've left.
(then)
Life isn't always fair, but if we
stop fighting...

Klain stops, Jeremy is starting to get it.

Mark Herron sticks his head into the room.

MARK HERRON
Ron, phone.

KLAIN
(to Mark)
Do you think Jeremy should become
the youngest associate at O'Melvney
& Myers?

The question is ridiculous.

MARK HERRON
Yes.

JEREMY BASH
(to Mark)
What are you going to do when this
is over?

Mark thinks about it.

MARK HERRON
I guess I'll have to tell my wife
that my firm fired me.

JEREMY BASH
You haven't told her?!

Mark sheepishly shakes his head.

Jeremy and Klain look at each other, then bust out laughing. Mark starts laughing too. The more they think about it, the harder they laugh. Mitchell Berger sticks his head in.

MITCHELL BERGER
What's so funny?

They laugh even harder.

INT. KLAIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Still smiling, Klain walks into his office, grabs the phone.

KLAIN
Hello?

AL GORE
(V.O.)
Oh, hey, Ron, it's Al.

KLAIN
Mr. Vice-President, I'm sorry to keep you waiti...

Gore cuts him off -

AL GORE
(V.O.)
I couldn't sleep last night, Ron, I just couldn't stop thinking.

Klain tenses up, sensing where he's going.

AL GORE
Then I remembered what a wise man once said to me. He said that I have to end this war when I know I can't win.
(beat)
Ron, I can't win. Even if I win...I can't win.

Time stops as all signs of life drain from Klain's face. Thirty-six days of adrenaline, sweat, anger and frustration wash away in an instant. All that's left is defeat.

Ron Klain knows that it's really over.

He tries to speak, but can't, too afraid he'll cry. Finally:

KLAIN
(barely audible)
...i'm sorry...i'm so sorry...

He stares forward in utter disbelief.

KLAIN
...I just couldn't get them
counted.

Al Gore sounds like he's trying to hold back tears too.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
I'll never forget what you did for
me, Ron. I promise you, I will
never forget it.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Through the window to Klain's office, Whouley sees Klain slumped over on the phone. He slowly walks toward the office, sensing what is going on. Jeremy sees Whouley walking toward Klain, he slowly walks over too.

One by one, everyone notices the painful conversation Klain is having in his office. They stop what they're doing and join Whouley and Jeremy.

INT. KLAIN'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

As Klain hangs up the phone, he immediately sees that everyone in the office is staring at him through the window.

He walks to the door, straightening his tie. Right before he opens the door, he pauses...doesn't know what to say...

For he feels that he failed them.

In this moment, he is consumed with the overwhelming sense of complete and utter failure.

As he opens the door...

The entire room gives him a wild round of applause.

It gets louder and louder and louder until the room begins to shake with the fire and anger that fills their souls.

Klain is profoundly touched by the moving gesture. Starts to applaud with them.

In V.O. we hear James Baker:

BAKER
(V.O.)
People are going to say a lot of
things about this election.

INT. BUSH BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUS

Baker is making a speech to the Bush team.

BAKER

That it was down to 154 votes. That
Bush's brother was the Governor.
That the Supreme Court gave it to
us. But I want you all to remember
that we won every single recount.
Never once did we trail Al Gore,
never once were we not in the lead,
and who knows how many votes we
lost when the networks called
Florida for Gore before all the
polls had closed.

(then)

When all is said and done, we had a
close election and our guy won. End
of story.

Ginsberg holds up his hand to toast an imaginary glass.

GINSBERG

To George W. Bush, the 43rd
president of the United States.

Everyone holds up their hands, clinking imaginary glasses.

EVERYONE

To George W. Bush.

EXT. TALLAHASSEE AIRPORT - MORNING

Klain and Whouley walk across a tarmac to a small propeller
jet in the tiny airport. No press, no mobs, no protestors.
They're the last to go home.

KLAIN.

You were right, we should've asked
for a statewide from the get go.
That was our biggest mistake.

WHOLEY

Yeah, sure, and Monica Lewinsky should've washed her fuckin' dress and Ralph Nader should've pulled his head out of his ass and Elian Gonzales should've stayed in Miami and Gore should've campaigned with Clinton who should've kept his dick in his pants and Palm Beach, Duval and Gadsen should've designed ballots that didn't cost us 20,000 votes and Judge Fuckhead should've counted our 800 dimpled chads and we should've stopped the 680 illegal military ballots and Katherine Harris should've thought twice about purging 20,000 voters from the rolls.

(then)

There's a lot of things that should've been different.

They walk up the steps to board the small plane.

