

SACRED COWS

by

Joe Eszterhas

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FADE IN:

EXT. A CAMPAIGN RALLY - DAY

A suburban mall's parking lot -- hundreds of people, lots of red-white-and-blue everywhere. Signs that say: TAYLOR/FORRESTER and JIM TAYLOR FOR PRESIDENT. Republican SENATOR JIM TAYLOR, of Illinois, in his late-40's, attractive, stands on a bunting-draped stage. He speaks in an incisive rhythm.

SENATOR TAYLOR

We're not a welfare agency for the world. I say we put Americans' hard-earned dollars back into America! Yes, I know there is poverty in India, but that poverty is not our responsibility, it is the Indians' responsibility. Let's use those dollars my opponent wants to give away for our own good.

Loud CHEERS from the crowd.

EXT. A CAMPAIGN RALLY - DAY

A narrow side street in an inner city -- thousands of people. Signs that say: RE-ELECT PRESIDENT PARR and PARR/GRAHAM. The President of the United States, SAM PARR, the former Senator from Nebraska, stands on top of the car. He is 64 years old; his face is craggy; but, except for his shock of white hair, he looks like he is in his mid-50's. He speaks in a low-key, person-to-person style.

PRESIDENT PARR

Let's not bog ourselves down in the politics of fear. The Parr Plan For Progress opens our hearts to the less advantaged -- not just here, but in other parts of the world. We live in a time of peace and prosperity. We are a blessed nation. We are a blessed people. Let's share our blessings. Let's not fear generosity. Generosity is nothing to fear. Generosity will only make us richer.

There is loud APPLAUSE from the crowd.

EXT. THE STREETS - CALCUTTA, INDIA - DAY

Deafening NOISE. Millions of people in the streets, waving American flags, CHEERING, chanting "America! America! America!"

Total chaos -- and in the middle of the chaos we glimpse, straying aimlessly, some sacred cows.

A TELEVISION SCREEN

We see the elaborate intro and theme MUSIC for the EBS Nightly News with Tom Martin. And then we see MARTIN on screen: he is in his late-40's; there is a polished sincerity about him.

MARTIN

As an estimated three million people staged the largest pro-American demonstration in history in Calcutta, India, a Gallup/EBS poll shows President Parr with a still-climbing 28 point lead against conservative Republican Senator Jim Taylor. There are only thirty days left in the campaign as the candidates prepare for their first debate.

INT. THE PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The President of the United States shuts the set off with a remote device and grins. Next to him in bed is LACY MORROW -- in her mid-30's, a beautiful woman.

SAM (PRESIDENT PARR)

Twenty-eight points! You know what that means? It means I don't have to chase that pissant all over the country.

LACY (smiles)

I thought you liked pressing the flesh.

SAM

I do.

He looks at her, smiles. She starts getting out of bed to dress. He watches her appreciatively.

SAM

Where the hell are you going?

LACY (smiles, as she dresses)

I have a debate to cover in Cleveland tomorrow.

SAM

I'll give you a ride on Air Force One.

LACY (smiles)

You're very nice in bed, Sam --

SAM

I'll take "very nice" at my age,
thank you --

LACY (smiles)

But I'm not going to take a chance
of getting that idiot elected
President of the United States.
Besides, there's no future in it.
Look what happened to Donna Rice.

SAM

What happened to Donna Rice?

LACY

Nothing.

She comes to the bed, kisses him on the cheek.

LACY

Good luck tomorrow. The future
well-being of the Western World
rests in your hands.

He puts his hand on her butt, cups it.

SAM (smiles)

Yes it does.

She knocks his hand away, smiles, and walks out. As soon
as she goes out, JACK HEFFERNAN comes in through another
door. He is in his early-50's, a take-charge kind of guy,
the President's Chief of Staff.

HEFF (upset)

I've been waiting out there for
forty minutes, Mr. President.

Sam gets up out of bed -- he wears undershorts -- goes to
pour himself a drink.

SAM

I'm getting old, Heff. When I was a
kid, I wished I could take more
time. Now I wish I didn't take so
much.

HEFF (grins)

It's Taylor. He wants to talk.

SAM

About what?

HEFF

Beats me. Tomorrow night, before
the debate. Just Jimbo and Victor
Mackey and you and me.

SAM

Tell him to come to the hotel.

HEFF (shakes his head)

Strictly private, no media. He wants to meet at the hall, a half-hour before the debate.

Sam thinks about it a long beat, sips his drink.

SAM

Do you know what he is, Heff? He's a skunk.

HEFF

That means we can take the meeting, but we have to watch the smell.

EXT. CONVENTION HALL - CLEVELAND - NIGHT

The President gets out of his limousine in front of Convention Hall. With him are his wife, EMILY, in her early-60's, a well-kept woman; DOC BARLEY, in his early-70's, a rumpled man who is President Parr's congressional liaison and one of his oldest friends; and Jack Heffernan. The President waves to the crowd and, smiling, is led into the hall by a phalanx of Secret Service and law-enforcement types.

INT. A MAKEUP ROOM - CONVENTION HALL - NIGHT

Makeup people are working on him. Doc is there and Heff and Emily, who is knitting and looks bored.

DOC (to makeup guys)

Watch the tint, okay? This isn't Richard Nixon here!

EMILY

Are we inviting President Nixon to the dinner for the Indian Vice-President next month?

SAM (hard)

No!

HEFF

Yes we are. He called me twice about it last week.

SAM

It took us long enough to get him out of the White House; I'm not inviting him back in.

DOC (grins)

Thataboy, Sam.

HEFF (plaintive)
He doesn't have anything else to do,
Mr. President. The baseball season
is over.

SAM
Why doesn't he listen to his
tapes? He made enough of 'em.

Doc, and then Heff, laugh.

EMILY
Well, I think that's very mean of
all of you.
(to Sam)
How would you feel if you didn't
have anything to do and you wanted
to come to a White House dinner?

A Secret Service agent comes in, whispers something to
Heff.

SAM
I wouldn't want to go to a White
House dinner under any
circumstances.

HEFF
I'm going to have to ask everyone
except the President to leave.

DOC (upset)
What do you mean, I've got to leave?
What the hell's going on?

HEFF
National Security.

DOC (starts to leave)
Anytime anybody ever says that, it's
a lie.

EMILY (to Sam, leaving)
Is it a lie, Sam?

SAM (grins)
I'm not going to lie to you, Emily;
of course it's a lie.

She smiles and is gone with Doc and the makeup people. A
long beat, and then Senator Jim Taylor comes in, wearing
his debate makeup, with his aide, VICTOR MACKEY. Mackey
is a heavysset man in his 40's.

SENATOR TAYLOR
Mr. President.

SAM

Jimbo.

SENATOR TAYLOR

You know Vic Mackey.

SAM

All too well.

Mackey extends his hand; a beat, and then Sam barely shakes it. They sit on couches facing each other -- the President and Senator Taylor in their makeup.

SENATOR TAYLOR (after a beat)

Is this room secure?

SAM

Nothing's secure anymore. Didn't the CIA brief you?

A long beat. Heff looks at his watch.

HEFF

We don't have much time. You better say whatever it is you've got to say.

MACKEY (after a beat)

Mr. President, do you remember what you did two weeks ago Saturday night?

The President thinks about it.

HEFF (impatient)

What is this?

SENATOR TAYLOR

Do you?

SAM

(after a beat)

Yes. I was at my brother's farm in Nebraska.

HEFF

I don't get it -- what does this have to do with --

MACKEY

You went into the barn, didn't you?

Sam looks at him a long beat.

HEFF (in disbelief)

The barn? What barn? He went into the barn? So he went into the barn, so --

MACKEY

We have a photograph, Mr. President.

A long beat. Sam just looks at him, then at Senator Taylor.

SAM (to Taylor, quietly)

You sonofabitch.

A long beat, as they look at each other.

HEFF

What photograph? What's going on here?

MACKEY (to Sam)

You withdraw from the race. For reasons of health. Vice-President Graham takes your place on the ticket.

Sam just stares at them -- Heff stares at Sam.

SENATOR TAYLOR

You've had a brilliant, long-lasting career. You don't want to turn your place in American history into a, into a...

A long beat.

MACKEY

Mockery.

A long beat as they look at each other.

SENATOR TAYLOR

You don't have a choice, Sam.
(he looks at his watch)
We have three minutes.

MACKEY (gets up)

A pleasure seeing you, Mr. President.

Sam just sits there as they leave; Heff stares at him, sees how disturbed he is.

HEFF (quietly)

Was Lacy out there with you?

A beat, and Sam shakes his head.

HEFF (frantic)

What the hell happened?

(he clears his
throat; calmer)

Mr. President, will you please tell me what happened?

Sam looks at him a long beat. A SECRET SERVICEMAN comes in.

SECRET SERVICEMAN
They're ready, Mr. President.

A long beat, and Sam gets up. He looks very disturbed.

INT. THE CONVENTION HALL - NIGHT

The President stands at one lectern; Senator Jim Taylor at the other. Jim Taylor looks full of life; the President looks like he's been poleaxed. Heff and Doc watch Sam Parr as he speaks.

SAM (haltingly)
Well, I think we can be proud of...
do something we should be proud
of... to conquer despair...
poverty... in other areas... parts
of the globe... in a time of
generosity... of peace and
prosperity... to admit to our
generosity...

A TELEVISION SCREEN

Tom Martin, the anchorman -- sitting next to him is Lacy Morrow.

MARTIN
With me now is White House
correspondent Lacy Morrow. Lacy,
this certainly wasn't the
President's finest hour, was it?

LACY
Well, the spin-doctors are trying to
put the best possible face on it,
Tom, but I've certainly seen the
President perform better. He didn't
have any of his natural rhythms. He
had a hard time getting to the
point. It was what I would call a
very flaccid performance.

MARTIN
He was stiff --

LACY
But disjointed. He may have been
stiff, but the performance was
flaccid and, as we all know, it's
the performance that counts.

A beat: his expression says: What did she say?

MARTIN
Thank you, Lacy.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - NIGHT

Eyes glazed, staring straight ahead, the President sits in the darkness, a drink in his hands. Heff sits next to him, staring straight ahead, too, saying nothing. A long beat, and then finally --

SAM

How bad was I?

HEFF (after a beat)

I don't know; we'll see the numbers tomorrow.

Sam says nothing, a long beat, he sips his drink. He doesn't look at Heff.

SAM (quietly)

I was out at the farm -- it was my dad's farm, it's Mose's now. It's where I grew up.

HEFF (losing patience)

I know all that. I'm not asking you to compose a campaign biography here. I composed your campaign biography.

A long beat -- Sam sips his drink.

SAM

I was tired. Connie came in from L.A. She told me she's getting divorced again.

HEFF

So what -- your daughter's getting divorced again. What does that have to do with anything?

SAM (reflectively)

It depressed me. I didn't raise her to get divorced all the time. I don't know what's happening to the values in this country, Heff.

HEFF (after a long beat)

Mr. President, please --

SAM

I was tired, I was depressed. Mose and I started hitting the Jack Daniel's. I went into the barn to sleep it off.

(a beat; he smiles)

I love that barn. I was in there all the time when I was a kid.

HEFF (after a long beat)
So?

SAM (directly)
So I woke up with a hard-on and
poked a cow.

Heff sits there a long beat, doesn't look at him.

HEFF (quietly)
I'm sorry?

SAM (impatient)
I poked a cow. I grew up on a farm,
for Pete's sake. It's as all-
American as the fireworks on the
Fourth of July.

HEFF (in shock)
You... poked... you mean --

SAM
Yeah, I fucked her.

A long beat, and then Heff closes his eyes.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - MORNING

Heff and Doc sit there. With them are: MARK SIMPSON, 34,
yuppie-ish, a Presidential speech writer. BILLY LONG, 48,
a battle-axe of a woman, very plain, the White House Press
Secretary. CLARK CRAWFORD, 72, patrician, distinguished,
a Democratic kingmaker and advisor to many Presidents.

There is a silence in the room. They don't look at each
other, then --

CRAWFORD
I'm sorry. I cannot accept this. I
do not believe this.

MARK (a slight smile)
It is unprecedented, I'll do some
reading, but --

CRAWFORD
I have been advising Presidents
since Franklin. I have sat in this
office and discussed a great many...
peccadilloes. Mr. Hoover was very
industrious about bringing them to
our attention. But this... this --

DOC
Ah, hell, Clark, he didn't steal any
money, for Christ's sake.

CRAWFORD
I wish he would have!

DOC
You want a crook in the White House?

CRAWFORD
I have many years of experience
dealing with those kinds of
problems.

A beat, and the President walks into the room. He looks
very chipper.

SAM
Good morning.

He looks at them, smiles. They avoid his look. He sits
down casually behind his big desk.

SAM (looks them over)
Well, I see you've all been briefed.

A long beat as they avoid his look.

BILLY (finally)
There is hardly any slippage from
the debate. We lost two points.
We're 26 up. Figure the media will
keep replaying the debate tape for
72 hours; we'll lose, at the max,
four more.

Nobody says anything.

DOC (smiles)
They love you, Mr. President.

A long beat; nobody says anything.

HEFF (hesitantly)
How do you feel, Mr. President?

SAM
Great. I slept like a baby.

They look at him. He grins.

SAM (suddenly serious)
All right. We've got a decision to
consider, but I want to say a
personal word to you.

He gets up and walks around as he talks; he is completely
casual and easygoing.

SAM

I'm just an old country boy, you know. What happened in that barn happens all the time in Nebraska. It's like going up the water tower after the senior prom, it's like having a beer with your dad the day you turn 18, like going to the cemetery with a picnic basket on Memorial Day. I woke up in that barn and got a little nostalgic, that's all.

(he smiles)

Maybe I wanted to feel like I was 14 again.

(a beat; he smiles)

Maybe I am getting old.

A long beat, and then, finally --

DOC (quietly)

Like hell you are, Sam. Like hell you are.

A long beat, and then --

CRAWFORD (with distaste)

Is it illegal? Is -- what you did -- illegal?

SAM (casually)

Sure it is. But if they started putting everybody in jail for it, they'd turn Nebraska into Devil's Island.

(he grins)

We've got more cowpokes in the Midwest than they do in the Rockies.

A long beat, as they consider that.

MARK

I have to ask you, Mr. President -- is what you did -- is it a recurring problem? Is there a history they can allege --

SAM (dismissingly)

I haven't poked one in 50 years.

There is a long pause. Doc stands up suddenly.

DOC (emotionally)

You can't pull out, Sam! You screwed a cow! They'll screw the country!

A long beat as Sam smiles at Doc.

CRAWFORD

What about the photograph?

DOC (emotionally)

So what if they've got one! What are they going to do with it? Who's going to show the President of the United States in flagrante on the Evening News?

BILLY

Whether the networks use it would depend on how revealing it is. I don't know about the mechanics of this, cow-wise. How do you...

SAM (smiles)

Very carefully. But if you're an old-style liberal Democrat, with great feeling.

DOC (emotionally)

They're bluffing! We don't even know if they've really got a picture!

A long beat, as they consider it.

CRAWFORD

What if a photograph does surface? What if it does become... an issue. What is your defense, Mr. President? That everyone who grows up in Nebraska does it?

DOC (emotionally)

Yes! They got chili in Texas, orange juice in Florida, maple syrup in Ohio, and cows in Nebraska!

A long beat, as they look at Doc.

BILLY

I suppose we could try to extend our case to Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas --

MARK

We're never going to be able to make it as American as apple pie, Billy.

BILLY (after a beat)

I suppose you're right.

HEFF (suddenly)

What difference does it make what he does in the privacy of his bedroom or his barn? Isn't that the kind of personal freedom we stand for?

DOC

You're damn right it is! We can turn it around on the bastards and make it a civil rights issue!

As they think about that, the President's phone RINGS. He picks it up, listens, then hits a button his desk. The big TV set in the back of the room comes ALIVE. We see the anchorman, Tom Martin, on screen --

MARTIN

In a blistering address to the VFW Convention in St. Louis, Republican Vice Presidential candidate Michael Forrester attacked what he referred to as "a long history of Democratic corruption."

FORRESTER, of Wyoming, is a big, beefy man in his 50's.

FORRESTER (on screen)

They're not the party of Roosevelt, they're the party of Wilbur Mills and Wayne Hays and Gary Hart and Jim Wright and Barney Frank. They are the party of godlessness, harlotry, and abortion. Are they the kind of people you want leading your America?

Sam shuts the set OFF -- a long beat.

DOC (emotionally)

What about Spiro Agnew getting paid off with his bags full of steaks? What about Rockefeller dying in the saddle humping his secretary? What about that Texas dwarf with his hard-on, chasing --

HEFF (reflectively)

Why would they bring all that up now?

A long beat.

CRAWFORD

Do you know what I wish, Mr. President? Do you know what I desperately wish? I wish you liberals would be more conservative in your daily affairs.

SAM (after a beat, smiles)

Then we wouldn't really be liberals, would we, Clark?

CRAWFORD

I've always believed in hypocrisy.

SAM (smiles)

Not me.

DOC (affectionately)

God bless you, Sam!

HEFF (after a beat, quietly)

They're setting us up. They're not bluffing. They've got the photograph.

SAM (after a beat)

I agree.

He looks disturbed.

HEFF (angry)

I want the CIA and FBI Directors in my office in twenty minutes!

SAM (calmly)

Please make sure they don't abuse their sanctions.

HEFF (smiles)

Absolutely, Mr. President.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - AFTERNOON

He sits, alone, turned away from his desk, staring out the window at the setting sun.

He reaches for his phone, picks it up.

SAM

Where's my wife?

(he listens)

I'd like to come up and see her.

