

THE 28TH AMENDMENT

by

Alex Kurtzman & Roberto Orci

previous revision by

Cyrus Nowrasteh

Jeff King

John Sayles

current revision by

Alex Kurtzman & Roberto Orci & Eli Attie

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FADE IN ON:

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A MAN'S FACE

*

-- ON THE MOVE -- dark suit, sunglasses -- sinister? As
the ROAR OF A MASSIVE CROWD SLAMS IN to reveal:

*

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE (WASHINGTON, D.C.) - DAY

SECRET SERVICE AGENTS running alongside the PRESIDENTIAL
MOTORCADE -- energy in the streets, newspaper headlines:

"OUTSIDER-IN-CHIEF?"; "CAHILL STORMS D.C."

*

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

INAUGURATION DAY, THE WHITE HOUSE PREPARES: PREVIOUS-
ADMINISTRATION STAFFERS pour documents into "burn bags"
as their "hard passes" are collected and they leave for
the last time --

-- HUNDREDS OF CONGRATULATORY PRESENTS fill the Vermeil
Room as a MECHANICAL AUTO-PEN signs thank-you cards with
the new President's signature: "BENJAMIN PATRICK
CAHILL" --

-- AT THE WHITE HOUSE SOUTH EXIT: moving trucks and
WHITE HOUSE USHERS wait. Like runners at the starting
line --

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

The motorcade STOPS, SECRET SERVICE AGENTS open the limo
doors; SPECIAL-AGENT-IN-CHARGE MARK TURNER says into a
wrist mic:

*

AGENT TURNER
Traveler's moving --

Out steps PRESIDENT-ELECT BEN CAHILL: handsome,
energetic, empathetic. But there's a weight in his eyes
that comes from the blood he's seen and spilled, and the
extraordinary mantle he's about to inherit. Beside him
is --

*

SAMANTHA CAHILL: self-reliant, kind, brave -- and after
15 years of marriage, they're still very much in love.
Their daughter: 9-year-old MARISA CAHILL, awed,
overwhelmed -- as the Secret Service walks them toward
the podium, Turner in the lead:

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
How are ya, Mark?

AGENT TURNER
Excellent, sir. I really
appreciate you requesting me.

BEN
Lost so much to you at the poker
table in the campaign, now's my
chance to get even.

*

EXT. INAUGURAL PLATFORM (CAPITOL HILL) - DAY

Ben's hand is on a Bible, in front of the Capitol:

BEN
... and will to the best of my
ability preserve, protect, and
defend the Constitution of the
United States, so help me God.

CHIEF JUSTICE
Congratulations, Mr. President.

A ROAR of applause and Ben turns to Sam, who hugs him,
proud tears in her eyes. Behind Ben's back, he puts out
his hand to his daughter -- the glowing girl gives her
dad a HIGH-FIVE and --

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - SOUTH LAWN - DAY

The HEAD USHER, by the moving vans, hears something over
an earpiece -- suddenly ACTIVATES:

HEAD USHER
Traveler's official!

All the Ushers jump to work, removing furniture from the
vans:

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - VARIOUS SHOTS

The ushers replace stuffy antiques with homier, modest
middle-class items. The Cahills' White House will also
be their daughter's home...

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - SOUTH LAWN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

FLASHBULBS as the first family walks through the White House gates with their Secret Service brigade, up the lawn --

MARISA

Is this our front yard?

INT. WHITE HOUSE - MARISA'S ROOM - DAY

DOORS OPEN TO MARISA'S NEW BEDROOM as she enters with her parents. More toys than any sane parent could dream of, GIFTS from insiders and dignitaries.

BEN

So much for the Congressional gift ban.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, well I just passed one: she can keep three things.

Marisa runs into the room, touching everything, reads a card:

MARISA

No way! This one's from The Jonas Brothers!

*
*

Ben glances at Sam: you really gonna rain on her parade?

SAMANTHA

(a sigh)
... or four.

*

INT. WHITE HOUSE SALON - DAY

An army of HAIRDRESSERS and MAKE-UP ARTISTS primp and prime Sam and Marisa -- a STYLIST indicates dresses.

LEAD STYLIST

And for next week's Congressional gala, Marc Jacobs will design you an original.

SAMANTHA

You don't have to go to all this trouble, really, I can just wear that dress again. It's beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEAD STYLIST

No, ma'am, I wasn't clear... this
is Marc Jacobs.

She gestures to MARC JACOBS, behind Sam, holding design
sketches:

*
*

MARC JACOBS

Madame First Lady.

SAMANTHA

(I'm on Mars)
... Hi.

INT. WEST WING CORRIDOR - DAY

Ben moves down the hall with JOHN VINCENT, his Chief of
Staff, wingman, protector; JOANNA, an executive
assistant, and three 20-something POLICY AIDES -- past
men carrying a HUGE CARDBOARD BOX with STEAM pouring out,
loads of FOOD GIFT BASKETS everywhere --

*
*

VINCENT

How about sending the President
four names, and he'll pick
one -- ?

*
*
*
*

POLICY AIDES

Yes, sir -- / Yes, Mr.
President --

BEN

(the food)
-- What's all this?

*

VINCENT

Cheesesteaks from the Philly City
Council, you loved 'em on our
final Pennsylvania swing --
kielbasas from Chicago, caramel
corn from -- well, I guess there
are a dozen batches, name your
most fattening state fairs --

BEN

I just ate this stuff to be
respectful --

*

VINCENT

Well now it's your favorite
food --

*

POLICY AIDE #2

We're still meeting with the
O.M.B. PAD's on the --

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
Crunch the numbers --

JOANNA
(cups a phone)
-- Mr. President, the Queen
of England just placed a
call to you --

Ben flicks a look to Vincent -- wow:

BEN
The Queen? Really? Sure it's not
my mother? Ask State to arrange a
return call with the proper
diplomatic protocol for --
(this is all gonna
take getting used
to)
-- The Queen.

As people RUN OFF --

VINCENT
Her Majesty. Mr. President.

BEN
(quiet, intimate)
Look, not you, okay? Ben. Don't
start treating me like I'm carved
out of alabaster --

VINCENT
Which you will be --

BEN
Then bow to the statue.

And what he's saying is: I need a friend. Vincent nods
-- a WARM MOMENT between them as they arrive at the door
to the OVAL.

And Ben just STOPS. At what he's about to do.

BEN
I'd... like a minute.

Vincent eyes the Aides behind them: that means scram.
Even from Ben's line of sight. And they do.

BEN
(to Vincent, quietly)
Only Sam --

Vincent nods and RETREATS too, as Ben takes his first
step in --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

CCTV cameras cover every inch of the White House.
CREDITS END on this suggestive image: CAMERA LOOKING
DOWN ON THE PRESIDENT as he enters the Oval in a TUX.
Alone.

INT. WEST WING - THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

SILENT. We're CLOSE ON BEN, humbled, walking along the
curved contour of the wall... until he's facing a bust of
Teddy Roosevelt. Another of FDR. Bizarrely,
preposterously, now his peers. He's overawed by this
sudden inheritance -- proud and relieved he's finally
been admitted to the club, after the arduous climb to get
here, but not sure he's earned the perch...

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
... oh, yeah. This'll do.

He turns: Sam, at the door, nearly as gut-struck as her
husband. In her stunning designer gown, more radiant
than ever. He clears his throat, trying to sound...
"Presidential":

BEN
Federal government for ya; I ask
for a desk and four walls, they
couldn't even get that right.

She smiles. He scans the room. Reverie plus
responsibility:

BEN
Social Security signed into law...
there. Decision to join the
allied forces, World War Two...
there. Creation of the War on
Poverty... there.

She sees, in light of these historical accomplishments,
how small he's actually feeling. Tries for LEVITY:

SAMANTHA
Monica Lewinsky... there. So do
us both a favor and stay over
here.

He smirks, he's too lost in the moment. Touches her face
-- gently, but seriously:

BEN
Promise me... all this... it'll
bring us closer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She just SMILES, how can he even ask that question? The
pride she feels; the accomplishments they'll earn,
together --

SAMANTHA

Of course, baby...

BEN

Whole world thinks I'm in over my
head.

(vulnerable beat)

Maybe I am.

SAMANTHA

You earned this. Future
Presidents'll be talking about
what you did from that desk.

With that, she BUOYS him. God, he loves her. Looks over
at the ancient, regal RESOLUTE DESK.

SAMANTHA

So kick your feet up, Tex.

He moves to the chair, about to sit, but somehow...
can't. Doesn't feel he's earned the right yet. Shrugs
it off with a grin, pulls her close with romantic
flourish:

BEN

Not officially open 'til tomorrow.

And cups his hand around hers, Fred Astaire to her Ginger
Rogers... as they start to SWAY...

SAMANTHA

What're you doing...?

BEN

Two-step. But if you had to
ask...

SAMANTHA

Thank God no one's watching, you'd
be impeached.

BEN

Ouch.

He DIPS her and she LAUGHS as -- FLASHBULBS EFFECT A --

CUT TO:

INT. NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben and Sam enter the inaugural ball, separate to work the crowd... Agent Turner tailing Ben:

AGENT TURNER
(into collar mic)
Pool spray for POTUS remarks, they
say seven to ten minutes and out --

SECRET SERVICE AGENT MELISSA BLAKE tails Sam, a JUNIOR AGENT on her detail -- stoic, deadpan, but sincere:

AGENT BLAKE
Copy: Blackbird's in motion --

SAMANTHA
Call me Sam. You won't lose my
respect.

AGENT BLAKE
No, Madame First Lady. Just my
job.

Ben laughs and jokes with a group of MILITARY OFFICERS. FAVOR ONE on the periphery: LT. COL. WILLIAM SADOWSKI. Marines. Ben sees him and brightens -- crisp salutes, then a hug:

BEN
Will... means the world to me you
came.

LT. COL. SADOWSKI
Thank you for inviting our
Annapolis class, Mr. President.
Means the world to us, having one
of our own in the building.

*
*

BEN
Wish I had fifty more...

As the warm moment between them HOLDS -- FLASHBULBS TRANSITION us TO VICE PRESIDENT JOSHUA DENNET, his wife ELIZABETH, and a LOBBYIST TYPE. Watching with some irritation as a cadre of CHINESE DIPLOMATS enter:

VICE PRESIDENT DENNET
The hell're they doing here?

LOBBYIST TYPE
Cahill's idea of reaching out, Mr.
Vice President.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICE PRESIDENT DENNET

Christ, they already own half the country, making it look like they own us too -- sends a helluva message. He clear this through channels?

*
*
*
*
*

ELIZABETH DENNET

The message is, he doesn't have to.

*
*

FLASHBULBS -- as Ben moves through the crowd with Vincent --

*
*

VINCENT

-- all I'm saying is 'Campaign in poetry, govern in prose' --

*

BEN

Christ, Vince, we gave 'em the VP, that was like giving 'em the umpire --

*
*

VINCENT

'VP' isn't worth what it used to be, call it inflation, Beltway needs a few more 'gimmies' --

*
*
*
*

BEN

Tell 'em 'Postmaster General's' up for grabs --

*
*
*

Vince nods as they approach the Chinese Diplomats:

*

VINCENT

Ambassador'll want to talk
trade surplus --

BEN

-- how 'bout I just say
hello?

Ben bows to Chinese Ambassador MADAME SOONG LI, elegant, icy.

BEN

Madame Ambassador Soong Li. Your dress is very beautiful.

MADAME SOONG LI

As is your wife's.

(veiled, but pointed)

Chinese textiles are difficult to match.

*
*
*

Ah, this is round one. Ben smiles, the consummate diplomat:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

I'm afraid my country's given up
trying.

*
*

MADAME SOONG LI

We each have our strengths.

*

BEN

I'd like to sit down with your
president. One on one. To praise
his strengths.

*
*
*

A beat. It seemed as if Ben played that perfectly, but:

*

MADAME SOONG LI

My President may need to see yours
first. Some question whether you
are capable of effecting change.

*
*
*
*

BEN

Respectfully, I would disagree --
means we have plenty to talk
about.

*
*
*
*

They TRADE BOWS; as she leaves, a gruff VOICE behind Ben:

MAN (O.S.)

Learn anything of international
import?

Ben turns: SENATE MAJORITY LEADER JAMES HAWTHORNE. A
grand eminence with an ego and attitude to match. They
SHAKE:

*

BEN

She chose to remain inscrutable.
Mr. Majority Leader, thank you for
coming.

HAWTHORNE

Wouldn't have missed it for the
world, 'specially now that you're
the center of it.

BEN

I value your support, as always.

HAWTHORNE

And I'm sorry we have to stop
working shoulder-to-shoulder on
the Hill --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)
 (leans in, fatherly)
 -- though we both know you make
 some folks with longer-term leases
 in this town a little jittery;
 doing all I can to assure them
 'Cahill' doesn't mean
 'uncompromising.'

BEN
 Hope they understand it doesn't
 mean 'compromising' either... but
 I appreciate the advice.

HAWTHORNE
 Not half as much as I appreciate
 the audience. And with the
 greatest respect, Mr. President...
 as a friend, a strong supporter,
 someone who marveled at your
 heroism in The Gulf... you ran
 against the government, now you
are the government.

*
 *

Ben goes a little cold. Something veiled in Hawthorne's
 words; Ben might be grasping it, even if we don't fully.
 Respectfully:

*
 *
 *

BEN
 If you'll excuse me; my last night
 as a civilian... I'd like to spend
 it dancing with my wife.

*
 *

HAWTHORNE
 Go, gonna be a busy four years.
 Maybe even eight.

Ben excuses himself. Hawthorne watches him go:
 something dark. We RISE UP OVER the room, the world
 gazing as the President and First Lady dance over the
 massive PRESIDENTIAL SEAL...

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAWN

Sunrise over the Capitol... our THEME promises new
 beginnings:

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Ben and Sam in bed, Marisa sleeping between them on her
 first night in this strange new home. A KNOCK: two
 USHERS and a NATIONAL SECURITY BRIEFER enter with armfuls
 of newspapers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATIONAL SECURITY BRIEFER
 Good morning, Mr. Presid--

BEN
 ("shh"; whispers)
 -- let's do this
 downstairs.

EXT. POTOMAC RIVER - EARLY MORNING

BEN RUNS alongside the Potomac, Vincent chugging to keep up. Five SECRET SERVICE AGENTS follow close behind. Ben mischievously speeds up, giving Vincent the workout of his life --

VINCENT
Will you slow the hell down?

INT. BEN'S LIMO - MOVING - DAY

POLICE on motorcycles WHIZZ BY the window. Ben's with Marisa in back; she's clutching a purple knapsack as he grins, trying hard to make her comfortable with what's about to happen:

BEN
 You nervous?

MARISA
 (yes)
 A little.

BEN
 'Cause you shouldn't be.

MARISA
 Un-huh.

BEN
 New school, new friends --

MARISA
 Yeah --

BEN
 (brightly)
 It'll be fun. And Mom and I
 talked; I'll drop you off Mondays
 and Fridays, okay?

But Marisa isn't really paying attention as the limo STOPS; she takes a deep BREATH as the door is OPENED by Agent Turner:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT TURNER
(into wrist)
Traveler and Knapsack are moving --

EXT. BUCOLIC MIDDLE-SCHOOL CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS ACTION

REVEAL the insane pageantry surrounding them: full Presidential motorcade, SECRET SERVICE AGENTS speaking into wrist mics, ADVANCE MEN standing at the door of the school about ten yards away... and a big crowd of STUDENTS and TEACHERS, parted like the Red Sea behind TWO METAL BARRICADES... all so Ben can walk Marisa safely to the front door. She keeps her eyes low, EMBARRASSED, MORTIFIED as they pass fellow STUDENTS, roped-off and caged-in. Ben KNOWS what she's going through -- his arm around her, still trying like hell to keep it light:

BEN
Y'know what class you have first?