KLAIN

You know, with all that happened here, all the what-ifs, all the second guessing, there's one thing I will always know to be true.

WHOLEY

What's that?

He looks Whouley right in the eye.

KLAIN

I fucking hate Florida.

Whouley smiles, boards the plane.

As Klain walks in, he sees Baker hurrying up the steps of a nearby leer jet. He stares at the legendary James Baker III strut up to his plane.

Spotting Klain, Baker stops. He nods to his recount foe.

Klain nods back.

Then...both men board their planes to go home.

As the planes taxi away, we hear George W. Bush's victory speech (actual):

GEORGE W. BUSH

(V.O.)

"Good evening, my fellow Americans.

(MORE)

GEORGE W. BUSH (cont'd)
 I appreciate so very much the
 opportunity to speak with you
 tonight."

EXT. DOWNTOWN TALLAHASSEE - DAY

The now empty streets of Tallahassee are littered with trash
 and protest signs. City workers clean up the debris.

GEORGE W. BUSH
 (V.O.)
 "I have a lot to be thankful for
 tonight. I'm thankful for America
 and thankful that we were able to
 resolve our electoral differences
 in a peaceful way."

INT. LATIN CLASS - DAY

Mac is back in his Latin class conjugating verbs.

GEORGE W. BUSH
 (V.O.)
 "I want to thank all the thousands
 of volunteers..."

INT. FLORIDA LEGISLATURE - DAY

Katherine Harris is getting a standing ovation from the
 Florida Legislature. She humbly acknowledges the applause.

GEORGE W. BUSH
 (V.O.)
 "...and campaign workers who worked
 so hard on my behalf."

EXT. WOODS - DAY

James Baker clutches his rifle as he walks through the woods,
 seeking vengeance on insolent ducks.

GEORGE W. BUSH
 (V.O.)
 "I am proud to have Dick Cheney by
 my side, and America will be proud
 to have him as our next vice
 president."

INT. PATTON BOGGS - DAY

Ben Ginsberg is in his law office reading the Wall Street
 Journal with the headline: **"Joe Allbaugh to head FEMA"**.

GEORGE W. BUSH

(V.O.)

"The president of the United States is the president of every single American, of every race and every background."

INT. GOVERNOR'S INN BAR - DAY

The African-American bartender at the Governor's Inn watches Bush's speech on the TV above the bar.

GEORGE W. BUSH

"Whether you voted for me or not, I will do my best to serve your interests and I will work to earn your respect."

EXT. O'MELVNEY AND MYERS - DAY

Klain and Jeremy Bash sit in a boardroom at their law firm, Warren Christopher runs the meeting. Klain seems distant.

In V.O. is Al Gore's concession speech (actual):

AL GORE

(V.O.)

"Just moments ago, I spoke with George W. Bush and congratulated him on becoming the 43rd president of the United States, and I promised him that I wouldn't call him back this time."

INT. MITCHELL BERGER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Mitchell Berger is in bed reading the paper. The headline reads - "**Katherine Harris announces bid for Congress.**"

AL GORE

(V.O.)

"I know that many of my supporters are disappointed. I am too."

He furiously tosses it into the trash.

INT. THERESA LEPORE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Theresa LePore is in the shower, she can't stop crying.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
"But our disappointment must be
overcome by our love of country."

INT. MICHAEL WHOULEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Whouley is in his office studying a giant US map on the wall that is divided into red and blue states.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
"This is America and we put country
before party. We will stand
together behind our new president."

EXT. CONSTITUTION AVE - TWILIGHT

Klain drives his family down Constitution Avenue, his three kids fight in the back seat, Monica tries to separate them.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
"As for the battle that ends
tonight, I do believe as my father
once said..."

Klain seems distant, the pain from this event far from gone.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
"...that no matter how hard the
loss, defeat might serve as well as
victory to shape the soul and let
the glory out."

Monica eyes him, worried, she wonders when her husband will finally come home.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - TWILIGHT

Flying over the city of Washington D.C. we see the Capitol, the Library of Congress, and finally...the White House.

The two men that this brutal battle was fought over finish their speeches in unison:

GEORGE W. BUSH
(V.O.)
Thank you very much and God
bless America.

AL GORE
(V.O.)
Thank you and good night, and
God Bless America.

EXT. SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES - TWILIGHT

We fly down to the steps of the Supreme Court of the United States. Under the dark grey sky, the white marble has lost a touch of its former glory.

Written over the courthouse is:

"Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this years presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law."

**- Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens
in his dissent to Bush v. Gore**

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END