A beat, and he hangs the phone up and continues to stare out the window.

INT. THE LIVING QUARTERS UPSTAIRS - AFTERNOON

Sam walks in. Emily, in her early-60's, is watching a painting being hung. Three young women AIDES are with her. The painting, consisting of a few lines, is very abstract.

THE AIDES

Mr. President.

EMILY (to Sam)

It's a Palligo.

(she looks at the painting)

I hate it, don't you?

SAM (after a beat)
I sure do. Why are you hanging it
up if you hate it?

EMILY
He's from the Third World. He's
coming to the dinner for the Indian
Vice-President.

She shrugs.

SAM (grins)
Seat him next to Nixon.

She looks at him, the twinkle of a slight smile --

EMILY
You're awful, Sam.

He looks at her -- there is a sadness between them now.

SAM (smiles)
I know it.
(a beat)
What the hell, I've always been
awful.

They look at each other a beat.

SAM
Can I talk to you alone, Emily?

She looks at him, surprised.

EMILY (to the Aides)
Would you excuse us, please?

The women leave. They look at each other. Sam doesn't
know how to begin.

EMILY
I have a reception for the National
Council of the Junior League in 45
minutes, Sam.

SAM
Emily, I'm the President of the
United States --

EMILY
-- And I'm the First Lady, Sam.
You've got your job and I've got
mine. And I've got to be somewhere
in 45 minutes.

SAM

I know you're the First Lady, Emily,
but if I can make time for you, you
can make time for me, too, can't
you?

EMILY (after a beat, sadly)

You haven't made time for me in
thirty years, Sam.

They look at each other a long beat.

EMILY

What is it, Sam? Tell me.

He looks at her a beat, then away.

SAM (with difficulty)

They've got some dirt they're
threatening to use in the campaign.

She says nothing; he looks at her; her face is a mask.

EMILY (after a long beat)

What do you want from me, sympathy,
Sam? Don't you think that really is
asking too much? I feared the day
would come when one of your...
adventures... would... I've learned
to seal myself off, Sam. The
children are grown. They've known
about your little... sweetmeats...
for years. Connie, I'm afraid, has
become as promiscuous as you are.
I'm sorry, Sam. I'm sorry for
you... and I'm sorry for me... and
I'm sorry for what it's going to do
to the country if it gets out. But
that's the best I can do.

SAM (after a long beat)

I know. I just wanted to give you
advance warning.

EMILY (sadly)

I got my advance warning thirty-
seven years ago, the first time I
discovered you were unfaithful to
me. Although I'm sure that if I had
been discerning, I would have
discovered it earlier.

A long beat, as they look at each other.

EMILY (smiles)

Do you remember that little house we
lived in in Chevy Chase when we
first came here?

He says nothing, looks at her.

EMILY (smiles)
We were happy there, weren't we,
Sam? It had that little yard in the
back -- the kids were little --
you'd come home from work early,
we'd cook in the back yard...

She trails off.

SAM (quietly)
I remember.

EMILY (after a beat)
I don't know whatever made me think
of it.
(she looks at her watch)
I have to go, Sam.

He looks at her, nods.

EMILY
Who is it -- that little television
reporter, Sam?

Sam looks at her a beat, then shakes his head.

EMILY
Don't lie to me, Sam -- at least
we've had that. You've never lied
to me -- it's not a small thing in
Washington.

SAM
It's not her.

She looks at him a long beat.

EMILY (after a beat)
Is there anything else I don't know
about?

SAM (after a beat)
What do you mean?

EMILY
Anything else they can dirty you
with?

He looks at her a beat, looking very uncomfortable -- then
makes a decision. He just can't bring himself to tell
her.

SAM
No.

EMILY (after a beat)
You look tired, Sam. Try to rest.
You may not believe it, but you're
not a spring chicken anymore.

She smiles at him with feeling -- a beat, and then he
smiles at her. She turns to walk out.

SAM (quietly)
Thank you, Emily.

She doesn't hear it; but then, he said it so softly he
didn't want her to hear it.

EXT. THE TRUMAN BALCONY OF THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

He sits out on the balcony, a drink in his hand, a phone
next to him. He stares. He picks the phone up. He looks
very tired.

SAM
Can you get my son for me, please?

A long beat, as he waits --

INTERCUT

-- And we see SAM PARR, JR., a good-looking, easy-going
man in his 40's on the phone in his ranch-style house in
Denver.

SAM (very tired)
How's the insurance business?

His smile is forced.

SAM JR. (smiles)
Hey, Dad -- did you get my wire
after the debate? I thought you
were great, Dad.

SAM
I stunk up the joint and you know
it.

SAM JR.
Naw, you were just a little tired,
that's all.

SAM
I certainly am tired, kiddo.

SAM JR. (after a beat)
Hey, Dad -- are you okay?

SAM (with difficulty)
No, I'm not okay. I want to talk to
you about something.

A long beat -- he doesn't know what to say.

SAM JR.
Lighten up, Dad -- it can't be that
bad.

At that moment, Sam's grandchildren, MILLIE, 6, and JOEY,
8, grab the phone from Sam Jr.

MILLIE
Hi, Grandpa! We saw you on the
TV! You were good, Grandpa!

SAM (with difficulty)
Why, thank you, darling.

MILLIE
You want to talk to Joey? Joey got
a new goldfish. He murdered the
other one.

JOEY (grabs phone)
I did not! I did not murder it,
Grandpa!

MILLIE (grabbing phone)
'Bye, Grandpa! Love you!

JOEY (grabbing phone)
'Bye, Grandpa! Love you!

SAM (emotionally)
I love you, too, goodbye.

SAM JR. (gets phone back)
Sorry. What is it you wanted to
talk to me about, Dad?

Sam freezes -- how can he talk to him now?

SAM (after a beat)
Never mind. Listen, I've got to
go. I've got Gorbachev on the other
line.

SAM JR. (suddenly upset)
Dad! Wait a minute, Dad! There's
nothing going on with the Russians,
is there?

SAM
Good night, kiddo. I'll talk to you
later.

And he hangs up and just sits there, staring out into the darkness.

EXT. THE ROSE GARDEN - NIGHT

He walks -- there are Secret Servicemen all over the place trying to be unobtrusive.

NOTE: The Secret Servicemen wear sunglasses whenever they appear, even at night.

Doc Barley sees him as he is getting into his car. Doc goes over to him.

DOC

What are you doing out here, Sam?

SAM (looks disturbed)

I just wanted to get some air, Doc.

Doc walks with him as they head toward the White House gates with this battalion of Secret Servicemen trying to blend into the darkness.

SAM

You know something, Doc? Sometimes I think I never should have left the darn farm.

DOC

Well, just think what shape this country'd be in if you never would've lived here.

He gestures toward the White House.

SAM (smiles)

This country's in great shape no matter what happens. Vietnam. Watergate. Irangate. Contragate. Assassinations. AIDS. We're still ticking.

DOC

If we got through all that, we can get through Cowgate, too.

Sam looks at him and grins. They keep walking.

DOC

Now you listen to me, Sam. I've whored and pimped and fed at the public trough in this town for fifty years. I saw you when you first got here.

(MORE)

DOC (CONT'D)

You were so poor, you used to go to every cocktail party in town to fill your pockets with hors d'oeuvre so you'd have some dinner. You remember that? You never took a penny in your life, you always had one consideration: the people... and maybe pussy. I don't care if you hump hummingbirds, hamsters, and one-eyed rhinos. I'm not going to let you drop out of this race.

A long beat, as they walk.

SAM

I love this country. I don't want to do anything to hurt it.

DOC

You pull out, Sam -- you'll hurt it. That nitwit Vice-President of yours with his ladi-dah West Coast ideas doesn't stand a chance against Jim Taylor and you know it. You think Jim Taylor cares about the people? He cares about Texas Oil and Boeing and the defense budget and the suburbs. Jim Taylor living here would make Nixon look like FDR and Reagan look like Abe Lincoln! Think about it, Sam! You want Jim and Tammy Bakker lying there together doing Christ knows what on that horsehair mattress in the Lincoln bedroom? Never mind you and your cow, that's obscene!

A long beat as they keep walking toward the gate.

SAM (quietly)

This country's like a big bus, Doc. And all the people in it want to make sure that the man at the wheel isn't going to go off the cliff. What are they going to think if this stuff comes out?

He and Doc look at each other a beat, and then they keep walking. And the Tourists who are down at the White House gates at all times during the day and night see the President now and start to APPLAUD. Secret Servicemen scamper as he stands there and waves as they applaud him.

DOC

There's your answer, Sam.

Sam looks at him.

INT. HIS BEDROOM - NIGHT

He walks in. He looks very tired. The room is dark.

LACY

Surprise!

He puts the lights on, sees her under the sheets. She wears black lingerie. Lacy Morrow is a very beautiful woman. He stands there, looking at her.

SAM (a slight smile)

I'm tired, honey.

LACY (big smile)

Well, get in here, Sam, I'll freshen you up.

He sits down on the side of the bed, looks at her.

SAM (gently)

Don't you ever worry that this...
might go public... somehow?

LACY

People wouldn't mind with you.
Everybody knew about JFK. God, Sam,
I'm so sorry I missed JFK, I was
just a baby.

SAM (a little jealous)

Jack had a bad back.

LACY

He had to move very, very slowly.

A beat -- he smiles at her sort of sadly -- and then gets up.

SAM

Good night. I'm going to find a
couch.

LACY

Are you serious? What's the matter,
Sam? Something's the matter, Sam.
I just know it.

SAM

Nothing's the matter.

LACY

Yes there is. I can tell.
Something was wrong in Cleveland,
too.

He smiles, steps closer to her, and kisses her gently on
the cheek. His hand wanders under the cover for a second.

SAM

You said I was flaccid -- imagine that, on nationwide TV, you called me flaccid. You. Of all people. That's a helluva thing to say about a man.

His hand is under the sheet; we can tell he is fondling her breast.

LACY (smiles)

You're not flaccid now, Sam. You're the President of the United States. You don't want to sleep on the couch, Sam.

SAM (to himself, quietly)

Oh boy.

LACY

You're the most loving man I know, Sam. I sleep better knowing you're in the White House.

She is guiding his hand.

SAM

I'm the horniest man I know. It's always been my curse.

She guides his hand lower, starts breathing deeper.

LACY

And my... and America's... blessing.

SAM

I guess I'm too old for the couch.

LACY

Yes, you are.

And he moves onto the bed next to her.

INT. HIS BEDROOM - MORNING

He is asleep; Lacy is curled around him. Heff and Doc come storming into the room.

HEFF (very agitated)

Mr. President!

Lacy covers herself up.

SAM

Jesus, Heff, this isn't a damn peep show!

HEFF

It's a matter of national security,
Mr. President!

LACY (getting excited)

Oh my God! It's the Libyans again,
isn't it?

HEFF

Out, Lacy! Now.

Lacy gets out of bed, half-covered with the sheet. Doc
ogles her.

LACY

I can't go, Sam. It's my beat.
They'll fire me.

Sam sits up on the side of the bed in his pajamas, rubs
his eyes.

LACY

Please let me stay, Sam.

SAM

Go on, honey. Don't worry, if it's
Khadafi again, I'll give you your
scoop.

She moves toward the door hesitantly, turns back.

LACY

Do you promise, Sam?

SAM

I do.

LACY

Is it a firm promise?

SAM

Unequivocal.

And Lacy, trailing the sheet, is gone. Doc watches her
leave.

DOC (admiringly)

You've still got the eye, Sam!

Sam smiles at him, then looks at Heff, who looks agitated.

He hands Sam a plain brown envelope. A beat, and Sam
opens it, looks at a photograph -- but we don't see it. A
beat, and then Sam shakes his head and puts it back into
the envelope. They watch him. He stands up, stretches,
and goes to a window, looks out.

HEFF

Victory Mackey brought it to my office. They want an answer in an hour, Mr. President. Unless they get the answer they want, they're going to the media.

DOC

Fuck 'em. Fuck the media! What are they gonna do with it? They don't do cowfucking on the Evening News!

HEFF

It's worse than I thought. There's no frontal nudity, Mr. President. All you can see is your bare butt, her bare butt, and the smile on your face. It looks like it was staged to make the Evening News.

SAM (after a beat)

All you can see is that I'm standing behind Elsie.

DOC

How do you know her name's Elsie?

SAM

Every cow we ever had was called Elsie.

(a beat)

It doesn't show me doing anything.

HEFF

I wish it would. Nobody could run it then.

SAM (turning from window)

I need some coffee.

He walks out of the bedroom to a sitting room. They follow him -- Heff grabs a phone and orders coffee.

INT. THE SITTING ROOM - DAY

The President looks upset. Doc stands there, watching him; he looks calm. Heff comes into the room, very upset.

HEFF

They want to get down into the mud, let's get down in the mud! Let's check Jimbo's extra-curriculars!

SAM

I don't get down in the mud, Heff. I never have and I never will.

DOC

I checked Jimbo out the day after
his nomination.

SAM (startled)

You did?

DOC

He's clean.

HEFF

Nobody's clean except maybe George
McGovern and he's dead!

SAM

No, he isn't.

HEFF

Yes, he is. He died in November of
'72.

DOC

Jimbo jacks-off all the time.
That's it.

SAM (smiles)

It figures.

A beat.

HEFF

They want an answer, Mr. President.
What do we tell them?

SAM (nervous)

I need a cigarette.

HEFF (very upset)

If you start smoking again, it's
going to be more controversial than
Elsie!

SAM (upset)

George Bush got away with no
broccoli!

DOC (stern)

He's right, Sam.

A phone STARTS going off.

HEFF (upset)

I told them coffee and Danish, why
can't they ever get the damn order
right?

He starts going for a phone -- sees that it's a red one
RINGING.

HEFF

Oh, shit! It's the hot line!

DOC

That's all we needed -- what does he want?

Sam goes to the phone warily, picks it up.

SAM

Hello?

(he listens)

Yes, Mike. How are you?

(he listens)

Well, I appreciate that, Mike.

(he listens)

Well, sometimes these things happen in our campaigns.

Heff and Doc look at each other.

SAM (on the phone)

I just got the photograph a couple minutes ago myself.

HEFF (to Doc, angrily)

Goddamnit!

DOC (angrily)

I knew it! I knew it!

SAM (on phone)

That's nice of you, Mike. It really is. Thank you, I appreciate it.

He hangs up. They stare at him.

SAM

He got it last night already.

DOC

I knew they were behind this.

SAM

Come on, Doc -- nix on that --

HEFF (upset)

Nixon? What about Nixon?

SAM

-- We're a liberal administration. We believe in glasnost.

DOC

I'm a liberal! I'm a JFK-LBJ-Scoop Jackson liberal! How the hell did they get it before we did if they're not behind it?

HEFF

Sound travels faster than light in this town, that's how.

SAM

It's just the KGB. You know how well-connected they are. Mike was calling to help. He says they've got a lot of cowpokes in Russia, too.

HEFF (excited)

Did he poke one? Will he cop to it? We're in the clear if he goes public. His favorable rating is still higher than Bob Hope's.

A long beat -- as Sam thinks about all of this. He reaches for a phone.

SAM (on phone)

Get Senator Taylor for me.

They watch him; what's he going to say? A long beat.

SAM

Jimbo?

(a beat)

No deal.

And he hangs up -- Doc is jubilant; Heff looks very concerned.

DOC

God bless you, Mr. President.

Sam and Heff look at each other a long beat. Heff looks afraid and proud at the same time.

INT. EBS NEWS HEADQUARTERS - NEW YORK - DAY

Three men are walking through the labyrinthine newsroom. ARTHUR SAMPSON is in his 60's, the Chairman of the Board of EBS, a well-kept, handsome man. ELLIOT KOHNER is in his 50's, the head of the EBS news division. With them is anchorman Tom Martin.

SAMPSON

I talked to Max Frankel and Ben. They have their copies. So do CBS, NBC and ABC.

MARTIN

What are they going to do with it?

SAMPSON

They're calling us the same way
we're calling them, to see what
we're going to do with it and what
they're going to do with it.

KOHNER

We're having it analyzed -- it's a
waste of time -- nobody's got the
negative.

MARTIN

Well, it certainly looks like Sam.

SAMPSON

Please. I am not even going to
consider the possibility that this
is the President of the United
States engaged in -- in -- without
total, absolute, scientific
verification.

MARTIN (innocently)

Where did you grow up, Arthur?

SAMPSON

Where did I grow up? What does that
have to do with it? I grew up in
Boston. Where did you grow up?

MARTIN (slight smile)

I grew up in Estes, Iowa.

SAMPSON

I don't understand the relevance --

MARTIN (wiping smile off)

Never mind.

They walk into a small, cubicle-like office. Lacy Morrow
sits there.

LACY (smiles)

Arthur, Elliot -- hi, what a
pleasant surprise --

Elliot takes a photograph out of an envelope, puts it in
front of her -- we don't see the photograph.

Lacy looks at it and breaks out in wild, uncontrolled
laughter.

They look at her, then at each other, then at her again as
she laughs.

SAMPSON

What -- are you laughing about, my
dear?

LACY

What am I laughing about? It's sick... this is supposed to be the President of the United States doing it to... a cow?

SAMPSON

Yes it is.

She starts to laugh again.

KOHNER

Please take a close look at the photograph, Lacy.

She laughs again and then her laugh freezes.

LACY

Are you serious?

MARTIN

We're serious.

LACY

But you can't be -- this is supposed to be...

She trails off, stares at it.

MARTIN

Is it him?

She looks at Martin.

SAMPSON

Is it he?

MARTIN

Sorry. Iowa.

She stares at them.