MARISA
(a whisper)
Earth Science...

BEN
Yeah? Maybe I can have someone
from NASA come visit --

She can't answer. He realizes he's not actually helping here. At the door, he kneels down to straighten her jacket:

BEN
Don't share anyone else's lunch,
honey, you know what the agents
say about sharing other people's --

MARISA
(interrupting)
-- Dad?
(a beat)
Maybe you shouldn't take me to
school anymore.

He sucks it up. Keeps the smile. Nods understanding, as he KISSES her --

BEN
Have a good day.

She waves bye and disappears FAST. He watches her go, knowing the normalcy they used to share is GONE.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAWN

Readouts identify the location of The President 24-7:
 "0:800:POTUS: W.H.O. Residence." Cameras track Ben
 as --

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 *

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CABINET ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- he enters with Vincent and Turner: GENERAL LLOYD
 BABBIT rises. Beside him, a Marine Officer, MAJOR
 GILMORE, has a STEEL BRIEFCASE cuffed to his wrist:

*
 *

GENERAL BABBIT

Mr. President: General Lloyd
 Babbit, Vice Chairman J.C.S.

BEN

Senator Hawthorne says he wouldn't
 lay down foreign policy without
 you, General.

GENERAL BABBIT

Thank you, sir.

BEN

Won't hold it against you.

Cahill GRINS, a joke. But a point's made. Babbit makes
 his:

GENERAL BABBIT

Good deal's changed since you were
 operational in the Gulf, sir. I
 look forward to seeing it anew
 through your eyes.

BEN

Well, that makes two of us.
 (as SAM enters with
 BLAKE)
 My wife, Sam --

GENERAL BABBIT

Madame First Lady, welcome to the
 White House.

INT. EAST WING - HALLWAY/ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Babbit leads them into an ELEVATOR. As they RIDE DOWN:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENERAL BABBIT

During World War Two, Roosevelt had the East Wing built to hide construction of an underground bunker, should the White House be attacked by air.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - DAY

Ben and Sam are lead down a long, WW2-era tunnel; brisk pace:

AGENT TURNER

If, during a crisis, any part of the command structure's taken out, all armed services recognize the Secret Service's authority to take supreme command --

INT. BUNKER - CENTRAL ENTRANCE - DAY

A MASSIVE STEEL DOOR swings open. Fluorescents pop on:

GENERAL BABBIT

-- they countermand me, the Army,
Air Force, Marines --

*

As they move toward a LAB AREA --

INT. GRAPHICS IMAGING LAB - MINUTES LATER

Ben is seated as RED LASER LIGHT tracks across his face:

TECHNICIAN

Scanner's mapping 140,000 points on your face -- from that we'll build a latex mold that'll make near-perfect contact with your shadow's features.

Technician gestures: "behind you." Ben turns, face-to-face with A NEAR DEAD RINGER OF HIMSELF. CHUCKLES in stunned surprise.

DEAD RINGER AGENT

(the double)
Stand-in for high-risk situations,
sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
(grins, still
reeling)
Really could've used you in the
campaign.

INT. BUNKER - WAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

A console of satellite displays blinks to life:

GENERAL BABBIT
The Tac-Sat command console. Your
link to every branch of
government, every alphabet agency.

Major Gilmore unlocks the briefcase from his wrist, it's
a MILITARIZED LAPTOP: *

GENERAL BABBIT
The famous 'Football.' A remote
trigger for our nuclear arsenal.
This is Major Gilmore, one of
five; his job's to keep it within
ready access 24-7. *

MAJOR GILMORE
Mr. President -- *

Gilmore unlocks it from his wrist, Babbit produces a
vial. Inside is a MICROCHIP. *

GENERAL BABBIT
This chip's encrypted with a
SATCOM communications device -- *

Babbit waves the vial/chip over a SENSOR on the metal
briefcase and it UNLOCKS, activating the LAPTOP within.
The screen reads: "SELECT TARGET PACKAGE..."

GENERAL BABBIT
-- pass it over the sensor, it'll
unlock the case and relay with the
National Military Command Center,
triggering the 'Emergency Action
Plan.'

SAMANTHA
Sounds cheery --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENERAL BABBIT

It's a crisis evacuation protocol to insure operational integrity of the government: all key personnel are taken to secure relocation sites and aircraft.

(indicates Tac-Sat)

Everyone's position is tracked on the monitors from here.

BEN

Everyone in the line of succession --

GENERAL BABBIT

Yessir, leadership from the three branches, Joint Chiefs, State, your cabinet, right down the line.

Ben -- his eyes -- drifting around, taking inventory --

BEN

Then I assume you've got a safer place for the chip than in that little vial.

GENERAL BABBIT

... 'Fraid we do.

INT. BUNKER - INFIRMARY AREA - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben's shirtsleeve is pulled up. The microchip's loaded into a SUBDERMAL INJECTION GUN:

LEAD MED TECH

Because the chip's tied to your thermal body signature, nobody but you can change your command codes once you authenticate. We'll inject it into your lower metacarpal, you won't even know it's there... try to relax.

He presses the injector barrel to Ben's left hand...
PULLS the trigger. A small POP as the injector FIRES and
we --

CUT TO BLACK.

*

PATRIOTIC MUSIC brings us back to...

*

FADE IN:

AN MSNBC BIOGRAPHY SHOW

ON BEN'S PATH TO PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. A picture of a young, robust CADET CAHILL addressing his graduating class; in the Persian Gulf; in military training exercises:

MSNBC REPORTER (V.O.)

(on TV)

-- when his battalion was sent to project supply lines in the first Gulf War, they came under heavy fire. Ben Cahill not only held his position, he braved a hail of bullets to save a critically-wounded soldier -- Captain James Carney -- who had received nearly-fatal gunshot wounds to the legs and hip.

A photo of Ben at 23 in combat fatigues, HOLDING UP the even younger JAMES CARNEY, dragging him along a decimated field. The image becomes the cover of TIME and NEWSWEEK:

MSNBC REPORTER (V.O.)

(on TV)

Producing this indelible image, the cover of dozens of national magazines and newspapers... and a lifelong debt:

JAMES CARNEY, now 40, in a WHEELCHAIR -- EMOTIONAL:

JAMES CARNEY (V.O.)

I owe my life to Ben Cahill.
Telling my story's the least I can do for him...

Now we PULL BACK to reveal we've been watching the report in:

INT. BAR (NEAR FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA) - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Local bar near Fort Bragg, blue-collar. The MSNBC show on TV, now footage of the present-day Ben on the campaign trail:

BEN (V.O.)

(on TV)

War can never be anything but a measure of last resort.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If our commanders had given us a clearer sense of what we were in for, maybe I wouldn't feel the need to be here...

(a grin)

Though I still might've tried.

*

LT. COLONEL MADIGAN GRAY, watching. 38, soldier-fit, but we feel a seclusion about him, psychic damage -- like the pin's already halfway out of the grenade. Playing pool behind him, his unit: STAFF SERGEANT JAVIER GONZALES, SERGEANT FIRST CLASS TIM HICKS, and MASTER SERGEANT SAM HETTRICK. The men are tight-knit and fun, brothers-in-arms against a world of heinous shit. Hettrick shoots the cue ball, banking the 11 off a hole:

*

HICKS

-- could you be a worse shot?

HETTRICK

Maybe I'll play better if I shove this pool cue up your ass --

HICKS

Why don't you go find another wife. I personally think #5's gonna be the one --

-- now Gray's look diverts from the TV to a WOMAN working the bar. ANNA: a local, her family owns and works the place. Meets his eyes as he approaches. Chemistry. Familiar. Already setting up a whiskey shot for him, gestures to Ben on TV:

ANNA

(South Carolina drawl)

What d'ya think of him?

Gray's EXPRESSION: real doubt about his new Commander-In-Chief.

*

*

*

ANNA

He had my vote.

GRAY

Now he has my ass.

At that moment, Gonzales reaches the bar -- gestures to Gray:

*

GONZALES

Thought you had orders to cut this guy off at one, Anna.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anna grins, gives Gonzales two beers: he moves off:
Gray and Anna share a look. A secret held between them
his men don't know about. He nods toward her FATHER
cooking in the kitchen:

GRAY

How's the fam?

ANNA

Wondering why I haven't found a
nice man and settled down yet.

GRAY

What'd you tell 'em?

She leans a little closer on the bar, playful, SEDUCTIVE:

ANNA

Like to punish myself, I guess.

And off his GRIN --

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT (NORTH CAROLINA) - NIGHT

Gray and Anna lie in bed, naked, post-coital. The mood's
WARM, familiar -- and the way their eyes connect, we
understand their secret: it's love. This woman is
Gray's anchor to emotionality he keeps locked down.
Which is why he's not thrilled to say...

GRAY

I'm going away again.

That drops her, hard. She sits up, alarmed. Considers
how to react, considers restraint, but her heart's
racing... finally:

ANNA

Can you tell me where?

GRAY

You know I can't.

Beat. Angry, hurt, she gets out of bed. Slips on a
tight T-shirt. Lights a CIGARETTE and sits there.

GRAY

Anna --

ANNA

I can't live with not knowing
anymore. Spend every waking
minute wondering where you are...
if you're alive...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA (CONT'D)
 (turns to him)
 ... at least give me that.

He looks down. Weighs violating law. For her, yes:

GRAY
 Temp Duty, HQ in Asia. All I can
 say.

ANNA
 Gonzales too?

GRAY
 Hicks. Hettrick.

She breathes a little easier... but only a little.

ANNA
 We have it pretty good now, right?
 You're sleeping again, hands don't
 shake anymore... took you a lot of
 work to get to that...

A flicker in Gray's eyes: trauma contained.

GRAY
 I need this, Anna. I just need my
 last one... to be a win. Can't
 explain it better than that.
 (beat)
 One more. Then maybe I can walk
 away.

And it's quiet. Her eyes moist. But she's a strong
 woman.

ANNA
 Dad says it's hard to have
 everything, y'know? Rare to get
 it, hard to keep it.

And for a man who's suffered as Gray has, this woman's as
 close to heaven as he'll ever find...

GRAY
 Two weeks. In and out.

She puts her head on his chest. Scared. GRAY'S EYES:
 haunted.

INT. WEST WING - OUTER OFFICE/OVAL OFFICE - DAY

*

JIM HAWTHORNE waits in the outer office. Ben enters, they shake and proceed into the Oval -- both at their diplomatic best:

BEN

Mr. Majority Leader, thanks for coming --

HAWTHORNE

My pleasure.

*

Grinning, Hawthorne gestures conversationally at a WAGON WHEEL PATTERN in the wood floor:

*

HAWTHORNE

Know the history of these wagon wheels?

*

Yes, of course he does. Yet diplomacy prevails:

BEN

No, sir. But I'd like to.

HAWTHORNE

Reagan had them put in by one of his ranch hands, Clinton took 'em out, Bush the younger put 'em back. There's that temptation, when you're so... new to all this -- change the world overnight.

(smiling)

Take a breath. Stop and smell the Rose Garden. The grizzled old hands -- like me -- we're here to help you out.

BEN

That's why I asked you here, I need the help. We have the chance to do great things together.

*

HAWTHORNE

Well, I'm flattered in advance.

BEN

In the House, I never got near the classified budget. Black ops, counter intelligence --

*

HAWTHORNE

Few one-termers do. Even up-and-comers like you were.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben drops a BUDGET REPORT on the table. Polite, but firm:

BEN

Still am. I was in there on September 10th, 2001, when Rumsfeld reported to Congress, I quote: 'The Pentagon cannot track two-point-three trillion dollars in transactions.' Now, I know we got a little sidetracked since then, but as the overseer of every Senate Committee, you're most qualified to finish what he started.

(a genuine offer)

I'd like you to help me audit the DoD. Find out where that money went.

*

HAWTHORNE. For the first time, sees Ben as a potential threat.

HAWTHORNE

No need to audit -- let this be the first of many peeks behind the black curtain. The money went to more than good use, it went to a critical one: Strategic Defense Initiative. SDI.

BEN

Missile Defense?

(as Hawthorne nods)

That's not in any of the public --

HAWTHORNE

-- it wouldn't be.

BEN

Who authorized it?

HAWTHORNE

Executive Order 12-778, issued and upheld by three of your predecessors, grants us the right to shield a percentage of our budget from political meddling --

*

BEN

... 'meddling'?

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE

The previous executives felt, as I
do, that a domestic shield
protecting us from nuclear
missiles is worth the price tag,
and the secrecy... especially with
China buying 'em in bulk these
days.

*
*

BEN

(beat; still smiling)
Fair enough... Tell you what:
show me where every dollar went,
you and I will make sure it all
adds up, we'll give the Defense
Department a clean bill of health.

*
*
*
*
*

Whoa. Hawthorne did NOT expect this. But keeps the
smile:

*
*

HAWTHORNE

Sir... I tell you this to spare
you more trouble than a new
President can handle. Some things
aren't meant to be 'cleaned.'

BEN

Senator... you wanna disagree with
me on missile defense, you're free
to do so on the Senate floor.

*
*
*

(friendly)

I'm grateful for the heads-up, but
I need a full accounting on my
desk. Three weeks.

*
*
*
*

(then)

Sorry to have kept you waiting.

*

Meaning, the meeting's over. And Hawthorne DOESN'T LIKE
being dismissed. Finally he goes, as Turner leads him
out. For an instant, Turner and Hawthorne MEET EYES.

*
*

Something passes between them. It's unsettling.

EXT. FORT BRAGG (NORTH CAROLINA) - FRONT ENTRANCE - DUSK

*

A SIGN: "FORT BRAGG -- Home of THE AIRBORNE and SPECIAL
OPERATIONS FORCES." Gray pulls up to the gate in a Dodge
Ram, offers ID to a soldier. He's let through --

*
*
*

INT. FORT BRAGG - BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Gray sits alone at a table surrounded by news channels.
All images of BEN. In walks BABBIT. Gray snaps to his
feet:

GENERAL BABBIT
Colonel, pleasure to meet you.

GRAY
Thank you, sir.

GENERAL BABBIT
I know you've been on hold status
last six months, full mental
review and evaluation... that was
unfortunate business in Abu Sayef.

A flicker in Gray's eyes: trauma contained.

GRAY
Yessir.

GENERAL BABBIT
You've reviewed the operation
specs?
(as Gray nods)
I need a hundred percent. If you
can't give me that, say it now.

GRAY
I need more Intel.

GENERAL BABBIT
You have enough to complete the
mission.

GRAY
No, sir, I don't. I need to know
who the target is and why.
Everything hinges on that. I
won't go into a room blind again.

Babbit looks at him. HARD. And as he NODS we --

HARD CUT TO:

INT. ANONYMOUS HOTEL ROOM (MACAU, CHINA) - DAY

AN OPEN LAPTOP shows a FILE PHOTO -- a CHINESE MAN. Gray
"backbriefs" his team, as they prep weapons. Out the
window behind them: skyscrapers and casinos.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAY
 (gestures; the
 computer)
 Feng Wu: Chinese Triad with money
 ties to Iran. Number 3 target on
 our terror watch-list. Our
 objective's to reduce his ops
 against US and Coalition forces in
 the Eastern hemisphere --

*
 *
 *
 *
 *

And we INTERCUT the backbrief WITH the mission in-progress:

EXT. MACAU, CHINA - DAY

A trio of CARS speeds along. The middle one's a BLACK MERCEDES:

GRAY (V.O.)
 Target convoy formation, three
 vehicles; target'll be in number
 two car. Two bodyguards in the
 'one' and 'three' vehicles; four
 in the primary --

*
 *

INT. ANONYMOUS HOTEL ROOM - DAY

GRAY
 Convoy'll be driving through the
 Yakiazi tunnel, 18:06 hours. When
 they exit, we'll have a 15 second
 window to engage.