LACY

Come on. Come on! I mean -- really!
Come on, you guys! Are you nuts?

MARTIN

Look at the photograph, Lacy.

She looks at all three of them.

MARTIN

Lacy, if you don't know -- nobody knows.

A beat -- she stares at Kohner.

LACY

What does that mean?

KOHNER (hard)
You know what it means. It means
we knew about the President's
proclivities. That's one of the
reasons you're covering the White
House.

LACY (offended)
If I told my friend Gloria Steinem
what you just said to me --

KOHNER
I said it was one of the factors -- a
very minor, almost negligible, though
not completely irrelevant... factor.

She stares at them.

MARTIN (quietly)
Look at the photograph, Lacy.
Please.

A long beat, and then she looks at the photograph for a
long beat.

LACY (quietly)
Oh my God.

She stares at it.

SAMPSON
How do you know, my dear?

LACY (in a whisper)
I've seen... that smile.

She keeps staring at the photograph.

SAMPSON
I see.

INT. A VAST CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

It is a meeting of the National Security Council. VICE-
PRESIDENT PETER GRAHAM chairs the meeting and sits at the
head of the long, beautifully-burnished mahogany confer-
ence table. He is 44, a good-looking, dark-haired, young-
looking man.

Sitting around the table, with brass nameplates in front
of them, are:

GENERAL BENJAMIN WOODS -- big, burly, in his 60's,
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

ROBERT HASTINGS -- thin, almost skeletal, in his 50's,
wearing steel wire-rimmed glasses, the FBI Director.

ANDREW MARLEY -- thin, almost skeletal, in his 50's, wearing gold wire-rimmed glasses, the CIA Director.

JUSTIN ANDERSON -- short, bald, priestly, the Secretary of State.

JOE CARSON -- broad-shouldered, in his 40's, black, the Attorney General.

DONALD YANUCCI -- horn-rimmed glasses, very trim, 50's, the Secretary of Defense.

ABE GOLDMAN -- 50's, fiery, a pepper-pot of a man, the Secretary of the Interior.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
I've asked you to come here to this special meeting of the council in the utmost secrecy to discuss the gravest matter of national security: the competence of the President of the United States to govern.

As he speaks, we see that most of the men in this room don't like him.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
Will you please pass these down?

We see a stack of photographs -- we don't see the photo itself. As they pass them down, we see their facial reactions: some are open-mouthed, some cough, some show no response, some turn it upside down and back.

The Vice-President and Secretary of State Anderson give each other a smug, victorious look as the others look at their photo.

INT. THE CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Everyone just sits there, their photograph in front of them. A long beat.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
Who would like to begin?

GENERAL WOODS
Does Sam know you called this meeting?

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
Considering the matter at hand, and considering my own constitutional responsibilities and our possible courses of action, I thought it best not to advise the President.

GENERAL WOODS
Sam's gonna kick your ass!

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON (nervous)

I want to make clear that we are not here to pass on the authenticity of this alleged incident. We are here to consider the domestic and global national security implications posed by the potential international dissemination of these allegations.

GENERAL WOODS

(to Graham)

Sam's still gonna kick your ass.

A long beat.

GENERAL WOODS

I don't see what the big whoop-de-doo is. Sam's always stuck it into anything that walks. He tied one on and... it happens.

ATTORNEY GENERAL CARSON

You mean he was drunk? The President of the United States was drunk?

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN

Well, I'd have to be pretty damn drunk to do it!

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE YANUCCI

How much is the President drinking?

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS

He's always liked his Jack Daniel's at the end of the day. He's not joyriding around the ranch like LBJ did with a six-pack or crawling around on his hands and knees with Kissinger like Nixon did.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN

His drinking has always been a part of his political strategy. When he was in the Senate, he voted with the North and drank with the South, and every bill he cared about got through.

ATTORNEY GENERAL CARSON

What about the black box? Nukes and Jack Daniel's don't mix.

GENERAL WOODS

Don't worry about the box. No President I've ever known even knows how to open it.

That stuns everyone a beat.

ATTORNEY GENERAL CARSON.
There's no evidence that the man in this photograph is the President of the United States. There's no evidence of any kind even that this photograph is real.

GENERAL WOODS (laughs)
Are you kidding? That's Sam. How much do you want to bet that's Sam?

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
We are already analyzing the photograph -- the glossy itself. We don't have the negative, of course, but we are covertly active in determining the photo lab where it was processed.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS
We are overtly covertly active in making that determination.

ATTORNEY GENERAL CARSON
What does overtly covertly mean?

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS
It means we are not doing what we're doing. To put it another way -- we're doing what we're not doing.

ATTORNEY GENERAL CARSON (after a beat)
Observe your sanctions.

MARLEY AND HASTINGS (together)
Of course.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
The New York Times, the Washington Post, and the networks were delivered copies this morning.

That stuns everyone. A long beat.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN
Who the hell delivered 'em?

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS
We're active in making that determination.

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
So are we.

A long beat.

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON (quietly)
I think we should consider asking the President to resign.

Vice-President Graham looks like he is desperately trying to hide a secret smile.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN
Are you crazy? In the final month
of the campaign? We'd be handing
over the White House to them!

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON
The Vice-President will --

GENERAL WOODS (to Graham)
The Vice-President's going to get
reamed worse than that cow!

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (angrily)
I resent that! I've served in the
Senate, in the state legislature --

GENERAL WOODS
In California!

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
My personal life is clean.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN
Aw, bullshit!

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (offended)
I beg your pardon?

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN
You're from California! You think
anybody in America thinks
Californians are clean? They think
you're from outer space.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (taken aback)
President Reagan was from California --

GENERAL WOODS (angrily)
He was from Notre Dame!

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS (after a beat)
Perhaps we're overstating the
potential public reaction to this.

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
Perhaps we're not.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (angrily)
Please. This is aberrant behavior!

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN
You're the Californian, you should
be the expert on that!

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (angrily)
There is nothing in American history
to --

GENERAL WOODS
Come on! We've had politicians
doing it on the Capitol steps, doing
it in the Potomac Basin, doing it in
the White House closet --

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS
The closet? Who?

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
Harding.

Hastings gives Marley a dirty look.

GENERAL WOODS
Doing it on the way to the Bahamas,
doing it on the stainless steel
counter in the Senate cloakroom.
How do you think Nixon got that 18-
minute gap on the tape?

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
Nixon? I don't believe it.

GENERAL WOODS
With J.F.K., they had to use triple
chlorine to de-sperm the West Wing
pool.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS (to General)
How do you know that? That's
confidential FBI info --

GENERAL WOODS
So now we've got a politician doing
it in a barn. That cow couldn't
have been any worse than Fanny
Foxxe.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE YANUCCI
Which one was she?

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
Wilbur Mills.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE YANUCCI
(to General)
You're right.

GENERAL WOODS
You're damn right I'm right!

There is a long pause as they consider this.

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON (quietly)
What about India?

GENERAL WOODS
India? What about India?

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON (quietly)
Sacred cows.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN
Sacred cows?

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON
Their cows, they're sacred.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE YANUCCI
So they're sa -- oh, shit.

A long pause. No one knows what to say.

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON
India will break diplomatic
relations with us.

GENERAL WOODS
They're all Hindus!

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON
So?

GENERAL WOODS (grins)
The Hindus'll get pissed, but the
Muslims -- the Muslims'll love us
for it.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE YANUCCI
We've been seeking ways of reaching
Islam anyway, haven't we?

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON (tentative)
Yes?

GENERAL WOODS (triumphant)
That's what Sam was thinking of. He
was trying to stop terrorism!

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON
I'm afraid I don't understand.

GENERAL WOODS
It's brilliant! You poke a cow; the
Hindus hate you! The Muslims hate
the Hindus. The Hindus hate us, so
the Muslims stop hating us.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN

The Muslims call their terrorists off. The world is a better place. All because Sam Parr schtupped a cow. It's brilliant. He should get the Nobel Prize.

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON

But the Hindus will still hate us!

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE YANUCCI

Not if they want to be a part of the Parr Plan for Progress they won't! Not if they want to get some big bucks from us!

SECRETARY OF STATE ANDERSON

You don't understand. Those cows are sacred to them. They care more about their gods than our dollars.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE YANUCCI (laughs)

You wanna bet? Money talks, cowshit walks!

GENERAL WOODS

Fuck the Hindus! They don't have any terrorists, that's what counts.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GOLDMAN

It's eyeball-to-eyeball diplomacy, at its very best.

There is a long beat -- as people around the table start to smile.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (in defeat)

I didn't think of that.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE GARDEN - DAY

Sam stands there, horseshoes in his hand, with Heff. He doesn't throw any. He looks shaken.

SAM

My God, what have I done? Sacred cows and I... Do you know the fondness, the special affection I have for those people, those poor, miserable people?

HEFF

I know how you feel about India, Mr. President. Mr. Nixon had China, Mr. Carter had Iran, Mr. Reagan had Nicaragua --

SAM

When I was in Congress, I went to Calcutta... one of those damn fact-finding junkets... What I saw there... it changed my life.

(a long beat)

Goddamn it.

He throws a horseshoe. It's a perfect ringer.

SAM

Goddamn me to hell.

He throws another horseshoe. Another ringer. Heff sees how upset he is.

HEFF (to console him)

I don't think the media is going to do anything. They still feel bad about Gary Hart. They're going to feel guilty about Hart for another three, four years minimum, then they'll destroy somebody else. Besides, all they've got right now is one glossy photograph.

Sam throws another horseshoe, says nothing, looks very upset. It is another perfect ringer.

HEFF

Mr. President -- if this thing leaks, it's not going to be a leak, it's going to be a blowout. It's not going to be a blowout, it's going to be the biggest blowout since Challenger.

Sam throws another horseshoe. Another perfect ringer. He starts walking down to the other end to get the horseshoes; Heff walks with him.

SAM

What are you trying to tell me, Heff?

HEFF

You're going out on the campaign trail this weekend, that's what.

SAM

No way.

HEFF

You go out, you press the flesh, you let everybody see you at your down-home, charismatic best.

SAM (upset)
The polls say I can stay right here.
They are Reagan's flight
controllers, you know. I don't like
to fly anymore.

HEFF
If this thing blows, we're going to
need all the stored-up goodwill we
can get.

SAM
If this things blows, Heff, letting
them see me at my down-home,
charismatic best is going to do
about as much good as poor Hubert
did trying to treat his cancer with
Pepto-Bismol. What is all that
commotion?

They hear a woman's yelling VOICE. They turn and see Lacy
Morrow trying to get past some Secret Servicemen a couple
hundred yards away.

SAM (stares at her)
Oh oh. Trouble...

He waves to the Secret Servicemen and starts heading
toward Lacy as she come toward him.

LACY (very upset)
I don't know what to say to you!

He draws her away to a private spot where no one can hear
them.

LACY (very hurt, angry)
(very hurt, angry)
I don't know what to say to you,
Sam! How could you... with that...
that...

SAM (after a beat)
Are we off-the-record here?

LACY (quietly, astounded)
What?

SAM (directly)
Are we off-the-record or aren't we?

LACY (after a beat)
We're off the record.

He looks at her a long beat and then he smiles and shakes
his head.

LACY (hurt)
You don't believe me, Sam? You
think I'd -- trick you?

SAM (gently)
Honey, you can violate
confidentiality this one time and
who knows? Maybe you'd make more
money than you ever dreamed about
your whole life.

LACY (earnestly)
I wouldn't do that to you, Sam.

SAM (tenderly)
I know you feel something, Lace. I
feel something, too. But we both
felt that something before and
before that and before that -- and
we'll both feel it again and again
and again. So let's not lie to each
other now, honey. Trust me, this
isn't a good moment for it.

LACY (after a long beat)
You're right, Sam.

They slowly smile at each other.

SAM
I'll say this: Whatever it is we're
talking about or not talking about,
don't take it personally. It
doesn't have anything to do with
you.

She looks at him a long beat.

LACY
You're not going to hold this
against me, Sam, are you? Trying to
talk to you about it?

SAM
I'm a politician, honey, I always
forgive and forget.

LACY (smiles)
I do, too.

SAM
Then we've got nothing to talk
about, do we?

She sees a limousine pull up by the horseshoe area. Vice-
President Graham gets out and talks to Heff.

LACY (suspicious)
What's he doing here? Is there
something going on?

SAM (grins)
He just came over for his horseshoe
lesson.

He kisses Lacy on the cheek and walks away toward Graham.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
Mr. President.

SAM (to Heff)
I'd like to confer with the Vice-
President alone, please, Heff.

Petey Graham looks nervous.

HEFF (slight smile)
Yes, Mr. President.

Heff walks away. Sam goes and picks some horseshoes up,
hands some to Graham, who holds them like he is handling
something distasteful.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (very nervous)
Mr. President, I'm here to tell you
that I asked the National Security
Council to --

SAM (smiles)
I know what you tried to do to me,
Petey.

He throws. It's a ringer. It's the Vice-President's
turn.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (gulps)
I hadn't thought it out completely,
Mr. President. I never considered
... Islam, for example. The
terrorists. The implications. The
ramifications.

SAM
Throw the damn shoe, Petey.

The Vice-President throws. It's a complete miss.

SAM
Do you think I'm just an old cow
who's going to stand around getting
kicked in the flanks, Petey?

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
An old... cow?
(MORE)

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (CONT'D)
(he clears his throat)

No, sir.

Sam throws. Another ringer.

SAM
You like sea gulls, Petey?

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (nervous)
Sea gulls, Mr. President?

SAM
I'm from Nebraska; I like cows.
You're from California; I figure you
must like sea gulls.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
Well, I probably don't like sea
gulls as much as you like cows, Mr.
President.

SAM (grins)
I like sea gulls, too.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (shocked)
You do?

The Vice-President throws. It's another complete miss.

SAM
Nothing pisses off an adult sea gull
more than to see a young chick
sticking his neck out. You know
what happens to the young chick who
sticks his neck out, Petey?

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (swallowing)
No I don't, sir.

SAM
He gets struck dead, that's what.

He throws three horseshoes. One after another: perfect
ringers.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (very nervous)
Nice shooting, sir.

SAM (grins)
I hope you enjoyed your horseshoe
lesson, Petey.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (nervous)
Thank you very much, sir.

Sam nods and picks up some more horseshoes; the Vice-
President heads for his limo.

INT. THE LIMO

He sits in the back, wipes the sweat off his brow, looks very nervous. Something SMASHES off the roof -- it's like a bomb, it scares the bejesus out of him.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM

What was that?

THE DRIVER

I don't know, sir.

The Vice-President looks out his back window. He sees Sam standing there, horseshoes in his hand, watching him.

EXT. THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

A series of QUICK CUTS of Sam and Taylor campaigning, kissing babies, eating hot dogs, shaking hands, arriving at airports.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Three weeks before Election Day, the candidates appeared before crowds of varying sizes in San Jose, Chicago, Louisville --

EXT. A SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTER

TAYLOR

Let's keep America's eye focused on Americans!

EXT. AN INNER CITY STREET

SAM

We live in a time of peace, prosperity, and global goodwill. Our economy is booming; our unemployment is at an all-time low. I say we can afford to be generous.

EXT. A ROTARY CONVENTION

TAYLOR

Is that what you work so hard for? To hand your money over to somebody in Thailand or Guatemala or India?

EXT. SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - NEW YORK

SAM

I say we can afford to be humane! If we dare! If we dare!

INT. A LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Sam sits in the back with Heff and Doc as the motorcade moves slowly through New York City traffic.

DOC (excited)
Did you see those crowds? God bless you, Sam, they love you!

Heff looks at his watch as the traffic comes to a complete stop. Sam has a drink in his hand.

HEFF
We should've blocked traffic.

DOC
Sam doesn't block traffic. Nixon blocked traffic, Reagan blocked traffic, Bush blocked traffic. Sam doesn't block traffic.

HEFF (upset)
It's the dumbest damn idea you ever had, Doc.

SAM (quietly)
Circle the wagons, boys.

They look at him: what is he talking about? He is staring out the window in the stopped traffic. They follow his look. A delivery man is putting on display a long row of tabloids at a newsstand. It is the National Snitch. The headline says: EXECUTIVE ACTION. Underneath, the photo of Sam and the cow -- we don't see the photo clearly.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - WASHINGTON - NIGHT

As they get off the plane -- Billy Long, the battle-axe press secretary, and Mark Simpson, the yuppie-ish speech-writer, are there. Billy hands them copies of the Snitch. They are heading toward a helicopter, speak over the NOISE of the chopper.

BILLY
They say they got the photo from a reliable source.
(to Sam)
The First Lady has been calling you, your daughter has been calling you, Mr. Gorbachev has been calling you, and Presidents Nixon and Carter have been calling.

SAM
What the hell do Nixon and Carter want?

BILLY

Mr. Nixon wants to talk to you about stonewalling; Mr. Carter wants to talk about carpentry. The Indian Ambassador called to say the Indian Vice-President can't come to dinner.

SAM

Shit!

HEFF

What about the networks?

BILLY

Nothing so far, it's just the Snitch.

MARK

This is bad mojo, Mr. President. This is very bad mojo. It's probably going to cost us the dairy lobby.

They get into the chopper.

INT. THE HELICOPTER

They talk over the NOISE...

HEFF

Let's wait for the feedback. We'll need some input.

DOC (holding Snitch)

We already know about the input.

BILLY

General Woods, Mr. Crawford, FBI Director Hastings and CIA Director Marley are already at the Oval Office.

HEFF (to Sam)

Look -- whatever the feedback is -- I want to say this right now for the record.

DOC

What record? We don't want any record.

HEFF (to Sam)

We can overcome this -- somehow... David knocked off Goliath, too.

SAM

Yeah, and all these years later they're still talking about it.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The President and Heff and Doc and Billy and Mark sweep in -- Clark Crawford, advisor to Democratic Presidents, is already there with General Woods, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and FBI Director Hastings and CIA Director Marley. There is a tense, crisis atmosphere to this meeting.

HEFF

How the hell can they have gotten somebody past the Secret Service to take that picture?

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY

It had to be an employee at the farm. We're active in making that determination.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS

So are we.

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY

I propose we hit the Snitch's offices.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS

You don't have the sanction to do that anymore!

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY

Neither do you!

SAM

A burglary? Don't you guys ever learn anything?

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY

We wouldn't use the Cubans this time. How about those Israelis that trained the Colombian drug dealers? We know we can trust the Israeli.

SAM

Forget it! No! I don't even want to hear it!

The PHONE rings -- Billy picks it up.

BILLY

It's the First Lady.

SAM (rolls his eyes)

I'll call her back!

MARK

I've done some research. In 1702, Deward Hyde, the governor of New York, was a transvestite who presided over the legislature dressed in drag. There was a 19th century congressman in Kentucky who kept an eleven-year-old mistress. President Buchanan was homosexual.

GENERAL WOODS

Now we're talking, Sam! There it is! So you did a cow, so what! We put it into historical perspective!

CRAWFORD (to Sam)

Maybe you should consider a kind of fireside chat, a Checkers-speech, 90's-style.

BILLY

In prime time? What about little kids? They're still going to be up.

MARK

She's right. They had it tough enough with Pete Rose.

GENERAL WOODS

Don't worry about the kids -- any kid with a cow in the pasture, it wouldn't be news to him. The other kids, they probably already used their imaginations.

HEFF

The kids won't care about this. Pete Rose hit 'em where it hurt.

The PHONE goes off again -- but it's the red one, the hot line. Sam picks it up.

SAM

Hi, Mike.

(a beat)

I appreciate that, Mike. I'll call you back, okay?

He hangs up.

SAM

Mike thinks this might be the right time to hold a quick summit at Camp David.

HEFF

He is a terrific guy, isn't he?

SAM

He could fly over, we could ban some chemical weapons, do some photo-ops --

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY

How about a war? Can't we start some kind of limited, risk-free war that would distract everybody?

SAM (in shock)

With the Russians?

HEFF

I don't think Mike'd go that far.

SAM (to Marley)

You want to get people killed just because I woke up with a hard-on in a barn?

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS

"War" is too strong. How about some kind of action, an incursion, something everybody could get excited about.

MARK

We could hit some drug dealers somewhere and do some good at the same time.

HEFF

Are you all nuts? We can't do anything like that. This is October. Everybody's always waiting for an October Surprise. The op-ed page guys would eat us alive.

A long beat.

DOC

Well, what the hell are we going to do?

CRAWFORD

We could set up a policy task force.

They look at him like he's nuts.

BILLY

It's hurricane season. Maybe we'll get lucky. That'd be distracting.

(to Sam)

You could chopper in, stay overnight at a shelter, take some disaster money with you, find some hospitalized, photogenic babies --

SAM

I'm not staying overnight at any shelter.

GENERAL WOODS

Can we seed some tropical depressions?

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY

We don't have that capability.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS (hopeful)

We're working on it.

A pause.

GENERAL WOODS (hard)

We can't just sit here! We have to take action!

A long beat.

MARK

Can't we get some of the multi-nationals to help us? How about Sony? What about that guy who invented the Zip Code, can't he think of something?

GENERAL WOODS (hard)

We've got to do something!

A long beat.

SAM

Well, I know what I'm going to do. I'm tired. I'm going to go to bed.

They look at him, astounded.

SAM (smiles)

When in doubt, do right. That's what Harry Truman said.

GENERAL WOODS

We're going to use the bomb?

HEFF (in disbelief)

We can't do that.

SAM

No, we certainly can't. Good night.

And he walks out of the room.

INT. ARTHUR SAMPSON'S HOUSE - IN THE HAMPTONS - NIGHT

Arthur Sampson, the Chairman of the Board of EBS, with Elliot Kohner and Tom Martin. A copy of the Snitch is in front of them.

MARTIN (angry)

Do you mean to tell me that, with this thing at every checkout stand in the country -- we're not going to say anything about it? We're not even going to have a reaction to the fact that it exists?

SAMPSON

It doesn't exist.

MARTIN

It's right here!

He holds it up -- we see the back page, not the photo.

KOHNER

Nothing exists except a photograph of dubious authenticity and even more dubious taste. The Snitch doesn't say who took the photograph. All they say is that they've verified its authenticity and got the photograph from a "reliable source."

SAMPSON

I am not going to accept their verification, nor am I going to accept their source. Nor am I about to accept their standards. This network will not lower itself to Snitch standards of journalism.

MARTIN

Arthur, this photograph is going to be a nuclear explosion in Washington tomorrow. There are going to be calls for his impeachment, his resignation -- this is bigger than the My Lai photos, Arthur, bigger than the Zapruder film.

SAMPSON

But none of that is going to happen, you see, because it doesn't exist. Not unless Max Frankel or Ben or Roone or Larry Tisch or Ted Turner or I say that it exists. And we've been on the phone all night and agree that it doesn't exist.

MARTIN

What about the whole country? This is all anybody is going to be talking about.

KOHNER

The country is going to be talking about whatever we're talking about.

MARTIN

Come on, Elliot -- you know that's not true. They don't talk about what we talk about -- they listen to what we talk about, on days when we're lucky. What they talk about is what they see in the Snitch.

KOHNER

So?

MARTIN

What do you mean -- so? We've got a responsibility, a public trust --

KOHNER

They talk about Elvis sightings, too, don't they?

MARTIN (after a beat)

Yeah.

KOHNER

But we don't put Elvis sightings on the Evening News, do we?

MARTIN

This isn't an Elvis sighting, Elliot.

SAMPSON

For the time being, Tom, that's exactly what it is.

INT. HIS BEDROOM - MORNING

He is asleep. We hear loud VOICES outside the room.

CONNIE (O.S.)

I don't care if he's asleep, I want to talk to him!

Sam opens an eye, grimaces.

HEFF (O.S.)

Just let me go in and tell him --

CONNIE (O.S.)
I'm going to tell him whatever I'm
going to -- he's my --

The door swings open. His daughter, CONNIE, is there with Sam Jr. Connie is in her early 40's, lots of makeup, on the svelte side.

CONNIE
Father! The degenerate!

Sam and Connie stare at each other.

HEFF
I'm sorry, Mr. President.

SAM JR. (brightly)
Hi, Dad!

SAM
Hi, Junior. Will you leave us alone,
please, Heff?

Heff looks at them, leaves.

CONNIE (loud, enraged)
I have never been so humiliated in
my life!

SAM
I need some coffee.

CONNIE (loud)
How could you rape that poor cow?

SAM
I didn't rape anybody. I'm a
politician -- I don't rape, I
seduce.

CONNIE (to Sam)
God, you're such a chauvinist!
You've always been such a
chauvinist!

SAM
Please. I really need some coffee.

SAM JR. (brightly)
I'll get it, Dad.

CONNIE (to Sam Jr.)
You're taking his side?

SAM JR.
I'm getting him some coffee.

CONNIE (to Sam and Sam Jr.)
You're all alike! All of you!

SAM
Thank you, Junior.

Sam Jr. leaves. Sam gets up from the bed, puts his robe on.

CONNIE
You're disgusting!

INT. THE SITTING ROOM

They have moved to the Yellow Sitting Room.

SAM (to Connie)
If you wouldn't be leaving another one of your damn husbands, maybe this whole damn thing wouldn't have ever happened.

CONNIE
It's my fault? This -- this act?
It's my fault? You commit this...
act... my own father -- and it's my fault?

SAM
Do you have any idea how much you depressed me? Your mother and I have been married 43 years. What's your record marriage: three years?

He suddenly notices that Emily has come into the room and is standing behind him.

SAM (after a beat, hesitantly)
Good morning, emily.

EMILY (after a beat)
Good morning, Sam.

Sam Jr. comes in with the coffee.

SAM JR.
Here's your coffee, Dad. I already put the sugar in it.
(a beat, brightly)
Hi, Mom.

EMILY
Hi, Junior.

SAM (to Sam Jr.)
Thank you.

A long beat, as they stand there, then --

EMILY (to Sam)
You shouldn't have any sugar, Sam.

He looks at her a beat, then --

SAM

I know.

And he puts the cup down. Another long beat, then --

CONNIE (to Emily)

Sugar? Who cares about sugar?

(a beat)

How can you even stand the sight of him?

EMILY (quietly, after a beat)

I care.

She and Sam look at each other a beat.

CONNIE

Well, I don't. As far as I'm concerned, I don't have a father.

Sam and Connie look at each other a beat.

SAM JR. (quietly)

Lighten up, will you, Connie?

CONNIE (to Sam Jr.)

What? Maybe you understand what he did -- maybe it runs in the family, huh, Junior?

SAM

Cut the shit, Connie. Since you reached puberty, you screwed your way through the administrative assistants in the Nebraska legislature, the freshman congressmen on the Hill, and at least one-third of the Secret Service -- not counting your catalogue of fiancés and ex-husbands.

Connie glares at him.

CONNIE

I don't believe this! I don't believe you!

SAM

The apple ain't gonna fall that far from the tree, huh, sweetheart? You're damn right it runs in the family.

EMILY (quietly)

Sam, don't.

SAM
Why the hell not?
(to Connie)
I love you, Connie, but that doesn't mean we can't level once every twenty years. It hasn't hurt you to be my daughter, has it? I've done more for your libido than The Pill and diaphragms and the sexual revolution combined. If I were you, I'd say thank you.

A long beat, and she glares at him, starts to cry and runs from the room.

SAM JR.
Lighten up, will ya, Dad?

And he hurries from the room after her.

Sam and Emily are left there alone.

A long beat, as they look at each other. Sam looks very sheepish.

EMILY
You lied to me, Sam.

SAM
I don't lie to you. You know I don't lie to you. I cheat, I philander, but I don't lie to you.

EMILY
Yes, you did, Sam. I asked you if there was anything else -- besides all the women --

SAM
For God's sakes, Emily -- I tried to tell you -- how the hell do you tell your wife that you...

A long beat, as they look at each other.

EMILY
Do you really think that in my mind this is the first cow that you...

SAM
It is! Since I was a kid, anyway...

EMILY
I don't mean that. I mean that some of your girlfriends offended me much more than this cow. I grew up on a farm, too, Sam. I'm not naive.

They look at each other. A long beat.

EMILY (quietly)
I'm leaving you, Sam..

He looks at her, stunned --

SAM
Emily, for Pete's sake, Emily...

EMILY
You've never lied to me before, Sam.
I'm sorry.

He looks destroyed.

SAM
Emily... we're right in the middle of
a campaign, Emily.

They look at each other a long beat.

Heff comes charging into the room.

HEFF
Mr. President, I have to see you right
away!

Sam doesn't even look at him, his eyes still on Emily.

HEFF
It is a matter of national security!

EMILY (smiles)
More lies. Goodbye, Sam.

And she turns and walks out of the room. A beat, and
then --

SAM (hard, to Heff)
What the hell did you have to lie to
her for? National security!

HEFF
We have to get down to the War Room
right away!

SAM (after a beat)
Are you serious?

HEFF
Yes, sir.

INT. THE WAR ROOM

They walk in -- the place is deserted.

SAM (astounded)
Where the hell is everybody?

HEFF
We cleared the room.

SAM (astounded)
You cleared the War Room?

HEFF
It clears by itself for the Super Bowl, you know. It's just for a couple minutes, there's nothing to worry about.

They get to the end of the War Room -- a big TV screen is on. General Woods is there with Doc and CIA Director Marley and FBI Director Hastings.

On the screen, we see a MAN in his late, late 20's -- he has a beatific smile on his face. He is sitting in a chair with bright lights on him -- there are figures around him in the shadows.

THE MEN (together)
Mr. President.

Sam looks at the smiling young man on the screen.

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
His name is Jose Noriega.

SAM
That rings a bell.

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
Six months ago your brother Mose hired him as a stableboy at the farm.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS
His father was killed at the Bay of Pigs. He has harbored a lifelong hatred for liberal Democrats.

The young man suddenly giggles on screen.

SAM
What's he laughing about?

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
We've given him a harmless drug that will erase his memory for 48 hours.

SAM
You drugged him? You don't have the sanction to drug him.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS
Mr. President, he took the
photograph of you in the barn. He
sold it to the Snitch. The Snitch
turned it over to Senator Taylor.

GENERAL WOODS
He's the only witness to whatever it
was that happened in that barn. The
only witness.

SAM
What are you suggesting, Ben?

HEFF
The General is suggesting, Mr.
President, that without a live,
talking witness, all they've got is
a shadowy picture that won't ever
make the evening news.

A long beat -- Sam laughs a nervous laugh.

SAM
Come on, you don't really expect me
to go along with this, do you?

DOC (hard)
He's gonna go public, Sam! The
sonofabitch doesn't just want to
make money, he's got a bigger hard-
on than you had. He wants to fuck
you!

A long beat.

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY (quietly)
We don't have to... fade him. We
have a drug that we can give him
that will... soft-focus him.

SAM
(hard)
No! Did you hear me? No!

DOC
He's gonna ruin you, Sam. You think
I like this kind of stuff? I've
spent my whole life fighting this
kind of stuff. But this guy... Are
you just gonna let him assassinate
you?

The young man suddenly giggles again on screen.

SAM

What did you do, brainwash this guy? You kidnap him, you drug him, you clear out the War Room, now you want to brainwash him into some kind of vegetable --

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY

We would not brainwash him, Mr. President. We are well aware of our sanctions. He would only have a minimal amount of very well-focused, almost pinpoint, memory impairment and personality dislocation.

SAM (angrily)

Forget it!

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS

That's what we're suggesting he do. We call it the Eldridge Cleaver pill.

SAM (angrily)

No! I'm not going to turn everything this country stands for upside-down just because I... I'm not going to do that, you understand? End of discussion. Let Noriega go. Now.

INT. THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE WAR ROOM - DAY

Sam walks angrily away; Doc catches up to him.

DOC

You're committing political suicide, Sam! Please. We've had a whole history of suicidal, death-wish Democrats. Think about it, Sam. McGovern, Carter, Mondale, Hart, Dukakis -- you're not like those guys, Sam, are you?

Sam stops, looks at him.

SAM (hard)

I'm not going to screw up everything this country stands for! I don't want to be President that bad.

DOC

If you're not willing to screw up everything this country stands for, Jim Taylor's going to screw this country up so bad no liberal Democrat will ever have a chance to screw it up again.

SAM (angrily)
What the hell kind of choice is
that?

He starts walking again; Doc keeps pace.

DOC
It's a choice between Humphrey and
Nixon, okay? But just remember --
Nixon turned out worse than Hubert
ever would have.

SAM (angrily)
How do you know that?

DOC
Because Hubert already had his
cancer. He would've died in office.

Sam stops, looks at him a long beat, and then storms away
angrily.

Heff comes out of the War Room and starts running after
him.

HEFF
Mr. President!

He turns, stops. Heff gets there, very upset, out of
breath. Doc joins them.

HEFF (after a beat)
Mr. President, I don't know how to
tell you this.

DOC
What is it now?. More damn national
security?

HEFF (after a beat)
The First Lady has disappeared.

DOC (after a beat)
It's a plot, I told you that's what it
was. They fix you up with the cow,
they blackmail you, then they kidnap
Emily.

HEFF
She was at the Mayflower making a
speech; she stopped in the rest room --

DOC (upset, to Sam)
I don't care what you say! It's the
Russians -- I never trusted anybody
with a birthmark in my life! It's the
Mark of Cain!

HEFF (urgent)
I've alerted the FBI and the CIA --

SAM (calmly)
Don't worry about it.

They gape at him.

SAM
She hasn't disappeared; she's left me,
that's all.

HEFF (awestruck)
She's -- left you?

DOC (crazed)
What for? What'd you do? What the
hell'd she leave you for?

Heff is rolling his eyes -- he looks like he is going to
cardiac.

HEFF
This can't leak! I mean this
absolutely can't -- can't -- can not
-- leak!

He desperately tries to control himself -- assumes, half-
way, a calm tone.

HEFF
Do you think she's going to come back?

SAM (after a beat)
Heff, I gave up trying to figure emily
out 43 years ago. I can figure the
Russians out. I can figure the Senate
out. I can even, on rare occasions,
figure the State Department out. But
Emily -- no.

They stand there a long beat.

DOC (frantic)
What are we gonna do?

SAM (angry)
I'm just the President of the United
States, Doc. How the hell do I know?

EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

He is throwing horseshoes. He looks very upset. He
throws them so hard he knocks the stake down. He stands
there, fuming. Not far away, he sees a White House main-
tenance truck and, near it, a GARDENER, a black man in his
60's, working. He doesn't know quite what to do with
himself, and sort of ambles over to the Gardener.

SAM

Hot day, isn't it?

The Gardener looks at him a long beat, then --

THE GARDENER

Yes, sir, it sure as shit is.

(a beat)

It sure as shit is you ain't it?

He grins.

SAM (deadpan)

Yes, sir, it sure as shit is.

THE GARDENER (grins)

I vote for you. You a good
President. I'm proud to meet you.
Can't say that about everybody lives
here.

SAM (after a beat, smiles)

Thank you. It's nice meeting you, too.

(a beat, seriously)

Will you do me a big favor?

THE GARDENER (grins)

Yes, sir, I do you any favor you
want!