Gray RACKS the slide on a gun, satisfied:

GRAY
 Tonight we sleep with a clear
 conscience and 800 pages of
 Constitutional Law on our side.

INT. HIGH-RISE OFFICE BUILDING (MACAU) - ELEVATOR - DAY

Upward travelling glass elevator: GONZALES and HETTRICK in coveralls with logo: "ChinAm Importing." Look like workmen carrying WORK CASES. DING: at the 42nd floor, they get out --

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Empty CONSTRUCTION AREA. No walls, windy, vertigo.
Gonzales opens his case revealing A 4-FT. JAVELIN MISSILE
LAUNCHER.

GONZALES
(into headset)
One to Ghost: Amber.

EXT. MACAU ROAD - DAY

HICKS guns INTO FRAME in a BEAT-UP CAR, tailing the 3-CAR
CARAVAN -- expertly keeps his distance:

HICKS
Two to Ghost: on the move.
Passing 'Yo-Yo'... passing
'Cricket.' ETA: one Mike.

EXT. MACAU SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - DAY

On a rooftop, GRAY oversees from a makeshift command
post.

POV THROUGH HIS BINOCS - THE YAKIAZI TUNNEL

GRAY (O.S.)
Ghost to One: status?

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Gonzales flips open a TARGETING DEVICE on the Javelin
launcher:

GONZALES
Nest is 'hot.'

INT. YAKIAZI TUNNEL - DAY

The 3 CARS ACCELERATE into the tunnel, Hicks following:

HICKS
Target entering tunnel, stand by.

IN THE TUNNEL -- TRAFFIC HEAVIER -- our Mercedes PICKS UP
SPEED as two trucks CROSS FRAME, Hicks LOSES SIGHT of
them --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And when the trucks clear, TWO SUBURBANS have joined the caravan. Flanking the cars from the front and rear, oddly precise -- Hicks gets CLOSER, and what he sees throws him: THE SUBURBANS HAVE CHINESE SECURITY PLATES. OFFICIAL GOVT.

HICKS

Whoa, two new Suburbans,
government plates, just came out
of nowhere executing an overwatch
maneuver --

EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - "THE NEST" - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Gray reacts -- quick pause -- that's odd --

GRAY

(into headset)
Roger, Two: stay with target.
One: stand by --

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

GONZALES

(into headset)
Copy, standing by --

Gonzales and Hettrick share a look -- confused, alert --

HETTRICK

'Overwatch' maneuver and
government plates -- ?

GONZALES

Chinese Secret Service?

HETTRICK

Protecting Triad? No way --

INT. BLACK MERCEDES - MOVING - CONTINUOUS ACTION

And for the first time, we SEE the passenger in the Mercedes. CHINESE. Business suit. Talking on a cell. This is NOT the same face we saw on Gray's laptop.

EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - "THE NEST" - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Gray knows something's wrong, snaps open his IRIDIUM SAT-PHONE -- instant link to the Pentagon:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAY

Condor, this is Ghost: target
convoy's executing an overwatch
maneuver, we have Chinese
government plates... recommend
abort mission, over.

The VOICE that responds is encrypted, EERILY DIGITIZED:

VOICE (V.O.)

Negative. Continue to execute
mission.

GRAY

Condor: believe intel
compromised. I say again:
recommend abort mission, over.

Strange PAUSE. Seconds tick away. Finally:

VOICE (V.O.)

Intel's verified. Mission holds.
Proceed with primary objective.

GRAY

Requesting positive ID of target.

VOICE (V.O.)

Ghost, you have been ordered to
proceed with the mission. Out.

INT. YAKIAZI TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The caravan SPEEDS toward the end of the tunnel, Hicks
follows:

HICKS

Target exiting tunnel, black
Mercedes, second car in, stand
by --

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - POV THROUGH LAUNCHER SCOPE -
CONTINUOUS ACTION

The caravan EMERGES from the tunnel. Gonzales'
CROSSHAIRS lock on the black Mercedes.

GONZALES (O.S.)

Locked on primary, ready to fire.
Losing my window in 15 seconds --
13 seconds --

EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - "THE NEST" - CONTINUOUS ACTION

VOICE (V.O.)
Engage target. That's a direct
 order.

IN CLOSEUP - GRAY

makes a command decision:

GRAY
 One and Two: abort mission.

-- but mysteriously, his COMMS go to STATIC. It's being
 jammed.

GRAY
 Radio check: One, Two, this is
 Ghost, do you copy?! ABORT ABORT!

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The CARAVAN nears the corner -- Gonz is sweating it:

*

GONZALES
 Ghost, this is One, say again,
 over!

EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - "THE NEST" - CONTINUOUS ACTION

GRAY
 ABORT MISSION, COPY, OVER!

-- but all he gets is that same JAMMING STATIC as --

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - GONZALES' CROSSHAIRS - CONTINUOUS
 ACTION

TRACKING the caravan --

GONZALES (O.S.)
Shit -- 8 seconds - 6 seconds --

Suddenly, over Gonz's earpiece comes that strange VOICE:

VOICE (V.O.)
 Two, Condor: communications
 failure with Ghost, you are
 cleared to engage target.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gonzales meets eyes with Hettrick -- fuckfuckfuckfuck -- this feels all wrong -- but he's a dutiful soldier and FIRES: WHOOSH! The missile ROCKETS off -- in SECONDS, the soldiers break the launcher down, rip off their coveralls to reveal BUSINESS SUITS underneath --

EXT. MACAU CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The missile WHOOSHES over buildings, homing in on the caravan -- KABOOOOOOM! The missile HITS and the black Mercedes EXPLODES -- Suburbans in front and rear FLIP off their axis, cars COLLIDE --

EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS ACTION

GRAY -- Quick exfil: activates a THERMITE GRENADE, tosses it inside the case: BOOM! The grenade blows a SMALL EXPLOSION -- spitting white-hot phosphorous that melts the comms equipment.

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Gonzales and Hettrick DISAPPEAR in a closing elevator as we SNAP TO their cases, WIRED TOGETHER with primer cord: BEEP BEEP BEEP:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - STREET LEVEL - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The 42nd floor BLOWS OUT, pedestrians SCREAM as debris rains --

*
*

EXT. MACAU STREETS - CONTINUOUS ACTION

GRAY BLENDS with the fleeing people on the street. Suddenly, around the corner, two CHINESE POLICE OFFICERS -- thinking fast, GRAY SHOUTS IN MANDARIN, pointing in the wrong direction:

GRAY
(subtitled Mandarin)
That way! I saw someone!

Officers RUSH OFF as Gray MEETS UP with Gonzales and Hettrick -- They MOVE wordlessly to a corner where HICKS SKIDS TO A STOP; everyone hops in -- the car PEELS OUT --

INT. CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS ACTION

SIRENS, MILITARY VEHICLES blast by in the opposite direction --

GONZALES -- the hell <u>happened</u>? -- What?!	GRAY -- 'Higher' jammed my comms -- '<u>Higher</u>' jammed my <u>comms</u> --
--	---

HETTRICK

-- we got burned?!

GRAY

Assume rally point is busted, head to Pacman's house --

HETTRICK

Jesus, who was in that car -- ?!

GRAY

-- we lay low, drop our shit and go, take the bridge --

HICKS

Who the fuck did we just kill?!

Up ahead, Macau's "FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE." As the rental starts over it, traffic suddenly STOPS. SOLDIERS in RIOT GEAR move TOWARD us from the far side of the bridge --

GRAY

REVERSE REVERSE!

Too late as the LEAD OFFICER points at the rental car, SHOUTING -- Hettrick hands a pair of P-90 SUB-MACHINE GUNS up front:

GRAY

Staggered retreat: Hettrick, take the left -- rendezvous at the warehouse, go --

They jump from the car -- Hettrick FIRES at the advancing soldiers who return fire --

HICKS is struck in the temple point-blank, BLOOD sprays the SPIDERWEBBING windshield -- PASSENGERS in cars SCREAM and DUCK -- ANOTHER TROOP OF SOLDIERS IN BODY ARMOR LEAP OFF A TRANSPORT, rush in from the rear end of the bridge, FIRING -- Gonzales takes a HIT in the gut, wounded but not dead --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hettrick makes a break for the side rail, but his body's RIDDLED WITH BULLETS -- dead -- Gray half-carries Gonzales with one hand, FIRES MADLY with the other -- CRAWLS under the car next to him still dragging a near-dead Gonzales -- they roll over the rail, CRASHING into the river -- DOZENS OF SOLDIERS FIRE DOWN.

When they finally stop... NO BODIES EMERGE. HOLD ON the churning water and...

INT. WHITE HOUSE WEST WING - SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

Ben sits gravely. In the SIT ROOM with Vincent, CIA DIRECTOR SHERMAN DINSMORE, NSA ADVISORS, QUENTIN KNOWLES, and GENERAL BABBIT. ON MONITORS: satellite footage of CHINESE MOB SCENES:

CIA DIRECTOR DINSMORE

The man in the car was perhaps the strongest anti-U.S. hardliner in China's Politburo; killed instantly. Mobs are gathering around our embassy in Beijing, around U.S. businesses --

BEN

Who's responsible?

CIA DIRECTOR DINSMORE

Best guess, one of a dozen dissident groups, hard to say right now. However, there's a larger issue... China wants us to admit we made the hit.

BEN

(this better be true)
Tell me we didn't...

GENERAL BABBIT

We have no wet operations in play in the region, but Chinese police claim U.S. Special Forces were near the explosion. They say they have two bodies.

BEN

The hell were they doing there?

QUENTIN KNOWLES

Hundreds of our personnel are on leave in the region -- Bali, Hong Kong.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN KNOWLES (CONT'D)

Easy to grab a couple guys out of
a bar, say they were on-scene.

Odd pause. Ben eyes faces. Something's not right here.

BEN

Define 'easy.'

GENERAL BABBIT

This could go 'hot' any second,
sir. China's saying we killed a
member of their government.
Whether they truly believe that or
not, we believe they'll use the
incident to justify militarizing
Taiwan, bring the island back
under Chinese rule, and tell us we
can't go near it.

BEN

But you have no hard facts, no
intel --

*

GENERAL BABBIT

Our intel says they have two-dozen
nukes pointed our way. They're
looking for a chance to corner us,
see us back down with the whole
world watching.

BEN

So what're you proposing, General?

GENERAL BABBIT

We comply with the Taiwan
Relations Act, move our ships
right into the Strait, and call
China's bright red bluff. They're
already whupping us economically,
if we don't head this off now --
meet fire with hellfire -- they'll
be strong enough to crush us.

BEN

You really believe they'd risk war
without a shred of evidence?
Those dead men; I'm their
commander. I'm still responsible
for them. Until I get answers
about what they were doing and why
they died, we're gonna try and
work all this out, 'whupping'
free. Second, I want proof those
Special Forces operatives weren't
hit men.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Everyone stares, totally unprepared for this response.

QUENTIN KNOWLES

We have their leave papers, radio intercepts -- but they're scratchy at best, it'd take days to transcribe them --

BEN

Don't bother, China's gonna do it for us. *

(again, stunned
silence) *

We give them the raw intel, offer a joint investigation -- that way, they save face. If not, I'll rally the mother of all multilateral forces and we'll have hard data behind us.

GENERAL BABBIT

Sir... my concern's for your Presidency. The perception would be... one of weakness. Rewarding the militarization of open waters with valuable intel to our greatest enemy --

BEN

While I appreciate your concern for my legacy, General, I already have a public relations department I ignore. Get me a pull-aside with the Chinese President, and the numbers of the soldiers' families. That'll be all. *

He's out the door. Everyone moves quickly, except a humiliated Babbit, who meets eyes with Knowles and Dinsmore, livid... *

Over which we hear CHILDREN SINGING "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" --

EXT. RAMBLING ESTATE (CHEVY CHASE SUBURB) - DAY

On the lawn of an upscale estate, a LITTLE GIRL blows out birthday cake candles. APPLAUSE, as the girl's MOTHER points toward a STUDY WINDOW. The little girl waves at...

INT. ESTATE - STUDY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

"Grandpa." Who is, in fact, Hawthorne. He waves back to his granddaughter, as behind him, GENERAL BABBIT paces, pissed:

GENERAL BABBIT
United fucking Nations...

He CARRIES us TO CIA DIRECTOR DINSMORE, others we recognize from the WAR ROOM. Seasoned faces, military and political. Their anger focused on HAWTHORNE, who's calm, unapologetic:

QUENTIN KNOWLES
We took your word on this one, Jim.

CIA DIRECTOR DINSMORE
He's the worst one yet. Won't be persuaded through channels --

HAWTHORNE
Growing pains. Natural learning curve --

QUENTIN KNOWLES
Not only isn't he delivering ... he's delivering us to the fucking cleaners.

GROUP MEMBER #1
Freelancing like a goddamn subcontractor.

GENERAL BABBIT
Blacks Ops are one thing... we can't move carriers without him rubber-stamping it for the public.

HAWTHORNE
He'll deliver. I've watched him, years. Likes the spotlight, but not so much the heat.

GROUP MEMBER #2
Then we turn it up. Our timetable's non-negotiable.

HAWTHORNE
Heat's in my portfolio... but we need to 'upgrade' his security clearance.
(then)
All in favor?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Grave faces: a decision they'd hoped to avoid. NODS of assent. We're not sure what it is... but we're about to find out.

*

*

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - EAST WING DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The presidential motorcade pulls in. As Cahill emerges:

AGENT TURNER

Sir, the First Lady asked for you
in the Family Theater. Says it's
urgent.

The way Turner says that ALARMS Ben --

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Ben enters quickly with Turner. A FIGURE in the front row:

HAWTHORNE

Just in time to see the show.

Ben STOPS -- double-takes in confusion:

BEN

What're you -- doing here?
Where's my wife?

HAWTHORNE

Didn't think you'd come as
willingly.

*

*

Ben just stares, bowled over by this guy's audacity,
angry:

BEN

Mark, escort the Senator out now,
and get me the Duty Officer at the
gate --

AGENT TURNER

You really should sit down.

And everything. Stops. Turner's gaze is ice-fucking-cold.

BEN

I'm giving you an order.

HAWTHORNE

I gave him a different one.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Turner doesn't MOVE. Ben BLANCHES -- what the fuck is happening? Turner's eyes go to Hawthorne, who NODS: AND TURNER'S FIST SLEDGEHAMMERS BEN'S GUT, DOUBLING HIM OVER. Turner catches him, easing him down into one of the chairs...

AGENT TURNER

I'm sorry, Mr. President.

Turner moves to the back of the theater and blocks the exit. Ben, catching his breath, is simply shocked -- unable to speak. Hawthorne LOOMS:

HAWTHORNE

What'd you think, this was a gilded throne? Stick a few medals on your chest, win a few class-action lawsuits... that entitles you to run the greatest superpower in human history? By yourself? All 'cause a few million soccer moms wanna fuck you, their husbands wanna have a beer with you? Nossir. NO.

(beat)

You don't work for 'the people,' Mr. President... you work for us.

Ben's brain is CAPSIZING -- the words he's hearing as ridiculous as they are terrifying --

BEN

... 'Us'?