(a beat; suspicious)

What you want?

SAM

I want to borrow the keys to your
truck.

THE GARDENER (grins)

Yes, sir.

(a beat; suspicious)

What you want the keys to my truck
for?

SAM

I want to go for a ride.

THE GARDENER (grins)

Yes, sir.

(a beat; suspicious)

What you want to go for a ride for?

SAM (angrily)

I want to get the hell out of here
for a while! I've had it!

The Gardener thinks about it for a while, then nods, gets
the keys out of his pocket.

THE GARDENER

Here you go.

SAM (takes them)

Thank you.

THE GARDENER

You bring it on back now, you hear?

SAM

I will.

And he heads for the truck.

THE GARDENER

You watch your drivin'.

SAM (nods)

You know something? I haven't
driven in twenty years.

THE GARDENER

You ain't gonna wreck my truck, are
you?

SAM

I promise.

THE GARDENER

Okay.

And The Gardener goes back to his work.

INT. THE PICKUP TRUCK

Sam gets in -- he sees a straw hat and sunglasses on the dash and a worker's jacket on the front seat. He puts the jacket on, the sunglasses, the hat, and looks at himself in the rearview mirror.

INT. THE PICKUP TRUCK - LATER

at the White House maintenance gate. He pulls up to the gate. The Guard doesn't even look at him, looks at the number of the truck and waves him on.

He pulls out into the street hesitantly -- cars pass him, HONK their horns at him. He moves off into another lane -- another car really HONKS at him, cuts him off.

SAM

(to himself)

Goddamn Republicans!

The other driver gives him the finger. Sam returns it angrily and then starts to laugh at himself -- first softly, and then with a cackle.

INT. THE PICKUP TRUCK - DAY (LATER)

He is driving, wearing his sunglasses, jacket, and hat. He sees a series of direction signs -- the last one says CHEVY CHASE -- he makes a wild left-hand turn, heads for Chevy Chase.

EXT. CHEVY CHASE - LATER

A middle-class neighborhood; very similar tract kind of houses. He drives the truck slowly, looking at houses.

He makes a turn onto another street, looks at the houses, then stops. He shuts the motor off and stares at one. It is a small house with a nice little back yard, a Weber grill in the back, two little kids -- a boy and a girl -- playing. He stares at the scene a long beat, then turns away.

There is a red Corvette a couple hundred feet down, across the street, facing him. He stares at the Corvette a long beat and sees the woman sitting in the driver's seat. It is Emily.

They stare at each other a long beat, and then he gets out -- and walks very slowly, hesitantly, up to the red Corvette.

EMILY

What are you doing here?

SAM (after a beat)

I came out for a drive.

EMILY after a beat)

That's not what I asked you, Sam.

He looks at her a long beat.

SAM

Where'd you get the car, Emily?

EMILY

I stole it.

SAM

You stole it?

EMILY

I came out of the Mayflower. It was parked in the alley. The keys were in it, all ready for me.

(a beat)

It's a nice car, isn't it?

SAM (smiles)

Yes it is.

EMILY
I hate those smelly old limousines.

SAM
I do too.

EMILY
Then what do we ride in them for all the time?

They look at each other a beat, then away. They don't know what to say to each other.

EMILY
It's still a nice neighborhood, don't you think?

Sam looks around.

SAM
Yes it is.

EMILY (after a beat)
Do you remember? We'd all pile into our old Nash after dinner and we'd buy the kids an ice cream cone.

SAM (after a beat)
I remember.

A long beat, and then he blurts it.

SAM
Emily, please don't leave me.

EMILY (after a beat)
Because of the campaign?

SAM (after a beat)
No, damnit.

(a beat)
Because we've been together a long time. Forty-three years, Emily. Forty-three years!

EMILY
I hardly even see you.

SAM (after a beat)
You've always hardly seen me. That's nothing new.

EMILY (flares)
Don't you try any of that political double-talk on me, Sam Parr! I used to see you plenty when we lived here -- or don't you even remember that?

SAM (after a beat)
I remember, Emily.

EMILY
Then shut up, Sam.
(a beat)
Please.

SAM
Okay.

A long beat. They look away from each other. Finally --

SAM
Can I ask you something, Emily?
She looks at him suspiciously. A long beat, then --
gently, quietly.

SAM
Would you like an ice cream cone?
She looks at him a long beat, deadpan.

EMILY
You're shameless, Sam.

SAM (a slight smile)
I know.

EMILY (a slight smile)
Absolutely shameless.

They look at each other warily, slightly smiling.

EMILY
Get in the damn car.

SAM
Can I drive?

EMILY
No.

SAM
Please?

EMILY (hard)
N. O.

SAM
I've never driven one of these
before. I've seen them on TV.

EMILY
I stole it -- I'm driving it. Get
in the car, Sam, and stop trying to
sweet-talk my vote.

SAM

Okay, don't make a federal case out of it, Emily --

And he hurries around the side and gets into the Corvette.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - THE WHITE HOUSE

Heff sits behind the President's desk. With him are Doc, CIA Director Marley, FBI Director Hastings and General Woods.

GENERAL WOODS

What do you mean they're... gone?
He's the President of the United States -- she's the First -- How can they be gone?

HEFF (philosophical)

He's gone. So is she.

(he shrugs)

They disappeared separately. I told him she'd disappeared -- he said not to worry about it -- then he disappeared.

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY

We checked every nook and cranny in here. We've determined they're not here.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS

We've made the same determination.

A beat -- they all look at each other.

DOC (calmly)

He did this in the first Senate campaign -- we were sixteen points down -- he found this waitress.

They stare at Doc in disbelief and consternation.

DOC (smiles)

He'll be back. So will she. Come on, it happens. They have an argument. First she goes stomping out. Then he goes stomping out. It's normal.

They look at him a long beat.

GENERAL WOODS (in a whisper)

Who's in charge?

HEFF (very shaky)

I am.

GENERAL WOODS (very loud)
Do you expect me to go to sleep
tonight thinking you're in charge?

DOC (shrugs)
We're all in charge.

They look at each other; they don't like that any better.

DOC (smiles)
It's like a plane... we're sort of
on.... automatic pilot... for a
little while.

They stare at Doc again.

GENERAL WOODS
What if something's happened to
them? What if somebody kidnapped
them?

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS
Forget it. Those guys are bears for
publicity. They would have called
the papers already.

HEFF (suddenly very upset)
This can't leak! I mean it! Can not
leak! Can not! A lot of things have
leaked! But this can't leak! This
would be worse than Teapot Dome, Pete
Rose, Watergate, Irangate, and the
cow -- combined!

They sit there thinking about that. The PHONE rings.
Heff picks it up. He listens a long beat as they
anxiously watch him. He hangs the phone up, looks at them
a beat.

HEFF (quietly)
He walked up to one of the gardeners
and borrowed his truck from him.

DOC (very upset)
He doesn't know how to drive
anymore!

A long beat.

GENERAL WOODS (quietly)
You mean to tell me that the
President of the United States and
the First Lady are out there
somewhere, separately -- without the
Secret Service -- out there with all
those... people?

DOC (grandly)
He can take care of himself with
people. She is people.

GENERAL WOODS (angry)
She is not people! She's a
politician's wife. And he's a
politician. He can take care of
himself in here and up on the Hill
with other politicians and their
wives. He's a babe in the woods out
there!

A long beat.

HEFF (quietly)
So let's find them.

He looks at the FBI and CIA guys.

HEFF
Let's see you guys do some police
work.

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY (after a
beat)
We really don't have that kind of
expertise.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS (smiles)
No problem. We do.

Marley gives Hastings an ugly look.

INT. THE CORVETTE - DUSK

The First Lady drives -- they are eating ice cream cones.

EMILY
You are not supposed to have sugar.

SAM (philosophical)
I'm not supposed to do... other
things... either, but I still do
them.

She glances at him -- then steps on the gas, hot-rods
around a guy. He looks at her.

SAM
You're pretty good, Emily.

EMILY
I'm going to steal cars more
often. It's fun.

SAM

Don't -- please -- we're in enough trouble already.

EMILY

You're in trouble, Sam.

SAM (after a beat)

Yes I am.

EMILY

What are you going to do about it?

SAM (after a beat)

I don't know.

EMILY

Great. That's a fine attitude. You're just twisting slowly in the wind, that's what you're doing.

SAM (hurt)

You didn't have to use those words, Emily. You really didn't.

EMILY

Now you listen to me, Sam Parr --

She ROARS around another car, dodges back into traffic.

SAM (alarmed)

Easy, Emily, we don't have any insurance.

EMILY (hard)

I didn't put up with all the grief I've put up with in 43 years to have it end up with the two of us pinned to a damn cow.

SAM

You weren't there, Emily. You didn't do anything.

EMILY (hard)

I am not going to just sit around and watch my career end like that.

SAM

Your career? What about my career?

EMILY

Do you see how inconsiderate you are? It's always your career; what about mine? Do you know how hard I've worked all these years? Do you know how many hands I've shaken?

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

No wonder I have arthritis. Do you know how my face has hurt for months from all the damn smiling I've had to do?

SAM (after a beat)

I'm sorry, Emily. I guess I am inconsiderate sometimes.

EMILY

Well, you just stop being inconsiderate right now! You owe me, Sam! Fight the damn bastards! But get me off of that damn cow! And don't you ever lie to me ever again!

SAM (after a beat)

I won't. I promise.

EMILY

Don't promise, Sam. You promised not to raise taxes, too.

SAM

Congress raised taxes.

(a beat)

Okay. I don't promise.

They look at each other again -- affection between them. They are stopped at a red light. A taxi stand is nearby.

SAM (warily)

Can you drop me here, Emily?

She looks at him a beat, then pulls over to the curb. She looks at him a long beat.

EMILY

Where are you going?

He looks at her a long beat.

SAM (warily)

I'm not going to lie to you, Emily.

They look at each other.

EMILY

I don't want to know, thank you very much.

He smiles, gets out of the car, waves, and turns toward a taxi as the red Corvette ROARS off.

EXT. THE STREET IN CHEVY CHASE - NIGHT

in the quiet, middle-class neighborhood where Sam left the pickup truck. Heff stands by the pickup with Doc, CIA Director Marley, FBI Director Hastings, and General Woods, in full uniform. Neighbors are out on their lawns with kids, watching, as an army is in the street -- cops, soldiers -- lights everywhere, a chopper BUZZING low.

GENERAL WOODS (looking
around, suspicious)
What kind of neighborhood is this?

DOC (looking around)
It's just a neighborhood. It's
Chevy Chase.

GENERAL WOODS (looking
around)
Is it safe?

HEFF (looks around)
We've cut crime in half.

FBI DIRECTOR HASTINGS
No neighborhood in America is safe.

CIA DIRECTOR MARLEY
You've got domestic sanction, we
don't.

They give each other an ugly look.

HEFF
He's got to be around here
somewhere.

GENERAL WOODS (looking
around suspiciously)
What the hell would he be doing
here? This is a neighborhood, for
Christ's sake. What's he doing in a
neighborhood?

DOC
Sam's always liked neighborhoods.

GENERAL WOODS
Maybe there really is something
wrong with him.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The First Lady pulls the Corvette to a stop in front of the White House gates -- there are no other cars around. She gets out, takes a last, longing look at the Corvette, and walks to the guard's hut.

THE GUARD is looking down at a sheet of paper.

EMILY

Will you open the gate, please?

The Guard stares at her, keeps staring. He starts trying to speak. He can't.

THE GUARD

M-m-m-m-m-is-is --

EXT. A HOUSE APARTMENT IN GEORGETOWN - NIGHT

Sam gets out of the cab; he wears his shades and his straw hat. The CABBIE is a kid with huge, spiked hair. Sam hands him a bill, starts to walk toward the house.

THE CABBIE (calling after

him)

This is a hundred dollar bill, pal.

SAM (comes back)

That's all I've got.

THE CABBIE

I can't break this!

SAM

Keep it.

The Cabbie looks at him a long beat, then grins.

THE CABBIE

You pulled some kinda holdup, didn't you?

He grins.

SAM

I just don't usually pay for anything.

A beat, then the Cabbie laughs. A beat, and Sam grins with him.

THE CABBIE

Don't worry about it, dude. Us freaks gotta stick together.

And he drives away.

SAM (after a beat)

Goodbye... dude.

And he grins and starts walking toward the house.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

He walks up to the door, gets a key from his pocket, opens it.

INT. THE HOUSE

It's dark. He puts the lights on, starts going up the stairs.

SAM

Lacy? Lacy, honey?

INT. HER BEDROOM

She is in bed in the darkness, making love. They are on their sides. She hears Sam.

LACY

Oh my God!

He misinterprets it.

HIS VOICE

It's so good, it's so good!

The door opens -- Sam stands there and puts the lights on and for the first time we see that it is Vice-President Graham in bed with Lacy.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM

Mr. President!

He is frozen in a... delicate position. So is she.

SAM (after a beat)

I don't believe it.

LACY

This isn't what it looks like, Sam!

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM

It is not, Mr. President!

SAM (getting upset)

What are you screwing him for?

I'm the President.

She disengages herself with... difficulty... and tries to get her breath back as she speaks.

LACY

Don't... take... it... personally.

SAM (upset)

I'm not taking it personally, I'm taking it politically.

LACY

No, no, no, this isn't political --

SAM

I'm not through yet! It's too early for you to... premature for you to develop... new sources. It's insulting to me. I didn't think you'd ever do this to me, Lacy.

He looks hurt.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM

I certainly don't mean anything political being here, Mr. President --

SAM (to Lacy)

Are you trying to tell me this is just... sex, Lacy? Are you trying to tell me this isn't a premeditated political action?

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM

That's right. That's right. It's sex. It's just sex.

SAM (hard, to Graham)

This is Washington, damnit! There is no such thing as non-political sex! Don't insult my intelligence!

LACY (after a long beat)

I'm sorry, Sam, I didn't mean to... there have been so many rumors...

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (very nervous)

I'm sorry, Mr. President. I didn't consider the full implications, the ramifications -- it's like the Hindus, I didn't think -- I know how you feel about sea gulls --

LACY (to Graham)

What are you talking about?

Vice-President Graham just shakes his head, he looks very scared.

SAM (after a long beat)

When I'm re-elected to my second term, Lacy, when you find yourself without your "informed White House sources" -- that's when you're going to be sorry, Lacy.

LACY

You're not going to -- withdraw?

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM (looks
at her)
I did already.

LACY (looks at him)
Not you -- him.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
Oh.

SAM (grins)
You're damn right I'm not.
(to Vice-President
Graham)
And when you come to me after my
second term and ask me to support
your candidacy -- buddy boy, I'm
going to remember what you did to me
in this room.

VICE-PRESIDENT GRAHAM
All I did was screw her. I didn't
mean to screw you! You've got to
believe me, Mr. President!

SAM (after a beat, wearily)
I'm ashamed of both of you.

And he walks out of the room.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

He walks out. An unmarked car is standing there, two MEN
by it. They look like Secret Servicemen.

A MAN
Can we give you a ride back to the
White House, Mr. President?

SAM
Thanks.

They open the back door for him. He gets in.

INT. THE CAR

It STARTS up.

ONE OF THEM
You had a lot of people worried
about you, Mr. President.

SAM
Well, sometimes you've just got to
get out of the house, it starts
driving you nuts.

ONE OF THEM (grins)
I know what you mean, Mr. President.

SAM (smiles)
What are you boys, FBI? CIA?

ONE OF THEM
KGB, Mr. President.

He is a bit taken back by that -- and then he starts to laugh. They look at him and then they start to laugh, too.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE GATE - NIGHT

He gets out of the car.

SAM
Thanks for the ride -- I hope I
didn't make you go out of your way.

ONE OF THEM
It's okay, we didn't have much going
on.

THE OTHER
Anytime, Mr. President. No problem.

He smiles and walks toward the gate. He wears his straw hat and his jacket, but no shades.

THE GUARD
What do you want, buddy?

Sam doesn't really look up from what he's doing.

SAM
I want to go home.

The Guard doesn't look at him.

THE GUARD
There's a park across the street --
why don't you sleep it off.

SAM
You want to know something? I feel
great! I'm not even tired.

THE GUARD (bored)
I'm going to have to call security,
pal.

SAM (hard)
Cut the shit, damnit, and open the
damn gate!

The Guard looks up -- he stares, he keeps staring. Sam tilts his straw hat back on his head. The Guard starts trying to speak. He can't.

THE GUARD

M-m-m-m-m-mis -- mis -- Mister Pre --

SAM

Hit the button, will you, dude?

The Guard hits the button and keeps stuttering and staring -- the big gate opens and Sam Parr, the President of the United States, walks down the wide dark driveway toward his house.

INT. EBS HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

JOSE NORIEGA sits with his AGENT, a man in his 60s who looks like Walter Winchell. With them are Arthur Sampson, the 60-ish chairman of the board of EBS, Elliot Kohner, the head of the news division, and Tom Martin, the anchorman.

SAMPSON

Do you really think you can come in here and shake this network down? We are not in the business of paying for news stories --

THE AGENT

All he wants is what everybody else wants: a house in the suburbs, a Mercedes, a pool in the back, a Weber barbecue. What's so un-American about that?

KOENER (hard)

I'll tell you what's un-American about it. He wants those things by assassinating the character of the President of the United States!

Noriega sits there and grins like a loon.

THE AGENT

This is the negative -- I have affidavits here from four nationally respected photography labs attesting its authenticity.

Noriega keeps grinning like a loon. Sampson, Kohner, and Tom Martin look at the affidavits and look at each other.

THE AGENT

Mr. Noriega is willing to tell his story exclusively to your network. If you're not interested, fine, we'll go someplace else.

The Agent stands up dramatically; Noriega just sits there grinning.

KOHNER (after a beat)

Fine. We're not interested.

The Agent starts heading for the door; Noriega sits there not moving, grinning into their faces. As The Agent gets to the door --

SAMPSON

Just a minute.

Noriega giggles. The Agent turns, looks at them.

SAMPSON

How much did CBS offer you?

THE AGENT

A million one.

KOHNER

Arthur, we don't want to do this.

MARTIN

Yes we do, Arthur.

SAMPSON

No we don't.

(a beat)

But if somebody has to do it, we don't want it to be CBS, do we?

MARTIN (to himself)

I think I just saw Elvis.

SAMPSON (to The Agent)

We'll give you a million two.

Noriega cackles.

THE AGENT (smiles)

Done.

MARTIN (to himself)

Elvis looks great.

Noriega keeps cackling loudly. They look at him disgust-
edly.

KOHNER (with distaste)

Can he speak English?

THE AGENT

Yes he can.

Noriega keeps cackling.

KOHNER (to Noriega, with
distaste)
Say something.

Noriega suddenly stops cackling and, with a perfectly straight face, dramatically, and without an accent --

NORIEGA
I couldn't believe my eyes. It was
the President of the United States
... doing this... horrible thing.

A long beat, and then he suddenly grins, and in a heavy Latino accent --

NORIEGA
Okay, amigos?

They stare at him.

INT. SECRET SERVICE CONTROL ROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

THREE SECRET SERVICEMEN sit at a bank of video monitors. They wear their sunglasses, like they do everywhere.

On one of the monitors, we see Sam walking up the White House driveway in his straw hat and jacket.

One of the Secret Servicemen stares at the figure on the monitor in disbelief.

THE SECRET SERVICEMAN
Who in hell --

ANOTHER SECRET SERVICEMAN
Grounds alert! Scramble! Scramble!

They frantically start hitting all kinds of buttons.

EXT. THE DRIVEWAY OF THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Sam walks up the driveway toward the White House... and groups of SECRET SERVICEMEN, Uzis raised, literally blow out the doors toward him in their sunglasses.

ONE OF THEM (yelling)
Get down on the ground!

ANOTHER
Freeze!

SAM (quietly)
Wait a minute.

ONE OF THEM
Get the fuck down!

ANOTHER

Don't move!

SAM (desperate)

It's me!

And several Secret Servicemen literally fly toward him and knock him to the ground, as others converge around them with their Uzis pointed. A helicopter with a spotlight is overhead now -- the scene is blinding and DEAFENING.

ONE OF THEM

Turn him over!

They turn Sam over; his straw hat has fallen off. A long beat, and then --

ONE OF THEM (quietly)

Oh my God.

A long beat, as Sam starts to get up.

ONE OF THEM

Mr. President.

They stare at him. Sam look at them a very long beat. He looks like he's going to kill them.

SAM (quietly)

Well done.

He forces a politician's grin for a beat, then looks at them like he's going to kill them again, then forces another grin and starts trudging for the White House door, limping a little.

Heff and Doc come running to him.

DOC (upset, concerned)

Holy Christ, Sam, it's not safe out there!

SAM (upset)

It's perfectly safe out there! It's not safe in here!

He gives the Secret Servicemen another dirty look.

HEFF (concerned)

Are you all right, Mr. President?

SAM (angry)

I was fine until I came back here.

DOC (to cheer him)

Emily's back -- I've never seen her in such a good mood.

They walk toward the White House.

DOC
You think she's got something going,
Sam?

SAM (after a beat, smiles)
Yeah, I think she does.

DOC (depressed)
Holy Christ, Sam. We can't handle
anything else! We just can't!

Sam smiles to himself.

HEFF (to Sam)
We've got everybody waiting for you
inside.

SAM
It's one o'clock in the morning!
Can't I take one day off without
everything going to hell?

HEFF
It's Noriega. He's going network
tomorrow.

DOC (to Sam)
He's getting a million bucks! I
told you we should've given him that
Eldridge Cleaver pill!

He just keeps walking calmly; Doc and Heff stare at him.

DOC (upset)
Didn't you hear me, Sam? He's --

SAM (very calm)
What did you think he was going to
do? You've got something that
people will buy --
(he shrugs)
-- you sell. It's the American Way.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

A crisis atmosphere -- General Woods, Clark Crawford, Mark
Simpson, Billy Long, FBI Director Hastings, and CIA
Director Marley are here. Sam walks in wearing his straw
hat with Doc and Heff. They all rise.

ALL OF THEM
Mr. President.

Sam goes behind his desk, takes his straw hat off, throws
it on his desk.

SAM

You go to South America, you get
dysentery. You come to this town,
you get timidity. Well, not me!
We're gonna fight the bastards!

Some of them clap, cheer -- others look at each other
warily.

GENERAL WOODS

We're gonna kick ass, Mr. President!

SAM (quietly)

Yes we are.

HEFF (to Mark, excitedly)

I want strategy memos on the
Watergate, Chappaquiddick, and
Irangate cover-ups on my desk at
eight!

MARK

You've got it.

SAM

I'm not going to let the fate and
fortune of this country get turned
around by one soft-ass moo-cow.

DOC

(loud)

God bless you, Mr. President.

SAM

I love this country too much to let
that happen.

INT. EBS NEWS STUDIO - NIGHT

Jose Noriega, looking very serious, wearing a nice,
serious suit, sits being interviewed by Lacy Morrow.

NORIEGA (quietly,
dramatically)

I couldn't believe my eyes. It was
the President of the United States.
It was a horrible thing.

Lacy is equally dramatic and quiet.

LACY (hushed)

What were your thoughts as you
watched --

NORIEGA (after a long beat,

hushed)

This... this was our... President?

LADY (after a long beat)
Was it?

NORIEGA (hushed)
You know it was.

LACY (almost losing it)
I beg your pardon?

NORIEGA
You have the negative.

LACY (after a beat)
Oh. Yes.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Billy Long stands in front of a mob of NEWSMEN reading a statement.

BILLY
The President did not engage in any
-- impropriety. He will not dignify
these allegations with a further
response.

A REPORTER (yelling)
Will the President hold a news
conference?

BILLY
The Justice Department will conduct
a full-scale investigation of these
allegations --

A REPORTER (yelling)
Will he appoint a Special
Prosecutor?

BILLY
It will examine the negative of the
photograph and --

EXT. AN AIRFIELD - DAY

Senator Jim Taylor, with a mob of REPORTERS, standing
outside his campaign plane --

SENATOR TAYLOR
(statesmanlike)
I hope, for the sake of this
country, that these allegations are
false, and I ask all Americans to
remember that, no matter how damning
the evidence seems to be, all men
are innocent until proven guilty.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Sam in front of a mob of REPORTERS.

SAM

President Gorbachev called me yesterday and asked for this summit to discuss the immediate demobilization of 26 nuclear missiles in the Soviet Union itself. I consider the meeting to be a breakthrough in the struggle for world peace. The Summit will be held at Camp David three days after the election.

A REPORTER (yelling)

What if you're not re-elected?

ANOTHER REPORTER

What about the cow?

ANOTHER REPORTER

Did you engage in inappropriate behavior --

SAM

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

INT. A TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

We hear the EBS JINGLE and see the logo for the Evening News, and then Tom Martin is on the air.

MARTIN

As Americans heard and read a farmhand's allegations concerning the sexual behavior of the President of the United States, the Gallup poll reported an overnight drop of twelve points in President Parr's lead over Senator Taylor.

TV COVERAGE

A REPORTER doing street interviews --

THE REPORTER

How do you feel about these allegations concerning President Parr?

A MAN IN A SUIT

I'm horrified.

A YOUNG BLACK STREET DUDE

Hey, whatever's right, you know?

A PROPER MATRON
It's disgusting. I don't want to
talk about it.

A FARM WOMAN (tractor
behind her)
Well, I like President Parr, but I
don't know about, you know... I grew
up on a farm. We've got eleven
cows. I hear it happens, but, you
know... I have three brothers, but
as far as I know they never... come
to think of it, they did spend a lot
of time in the barn.

EXT. PASCAGOULA, MISSISSIPPI (FILM FOOTAGE)

We see FOOTAGE of a hurricane battering Pascagoula. As we
watch the footage, we hear --

MARTIN (V.O.)
The unexpected storm, which
developed suddenly and fooled
forecasters, struck the Pascagoula
area late last night. President
Parr interrupted a campaign swing
through the midwest to fly to
Pascagoula.

We see FILM FOOTAGE of Sam in a shelter, talking to people
and holding a very photogenic baby.

INT. AN AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Senator Taylor waving to a huge crowd, as they APPLAUD him
mightily. He gets off the stage and is surrounded by
REPORTERS.

A REPORTER
Senator, did you change your wording
from the text at the conclusion of
your speech?

SENATOR TAYLOR
I never deviate.
(he grins)
I am not a textual deviate.

MONTAGE - A SERIES OF HEADLINES

The front page of a daily -- TAYLOR: I AM NOT A TEXTUAL
DEVIATE. On the front page of a tabloid, a photograph of
a cow: EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS: FIRST LADY? Another tabloid,
another photograph of a cow: HERE'S BESSIE! A news
magazine -- the headline: SCANDAL IN WASHINGTON -- on the
cover, we see photographs of Fanny Foxxe, Liz Ray, Rita
Jenrette, Donna Rice, and a cow. The front page of the
New York Post -- Sam, at a campaign banquet, a glass of
milk in his hand. The headline: EVERY BODY NEEDS...

EXT. CALCUTTA, INDIA (FILM FOOTAGE)

Hundreds of thousands of people rioting, running through the streets, burning American flags, attacking the American Embassy -- on the periphery of the action, we see some sacred cows grazing benevolently.

MARTIN (V.O.)

In Calcutta, 172 people were killed in the largest anti-American rioting in the history of that country, as the government prepared to break diplomatic relations with the United States.

INT. A TV STUDIO

The patrician Clark Crawford, on a David Brinkley-type talk show.

CRAWFORD

Of course I'm certain these allegations are untrue, but let's put this into context. When Grover Cleveland ran for the White House, he had fathered an illegitimate child and his opponents were chanting -- "Ma, ma, where's my pa? Gone to the White House, ha ha ha!"

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. (FILM FOOTAGE)

We see hundreds of cows milling around in front of the White House, surrounded by angry protesters.

MARTIN (V.O.)

It was a joint protest sponsored by the Rev. Jerry Falwell's newly-reborn Moral Majority and the Animal Rights Defense League.

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK (FILM FOOTAGE)

We see gays and lesbians, thousands of them, marching, many of them outrageously dressed, all of them holding "Parr For President" signs.

MARTIN (V.O.)

In New York's Greenwich Village and San Francisco's Castro District, gay and lesbian marchers staged what they called "Freedom of Choice" rallies in support of the President.

INT. EBS NEWS STUDIO

AN ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

-- substituting for Tom Martin is Lacy Morrow.

Lacy is on the air.

LACY

As President Parr crisscrossed the country campaigning today, the Gallup-EBS Poll, for the first time, showed Senator Jim Taylor with a four-point lead.

EXT. A FACTORY GATE IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Sam, speaking to a small crowd --

SAM

The world is a global village. Human beings thousands of miles away are our next-door neighbors. The Parr Plan for Peace and Progress --

A HECKLER

You got a piece, didn't you?

SAM

-- says that those who have plenty also have the responsibility to share.

A HECKLER (very loud)

What'd you share with that cow?

Laughs. Sam stops, looks at them. We see people waving signs that say -- PARR AND ELSIE.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The helicopter lands -- Sam gets out with Heff and Doc. They move quickly towards the White House, but REPORTERS yell questions.

A REPORTER

Are you going to appoint a Special Prosecutor?

ANOTHER REPORTER

What about the Justice Department investigation?

ANOTHER REPORTER

Why won't you comment directly?

Sam cups his hands over his ears as the helicopter blades ROAR and pretends like he doesn't hear the questions... just like another President used to do.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

They get inside. He stops dead. Billy is waiting for them inside.

SAM (quietly)

Christ.

He leans against the wall a beat, closes his eyes.

SAM (bitterly)

Did you see what I just had to do?
Did you see me have to pretend that --

(a beat, then hard)

Goddamnit!

A long beat; he looks at them.

SAM (quietly)

I never in my life imagined I'd sink
that low.

A long beat; nothing is said.

SAM (in pain)

Do you have anything more on
Calcutta?

BILLY

The death toll is up to 425.

Sam winces.

BILLY

They burned our Embassy, Mr.
President.

DOC (crazed)

Those goddamn savage heathen
sonsabitches!

BILLY (quietly)

We got everybody out. Nobody was
hurt.

SAM (bitterly)

I must be the only President in the
history of the United States who
burned his own Embassy down.

DOC

Aw, bullshit, Sam! Back in the
60's, we had 'em going up like
matches in the sun. We'll rebuild
th: sucker. It'll be good for their
local economy.

SAM (after a beat, quietly)

Don't you understand? 425 people
have died. Because of me.

A long beat.

DOC
That's the down side, Sam.

They stare at him. Sam, finally --

SAM (quietly, controlling
rage)
What's the up side, Doc?

DOC (brightly)
You didn't start any wars. You
never had to say "Bring the boys
home!"

Sam just stares at him.

DOC
It's a real low body count, Sam --
(a beat)
-- considering... the possibilities.

Sam doesn't say anything, just looks at him.

HEFF
He's right, Mr. President.

Sam looks at Doc a long beat, then at Heff, then walks out
of the room.

INT. A MASSAGE ROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

He is being massaged very hard, really being beaten. He
just lies there, looking exhausted.

HEFF
Noriega's going to be on Zsa Zsa
Gabor's talk show tomorrow -- that's
the highest-rated talk show in the
country.

Sam says nothing, gets beaten.

HEFF (desperately; to Sam)
This thing is killing us! You've
managed to unite the Moral Majority
and the Animal Rights Leagues --
that's a political miracle.

DOC (after a beat)
Maybe you should go on Barbara
Walters and shed a few tears.

HEFF (to Doc, hard)
And say what?

DOC
I don't know. It doesn't matter.
Nobody listens to her, they just
wait for the tears.

Sam doesn't even look at them -- his eyes are closed and he is being beaten.

HEFF (desperate)
Do you know how out of control this is getting? The Dairy Lobby is going to issue a statement about this. The Dairy Lobby! Are you kidding me? Penthouse is paying \$100,000 to some kid who works on your brother's farm who says he screwed the same cow. Gary Hart is covering the rest of the campaign for the Miami Herald. Gary Hart! Six kids, aged 12 to 14, were arrested in upstate New York for kidnapping a cow with sexual intent. What's next? Are the pimps going to put them out on 42nd Street?

DOC
That's not a bad idea. It's safe sex, you know. I read up on it.

A long beat -- Sam sits up. He stares. Masseur leaves.

HEFF (quietly)
The Speaker's coming over tomorrow with the Party chairman. There's talk of asking you to resign.

DOC
They'll never do that.

HEFF (in disbelief)
Why not?

DOC
Because they'd be stuck with Petey Graham. He's better insurance for Sam than what's-his-name was. Bush's guy... Redford.

A long beat; he sips his drink.

HEFF (quietly, intensely)
We've got to do something, Mr. President.

Sam says nothing, stares.

DOC
It's too late to delete the sonofabitch. We should've done it when we found out --

Sam gives him a look that silences Doc.

DOC (angrily)
Well then, we should've given him
that Beaver Cleaver pill!

A long beat.

HEFF (quietly)
I've got an idea.

They look at him.

INT. THE SITTING ROOM - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

He stands in his robe, looking out the window -- Doc and Heff in the room behind him, watching him intently. A long beat as he stares, then --

SAM (simply)
No.

A long beat -- Doc and Heff look at each other in distress.

HEFF
This is your choice, Mr.
President. You do this -- nobody
gets deleted, erased, edited, faded,
Cleavered, whatever -- and we've got
a shot. If you don't, Noriega may
as well have put a bullet in your
heart.

Sam keeps staring out the window intently.

SAM
No. Absolutely not.

HEFF
Why the hell not?
(a beat)
Excuse me -- why not, Mr. President?

SAM
He's a human being.

DOC
He's a worm!

Sam stares out the window -- a long beat as they watch him.

HEFF
Mr. President, Jim Taylor isn't
Barry Goldwater. He's Joe McCarthy
without the booze. He's going to
play with this country the same way
he plays with himself.

Sam doesn't say anything, but turns and looks at them.

DOC

You know what I heard the other day? I heard when Jimbo was twelve years old, he wanted a black briefcase for Christmas.

Sam looks away from him, stares out the window again.

DOC

Think about it, Sam. Do you want somebody like that in here? He wants a black briefcase for Christmas and he jacks off all the time?

Sam stares out the window, says nothing.

EXT. THE AMERICANA HOTEL - NEW YORK - NIGHT (FILM FOOTAGE)

Lots of policemen, spinning red lights, two hookers being brought out in handcuffs -- and then we see Jose Noriega, his hands cuffed behind him, being led out by a bevy of policemen.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Police said they were acting on an anonymous tip when they arrested Noriega at the Americana Hotel. He was in the company of two women with long records for prostitution. They recovered 14 ounces of cocaine in his room. He will be charged with possession of cocaine for sale.

We see Noriega yelling to the cameramen.

NORIEGA (V.O.)

I don't do drugs! I don't know these women! I had a drink at the bar! I don't remember anything!

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Billy Long in front of a bunch of reporters. She reads from a statement.