HAWTHORNE

The real government, the permanent one -- through 11 Presidents and 57 years. Unseen, unbroken, empowered by classified executive order with full... national... command... authority. Every instruction, passed down through channels, unquestioned -- even those who don't work for us directly, who don't follow the agenda knowingly... do.

Hawthorne watches Ben struggle to accept this impossible truth -- suddenly nothing makes sense --

BEN

You're out of your fucking mind...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE

Said those very words, day they
told me. Thought it was a
violation of every oath I'd taken,
on my own granddaddy's Bible.

(beat)

But it's real, Ben. Sooner you
accept it, not as some desecration
of your oath, but as its very
fulfillment... sooner you can
finally do your job.

BEN

Just... like that? To hell with
the Constitution?

HAWTHORNE

What's the Constitution anyway,
but a living, breathing legal pad
-- 'Trial By Jury, Freedom Of
Religion' -- all 27 Amendments,
afterthoughts, refinements put in
place by the people in power. You
think we couldn't write ourselves
in if we really needed to? If it
helps, just think of us as the
28th Amendment.

Ben, shaking his head, ANGER mounting:

BEN

Why even pretend? Why go through
all this... elections... this
show --

HAWTHORNE

Bureaucracies don't have magnetic
smiles. Big, blue bedroom eyes.
You're every voter's fantasy of
the American Dream, we're the
reality.

BEN

And you expect me to just... sit
back and watch?

HAWTHORNE

'Course not: democracy's real
enough here at home, we don't care
how high the minimum wage is or if
abortion's legal. Have at it.
But outside our borders, where
there are no rules, we're
embedded.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)
 'Continuity of Governance' by any
 means necessary... to keep a
 brutish world on its knees.

BEN
 (realizing; holy
 shit)
 ... you ordered the hit in
 Macau...

HAWTHORNE
 Your signature's on the directive.

BEN
 You sent those men in to die --

HAWTHORNE
 Paradox of statehood: how does
 the heavyweight champ stay in
 shape if there's no one to spar
 with? Keeping our dominance
 requires honest-to-God, flesh-and-
 steel war. Hell, we miss the
 Russians as much as we needed to
 crush them -- now it's China's
 turn, to get crushed before they
 crush us first.
 (beat)
 But in the eyes of the world?
They have to be the aggressor...
 and you, our knight in shining
 armor.

Ben's on his FEET -- shaking his head, no:

BEN
 Go fuck yourself --

HAWTHORNE
 Careful, son. We made you, and we
 can break you, in a million tiny
 pieces. Who do you think leaked
 that photograph of you in Iraq?
 Hauled that cripple out of rehab,
 paid him handsomely to stump for
 you?

That FREEZES Ben -- his most hidden secret, greatest
 shame -- but we don't get the whole story, not yet, as:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE

'Ben Cahill, America's war hero'... won't take more than a whiff of that lie to make your life such a 24-hour-news-cycle misery, you'll be begging for impeachment. Won't even have to beg; there isn't a single member of Congress who thinks you're qualified to be here -- believe me, I asked around -- they'll be doing you the honors.

(off Ben's mind
spinning)

'Til then, this is the life you chose. Round the clock surveillance, people monitoring your bodily functions, the air you breathe. Men like Agent Turner here. You'll never know who's ours and who isn't. And if you think about trying to sneak away, chat with a Woodward and Bernstein? That chip in your hand tells us where you are, down to the square inch.

(leans in)

So don't test us. Anyone you tell, we will kill. Anyone who starts asking questions, we will kill. Anyone gets in our way, we will bulldoze and bury --

BEN

You are insane...

HAWTHORNE

Let's not get ahead of ourselves. We want to work with you or we wouldn't've put you here. Strange as it may seem, I have faith in you, Benjamin. Do your duty, day'll come when you sit back... feel right at home putting your feet up on that desk.

Jesus Christ: Hawthorne HEARD his conversation with Sam in the Oval. The Senator rises, walks to the exit, beside Turner. SMILES:

HAWTHORNE

So congratulations, you're about to be a President at war. Most Presidents dream of this.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)
 Maybe you'll be a bona fide hero
 after all... or maybe you'll just
 be remembered as one.

And he's GONE, leaving Turner standing there. Just
 staring at Ben... alone in the theater.

*
 *

INT. WHITE HOUSE - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

Ben -- mind tumbling, in shock -- walks through the White
 House, every instinct a contradiction: go/sit/stay/run/
 talk/shut up.

Agent Turner's right on his heels.

Ben walks a little faster. So does Turner.

And suddenly Ben's noticing the LITTLE BLACK CCTV BUBBLES
 EVERYWHERE, watching him:

INT. WHITE HOUSE - ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE ROOM -
 CONTINUOUS ACTION

The WATCH OFFICER'S dead-on stare tracks Ben -- waiting
 for sudden movement, anything unpredictable -- we BOUNCE
 FROM MONITOR to MONITOR as Ben passes White House rooms:

WATCH OFFICER
 We have him passing Blue Room --
 China -- Diplomatic. All exits
 covered, stand by --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - VARIOUS SHOTS - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben moves past AGENTS posted by doors, all eyes on him.
 PARANOIA CRASHES: maybe that one's in on it, maybe that
 one isn't. A Marine steward opens the door to the
 Residence -- Ben LOCKS EYES with Turner as the door SHUTS
 between them and --

Ben falls back against the frame. Alone. Breathing
 harder. Looks down at his hand... the fucking chip...
 his look tracks up... to a PORTRAIT that nearly takes his
 breath away:

*
 *

JOHN KENNEDY. His official White House portrait. Arms
 crossed, looking down. In this new context, it carries a
 different and very frightening weight.

*
 *
 *

EXT. CHINA STREETS - NIGHT

SCREAMING SIREN, GRINDING OF TREADS ON CEMENT -- CHINESE APC's roll through the streets. Lockdown. Roadblocks set up; SOLDIERS go door-to-door, hunting the assassins --

INT. WAREHOUSE (CHINESE GHETTO NEIGHBORHOOD) - NIGHT

Safe house. A back door SWINGS OPEN FAST as Gray fireman-carries a very bloody and in-pain Gonzales --

QUICK CUTS

Gonzales' shirt is torn open, a BRUTAL GUT-SHOT -- a FLOORBOARD is pried open by Gray, revealing an EMERGENCY MED-KIT -- Gray wraps it with an ace bandage, opens a saline IV -- all the while talking to keep Gonzales distracted from the brutal fact that he's bleeding to death:

GRAY

Gonzo, run this through with me,
man, you're the comms expert --
who'd have access and tech to jam
my bay station and bypass to
yours?

Gonzales tries to breathe... toughing it out...

GRAY

Talk to me, G -- think it
through --

GONZALES

Have to be someone... from the top
for access... only know two
systems, could do that...

GRAY

-- two systems, which ones -- ?

GONZALES

One's still a prototype... other's
used by the deep cover guys at
NSA...

They lock eyes: understanding the terrible truth here.

GONZALES

They knew... we were coming. Came
right for us. Saw what to look
for.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gray's furious, betrayed -- but keeps it locked down. No time.

GRAY

Alright, Gonzo, here it is: the round missed all your vitals, but your guts are torn up pretty bad. We can't risk a surgeon here, gotta assume our original way out's compromised...

GONZALES

What'd we expect, right? How dumb we gotta be... to keep following orders?

GRAY

Gonna try and arrange some kind of passage to Malaysia... Philippines, maybe Thailand. Find you a nice Thai lady to nurse you back to shape? Huh? Put a happy ending on this mess, if you know what I mean.

GONZALES

(smiles, through agony)

Sounds good, Boss --

-- as Gray grabs a NEW SUIT from under the floorboards, and a HIDDEN CASE. Clicks it open: stacks of CHINESE YUAN. Doctored ID's, passports. Starts a QUICK CHANGE into the suit --

GRAY

I'll keep you on saline, but I can't give you morphine -- need you frosty. Sit tight, there's water right here, and don't fuck with that gauze.

(hands him a gun)

Your piece, extra mags. If you gotta relocate, there's a sewer in the alley behind the building -- get to it and hide inside.

Gonzales knows he'd never make it to the sewer, they both do. He GRIPS Gray's arm. Scared.

GONZALES

... you're comin' back, right?

And Gray looks his dying teammate right in the eyes, nods...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAY

I promise.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - RESIDENCE - MORNING

Sam's eyes flutter open. She turns, looks over at Ben's side of the bed: untouched.

SAME SCENE - LATER

She emerges, dressed, into the living room where she FINDS HIM by the window. Drawn, jaded.

SAMANTHA

Honey? What's wrong?

BEN

... long night.

He just stares. Deeply stirred. Very quietly:

BEN

My mother told me once... only
time she ever saw my dad cry...
not when he lost his job, the
house... but when John Kennedy was
shot.

(beat)

Always wanted to be the kind of
man... who could move my father
like that.

Something about the way he's saying this. She can't read him, and it's entirely foreign to her:

SAMANTHA

What happened, Ben?

He wants so desperately to tell her the truth. And for a minute we think he might, until his eyes go to the bubble cameras. Watching. Then -- Marisa enters the room with a VIOLIN in hand -- bursting with excitement. Just steps behind her, a uniformed MILITARY AIDE, a man in a DARK SUIT, and Joanna step in -- the CRUSH of the President's day begins:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARISA Dad! I finally got the mid-section! Wanna hear?	JOANNA (apologies) Daily intelligence briefing, they need an extra twenty, plus New Mexico Governor's in the Yellow Oval and you've got the budget PAD's at eight.
--	---

Marisa looks expectantly at Ben, but Sam quickly intervenes, helping her husband through it:

SAMANTHA

Why don't you play it for me first, sweetie, you can practice up for Dad.

MARISA

But it's ready now...

SAMANTHA

Then think how much better it'll be after a plane ride's worth of practice.

BEN

(suddenly ALERT)

Where're you going?

SAMANTHA

Tennessee; Family Policy conference. Vincent thought one of us should be there...

Ben's eyes hold on his family, everything he loves most in the world. Fear rising, he tries to hide it -- says to Marisa:

BEN

... right. Better listen to Vince.

JOANNA (so sorry about this) New Mexico Governor's in the --	BEN -- just... give me a minute.
---	--

Contrite, Ben moves to Marisa at the doorway, kneels down so they're eye-to-eye -- his best grin:

BEN

You can work up a special new piece for me on the plane, okay, honey?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN (CONT'D)
 (beat, as she nods)
 And eat junk food, 'cause I won't
 be there to stop you. But brush
 your teeth.

*

*

And gives her a long, lingering hug. It heartens her.
 Ben rises -- to Sam:

*

*

BEN
 I'm fine, everything's fine. You
 don't need to worry. Love you.

SAMANTHA
 (still unresolved)
 Love you too...

*

He kisses her, then walks out, past Crisafi:

AGENT CRISAFI
 Have a good day, sir.

Sounded like a threat. Ben hard-eyes him; not sure what
 to think... and finally goes. STAY ON Sam. Deeply
 unnerved.

INT. FIRST LADY'S SUBURBAN - DAY

Sam's caravan pulls into ANDREWS AIR BASE. Marisa in
 back, reading American Girl magazine with IPOD on. Sam
 finishes skimming a Wall Street Journal editorial,
 angrily reads aloud:

SAMANTHA
 '... absent from the national
 discussion was the First Lady,
 squandering another chance to
 carve out a distinctive policy
 voice. Tammy Wynette would be
 proud...' And if I run the
 goddamn task force I'm Evita
 Peron, with my own pair of
 testicles and an in-box under the
 President's pillow. Jackass.

Tosses the paper aside. In Blake's eyes, a flash of
 sympathy...

AGENT BLAKE
 What they say about all of 'em.
 You just do what you're doing,
 ma'am.

*

These simple words touch Sam, right when she needs them
 most.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

You protect my peace of mind, too?

Blake just grins as the car STOPS; Blake OPENS the door onto the tarmac, where an AIR FORCE 707 JET waits --

*

EXT. CHINESE DOCKS - NIGHT

Skiffs, pontoon boats, cigarette fast boats. Smuggler's haven. Moving among the boats is GRAY in his suit, remarkably crisp and clean, deep matte black shades: effortless confidence despite the distant sirens. An operator in his natural habitat.

JUMP CUT TO:

IN A PRIVATE ALCOVE

Gray and a SMUGGLER deal in SUBTITLED CHINESE (*italics*) as Gray pulls out a wad of bills:

GRAY

*You get the other half when you
get me and my friend to the
Philippines...*

*

EXT. CHINESE STREETS - 20 MINUTES LATER

Gray moves through streets, heading back to the safehouse -- SUDDENLY: POLICE CARS, HOWLING, whipping past the alley where --

GRAY is against the wall, hidden. Slips out the other side. There's the safehouse -- go, hurry -- but as he approaches, WILD NOISE -- AN ANGRY CHINESE MOB has taken to the streets -- Gray sees a ladder on a building -- climbs fast as military vehicles and the mob swarm around the corner...

WITH GONZALES. Shot in the head.

Clothes stripped off, body tied to the bumper of a car as he's dragged through the streets by the furious anti-American mob...

GRAY. Anguished. All he can do is watch and hide. Devastated, at the corpse of the soldier he promised to get home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)
 -- anti-American sentiment burst
 into horrific mob violence on the
 streets of Macau this morning --

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT (NORTH CAROLINA) - MORNING

ANNA moves about her apartment, getting dressed for work,
 feeding her cat... as CNN plays in the b.g.

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)
 CNN has obtained footage of
 Sergeant Javier Gonzales --

Anna's look SNAPS UP.

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)
 -- apparently killed and being
 dragged through the streets by an
 angry group of Chinese citizens.
 Army spokesmen say he was on leave
 in the region; the President is
 expected to address the nation in
 approximately ten minutes --

-- ANNA, in shock, tears start welling. Panic. She
 races to a phone -- pleasepleaseplease -- frantically
 dials a number -- gets VOICEMAIL -- BEEP:

*

ANNA
 It's me -- I -- I just saw the
 news, oh my God -- are you okay?
 What's happening?! Please call
 me, baby, please call me now --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESS ROOM/OUTSIDE EAST ROOM -
 CONTINUOUS ACTION

MONITORS in the press room all show the same image:
 Gonzales being dragged through the streets. BEN TAKES
 FRAME, moving toward the East Room with Quentin Knowles.
 Turner on his heels.

QUENTIN KNOWLES
 Whole country's watching this kid
 being dragged all over Macau, and
 China just announced they're
 closing off the Taiwan Strait,
 making it hot.

Ben's trying to find his focus -- the crash of last
 night's brutal reality, now the brink of war:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

We don't know the facts yet --

*

QUENTIN KNOWLES

Your statement's been negotiated among all five national security agencies; it's on the prompter. Situation this sensitive, you'll want to stick to every dot and comma.

And Ben looks at him, then back at Turner, realizing... Knowles is in on it too. All he wants to do is fight back, but there are 50 million live TV viewers waiting... so he turns, walks down the red carpet into the FLASHING BULBS:

*

INT. EAST ROOM - MINUTES LATER

The press corps scribbles furiously as Ben speaks from the "Blue Goose" podium. We see his SPEECH roll up the President Glass:

BEN

... finally, our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the servicemen who died in Macau, and with the Chinese people, who are mourning the loss of one of their leaders. We will demand answers. And we will get them.

The room erupts. Ben points to one of the press pool --

REPORTER #1

Mr. President, as everyone's painfully aware, the body of a U.S. soldier is being dragged through the streets of Macau -- and yet China's the one militarizing off the Taiwan Strait. Can you deny once and for all that our own military personnel were responsible for the assassination of Chou Luyen?