BILLY

We have no comment on Mr. Noriega's arrest. He is innocent until proven guilty. The tawdriness of the circumstances of the arrest should cast no light on the false allegations he has recently made.

EXT. A TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Senator Taylor talking to reporter.

SENATOR TAYLOR

I don't have any comment. Since the beginning of this campaign, we've strived to take the high road. This campaign is going to be decided on issues, not dirt.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Heff, Doc, Mark Simpson, Billy Long and Sam. There is excitement in the room.

MARK (to Sam: smiles)

There's a whole change of attitude on the Hill this morning. The Speaker has invited you to his prayer breakfast.

SAM (flat)

Not unless they're serving Bloody Marys.

HEFF

Go. We'll write you a special prayer. We could use some prayer photos right now.

BILLY

(excited)

His arrest is going to change the entire focus of this thing. They're all going to start doing stories about Noriega's background. His allegations will be on the jump page next to the hemorrhoid ads.

Sam looks at her a beat and then looks away. He is the only one in the room who doesn't look excited; he looks depressed.

SAM

Have we got the overnights yet?

HEFF

Any minute.

DOC (excited)

They're going to release him on bail this afternoon. There are going to be more reporters there than when that little girl fell in the well!

An aide comes into the room briskly, goes to Heff, gives him some sheets of paper.

HEFF (grins)
 Alright, here we go!

He stares at the sheets of paper. He looks up. A beat, then --

HEFF (to Mark and Billy)
 Will you excuse us, please?

A beat, and Mark and Billy leave the room.

SAM (quietly)
 They didn't buy it, did they?

DOC (in disbelief)
 Sure they bought it. They saw it right on TV -- the guy in handcuffs, the hookers -- they're voters. They're dumb. They always buy it.

HEFF (to Sam; evenly)
 We dropped six points since the bust. We're fourteen down.

Doc hits the wall with his fist. A very long beat, then --

SAM (quietly)
 They're not dumb.

He gets up wearily. He looks almost broken.

SAM (quietly)
 I don't deserve being here.

And he starts slowly, wearily, from the room.

HEFF (angrily)
 What -- Jim Taylor deserves being here?

Sam turns to him, looks at him a beat, then --

SAM (quietly)
 No. Tom Jefferson deserved being here. Abe Lincoln deserved being here. FDR deserved being here... and Jack.

(a beat)
 And I used to take great pride in the fact that maybe, just maybe, Sam Parr deserved being here... a little bit... too.

A beat, and he turns and goes out of the room. They watch him. He looks destroyed.

EXT. THE SOUTH LAWN - DAY

He is throwing his horseshoes. It looks like it's the greatest effort in the world for him to throw each one.

He sees the black Gardener he borrowed the truck from nearby -- his truck is near him again.

Sam throws a last horseshoe, stands there, looks at the Gardener working, and slowly walks over to him. He looks like he is in a daze.

THE GARDENER

You not gonna take my truck again.

Sam's smile is barely there.

SAM

No. Did you get your hat and jacket back?

THE GARDENER

Yes, sir. Can't wear 'em no more. My wife, she took 'em away, put 'em in a case, goin' give it to the grandchildren. I like that hat.

SAM

I did, too.
(a beat)
I'm sorry.

THE GARDENER

I gonna buy me a new one. Next time you ask me for it, I ain't goin' tell nobody I loan it to you.

SAM

Deal.

He looks drained; his smiles are very tired.

SAM

What's your name?

THE GARDENER (after a beat)

Jethro.

Sam puts his hand out. The Gardener shakes it warily.

SAM

I'd like it if you called me Sam.

The Gardener looks him over warily, but nods. They stand there a moment looking at each other, not knowing what to say.

THE GARDENER

You gonna win?

SAM

It doesn't look like it, does it?

THE GARDENER (after a beat; smiles)

Well, I guess you ain't ever gonna forget that cow, huh?

SAM

I guess not.

THE GARDENER

She worth it?

SAM

No.

(he smiles)

Hell no.

They look at each other a beat and they start to laugh just a little bit. A long beat.

THE GARDENER

You ever think about just tellin' the truth?

He starts to work on pulling weeds.

SAM

The President of the United States isn't supposed to poke a cow, Jethro.

A long beat as The Gardener works -- he doesn't look at Sam.

THE GARDENER

Nobody tell the truth no more, see. Everybody lie. Everybody expect everybody lie. Now people watchin' their T-Vee, they say -- Hellfire, Sam's lyin' now too? Shit.

(he looks at Sam now, gets up)

I been laughin' at you. I say -- Whooboy, he stick it in that old cow -- whooboy, he got himself a dick. But I was still goin' vote for you.

(a beat; he looks away)

Now I ain't goin' no more. Now I say -- Sam, he just like all the others, I'm goin' stay home like most folks do, vote for nobody.

They look at each other a long beat.

THE GARDENER

Tell you what, though -- you want my truck, I give it to you anytime.

SAM (after a beat)

Thank you, Jethro.

THE GARDENER (seriously)

You want my new hat when I gets it, I give you that, too.

Sam looks at him a long beat, touched, nods, and then starts to walk wearily away. The Gardener watches him.

INT. A TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Tom Martin is on the air.

MARTIN

Four days before the Presidential election and two before the final candidates' debate, President Parr barnstormed the country, trying to shore up his badly slumping campaign.

SAM (on the TV, at a rally)

We are a nation at peace and a nation --

INT. THE SITTING ROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Sam shuts the set off. He looks exhausted. Doc and Heff are with him.

DOC (angry)

Barnstorm -- what did he have to use a word like that for?

SAM

It's just a word, Doc.

He looks utterly spiritless.

DOC

It's a cheap shot, that's what it is, it's a lot of horse shit!

HEFF

Let's cut out all the animal analogies, similes and metaphors, okay?

Doc gives him an ugly look. A long beat.

DOC

How come it's so quiet around here?

They look at him a beat.

SAM

Do you know how many messages I got while I was gone? Two. Do you know who the messages were from?

HEFF

Nixon.

SAM

Yup, Nixon.

HEFF (smiles)

I was talking to an AFL-CIO guy yesterday, he kept glancing at his Rolex. I forgot what that feels like -- when you talk and they glance at their Rolex. It feels like hell.

(gets up)

Well, I've got to get some sleep.

SAM

Good night, Heff.

DOC

Me too, Sam.

SAM

Okay, Doc.

He looks so preoccupied he's hardly noticed they are leaving. He turns to the window, stares out. He opens the glass door and steps out on the patio. He buttons up his robe -- it's cold. He stands there, looking at the lights of Washington, D.C. A long beat.

And he turns and goes back inside.

He goes to a telephone. He stands there a beat, then reaches down and dials.

SAM

Emily -- did I wake you?

(a beat)

I'm in the sitting room.

(a beat)

No, no, it's nothing. I just wanted to ask you to come to the debate with me.

(a beat)

I know you always come. I just wanted to ask you to come.

(a beat)

Well, because it occurred to me that I hadn't asked you to do anything in a long time.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)
 (a long beat)
 Good night, Emily.

And he hangs up, stands there a moment.

EXT. A TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Tom Martin is on the air, an old town hall that looks like it belongs in a different century lighted up behind him.

MARTIN
 The candidates arrived tonight for their final debate, two days before the election, in the little town of Nashua, New Hampshire, in this old stone building that has been the town hall for 123 years.

We see FILM FOOTAGE of Sam arriving with Emily; of Jim Taylor arriving with his wife. Sam looks spiritless, going through the motions.

MARTIN (V.O.)
 The debate will begin as President Parr has slipped 23 points in the latest Gallup poll behind Republican Senator Jim Taylor. It is the lowest standing for an incumbent President since election polling began.

INT. A DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Sam with Doc, Heff, and Emily. Emily is knitting. A makeup man is working on Sam.

HEFF
 Keep hitting away at the peace and prosperity issue. Drop in the Summit whenever you can. It's pronounced Mos-coe, not Mos-cow. Stay cool, be Presidential. No words like "leapfrogging," "pork barrel" or "hog-tied."

DOC
 You don't want to make a horse's ass out of yourself, Sam.

Doc grins. Heff turns on him.

HEFF
 That's not funny!

DOC (innocently)
 What'd I say?

They look at each other -- Emily titters; Sam is like a statue.

SAM (quietly)
Could I ask you to leave me alone,
please? I'd just like to... sit
here a minute.

They look at him with concern, then at each other, then start heading out.

SAM
Would you mind... staying with me...
Emily?

Doc and Heff glance at each other. She looks at him a long beat, then smiles.

EMILY
If you like.

She sits back down -- they leave. She continues her knitting. He just sits there, staring a long beat.

SAM (quietly)
Sometimes I wish I could... knit.

EMILY
Maybe one day I'll teach you.

SAM
No thank you.

They look at each other and then she continues her knitting. He has been dead serious, but now he smiles slowly -- looking at her; she is not looking at him. And it turns into the biggest smile in the world.

INT. THE TOWN HALL STAGE - NIGHT

The town hall is filled -- we see many of the political faces here that we've seen before -- the Cabinet members, General Woods, Crawford, etc. We can go to their facial reactions if we want.

Tom Martin is the moderator -- a panel of news people face the candidates -- among them is Lacy Morrow, looking very businesslike. The candidates stand behind lecterns.

Sam looks downcast; Senator Taylor looks buoyant.

MARTIN
Each candidate will have five
minutes for his opening statement.
Senator Taylor won the coin toss and
has elected to begin. Senator
Taylor.

SENATOR TAYLOR

I'm here to speak to you of a bygone America! An America without affirmative action! Without welfare! An America ready and willing to take care of itself.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE TOWN HALL - LATER

SENATOR TAYLOR

Let's make this country the country of our forefathers once again! Let's return to the old-time ethical standards! The morality that made this nation great!

There is very loud APPLAUSE; Taylor has looked great. Heff looks at Doc, winces.

MARTIN

President Parr.

Heff and Doc watch him with concern. A long beat, and he says nothing. FROM HIS POV, we see Lacy sitting there very prim and proper. He looks at Lacy. Lacy avoids his eye.

SAM (quietly)

Holy cow.

Heff looks at Doc, his mouth drops open -- he gapes. There is shock in the hall, TITTERS.

SAM (loud)

Holy cow!

There is LAUGHTER now, movement --

HEFF (to Doc, frantic)

He's lost it -- sweet shit, he's lost it!

SAM (hard)

He has the gall to talk about ethical standards, this sanctimonious little jerkoff --

He points to Taylor, who gapes -- the beginning of pandemonium in the hall, some Reporters running for the doors --

SAM

Who tried to blackmail me out of this race!

More people running about in the hall.

SENATOR TAYLOR (desperately)
That's not true! That's not true!
He's crazy!

SAM (hard)
Morality, he says. Well, I'm not
going to be blackmailed!

Some APPLAUSE; other people speechless; Reporters running
about.

SAM
Yes, I diddled that cow.

Complete PANDEMONIUM.

SAM
I diddled one when I was fourteen
years old, and I diddled one in the
same barn last month, just like my
dad did and his dad did before, and
a lot of men have diddled a lot
worse than that cow, let me tell
you.

Complete CHAOS in the hall.

SAM
Let me tell you something else. I
lied to you.

Things suddenly start to settle down now -- people seem to
be in shock.

SAM
But I did something worse than that.
I made a decision to frame Mr.
Noriega and get him arrested for
something he didn't do.

GAPES -- BOOS, NOISE from the crowd.

SAM
And there is no excuse for that. I
was wrong. I dishonored my office.

Heff is sitting on a chair with his head between his legs.
Doc is holding his shoulder. It is quiet once again in
the hall.

SAM (quietly)
I've got nothing else to say to you.
It's out in the open now. When I
came into office, I told you I
wasn't going to lie to you. And now
I know one thing: When I go out,
that's still going to be true.

A beat, and he simply starts to walk away from the mike, as CHEERS and BOOS and PANDEMONIUM begin again. Then he turns back to Taylor, who looks like he is going to faint.

SAM

And you, sir, you can stay up here as long as they're willing to listen to you. But I don't even want to be in the same town with you.

More BOOS, APPLAUSE, PANDEMONIUM, as Sam walks calmly off-stage.

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

Newspaper headlines from across the country:

NORIEGA FRAMED
 PRESIDENT ADMITS BESTIALITY
 PSYCHODRAMA IN NEW HAMPSHIRE
 PRESIDENT: TAYLOR A "JERKOFF"
 TAYLOR: PRESIDENT "CRACKERS"
 NIXON PLANS COMEBACK
 NORIEGA TO SUE GOVERNMENT
 DOWN DOWN 123! MARKET CLOSES!
 FIRST LADY: "I'M PROUD OF HIM"
 PETE ROSE TO PREZ: DON'T GIVE UP ON HALL OF FAME

INT. A TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Tom Martin on the air, live. He looks shaken -- he clears his throat before he begins.

MARTIN

Good evening. As America reeled from the effects of last night's Presidential debate in Nashua, New Hampshire, global reaction was mixed. In Moscow, President Gorbachev responded with a barnyard epithet when a reporter asked him if he thought the President of the United States had lost his capacity to govern.

GORBACHEV speaks in Russian with a TRANSLATOR translating as he speaks --

GORBACHEV

Why? Because he was honest?
 Because a man is honest does not make him crazy. Perestroika has always meant that honesty must not be equated with madness, as it was in the Soviet Union for so many years. That notion is --
 (in English)
 -- how do you say... Bullshit.

THE TRANSLATOR

Bullshit.

MARTIN

In India, the government declared a state of emergency as the death toll rose to 2,332 in the largest anti-American rioting in history. We have a report from Calcutta.

INT. A WHITE HOUSE MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Sam is sitting watching the TV -- with him in the room are Doc, Heff, Billy Long, Clark Crawford, Mark Simpson, and Emily, who is doing her knitting.

They are watching footage of crazed crowds and burning buildings.

THE TV REPORTER (on scene)

Anything American was burned.
American Express. McDonald's.
Coca-Cola signs. Movie theatres
whose marquees advertised Hollywood
movies.

Sam shuts the set OFF. A long beat; no one says anything.
He gets up.

SAM (quietly)

What about the body count now, Doc?
Are you still so happy I didn't start
any wars?

A long beat; no one says anything.

SAM (suddenly)

I'm going to go over there.

A beat -- no one says anything -- they look at each other.
Emily just keeps knitting.

HEFF (clear his throat)

I'm sorry, Mr. President?

SAM

I'm going to go over there.

HEFF (after a beat)

Where?

SAM

Calcutta.

DOC (jumps up)

Like hell you are! Like hell you are!
I love you, Sam, you know I do --

SAM
Tomorrow morning.

They stare at him.

DOC
It's the pressure, Sam. The pressure.
You'll be okay. Just hold my hand,
boy -- let's sit right down over here.

He tries to lead him to a chair.

Sam sees Heff looking at him.

SAM
Get that I-better-convene-the-
Security-Council look out of your
eyes, Heff. I'm perfectly fine.

HEFF (after a long beat)
If you say so, Mr. President.

A long beat, as they stare at him.

EMILY (suddenly)
I think it's a great idea, Sam.

SAM (looks at her, smiles)
Thank you, Emily.

Now they look at the two of them as Emily keeps knitting.
They clearly think they've both lost it.

CRAWFORD (carefully)
May I ask, Mr. President? Why in the
world do you want to visit India
now?

SAM
Because I hurt those people. I wanted
to help those people and I hurt them.
And I want to apologize.

DOC (upset)
Fine! Step out on the damn lawn and
apologize! The whole world's standing
out there anyway waiting for the next
part of the freak show!
(to Heff)
Call the goddamn Security Council!
I'm not gonna let him commit suicide!

MARK SIMPSON
Did you see the television footage,
Mr. President? They'll tear you to
pieces.

Emily picks the pieces of her knitting up, looks at them.

EMILY (calmly)
We're already in pieces.

They look at her like she's totally lost it.

HEFF (after a long beat)
The Indian government's not going to agree anyway. They've got a state of emergency over there, they can't be responsible for --

SAM (angry)
I'm the President of the United States, dammit. If I want to go to Calcutta, I'm gonna go to Calcutta.

EMILY
That's my Sam.

A long beat; no one says anything.

BILLY (to the others)
What's there to lose? The election's over. This way -- he goes out with a profile in courage.

CLARK (after a beat)
Maybe it is time for all of us to start thinking about posterity.

DOC (very upset)
Posterior? Posterior? That's all we've been thinking about for a whole month! Where the hell have you been?

SAM (smiles)
Good. It's decided then.

A long beat, then Emily gets up.

EMILY
Well, I guess I've got some packing to do.

And, as they stare, she heads out of the room.

INT. EBS NEWS - DAY

Lacy Morrow sits at the news desk.

AN ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
This is a special edition of the EBS Morning News with Lacy Morrow.

LACY

Good morning. America votes today as the Gallup-EBS Poll shows a 31 point lead for Senator Taylor. As political experts everywhere forecast the greatest landslide in American history, the President of the United States is on his way to Calcutta in defiance of the Indian government's wishes. Millions of Indians, meanwhile, have taken to the streets of Calcutta to protest the President's arrival.

LIVE VIDEO COVERAGE - CALCUTTA

Jammed streets. Crazy, HOWLING mobs. Chaos. American flags being burned. Sam being hanged in effigy. Windows SHATTERING. Buildings aflame.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Sam is watching this on TV on the plane. Emily sits next to him, knitting -- also there are Doc and Heff. We see lots of Secret Servicemen -- the same ones who knocked Sam down in front of the White House -- wearing their shades.

As they watch the Indian scenes of carnage --

DOC

I don't care what you do, Sam -- but I'm not getting off this goddamn plane, I'll tell you that.

SAM

How far are we?