ON THE TELEPROMPTER, words race up the President Glass: "The United States had no role in the assassination and..."

They're feeding Ben his answers too. His every instinct won't let him say them. Knowles shoots a steely glare: "read it."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

(too-long pause)

There have never been any soldiers from our armed forces acting under my direction in Macau or mainland China.

*

REPORTER #1

How will you respond to the militarization of the Taiwan Strait?

NEW WORDS on the President Glass: "I have ordered Carrier Strike Group 3 and Destroyer Squadron 31 into the Taiwan Strait..." Holy shit. Ben struggles, reporters MURMUR -- but he refuses to repeat the words:

BEN

... we don't know who's responsible for... any of this, not yet... we're going to cooperate with the Chinese government to find out who is.

*

Knowles subtly shakes his head: "bad move." Babbit starts TYPING something on a BlackBerry and --

IN THE PRESS POOL, one of the REPORTERS gets a TEXT MESSAGE on his cell, we read: "Carrier Strike Group 3/ Destroyer Squadron 31 to South China Sea." And even though Cahill points toward a different part of the room, the reporter SHOUTS:

REPORTER #2

Sir, the Pentagon's announcing that you've ordered Carrier Strike Group 3 and Destroyer Squadron 31 into the Taiwan Strait. Is this a signal to China that you're willing to use force to defend American interests?

On the sidelines, Vincent's look says WHAT THE FUCK?!

We realize with a chill that this Reporter's a plant. Ben looks at the glass: "You want your wife's plane to land safely." Ben's heart's in his throat, he's starting to falter --

INT. AIR FORCE 707 JET - MID-AIR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

From their plane seats, Sam and Marisa watch coverage on CNN --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARISA
What's wrong with Dad?

CLOSE ON SAM

What the hell's happening?

INT. PRESS ROOM (EAST WING) - CONTINUOUS ACTION

BEN
(clears his throat)
I can't comment on that.

*

VINCENT spins urgently to the Press Secretary:

VINCENT
Pull him, pull him now --

A FRENZY OF HANDS -- our real (non-plant) reporter's already mid-question, and by now, certainly no ally of Ben's either:

REPORTER #1
DoD's now asking for another 60 billion in supplemental appropriations to support strategic missile defense, contradicting your campaign pledge to scale it -- why the sudden about-face?

WORDS SCROLL: "You can be sure that we'll commit every dime necessary to stand up to acts of unwarranted -- "

Babbit shoots Ben the dangerous look of a schoolyard bully. He measures his words, under impossible pressure:

BEN
The truth is... the realities of this office can't be foreseen from the campaign trail... especially when lives are at risk.

And the PRESS SECRETARY is there, ending it fast.

PRESS SECRETARY
Okay, that's it. Thank you.

Utter pandemonium among the press corps -- CAMERAS
FLASH --

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BLUE ROOM

Ben exits fast with Turner in tow -- his Executive Assistant, JOANNA, is there:

BEN

Get my wife on the line, now --

And here comes Vincent, blazing:

VINCENT

Jesus Christ --

BEN

Later, Vince --

Ben's eyes flick to Turner, on his heels, as they head OUT to:

INTERCUTTING - EXT. WHITE HOUSE ROSE GARDEN/INT. AIR FORCE 707

ROSES in spring bloom; a Technicolor backdrop, against which Ben emerges with Vincent; Ben's on the phone with Sam, urgently needs to confirm:

BEN

-- you're okay?

SAMANTHA

(rattled)

Yeah, we're fine -- what happened?
When'd you order ships to Taiwan,
Ben?! Vincent okayed this?

*

BEN

We'll get into it later --

SAMANTHA

We sure as hell will --

Ben abruptly hangs up, relieved she's okay but the noose is so tight he's choking; faces off with an angry Vincent:

VINCENT

We gonna get into it later too?

Ben BLOCKS Turner from following them further:

BEN

Stay here.

Turner glares: "careful." Stays behind as Ben disappears around a hedge, searching for a hidden place to talk, Vincent following -- Turner switches to a SECURE CHANNEL, murmurs into his mic:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT TURNER
202 to 208, we need Eagle Eye --

*

INT. WHITE HOUSE - ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE ROOM -
CONTINUOUS ACTION

*

*

What happens next happens FAST and with military
readiness:

*

*

WATCH OFFICER
NSA protocols, pull up the keyhole
feeds --

*

*

*

Second Agent pulls up a SATELLITE FEED -- it POPS from
WIDE over the Washington city grid, to MEDIUM, to CLOSE:
suddenly we're watching a real-time feed of BEN AND
VINCENT IN THE ROSE GARDEN:

*

*

*

*

SECURITY AGENT
(into headset)
206 to 209, we need infrared audio
sensors now, targets in the rose
garden --

*

*

*

*

*

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS ACTION

TRACK FAST WITH a pair of shoes as they RACE across the
rooftop -- it's a SECRET SERVICE AGENT quickly activating
a "SPIKE MIC," AIMS it at the figures of Ben and Vincent
in the garden below --

ROOFTOP AGENT
(into headset)
209 to 206, audio's coming up
now --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE ROOM -
CONTINUOUS ACTION

STATICKY SOUND POPS IN AS WE HEAR THE CONVERSATION:

VINCENT (V.O.)
'The realities of this office
can't always be anticipated'?! So
you order strike groups into the
South China Sea?!

BEN (V.O.)
I changed my mind --

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - ROSE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

VINCENT

WHEN?! In the Sit Room you
said we're negotiating! I
already briefed half of Congress,
half the goddamned editorial
boards --

BEN

We have to send a message --

VINCENT

Why're you cutting me out of the
loop? Who the hell's advising you
on this?!

Ben's eyes scan, ultra-paranoid -- desperate to tell
Vincent the truth; but very very much wants his friend to
shut the fuck up: *

BEN

I make the decisions --

VINCENT

I control the damage. What, is
Knowles leaving memos under your
pillow now -- ?

BEN

-- I barely sleep in this crown
jewel of the federal penal system,
I don't see how that's --

VINCENT

-- don't change the subject --

BEN

-- I'm ending it --

VINCENT

-- I know you too well. You're
not telling me something, Ben.

BEN

It's Mr. President.

That hurts Vincent and kills Ben even more, but he has to
create a distance right now, a buffer zone, for his
friend's own sake. Starts walking away -- Vincent
follows, pressing the point:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT Whatever it is, I'll get us out of it, <u>talk</u> to me, I'll take care of it -- -- did someone -- get to you?	BEN This conversation's over. -- <u>Vincent</u> -- -- <u>I said this conversation's over.</u>
--	---

Vincent's very fucking weirded out. Ben straightens himself:

BEN

Get me the Pentagon's code-word files on those dead soldiers, everything they've got.

(then)

That's all.

And turns his back on Vincent, leaving him among the roses.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The Watch Officer's seen and heard the whole thing. A look of growing concern...

*
*
*

INT. QANTAS 747 - NIGHT

TRACK DOWN THE AISLE to find GRAY sitting on the plane. Nursing a drink. A Flight Attendant offers him another. We MOVE IN ON Gray, and SOUND FADES OUT. Dead silence. So that we can study him, seated in the half-light, staring out the window on his way home. Years of emotional suppression, fragile stability...

GENERAL BABBIT (V.O.)

Colonel Madigan Gray...

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - ROOFTOP - DUSK

Hawthorne and Babbit. Pink sunset over the Capitol behind them.

GENERAL BABBIT

... was in charge of a 'Kill Squad' under the First Special Forces Detachment.

'Unacknowledged.' Gray's had ten years in the Asian theatre: Taiwan, Philippines, Abu Sayef. Primarily Reconnaissance and Wetwork.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENERAL BABBIT (CONT'D)

After that, spent six months at
Womack Army Medical undergoing
psych eval. Wounded bird.

HAWTHORNE

Sounds more like a Doberman... and
you're telling me now he eluded
the Chinese, may've slipped out of
the country --

GENERAL BABBIT

He's probably coming home, if he's
not already here...

INT. CUSTOMS AREA (REAGAN AIRPORT) - DUSK

GRAY emerging from the plane -- HEIGHTENED PARANOIA,
every face a potential enemy -- NATIONAL GUARDSMEN --
Gray's eyes scoping: CCTV CAMERAS EVERYWHERE -- smart
enough to keep his head low --

AT CUSTOMS: Gray stands in front of a CUSTOMS AGENT
studying his passport -- the doctored ID Gray pulled from
his safehouse:

CUSTOM AGENT

What were you doing in Australia?

GRAY

(smiles)
Lying on the beach. Summer over
there now.

The agent stares Gray down... then STAMPS his passport --

CUSTOM AGENT

Welcome back.

GENERAL BABBIT (V.O.)

We put the names of all known
associates on the ECHELON
watchlist...

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - ROOFTOP - RESUME

GENERAL BABBIT

... something turned up.

Babbit hits a DICTAPHONE, plays a VOICEMAIL RECORDING --

*

ANNA (V.O.)

It's me -- I -- I just saw the
news, oh my God -- are you okay?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What's happening?! Please call
me, baby, please call me now --

*

Hawthorne listens, face dark... as HAUNTING MUSIC takes us to...

INT. CABINET ROOM - DAY

SLOW MOTION, DREAMLIKE... the FAMILIES of the dead soldiers have been assembled...

Ben's clasping arms, solemn, offering comfort... and clearly in as much torment as those he's consoling. An AIDE leads him toward a grieving MOTHER, sotto:

AIDE
Yvette Gonzales, mother of Javier
Gonzales, the young Army Staff
Sergeant who was --

BEN
I know.
(as he reaches her)
Ma'am. My deepest condolences.

She stares at him, quiet, dignified, but heartbroken:

YVETTE GONZALES
My son was a patriot. He'd never
betray this country -- do those
things they said -- kill that man
in China -- never. I would know,
I'm his --

She stops, voice breaking. In this moment, it strikes Ben at his core: she's right. Maybe these men were used too.

BEN
I believe you, ma'am. Sincerely I
do.

YVETTE GONZALES
Then don't let them turn my boy
into a murderer, sir. Please.

The Aide politely ushers her away: OFF Ben, STRUCK with purpose --

*

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SOLARIUM - DAY

DRIVEN, Ben goes through Pentagon files. Photos of GONZALES. HICKS. HETTRICK.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Burning details into his brain. Two MILITARY ATTACHES enter, having been summoned:

PENTAGON ATTACHE #1

Mr. Presid--

BEN

Three soldiers accounted for. But not this one.

Ben holds up a picture of MADIGAN GRAY.

BEN

What happened to him?

PENTAGON ATTACHE #2

It's unclear, sir.

BEN

I worked with Special Forces; they don't do 'unclear.' Is he presumed dead? Who the hell's trying to find him? What about covert commo?

PENTAGON ATTACHE #1

Nothing through SOCOM, our embassy in Beijing, or our people in Taiwan --

*

PENTAGON ATTACHE #2

If he's still alive, sir, he may be doing exactly what he's trained to do: lay low 'til the threat's passed.

Off Ben, taking in the full, multi-dimensional weight of that.

BEN

That's all.

They exit. Ben's eyes go back to a file photo of Gray and the team; this picture's casual, shows the camaraderie among the unit at an Afghani Forward Operating Base.

But Ben notices something -- a TATTOO on Gray's arm. He uses his glasses to MAGNIFY, and we read the phrase:

"FACTA NON VERBA." OFF Ben, processing --

EXT. ANNA'S APARTMENT (NORTH CAROLINA) - DAY

Lower-middle class complex in North Carolina. Anna's. From an alley, GRAY scopes the perimeter. Notices a suspicious-looking SEDAN. Avis Rental plate frame. Circumvents the main entrance --

*

*

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

We hear the lock jimmy, the door opens and Gray enters. Quiet.

A CAT on the counter, eager to be fed. Empty bowl. Bad sign.

Gray's gut alarm already red-lining. The door to Anna's bathroom is open a little. Gray pauses. Already knows what he's gonna find... steels himself before pushing through...

ANNA. DEAD. On the bathroom floor. Wrists slit, blood seeped over white tile...

GRAY'S SOUL SHATTERS. SUDDENLY -- INSTINCT --

GRAY LEAPS JUST AS TWO SILENCED BULLETS TEAR PAST HIM, ONE INTO THE WALL, THE OTHER SHATTERING A WINDOW.

THERE'S ANOTHER MAN IN THE APARTMENT. PHFT!-PHFT!-PHFT!-PHFT!-PHFT!-PHFT! -- silenced gunfire rakes the furniture and --

GRAY rolling away, into the KITCHEN -- BUTCHER BLOCK KNIVES -- THROWS ONE -- the knife CATCHES the man in the arm -- Gray KICKS the man's gun away -- FIST slamming into the guy's JAW -- and even with the knife in his arm, the man FIGHTS BRUTALLY -- matching Gray's moves blow for blow, relentless --

Until Gray manages to get his hand on the knife and PLUNGE IT FURTHER into the man's arm -- WRAPS his arm around the guy's neck in a chokehold... PULLS HARD... the man FLAILS, FLAILS, but Gray has him... until he SLUMPS.

It's over. GRAY -- face still shivering with fury -- hands -- moving -- searching the man's clothes -- a track suit -- pockets -- something there -- a set of CAR KEYS and --

EXT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gray exits fast, walking past cars, pressing the car alarm keys until BLIP-BLIP: it deactivates an alarm on the AVIS RENTAL CAR he spotted earlier -- uses the keys to OPEN the door --

*

*

INT. AVIS RENTAL CAR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Gray checks pockets; a stick of gum, gas receipts. They tell us the car came from Washington. Gray searches beneath seats, under the visors -- the glove compartment -- IT'S LOCKED. He snaps open a device, BREAKS THE LOCK. Pops it open -- finds a LEATHER WALLET. Opens it --

*

On one side is a SECRET SERVICE SHIELD. The other, an SS ID: the man who killed Anna was Secret Service.

GRAY. FURY. MIND TUMBLING. WHAT THE FUCK IS HAPPENING?!

INT. WEST WING CORRIDOR - DAY

Ben strides down the hallway while SCRIBBLING furiously on a yellow legal pad, trailed by Vincent and Ben's executive assistant, JOANNA:

*

BEN

Did you get me a Latin dictionary?

*

JOANNA

Yes, sir, Library of Congress is sending two --

*

*

VINCENT

There's a process, you want to rip up a speech that's been vetted with every veteran's organization --

*

*

*

*

*

BEN

-- humor me --

*

VINCENT

I can't run interference if you're doing end-runs around me.

*

*

*

BEN

Then don't run interference.

*

*

Vincent stops, he's had ENOUGH -- looks Ben in the eye:

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT

Alright, look, I don't know what this is; if you're unhappy with your speeches, the counsel you're getting on security issues... we both know you're the only one who's irreplaceable. But so long as I'm here, if there's some back channel you're using, I'm gonna damn well know about it.

Point made, Vincent walks off. Leaving Ben to look anxiously at the BUBBLE CAMERA above. At the end of the long hall, SAM has seen but not heard this exchange; the TENSION between the men palpable. As Ben moves on she approaches -- moving with him --

SAMANTHA

What's going on with you two?

BEN

(perfunctory smile)
Just working too hard.

-- he heads off, leaving her there. Feeling like she's sinking deeper away from him, and him from her.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

That same SURVEILLANCE AGENT watches Vincent moving through the West Wing. Picks up a phone, dials...

SURVEILLANCE OFFICER

This is Post. We have a 'Loose Thread.' I'm uploading video.