HEFF

Seven and a half hours.

A SECRET SERVICE AGENT in charge comes in.

THE AGENT

Calcutta traffic is gridlock --

EMILY

It was gridlock when we were here the last time, too --

THE AGENT

President Singh has notified us he will provide no special security, but the KGB has sent 200 of their people in. They're setting up the advance right now.

Another Aide whispers to Heff.

HEFF

Do you want to hear some exit polls?

They don't even answer him.

DOC

Where the hell are we going once we get there?

SAM

To the Embassy.

DOC

The heathens burned it down, Sam -- weren't you listening?

EMILY

Burned or not, it's still our embassy, Doc.

He stares at her.

INT. EBS ELECTION CENTRAL - NIGHT

Tom Martin in front of the gigantic electronic set. There are lots of people there now; the place is very alive. Big TV monitors, maps all over the room.

MARTIN

Good evening. As the count begins for this year's Presidential election, one thing is already certain. This will be the lowest turnout in American history. Urban registrars across the country report record-breaking low turnouts. With me now is EBS White house correspondent Lacy Morrow. Lacy -- is there any way, in your estimation, that President Parr can pull off a political miracle tonight?

LACY

Well, if I've learned anything at all at the White House, Tom, it is never to underestimate President Parr's... strengths. I don't want to come... to any... premature... conclusions, but this election, it seems to me, is really... anti-climactic. It climaxed with a bang in New Hampshire.

MARTIN (urgently)

I have word now that Air Force One is about to land in Calcutta -- we will be switching live by satellite as soon as the President lands.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

It is night in America, day in Calcutta. As the plane comes in to land, they see a sea of people. Sam stares. Emily looks up from her knitting, looks out, then looks back at her knitting -- but puts her right hand around Sam's.

Doc just stares out the window.

DOC (to Heff; quietly)
I know I have but one life to give for
my country... but I want it.

LIVE TV COVERAGE

We see the plane doors opening. Martin describes the action as it happens.

MARTIN (V.O.)
That fleet of limousines you see there
awaiting the White House party was
provided by Indian holy man
Rabindranath Ma.

We see a photograph of a somewhat familiar-looking man in the top right-hand corner of the screen. He is very bearded and very long-haired.

MARTIN (V.O.)
Mr. Ma, as some of you may know, is
the former televangelist Jimmy
Swaggart, who moved to India six years
ago, renounced Jesus, and set up his
pantheistic ministry on the banks of
the Ganges.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Sam stands at the top of the stairs. A beat -- he doesn't smile, and then he waves. An overwhelming chorus of BOOS and chaotic NOISE greets him: the howl of the mob.

A beat, and he starts to head down. Heff comes to him quickly from inside the plane. He wears a headset with one of those tiny mouthpieces attached.

Sam stops, looks at Heff. He sees the concern on Heff's face.

SAM (with feeling)
It'll be alright, Heff.

There is affection between these two people. What does Heff say at a moment like this?

HEFF

All we've got is the big-city vote.
Democratic, solidly-labor -- it's
going two-to-one for Taylor.

Sam smiles, then heads down the stairs. Emily, Heff, Doc -- wearing a headset with a mouthpiece just like Heff's -- are behind him, as well as a bunch of Secret Service types.

They get to the bottom of the stairs. The HOWLING, banshee-like noise continues. They are greeted by men in suits.

SAM (to one of them)

I know you, don't I?

It is one of the KGB MEN who drove him back to the White House.

THE KGB MAN

You felt like getting out of the house again, right?

LIVE TV COVERAGE

The Presidential motorcade -- a very small one -- is moving at snail's pace through huge, angry crowds.

MARTIN (V.O.)

This is a unique moment in American history -- The President of the United States, on Election Night, braving hostile crowds, riding Jimmy Swaggart's limousine, en route to the ruins of a burned American Embassy, to apologize for a deviant sex act.

As we FOLLOW the limousine at snail's pace through the SCREAMING, angry crowds -- these words run across the bottom of the screen: EBS PROJECTS SENATOR TAYLOR HAS WON NEW YORK AND PENNSYLVANIA.

INT. THE PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE - DAY

Sam sits in the back with Emily, who is knitting -- facing Heff and Doc, who are wearing their headsets. Crazy, angry faces push against the windows.

HEFF (into his mouthpiece)

It's wrong, check it again.

(to Sam)

Athens County, Ohio. Solidly rural, solidly Republican. Last time out 1,400 people voted there out of 11,100 registered. This time out, we've got 10,200 people voting.

Sam looks at the SCREAMING, angry faces. As he does, these words run across the bottom of the screen: EBS PROJECTS SENATOR TAYLOR HAS WON ILLINOIS AND OHIO.

SAM

What are you knitting, Emily?

EMILY (smiles)

A sweater for Joey.

SAM

It looks nice.

EMILY (smiles)

Thank you.

HEFF (to Sam)

It doesn't make any sense. We've got the lowest turnout in Presidential history, according to the TV guys -- what the hell are all those people doing voting in Athens County, Ohio?

DOC

It's the goddamn computers screwing everything up!

HEFF (to mouthpiece)

What?

(to Sam)

It says we're getting 9,150 votes out of 10,200.

(a beat, then suddenly)

Oh boy oh boy oh boy oh boy!

They follow his look. A sacred cow is at the side of the car, its face pressed to the glass.

DOC (yelling)

Get that damn cow outa here, for Christ's sake!

Sam and the cow look at each other a long beat.

SAM (quietly, friendly)

Hello there, Elsie, how are you?

Emily looks up from her knitting, looks at him smiling at the cow, sort of harrumphs, and goes back to her knitting.

LIVE COVERAGE

We see the motorcade winding its way very slowly toward a building in the distance that has been burned into rubble.

MARTIN (V.O.)

That, I think is what is left of the American Embassy. This is a scene of absolute chaos, a moment of drama equal in my mind to Neil Armstrong's first step on the moon.

(a beat, then urgently)
EBS projects, on the basis of early urban returns, that Senator Taylor has won the states of Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia, and Florida.

(more urgent)
Senator Taylor, I have word, has just entered his campaign headquarters at the Palmer House in Chicago.

INT. THE PALMER HOUSE - CHICAGO

The campaign headquarters -- Taylor and his wife and kids step out on the stage, wave to the crowd. A band PLAYS the theme from Rocky. Excitement. Joy. Taylor smiles the smile of the winner.

TAYLOR (smiling)
Thank you. Thank you.

Crowd CHANTING: We want Taylor! We want Taylor!

INT. THE LIMOUSINE - CALCUTTA

It pulls up to the rubble of the Embassy, stops. The HOWLING crowd. Only a few walls are left and they are covered with anti-American graffiti in big letters. The crowd all around the car.

Sam looks out at this.

DOC (desperate)
Let's get the hell outa here, Sam!
Please. Please!

Sam looks at the angry crowd. A long beat. He looks scared.

EMILY (calm)
It's the largest crowd we've ever worked, Sam.

He looks at her, smiles. Doc and Heff still wear their headsets.

HEFF (suddenly)
Clinton County, Pennsylvania. Rural.
Republicans. 16,000 registered;
13,622 Parr.

He says it in machine-gun style, a faraway look in his eyes.

DOC (to Heff, yelling)
Will you shut up, for Christ's sake!

HEFF (in a babble)
Plier County, Vermont -- 4,000
registered -- 3,120 votes for Parr.

Doc reaches over in fury and pulls the plug out of Heff's headset.

SAM (to Emily, smiles)
Let's go knock 'em dead.

And he opens the door. And Doc closes his eyes shut as Heff desperately tries to fix his headset.

LIVE COVERAGE

OVERHEAD SHOT -- getting out of the limo, surrounded by Secret Service and KGB guys -- hemmed in by a HOWLING mob on all sides -- Sam has his arm around Emily as they make their way to the rubble of the Embassy.

MARTIN (V.O.)
On the basis of three percent of the
vote, EBS now projects: Senator James
Taylor of Illinois! Has been elected
President of the United States!

INT. A SUITE AT THE PALMER HOUSE - CHICAGO

WHOOPING, hugging -- Taylor and his family and closest advisors. Who is that man in the corner? Can that possibly be Richard Nixon? Victor Mackey grins, holding a telephone, smiling broadly as people hug him. And then the smile on his face suddenly fades.

LIVE TV COVERAGE - CALCUTTA

Sam gets to a large mound of rubble inside the Embassy area. He climbs it and stands there as the mob HOWLS at him.

SAM
My friends --

An egg hits him in the face, splatters down his face.

SAM
My friends --

They keep screaming, don't quiet down.

On the TV screen, these words flash in big letters:
SENATOR TAYLOR ELECTED.

Behind the flashing words, Sam tries to talk. Another egg hits him, then another. He just stands there, ignores it.

Doc stands behind Sam on the mound with Emily and Heff.
Suddenly Doc's eyes go huge in this chaos.

DOC
(quietly)
Holy shit.

A long beat, as Sam stands there, facing the howling crowd.

DOC (very loud)
Holy shit!

INT. EBS ELECTION CENTRAL - NIGHT

Tom Martin, off camera, with Lacy, two other correspondents, and Elliot Kohner. They're looking at computer figures. There are TV monitors all over the room showing Sam trying to speak.

MARTIN (looks at sheet)
I don't get it.

KOHNER
I don't either.

MARTIN
It must be the damn computers.

A CORRESPONDENT
We called the county registrar's
three times. I called myself.

Tom gets another computer printout.

MARTIN (reads)
Wyandotte County, Michigan. Rockrib
rural. Republican. 14,000 registered
-- 12,300 voted. It's impossible.
It's just -- not -- possible.

Kohner takes the printout.

KOHNER
12,300 voted -- 10,200 of them for
President Parr.

MARTIN (flatly)
Come on, it's wrong.

A man brings another sheet of printout. Martin looks at it.

MARTIN (in disbelief)
Jefferson County, Indiana. Rural.
Republican. 15,200 registered.
13,200 voted. 11,900 for Parr.
(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 (a long beat, then)
What the fuck is going on?

Lacy looks at the printout a long beat -- then, very quietly --

LACY

Oh my God.

INT. THE PALMER HOUSE SUITE - NIGHT

Everybody yelling "We want Taylor!" Victor Mackey, in all this noise, whispers something to Senator Taylor. Taylor's face goes blank. He suddenly looks like a ghost.

EXT. THE EMBASSY - CALCUTTA

One of the KGB men hands Sam a bullhorn. He stands there, atop the mound of rubble, in the HOWLING noise --

SAM

My friends --

They start to quiet -- but very little.

Doc is a few people away from Heff, both of them wearing their headsets, behind Sam.

SAM (loud, to Heff)

What the hell is going on?

HEFF (loud)

I don't know!

Sam glances back at them a beat, then --

SAM

My friends --

LIVE TELEVISION COVERAGE

Tom Martin is on. He looks shaken.

MARTIN

On the basis of record-setting rural and agricultural returns -- EBS is withdrawing -- withdrawing -- our earlier projection that Senator James Taylor has been elected President of the United States.

EXT. THE EMBASSY - CALCUTTA

As Sam tries to talk, Doc suddenly lets out a wild, crazed whoop, and then another.

Sam looks back at him -- the crowd seems awed by the whoops, too, and now really starts to quiet.

HEFF (screaming)

Sonofabitch!

Doc lets out another whoop as Sam looks at them and the crowd is quiet enough now for him to speak.

SAM (with bullhorn)

My friends --

Behind him, Doc and Heff try to restrain themselves.

SAM

I come before you today, as the President of the United States -- to ask your forgiveness.

Some angry yells and noise in this huge crowd but they are for the most part quiet.

DOC (suddenly, loud)

We won New York!

Sam looks back at Doc in disbelief.

DOC (grinning like a loon)

We won New York!

SAM

I come to ask you not to blame the greatest nation on the face of the earth for one foolish old man's mistake.

On screen, we see these words run across the bottom: EBS PROJECTS PRESIDENT PARR HAS WON NEW YORK.

SAM

I have no excuse for what I did. I am a human being, like all of you, with faults like everyone else.

DOC (suddenly, loud)

We won Pennsylvania!

SAM

Please don't allow my actions to separate our two great nations.

On the screen, we see these words running across the bottom: EBS PROJECTS PRESIDENT PARR HAS WON PENNSYLVANIA.

SAM

I am here to ask you to somehow find it in your hearts to forgive me.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

I am here to ask you to understand, as I have learned to understand, that we are -- all of us -- all of us everywhere in every nation -- we are all God's imperfect children. That's all we are. That's all we will ever be.

INT. THE PALMER HOUSE SUITE - NIGHT

Senator Taylor stands against a wall. He looks dead. Everyone in the room is frozen, staring at him. Victor Mackey is crying.

Senator Taylor turns, deadpan, and walks into the bathroom. He closes the door.

EXT. THE EMBASSY IN CALCUTTA - DAY

SAM

Thank you. And God bless you.

He stands there a long beat. There is not a sound in the huge crowd.

LIVE COVERAGE

Tom Martin, on screen. He is almost babbling.

MARTIN

We're beginning to get the Western vote. Record turnouts in Wyoming, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, New Mexico -- rural areas across America turning out like they've never turned out before, voting overwhelmingly for President Parr --

EXT. EMBASSY - CALCUTTA

The phalanx of KGB and Secret Service guys leading Sam, Emily, Heff, Doc and the others through the crowd. The crowd is still, these people are just staring at him.

As they work their way through the crowd to the limo --

HEFF (to Sam)

It's a fucking stampede! The farmers! Can you believe it? The goddamn farmers!

DOC

What the hell's wrong with 'em? They never vote for us!

INT. THE LIMOUSINE

They pile inside the limo. As soon as they do, the limo starts moving, slowly, through the crowd.

DOC

I don't get it!

HEFF

I don't, either!

Emily takes her knitting out again.

EMILY

I do.

HEFF

You do?

EMILY (smiles)

I certainly do.

SAM (smiles)

I do too.

EMILY (knitting)

Every farmer I ever knew had a soft spot for a cow.

Doc and Heff stare at her a long beat.

INT. THE PALMER HOUSE SUITE - THE BATHROOM

Senator Taylor sits on the lidded toilet, fully-dressed. His eyes are dead. He stares. A long beat, and then we hear the SOUND of a zipper being unzipped.

INT. EBS ELECTION CENTRAL - NIGHT

Tom Martin, on the air with Lacy. On the monitors around them, we see the Presidential motorcade moving slowly through the streets of Calcutta.

LACY

What I think we're seeing, Tom, is a response to rugged,, old-style American individualism. The Silent Majority has finally voted. President Parr has struck a chord and non-urban, non-ethnic America has responded. Liberalism is no longer a big-city phenomenon; it has captured the heart -- the secret heart -- of America itself.

She smiles. Martin stares at her a beat. His expression says: What did she say? -- and then forces a smile.

MARTIN
Thank you, Lacy.

INT. THE LIMOUSINE

as it moves through traffic very slowly.

DOC
We've got Virginia!

HEFF
Florida!

DOC
South Carolina!

HEFF
Texas!

The car comes to a sudden, dead stop. They are almost thrown out of their seats.

DOC (turning around)
What the hell's the matter?

Heff turns and stares.

HEFF (quietly)
Oh no.

And then we see it. A sacred cow stands right in the middle of the road, a couple hundred feet in front of the car. There are thousands of people on both sides of the car.

A long beat, as Sam looks at the cow through the window, and then he opens the door.

DOC (in panic)
Don't do it, Sam!

Sam gets out -- and Heff puts his head into his hands.

EXT. THE STREET

Sam gets out. There is pindrop silence in the street. He looks at the cow a long beat -- the cow looks at him -- and then he slowly goes up to it.

Emily has gotten out of the car behind him and stays about fifty feet behind him.

Sam and the cow look at each other a long beat. The cow suddenly MOOS -- the crowd drops to its knees. It MOOS again. The crowd presses their faces toward the ground.

A long beat, as Sam looks at the cow, then --

SAM (gently, quietly)
You go on now, Elsie. Go on now.
(a beat)
You go your way, honey, and I'll go
mine.

A long beat, the cow stands there, and Sam slowly smiles.

SAM
You know I love ya, honey. You know I
do. Go on now, go on.

The cow gives Sam a last, mournful look and wanders away.

On screen, suddenly, the flashing words: PRESIDENT PARR
RE-ELECTED!

He turns to Emily, standing there, as the crowd is getting
up off the ground and staring at Sam in awe. They start
to walk back toward the limo.

SAM
Emily, did I tell you I was sorry?

EMILY
Actions speak louder than words,
Sam.

He looks at her and as he opens the door to the limo for
her, he kisses her softly on the cheek.

SAM
Not in politics, honey.

And they get into the car.

INT. PARR CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - NEXT DAY

The band PLAYS a booming "Hail to the Chief" as Sam comes
out on the huge, platform-style stage. Bunting is every-
where. He is with Emily, Connie, Sam Jr., the grand-
children, Doc, Heff, some of the others.

He waves, grins, backslaps, moves down the big stage,
pointing to people, laughing as the band keeps playing
"Hail to the Chief."

And the FINAL CREDITS BEGIN.

We HOLD on this consummate political campaign scene -- the
victorious candidate, in full triumph, waving, smiling,
backslapping. He comes to the edge of the stage and
shakes hands with people: General Woods -- Jethro, the
gardener is there in a suit -- he goes up to Lacy, holds
her hand a moment, laughs (as Emily watches from the
stage).

Near the end of the CREDITS, a very wary Vice-President Graham comes onstage -- Sam gives him a look -- and they link their arms together, in the final image as the CREDITS run to their end... as the band PLAYS and the crowd CHEERS.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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