Ominous. As we SEE Ben on another monitor enter:

INT. WEST WING - NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Knowles is in an outer office with SPEECHWRITERS. All AIDES and DESK ASSISTANTS rise, surprised as the President sweeps in:

BEN

Good draft, guys. Just wanna make it mine.

And hands them the LEGAL PAD covered in RED INK, grins -- the writers quickly scan:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

Presidential voice. Takes a while
to get just right.

*

*

And he's OUT the door without giving Knowles time to
respond. What's Ben doing?

INT. DIVE BAR - DAY

GRAY sits at the bar, drinking a double, waiting for
someone. Looks down at his hand, notices... IT'S
SHAKING. Old signs of PTSD resurfacing. SNAPS his hand
closed. Coming apart...

A MAN takes a seat beside him. 100 percent pure CIA
SPOOK. They don't meet eyes:

*

CIA SPOOK

You're very popular with a lot of
intelligence agencies.

GRAY

Who sent us in.

The man drops a folded NEWSPAPER on the bar:

CIA SPOOK

Check out the 'Classifieds.'

Gray opens the "classified" section, finds a COPY of a
PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER -- "Assets deemed expendable
per executive order 009986." Signature: "BENJAMIN
PATRICK CAHILL." Gray's killer eyes fix in anger.
Revenge. But then:

CIA SPOOK

Something's off. The order ran
through the CIA to the Pentagon.
Not sure why. Never touched the
White House.

Gray pauses. Taken aback --

GRAY

Meaning what... the President
never saw this?

CIA SPOOK

'Plausible Deniability.' Works
every time.

(rises)

Sorry 'bout your men.

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And he's gone. Gray's trying to make sense of all this...

*
*

BEN (V.O.)
... Scripture tells us that
'greater love hath no man than
this, that a man lay down his life
for his friends...'

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Shades drawn, fleabag motel. A bottle of SCOTCH is opened by GRAY. Hands shaking, he slugs it. CNN plays on TV in b.g., on which THE PRESIDENT is addressing the nation from the Oval:

*
*

BEN (V.O.)
(on TV)
I can tell you from hard
experience: theirs was a life of
service, of humility. They sought
not medals, but meaning...

Gray's not really paying attention as he moves to the BATHROOM, splashing cold water on his face --

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

BEN'S SPEECH scrolls up a monitor; he sits, somberly, at the Oval's Resolute Desk, facing a camera and TECHNICAL STAFF:

BEN
And they earned both. Which is
why I will hold a private memorial
tomorrow, at Andrews Air Force
Base, and invite fellow members of
their command to fly with me to
the Veterans of Foreign Wars
convention in Orlando. To honor
not only their lives extinguished,
but their creed, a creed that
shall never die, a creed that is
etched right into the flesh of our
bravest soldiers, for all to see --

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

BEN (V.O.)
(on CNN)
*Facta non verba: 'Deeds not
words.'*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAY -- SUDDENLY ALERT. Looks up from the sink.
Reflected in the mirror, his TATTOO: "FACTA NON VERBA."

He SNAPS around -- MOVES CLOSE to the TV --

BEN (V.O.)

(on CNN)

To you I say, your cause is my
cause; your blood is my blood. In
word and in deed, *Fiat justitia:*
'Let justice be done.'

GRAY stunned... Is it possible? Is it a trick? A code?
Was the President talking to him?

EXT. VINCENT'S GEORGETOWN HOME - NIGHT

A SEDAN pulls up; Vincent's AIDE opens the door for him
as he exits, moving up the steps of his brownstone on the
phone:

VINCENT

No, I'll be in at six for senior
staff, plenty of time for sleep
when we lose re-election -- just
need two or three hours --

INT. VINCENT'S GEORGETOWN HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sound of KEYS in the door; we see the sedan DRIVE OFF out
the window. Vincent enters -- the SECOND he closes the
door:

GLOVED HANDS -- AROUND HIS MOUTH -- A NEEDLE INJECTS IN
HIS NECK.

Vincent's legs KICK -- fighting with all his might but
the JUMPSUITED MAN holds him like a vice -- until Vincent
goes LIMP.

He's just been injected with SEASNAKE VENOM, which
induces WAKING PARALYSIS. So Vincent's ALIVE and AWARE
as a SECOND JUMPSUITED MAN grabs Vincent's legs, they
carry him into:

INT. VINCENT'S GEORGETOWN HOME - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS
ACTION

-- and set him on his toilet. Second Man pulls a PISTOL
out of his coat, puts it in Vincent's hand, raises it up
under Vincent's chin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT'S EYES -- TERRIFIED -- UNMOVING -- A TEAR LEAKS. *

As the First Man drapes a plastic tarp over himself and his partner -- *

SILENCED GUNSHOT! Vincent's BRAINS SPLATTER the wall RED. *

With the same cold efficiency, the men fold up the spattered tarp and exit the bathroom without a glance back... leaving a lifeless Vincent on the toilet -- no dignity in death. *

EXT. SKIES OVER MIDWEST - DAY

Air Force One roars over Farmland country --

INT. AIR FORCE ONE CONFERENCE ROOM - MIDAIR - DAY

BEN, mind a thousand miles away, watches clouds pass out the window. Joanna approaches, shaken. He looks up at her -- something's worse than wrong. She leans down to explain... and we PULL AWAY... as we watch the blood drain from his face...

REPORTER (V.O.)
Jonathan Vincent, White House
Chief of Staff; dead at 41 years
old, an apparent gunshot wound -- *

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - PRESIDENT'S CABIN - DAY

A NEWS BROADCAST, file footage shows PARAMEDICS carrying a BODY BAG down the steps of a Georgetown brownstone...

REPORTER (V.O.)
Friends say Vincent had battled
depression for years, and had
complained in recent weeks of the
-- quote 'bloodsport' politics has
become --

Ben watches from the President's cabin. Knows it wasn't an accident. His eyes CLOSE, the moment just too horrible to bear... *

REPORTER (V.O.)
No comment yet from the President
himself, who's returning from
Milwaukee where he was keynoting a
Memorial Day celebration --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Turner appears at the door. Ben's look is searing:

*

BEN
Tell Hawthorne to meet me at
Andrews.
(off Turner's glare)
Now.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Gray re-watches Ben's Oval Office speech on YouTube,
studying every micro-detail:

*

*

BEN (V.O.)
(on YouTube)
... and they earned both. Which
is why I will hold a private
memorial tomorrow, at Andrews Air
Force Base, and invite fellow
members of their command to --

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

GRAY -- mind working in overdrive -- checks his watch --
as the ROAR OF JET ENGINES takes us to:

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE - RUNWAY - DAY

Air Force One touches down. The stairway ramp lowers and
AIR FORCE SSG SNAP SALUTES as Ben descends. He's grim,
livid -- and most of all, SCANNING the perimeter. Was
his message received? Is he being watched?

*

*

*

ACROSS THE TARMAC -- a Town Car door opens: HAWTHORNE.
The men lock eyes like gunfighters across the OK Corral.
And as Ben starts to MOVE toward him, determined --

*

POV OF SAME - THROUGH LONG-RANGE BINOCULARS

GRAY

is the man behind the binocs, perched in position on a
DISTANT ROOFTOP. Watching as --

*

ON THE TARMAC

Ben and Hawthorne are face-to-face, talking against the
JET ROAR:

BEN
You killed him. Didn't you.

GRAY

flips the magnification to 1000mm as Ben and Hawthorne
ARGUE.

*
*

CLOSEUP

*

Their mouths MOVE in CLOSEUP and our ANGLES start to
reveal GRAY'S READING THEIR LIPS.

*
*

HAWTHORNE (V.O.)

No, Ben. You did. You let him
get curious.

ON THE TARMAC

Ben's look goes to the press gate. Sees the cameras
waiting. A moment of decision...

BEN

Resignation was starting to look
like a noble way to go. Least I'd
get to grow old with my family.

(beat)

But a life of regret... isn't
worth my silence.

*

(gestures: the
press)

If you're going to kill me, you'll
have to do it right here.

*

GRAY

HOLY SHIT.

ON THE TARMAC

HAWTHORNE

You just gonna walk over there,
tell 'em the truth? Who's gonna
find us? You know about me, but
who else? With what proof? We're
the ones, own the paper trail on
you: every post-war psychiatric
visit -- and there were nine --
we'll spin so hard, you're the
only one who'll look crazy and
corrupt.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Ben just glares.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE

Still your country to protect,
too.

*

BEN

Right now... a little more yours
than mine, you sonofabitch.

And charges toward the reporters. Angry, Hawthorne gives
Turner a LOOK; Turner murmurs in his collar!

AGENT TURNER

Gun!

In seconds, nearly EVERY AGENT is on top of the
President. His limo SCREECHES IN and Ben FLAILS against
Turner, who pulls out an AUTO-INJECTOR PEN and INJECTS IT
into Ben's arm...

*
*
*

GRAY

*

SEES THAT!

*

ON TARMAC

*

Ben weakens... THAT SAME PARALYSIS VENOM TAKING HOLD.
He's PUSHED inside the limo before the press knows what's
happening, it ROCKETS off... GRAY CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
Confirmation: the president's a hostage. As the limo
ROARS down the tarmac --

*
*
*
*
*

INT. PRESIDENT'S LIMO - DAY

*

-- and out the gate, SCREECHING around corners, POLICE
SIRENS SCREAMING all around -- Ben's FROZEN in back,
unable to move -- PARALYZED WITH FEAR -- and Hawthorne's
UNHINGED, an enraged parent to a petulant child --

*
*
*
*

HAWTHORNE

*

(to Turner)

*

Gimme your gun!!

*

Without hesitation, Turner unholsters his .38 and hands
it to Hawthorne -- the car SCREECHES around a corner --

*
*

HAWTHORNE

How else can I bring it home?!
Cover story's already in place,
all we have to do is pick which
one!

*
*
*
*

He SNAPS OPEN the gun barrel, starts shaking out BULLETS:

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE

President has unknown allergy,
dies of anaphylactic shock -- lone
nut got through the secure
perimeter -- 'Protective detail' --
contradiction in terms. Everyone
has their time. Yours could be
right now --

(and leaves one
bullet in the
chamber)

-- this bullet... half the press
corps thinks you might've been
shot out there -- were you? Are
you dead? Maybe you are!

He SPINNNNNNS the barrel, AIMS coldly at Ben -- AND
PULLS THE TRIGGER. CLICK. BEN can barely even FLINCH.
JESUS!

HAWTHORNE

You. Don't. Mean. SHIT.
Understand it already: Presidents
die, people around them die! Open
a history book, look in a mirror!
The country's all that matters!
That's why we're here, it's who we
are: patriots, to the very last.
And like it or not, you're goddamn
well gonna be one too.

As he SPINNNNS the barrel again --

HAWTHORNE

Now, you don't wanna live up to
your responsibilities? We'll end
this for you, one way or another.
But you wanna stay in the job?
Start doing the job... or it'll be
your wife, your daughter in that
seat. Someone else you consider a
'friend' --

And presses the gun to Ben's temple.

HAWTHORNE

... if it isn't you first.

He PULLS THE TRIGGER -- the final CLICK ECHOES:

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The motorcade ROARS OFF into the distance, over which:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER (V.O.)
The President had quite a scare
today when his security detail
mistook a nearby plane's engine
trouble for gunfire --

*
*
*
*
*

FADE TO BLACK.

*

SIRENS TAKE US TO --

*

FADE IN:

EXT. VIRGINIA HIGHWAY - DAWN

HEAVY RAIN: the President's MOTORCADE follows a HEARSE
toward Arlington National Cemetery...

*

EXT. VIRGINIA TRUCK STOP GAS STATION - DAWN

A PICKUP TRUCK pulls into a dingy gas station. Gray gets
out with his duffel --

INT. GAS STATION - BATHROOM - DAWN

Gray LOCKS the gas station bathroom door --

QUICK CUTS

Shaving/ black hair dye squirts on plastic gloves/ a
brush combs it through his hair, concealing the GRAY in
it/ an instant tan spray can turns his skin a slightly
darker olive --

Gray takes two glass bottles from the duffel: OIL OF
CINNAMON and PHOSPHOROUS. MIXES them together in a third
bottle, then turns off the lights:

THE SOLUTION GLOWS IN THE DARK.

Gray dips in a SMALL BRUSH, carefully PAINTS it onto a
WHITE MILITARY GLOVE. What's he doing?

Connects his LAPTOP to a portable printer -- a DOCUMENT
spits out on a MILITARY LETTERHEAD: "Assignment Orders
for SSG Bill Johnston, 3rd Infantry Regiment, The Old
Guard..."

INT. ARLINGTON CEMETERY - 3RD INF DIV BARRACKS - MORNING

Gray enters the Arlington Cemetery barracks in UNIFORM; a man who looks like he belongs. Moves to the HONOR GUARD office -- hands a COMMANDER the forged orders he just printed:

COMMANDER

Orders to join the VIP ceremony...

EXT. OAK HILL CEMETERY - MORNING

In the RAIN, an AMERICAN FLAG is draped over VINCENT'S COFFIN. Sam sees Ben fighting back enormous emotion. GUILT crushing him. Six HONOR GUARD SOLDIERS fold the flag, their BACKS TO us.

Secret Service watching the perimeter. Scanning outward.

The last Honor Guard Soldier takes the folded flag. SNAPS an about-face, head tilted down, rain dripping off his brimmed military hat. We can't see his face, until he looks up at Ben:

It's GRAY. Ben contains his reaction: holy shit! The moment we've been waiting for, and it's freighted with everything.

As Gray hands Ben the flag, HE PRESSES HIS WHITE-GLOVED HAND ON TOP OF BEN'S HAND. Hard. Speaks, LOW:

GRAY

Facta non verba.

The men LOCK EYES. Ben NODS SLIGHTLY in acknowledgment. Gray retreats, as Ben turns -- keeping it together -- hands the folded flag to VINCENT'S WIDOW with solemn words.

SAM meets eyes with the widow. Haunted.

INT. LIMOUSINE - MOVING - CLOSE ON BEN - DAY

staring out, deeply stirred by what just happened. It's quiet, just the sound of the window wipers. Finally:

SAMANTHA

... suicide? Not Vincent. No way.

*
*

Ben's face is set in stone. All he wants is to protect her, so he says NOTHING. Quietly desperate for her not to pursue this.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

What's happening? What do you
know? Because you sure as hell
know something.

*
*
*
*

His eyes meet the DRIVER'S in the rearview, more
paranoia. But his silence just makes her more
heartbroken:

*
*
*

SAMANTHA

Okay. I get it, I'm just the
wife. Your war council's banging
on cans, and someone's gotta keep
doing the photo-ops. But it's
me --

*
*

BEN

Please don't ask me about this.

SAMANTHA

Maybe I should just turn on the
TV? I mean, that's how I found
out you're about to be a wartime
president -- who knows what else
Anderson Cooper has to say --

BEN

You knew almost as soon as I did --

SAMANTHA

'Almost' is the space we can't
have between us. I've toed the
line almost two decades -- kept
your secrets, helped build this
goddamned myth -- because of what
I knew you'd do in this job, who
you'd be. But I don't know what
secrets you're keeping now. I
don't know who you are, and that
was our rule: you think I'd put
up with this prison of a life for
anything less? I needed to love
you as a President too.

He looks down, dying to tell her the truth:

*

BEN

I'm trying... to do my job, Sam.

*

SAMANTHA

But it's doing you. And isn't it
my job to tell you that?

*

Words that simply break his heart. He's struggling to
maintain his poker face...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

but it's damn near impossible, so he turns to the window.
She does too. And it's quiet, until finally --

SAMANTHA

What's happening to us?

His eyes close. No way out. OFF the two of them, worlds
apart... *

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Ben enters a massive closet filled with suits. Looks at
himself in the mirror. Identity crisis. Morality
crisis. *

As he starts to remove his tie, he NOTICES something on
his hand in the half-light. Recognizes it as some kind
of IRIDESCENT STAMP. Turns off all the lights now, and:

"LOC.NN6.1P" Glowing right there where Gray pressed.
Ben stares at the number, in the dark, mind tumbling.
Adding it up. Realizing what this might be.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING CORRIDOR - MORNING

Ben moves toward the Oval with Joanna, trying for casual:

BEN

Does the Library of Congress still
use the Dewey-Decimal system?

JOANNA

Yessir. It's computerized, but I
think it's still their base
reference.

BEN

I need you to pull a book for me.
Soon as you can --

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - CLOSEUP - PROFILES IN COURAGE -
MORNING (LATER)

BY JOHN F. KENNEDY is placed on a coffee table. Hard-
bound in linen, the title EMBOSSED IN GOLD. *

WIDER

Ben stares, trying to make sense of it. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA
Anything else, sir?

BEN
No, thank you. That's all.

As she leaves, Ben sits on a couch. Skims the book, not sure what he's looking for... No underlined passages... nothing stuck between the pages... he feels around the binding... no... no --

Wait. At the bottom of the hard cover, a LOOSE THREAD. He starts to PULL IT, revealing a STITCHED INNER LINING.

*

INTERCUT:

THE SURVEILLANCE ROOM

The Watch Agent hits a button, ZOOMING in on Ben and the book --

BEN IN THE OVAL OFFICE

gets up casually and walks into the bathroom, closes the door --

IN THE SURVEILLANCE ROOM

The Agent tracks Ben from one monitor to ANOTHER as he's SEEN entering the bathroom --

OVAL OFFICE BATHROOM

Ben discreetly scans for a hidden camera... sees his own REFLECTION... and realizes... it's hidden behind the mirror.

He turns on the sink. HOT water. STEAM --

THE SURVEILLANCE ROOM

ON MONITOR: view from behind the bathroom mirror as it STEAMS UP and Ben DISAPPEARS FROM VIEW. Surveillance Agent REACTS -- switches to a SECURE CHANNEL:

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

TURNER touches his earpiece as the Surveillance Agent gives him a head's up. MOVES FAST down the hallway to the Oval Office --

INT. OVAL OFFICE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Urgently, Ben peels back the rest of the jacket lining to reveal THE WORLD'S SMALLEST, MILITARY-GRADE EARPIECE AND -- ODDLY -- A PAIR OF CONTACT LENSES. His heart RACES -- on the earpiece is a TINY RED BUTTON -- he slips it in, hits "play":

GRAY (V.O.)
Mr. President, please listen
carefully --

INT. OVAL OFFICE - OUTSIDE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Turner approaches the door, doesn't hear anything --
KNOCKS --

AGENT TURNER
Everything alright, sir?

INT. OVAL OFFICE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben whirls -- SHIT -- covering as the earpiece keeps playing:

BEN
Fine -- be right out --

GRAY (V.O.)
... at the end of this recording,
instructions will guide you to the
extraction point. As for your
wife and daughter, you'll have to
arrange for their safety
yourself -- you'd never make it
out together. I'm sorry I can't
offer a better option, sir.

AGENT TURNER (O.S.)
(another KNOCK)
Mr. President, I'd really like to
make sure you're alright --

Ben's rocked by what he's just heard but has no time to react --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rips out the earpiece, slips it in his pocket with the contacts, seals the book's sticky lining back up --

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

A FLUSH from inside, Ben exits with the book in-hand:

BEN

And you did.

Turner scans the bathroom, his suspicions raised...

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - RESIDENCE - DAY

Samantha exits into the hallway, nearly BUMPS into a 300-pound gorilla: SECRET SERVICE AGENT DONALD MORGAN.

AGENT MORGAN

Didn't mean to startle you, ma'am,
my name's Don Morgan, I'll be your
new S.A.C.

SAMANTHA

(crestfallen)
What happened to Agent Blake?

AGENT MORGAN

Standard rotation for junior
agents. Field assignment came
through.

His smile's distinctly plastic. Sam just lost the only friend she seems to have left.

INT. WEST WING - PRIVATE DINING ROOM - DAY

Lunch: Ben fights distraction as he's briefed by NSC AIDES:

NSC AIDE #1

-- latest estimates show China has
800-900 intermediate-range
missiles, President Deng's gonna
try to marshal international
support for --

BEN

-- the ones he's about to point at
the Rose Garden, I get it --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NSC AIDE #1

He's going to address the U.N.
General Assembly, it's just been
announced.

Ben STOPS cold.

BEN

Deng's coming here?

NSC AIDE #2

In two days, yessir. We're
waiting for word on his manifest,
if he's bringing mostly diplomatic
or military --

But Ben's not really listening anymore. A seed's started
to germinate...

INT. WHITE HOUSE - THE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Ben's flipping through an old ANNAPOLIS YEARBOOK,
remembering faces. But more than that, searching for
something...

Finds the NAVY MIDSHIPMEN FOOTBALL TEAM: his team photo
at 19 years old. Ben as QUARTERBACK, one of the
Midshipmen has an arm slung over his shoulder in
friendship. It's a face we find familiar: WILLIAM
SADOWSKI, younger here, but we met him during the
inauguration party with Ben.

CLOSE ON BEN'S EYES

The seed keeps growing into a PLAN...

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

As a National Security Council meeting disperses,
Hawthorne, Babbit, and Knowles linger behind --

*

HAWTHORNE

Mr. President, a moment?

Ben nods as everyone files out...

HAWTHORNE

Saw your itinerary, you scheduled
a troop review at Quantico. Care
to tell us why?

*

Ben exhales. Earnest, "resigned":

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

If I'm going to ask those men for
the ultimate sacrifice, I need to
look them in the eye.

(the men REACT)

Doesn't matter how we got here...
we're here. If it's us or them,
I'm ready to man up if this goes
hot.

*
*

Knowles, Babbit, and Hawthorne exchange looks --

*

HAWTHORNE

We take on the People's Republic,
it's not some order of cold sesame
noodles we can cancel while
they're biking down the block;
whatever goes hot, stays hot.

*

BEN

Yes, thank you, I've been to war.
Consider me with the program.

And CHUCKS a highly skeptical Hawthorne on the shoulder
as he exits. Knowles looks to him:

*

KNOWLES

You give him a blood transfusion?

*

EXT. MARINE CORPS BASE (QUANTICO, VIRGINIA) - DAY

MARINE ONE ROARS OVER THE IWO JIMA MONUMENT, LANDS. Ben
steps from the chopper, followed by Knowles and Agent
Turner...

*

EXT. PARADE GROUND (QUANTICO) - DAY

Ben walks along a REGIMENT of MARINES in combat gear, at
attention, rifles shouldered. He has a MARINE GENERAL on
one side, Knowles and Turner a few paces back... as he
passes stoic faces... stops at the one he was looking
for: LT. COL. SADOWSKI.

BEN

Guess I'm not the only one who
knows how to throw a party.

LT. COL. SADOWSKI

Mr. President, it's an honor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

Let's drop the formalities, Will;
you've been to my house, now I've
been to yours.

Ben glances back; Knowles and Turner a few paces behind,
out of earshot. So Ben edges closer, takes a leap of
faith:

*

BEN

If I asked you to single out four
men you trust. Men who do what
they're told, no questions asked,
could you do that?

Sadowski just stares, what the fuck? Before he can
respond, Turner and Knowles are RIGHT BESIDE THEM with
the General:

BEN

Just reminding the Colonel of the
beating he took in the Navy-Notre
Dame game. Glutton for
punishment, this guy.

LT. COL. SADOWSKI

(beat; goes with it)
... pouring rain, sprained my
ankle on the third down.

BEN

(the soldiers)
Good thing he's got a stronger
bench today... we're gonna need
'em.

Ben moves on. Agent Turner eyeballs Sadowski up close,
but the Marine displays no glimmer of reaction. Finally,
Turner follows Ben... HOLD ON Sadowski: what the hell
was he just asked to do?

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - MARISA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ben once again stands in Marisa's half-open door,
watching his daughter sleep. Thinking of all he now has
to lose, and what he's about to do. His face: too much.
He starts to go...

MARISA

... Dad?

BEN

Yeah, honey. Go back to sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARISA

Can't sleep.

BEN

Why not?

MARISA

Still miss my own bed.

BEN

This one too big?

MARISA

It's just... not mine. Nothing is.

Boy, does he relate. Tucks in the sheets around her... *

BEN

Scoot over.

She does. He gets in bed beside her, puts his arm under her neck so that he's become her pillow. She's just happy he's here... as he brushes a strand of hair from her forehead...

BEN

I'm sorry I couldn't make your recital. *

She just nods. Trying to make it okay.

MARISA

Next time.

On that, his heart breaks, knowing there may not be another chance... but manages to whisper...

BEN

Next time.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - RESIDENCE MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

A grave-looking Sam watches CNN as she undresses for bed. Ben appears in the doorway; their eyes meet.

BEN

Chinese President's wheels-down in New York tomorrow.

SAMANTHA

Times Square turned Tiananmen Square... congratulations.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

(beat; takes the hit)
I'm going to Camp David in the
morning. Take a breath, review my
strategic --

SAMANTHA

Hey, guess what? I'm not your
scheduler.

She moves past him without a word, chilly. Then --

BEN

I never thought we'd really get
here.

That stops her. She turns, sees he's on the verge of
emotional upwelling. A history of love and affection
behind those eyes. Glances at a camera bubble. Fuck it,
this part they can hear... *

BEN

But when it got real, something...
changed.

(beat)

I made... compromises. Started
talking in seven-second sound
bites... took Marisa out of
school, brought her on the
trail... kept my mouth shut when
that picture broke. *

(beat, angry at
himself)

I let it happen. Just stood by...
and let it happen.

(beat)

When I knew better.

That gets her...

BEN

I took away our life. Our
daughter's life. Everything.
For... me. For this.

(beat)

I thought I was better than that.
I knew you were.

(on the verge of
losing it)

I'm ... sorry... *

She HUGS him. His eyes close, they've both needed each
other's touch so badly...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

You make it sound like you don't
have the power -- all the power in
the world -- to do something about
it.

Over her shoulder, his eyes go back to that camera bubble
again... he WHISPERS in her ear, too quiet for any mic to
hear:

BEN

You're right... no secrets. *

An edge of warning behind it. Her alarm mounting. Ben
turns on the STEREO -- Brahms' "Violin Concerto in D
major" PLAYS as he takes her hand, pulls her toward the
bathroom... *

INT. RESIDENCE - MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben turns on the SHOWER, begins undressing. She looks at
him strangely, what is this? He murmurs...

BEN

Trust me.

She knows that look. The Ben she recognizes. So she
starts undressing too. *

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Eerily, they're being WATCHED as Ben leads her into the
shower. The LOUD MUSIC plays, covering all sound. One
of the Surveillance Officers turns to another:

SURVEILLANCE OFFICER #1

Sh'we get the lip-reader up here?

SURVEILLANCE OFFICER #2

... Nah. Let 'em fuck.

INT. RESIDENCE - SHOWER - CONTINUOUS ACTION

And still the VIOLIN CONCERTO PLAYS, making this a purely
emotional, not sexual, moment. Ben pulls her close,
holding her as the water sprays them... finally, he
whispers:

BEN

Don't react. We're being
watched...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A moment as Sam takes this in. Smiles -- then laughs. But his face remains firm, and she's never seen this expression before. And her smile vanishes as she realizes he isn't kidding.

Outside the shower, PULLING BACK... we can't hear what he's saying, but he's telling her everything. And she's stunned. Horrified. Finally understands the truth.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - LAWN - MORNING

Marine One waits on the White House lawn, rotors spinning. Sam and Marisa say goodbye to Ben... he kneels down to his daughter:

BEN

You listen to your mom, okay?
Whatever she tells you to do, you
do it.

She nods. He grabs and HUGS her. Holding on for dear life.

BEN

(choked)
Love you so much.

MARISA

Love you too, Dad.

Heartsick, he lets go. Sam's keeping it together, nevertheless, on the verge of tears. For her, Ben stays strong -- runs down the inventory of things to happen -- speaking in CODE:

*

BEN

You'll get that prescription
filled?

SAMANTHA

(nods, nervous)
Yeah, I'll call it in once we
settle in...

BEN

Dinner plans?

SAMANTHA

Having a friend drop by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We don't understand what they're saying, but we will. He searches his soul for the courage to leave them, but in the moment, can't seem to find it...

*

BEN
I'm staying. I'm... your husband first.

Sam shakes her head, touches his face...

SAMANTHA
That's not true, not anymore... as much as we want it to be.

Their eyes hold. Knowing this may be their last goodbye. The worst moment of his life.

BEN
You deserve...better.

SAMANTHA
(tears in her eyes)
So do you.

Puts her arms around him. Trying not to show her terror. He whispers:

BEN
I'm gonna make this right... I swear to God I'll make it right...

Holds her so tight. And finally, pulling away, says LOUD ENOUGH for the agents to hear:

BEN
I'll call you at ten.

SAMANTHA
(pulls it together,
nods)
Ten o'clock.

He squeezes her hand, trying with all his strength to keep it together. Sam pulls Marisa closer as they watch Ben get on the chopper. The little girl waves, thinking she'll see her father again soon. Sam -- her heart breaking -- knows otherwise...

*

EXT. CAMP DAVID - TACTICAL OPERATIONS TOWER - DUSK

Waning sunlight GLINTS off a razor-wire fenceline. RACK FOCUS TO THE TACTICAL OPERATIONS TOWER, where the TOWER CHIEF watches Marine One land. Cahill exits, meets a saluting MARINE CAPTAIN:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINE CAPTAIN

Welcome to Camp David, Mr.
President!

INT. CAMP DAVID TACTICAL OPERATIONS TOWER - COMMAND TOWER

ON MONITORS, every inch of the camp covered. We see Ben entering his cabin; we see the Marine Officer with the nuclear Football take the cabin next door:

TOWER AGENT

203 to 201: Traveller's in his
crib. The Football is secure next
door.

EXT. CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN PARK (OUTSIDE CAMP DAVID) - NIGHT

A Dodge Ram pulls up in a shadowed area. GRAY gets out in BLACK FATIGUES, grabs his bag and RUNS into the woods --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Sam and Marisa are eating dinner. Marisa, oblivious, rambles about her day as Sam tries to focus: distracted, nervous, aware that AGENTS MORGAN and CRISAFI are down the hall, watching them:

MARISA

-- and this girl Britney got these
awesome old illustrated books, so
now we're friends, me and Britney.

SAMANTHA

(distracted)
'Britney and I,' honey.

A THROAT CLEARS in the doorway:

AGENT BLAKE

You called for me, ma'am?

SAMANTHA

(a smile; salvation)
Yes, please, come in.

Blake passes by Agents Morgan and Crisafi, who look stoically unhappy about her presence here. Sam reads it:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA
Agent Morgan, I'd like some
privacy, please. Would you close
the door?

And he grudgingly does, but they're still not alone
because --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- one of the Surveillance Agents is watching them:

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
(on monitor)
I just wanted you to know I tried
to get you back, but apparently
it's one of the few things my
husband and I don't have a say
over.

INT. RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

AGENT BLAKE
I know that, ma'am, and I
appreciate it.

SAMANTHA
Now you can call me 'Sam' -- you
don't work for me anymore.

Blake just stands there awkwardly, not comfortable with
that.

SAMANTHA
Can I talk you into staying for
dinner? Least I can do for my
guardian angel.

Something in Sam's voice. A need. Blake nods, okay...

INT. CAHILL'S CABIN - NIGHT

BEN tears off his clothes, changing into sweats. CNN
shows CHINESE PRESIDENT DENG stepping off a military
plane at JFK:

*

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)
... as President Deng arrives in
New York City tonight amid what
many believe could be an armed
confrontation with the West.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CNN REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Officials say he will appeal to
 the community of nations to
 support any aggressive action
 toward America's --

*
*
*
*

-- CLICK. Ben turns the TV off. This is it. Wasting not a moment, he slips in the EARPIECE Gray gave him --

INT. FOREST (2 MILES OUTSIDE CAMP DAVID) - NIGHT

A SEWER DRAIN. Welded shut with a pressure switch to let Camp David security know if it's been tampered with.

Gray uses a piece of metal and clamp to run a bypass on the pressure switch. Quickly sets up a makeshift TENT to cover the light as he IGNITES A WELDING TORCH to cut open the drain --

EXT. CAMP DAVID - CAHILL'S CABIN - NIGHT

Turner makes rounds. THUNDER RUMBLES, a flash of LIGHTNING brightens Ben's CABIN in the distance --

EXT. FOREST/INT. WATER RUNOFF PIPE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Gray slips on NIGHT-VISION GOGGLES to navigate the pipe system. MOVES QUICKLY down the pipe, TURNING CORNERS, he pulls out a PAINT GUN -- MARKS THE WALLS with infrared paint to remember his way out --

*

INT. CAHILL'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben opens Gray's CONTACT LENS CASE -- Slides them in his eyes. Hits a switch and the room goes DARK --

BEN'S POV

His contacts are INFRARED. His reflection is a RED SILHOUETTE in the mirror. Checks his watch: "9:42."

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

"9:42" on a CLOCK as Sam eyes it nervously, mid-conversation with Blake, Marisa now doing homework on the couch in b.g.:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA
-- and your social life?

Blake sips her coffee, uncomfortable...

*

SAMANTHA
Sorry, I'm prying...

A beat. Against her instincts, Blake admits:

AGENT BLAKE
I've been told I'm not the warmest person. Doesn't help that I can't talk openly about most of my day.

SAMANTHA
Must be hard.

AGENT BLAKE
Guessing it goes both ways.
Can't be easy having a husband with so many secrets.

*

Samantha's eyes narrow just a little.

SAMANTHA
I like to think I'm not totally in the dark.

Straight at Blake, probing for some kind of response. A hint of reaction. Nothing. They stare at each other.

EXT. CAHILL'S CABIN - PORCH - NIGHT

Ben SLIDES all the curtains closed. Picks up the phone, a nervous breath, readying himself for what he's about to do:

VOICE (V.O.)
Yes, Mr. President.

BEN
I'd like to see Major Gilmore.

*

EXT. CAMP DAVID - CONTINUOUS ACTION

RAIN starts to fall heavily on Turner, as he HEARS:

*

RADIO (V.O.)
203 to 205: Gilmore's heading to Traveller's cabin.

*

*

*

Turner starts MOVING across the woods toward the cabin --

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT TURNER

Roger --

EXT. CAMP DAVID TACTICAL OPERATIONS TOWER - CONTINUOUS ACTION

MAJOR GILMORE, the Marine carrying the Football, exits the cabin and heads toward Ben. KNOCKS and enters --

INT. PRESIDENT'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- Ben CLOSES the door behind him. Stoic.

MAJOR GILMORE

Mr. President.

BEN

I'd like you to uncuff
The Football.

MAJOR GILMORE

-- Sir?

BEN

Not a suggestion, Major. Give it
to me.

HE'S SMOKING GILMORE OUT. Trying to see if he's one of them. A long, uncomfortable pause -- we aren't sure --

MAJOR GILMORE

That's... not the protocol, sir.

BEN

My order is the protocol.

TENSION. Gilmore isn't sure how to react -- and sort of SMILES APPEASINGLY -- but there's DESPERATION -- that's when Ben KNOWS HE'S BAD -- and it happens FAST --

Gilmore MOVES to activate his wrist-mic, BEN LUNGES for the FOOTBALL -- Gilmore SWINGS the metal case, SLAMMING Ben back --

Gilmore STRIKES again, but because he's CUFFED to the Football it's CLUMSY -- off balance --

BEN'S MILITARY INSTINCTS KICK IN -- his knee -- hard into GILMORE'S GUT -- grabbing the metal case -- SMASHING IT down on Gilmore's head and KNOCKING HIM OUT COLD.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben -- FAST -- searching Gilmore's unconscious body for
the KEY to unlock the case -- nothing in the POCKETS --
jacket -- shirt -- pants -- shit --

Wait -- A SECRET POCKET IN THE LINING OF GILMORE'S JACKET
-- where Ben finds the KEY but --

SUDDENLY THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN AND TURNER'S STANDING
THERE!

Heartbeat of SHOCK at finding Gilmore on the ground, the
President over him -- Turner goes for his gun but Ben
BODYSLAMs HIM -- the KEY flying from Ben's hand, the GUN
flying from Turner's -- a balls-out, messy, close-quarter
death match --

Ben takes a PUNCH in the face, staggers -- Turner LOOPS
an arm around Ben's throat, YANKS BACK -- they
TUMBLE/SLAM to the floor, Ben LANDING on top of Turner
who holds the arm lock, CHOKING THE LIFE OUT OF HIM --

Ben -- eyes POPPING -- SEES a GUN in an ANKLE HOLSTER
beneath Turner's upturned pants' leg -- Ben's fingers
GRASP -- flailing -- reaching -- seconds before he PASSES
OUT --

He PULLS the gun from the holster, swings it back and
BLAMM!!! BLOWS TURNER'S HEAD APART.

EXT. CAHILL'S CABIN - NIGHT

The HARD RAIN covers the sound of the shot -- a
PATROLLING MARINE SENTRY is oblivious --

INT. CAHILL'S CABIN

PUUUUUUUH!! Ben GASPS a huge intake of air as Turner's
grip RELEASES -- Ben stumbles up -- CHOKING -- sucking
air -- recovering -- turns and WINCHES at Turner's body.
Never easy taking a life, no matter whose it is.

Ben checks his watch: 10:00!! Shit -- scrambles,
looking for that KEY he took off Gilmore -- finds it --
uses it to UNCUFF The Football from Gilmore's wrist --

Ben waves his hand with the vial/chip over a SENSOR on
the laptop. A light turns from RED to GREEN. It
UNLOCKS.

The screen instantly ACTIVATES: "SELECT TARGET PACKAGE."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben quickly scrolls through options: "ALPHA CATEGORY,
OPTION A3: EASTERN EUROPE... OPTION A7: MIDDLE EAST...
OPTION A11: ASIA..." Finds:

*

"OPTION A12: CHINA MAINLAND ONLY." A FLASHING CURSOR
next to "Enter" -- but Ben doesn't hit it, not yet --

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Blake's getting ready to go --

AGENT BLAKE

Thank you for the coffee.

*

Sam checks her watch: 10:00. Heart SKIPS, she says to
Marisa:

SAMANTHA

Honey, let's walk Agent Blake out.

MARISA

I'm doing homework--

SAMANTHA

Marisa. Now.

Marisa rolls her eyes, turns on her IPOD and slips in the
earbuds -- tuning her mom out defiantly as she follows
Sam and Blake past Agents Morgan and Crisafi, into the
ELEVATOR --

*

*

*

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

*

Blake hits "Level One." The elevator starts to move.
MUSIC coming from Marisa's headphones. Blake senses
something weird, looks over and sees Sam's HAND SHAKING --

*

*

AGENT BLAKE

Ma'am? You alright?

There's a pause. And Sam turns to Blake -- WHISPERS,
dead straight:

*

SAMANTHA

Just shoot me now, but spare my
daughter.

*

*

AGENT BLAKE

-- what -- ?

SAMANTHA

Tell me the truth, we don't have
time -- Are. You. IN ON IT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Marisa -- OBLIVIOUS -- the MUSIC --

*

AGENT BLAKE
IN ON WHAT?

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE ROOM -
CONTINUOUS ACTION

Like a shot, the Surveillance Agent switches comm
channels:

SURVEILLANCE AGENT
(frantic)
-- RED! -- RED! CODE RED!
ELEVATOR SIX OUTSIDE CHINA ROOM!

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Morgan and Crisafi RACE DOWN a stairwell with two OTHER
AGENTS:

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

SAMANTHA
They're gonna try and separate us
-- if we have any chance of
surviving we have to get to the
emergency bunker NOW!

*
*
*

Sam and Blake LOCK EYES -- and for a crazy tense beat we
don't know WHAT Blake's gonna do... until she STOPS THE
ELEVATOR on the State Floor. Marisa looks up. And now
Blake draws her gun and PRESSES IT TO SAMANTHA'S HEAD --
Marisa SCREAMS --

*
*
*
*
*

SAMANTHA
Oh God -- you are --

*
*

MARISA
(RIPS out her earbuds;
starting to CRY)
-- Mom, what's happening?!

AGENT BLAKE

QUIET!

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - STATE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

As the elevator door opens, MORGAN, CRISAFI and the TWO
OTHER AGENTS rush in, guns drawn -- STOP when they see
Blake holding her gun to the First Lady's neck -- Marisa
CROUCHED in terror --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT MORGAN
Agent Blake, step out of
the elevator and drop the
gun -- I DON'T NEED TO
DEFINE YOUR PRIORITIES FOR
YOU, DROP IT --

AGENT BLAKE
 -- NO: RADIO IN A POTUS-
 TRIPLE-ONE, THEN I PUT DOWN
 THE GUN --

Eternity passes -- Blake EXPLODES:

AGENT BLAKE
 I AM DEADLY FUCKING SERIOUS!

AGENT #2
 Alright! Look -- I'm calling it
 in --

He drops his gun on the floor -- and in a split-second
 Morgan and Crisafi trade a LOOK; MORGAN COLDLY FIRES
 POINT-BLANK AT THE AGENT'S CHEST TO STOP HIM FROM
 CALLING -- BEFORE THE FOURTH AGENT KNOWS WHAT'S
 HAPPENING, CRISAFI SHOOTS HIM TOO --

Blake HEAVES Sam and Marisa to one side of the elevator,
 COVERING THEM BOTH WITH HER BODY WHILE RETURNING FIRE AT
 MORGAN AND CRISAFI -- GUNSHOTS PEPPER THE ELEVATOR
 WALLS --

AGENT BLAKE
 Down button!

Sam STABS out a finger hitting the elevator pad -- doors
 CLOSE --

AGENT MORGAN
 (into mic)
Blackbird and Knapsack are exposed
 -- they're on their way to Deep
 Six --

*

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - NIGHT

Sam, Blake and a HYSTERICAL Marisa exit the elevator into
 the underground tunnel -- Blake pulls a TELESCOPING BATON
 from her side, wedges it into elevator so doors can't
 close -- she's reeling in shock, the enormity of all this
 still sinking in:

AGENT BLAKE
 Damnit! This is real, isn't it?

The women start RUNNING down the tunnel --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

What happened? What's a Potus-
Triple-One?

AGENT BLAKE

Standard operating procedure;
call the FBI in a First Family
hostage situation.

SAMANTHA

... and they didn't...

Blake presses a button to open the train door -- that's
when she sees BLOOD pooling under Blake's shirt --

SAMANTHA

My God --

AGENT BLAKE

-- it's not bad, keep
moving --

Blake swallows her pain as they press onward down the
tunnel --

INT. CAHILL'S CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ben snaps open a POCKET KNIFE -- lights a MATCH -- runs
it under the blade. What's he doing? And then --

CUTS INTO HIS PALM. We play most of this on his FACE, AS
HE DIGS OUT THE IMPLANTED CHIP.

Drops it into the sink, blood pooling down the drain.
Exhales, bearing back pain -- starts WRAPPING his hand
with bandage as he moves to THE FOOTBALL --

THE BLINKING CURSOR beside the "China" nuclear package.
And God help us, hits "ENTER" --

EXT. F.E. WARREN AFB (WYOMING) - NUKE SILO - NIGHT

THE MISSILE SILO COMES ALIVE -- RED ROTATING WARNING
LIGHTS -- the huge blast shield slides back, revealing a
NUCLEAR ICBM:

IN THE CONTROL ROOM

ALARMS SCREAMING --

OFFICER-IN-CHARGE

Launch authorization from POTUS
mobile capability! Get NORAD
Commander on the horn!

EXT. MALMSTROM AFB (MONTANA) / MINOT AFB (NORTH DAKOTA) - NIGHT

*
*

IDENTICAL SCENES AS MORE SILOS OPEN ACROSS THE UNITED STATES -- B-52s are scrambled, aircrews heading for the massive bombers --

*
*
*

INT. CAMP DAVID TACTICAL OPERATIONS TOWER - CONTINUOUS ACTION

EVERYTHING GOES BATSHIT: A DEFCON 1 ALERT, ALARMS -- we're WHIPPING AROUND the room, OVERLAPPING:

TOWER AGENT #1
What the fu-- ?

TOWER AGENT #2
-- Traveler just activated
COG protocols --

TOWER AGENT #3
-- CONFIRMED: NORAD JUST
WENT TO DEFCON ONE; NUCLEAR
SILOS OPENING PER OPTION
PACKAGE A-12!!

LEAD TOWER AGENT
-- THIS IS NOT A DRILL.
HOBBS, DOPKINS GET YOUR
ASSES IN HERE!!

TOWER AGENT #4
Priority evac in effect; all
critical tier-one personnel are
being moved to safe bunkers -- we
have a hundred percent
accountability --

TOWER AGENT #5
(into headset)
201 THIS 203, OVER! 201 THIS 203,
OVER!
(to the room)
NO COMMS WITH TURNER!

TOWER AGENT #6
-- WHERE THE HELL IS HE?!

TOWER AGENT #7
-- WHERE THE HELL'S
TRAVELER?!

They SNAP to a BLINKING, UNMOVING DOT on a monitor -- the TRACKING CHIP:

LEAD TOWER AGENT
Traveller's stationary, in the
cottage! Secure his location!
Go! Go! Go!

INT. CAHILL'S CABIN - NIGHT

A dozen agents BURST into the dark cabin -- hit the LIGHTS to find Agent Turner, DEAD, and the Marine Officer, UNCONSCIOUS, on the ground amid toppled furniture from the fight --

An agent bursts into the BATHROOM to find a BLOODY SINK. And the TRACKING CHIP there --

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
Room is clear! Traveler's gone!
Fanning out -- Securing perimeter!

EXT. CAMP DAVID - CAHILL'S CABIN - NIGHT

BEN races through the pelting rain -- using the INFRARED CONTACTS to see in the dark -- guided by GRAY'S VOICE over the earpiece as he passes a row of POWER GENERATORS:

GRAY (V.O.)
(on earpiece)
-- determine true north, 040
degrees, should see large out-of-
place oak tree, 30 meters then
stop --

Ben sees the INFRARED LASER FENCE -- he drops -- crawls under the low beams -- keep moving, hurry --

INT. CAMP DAVID TACTICAL OPERATIONS TOWER - CONTINUOUS ACTION

LEAD AGENT BARKS TO MONITOR TECHS:

LEAD TOWER AGENT
Go ambient!

EXT. TACTICAL OPERATIONS TOWER - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Xenon spotlights POP ON all around the grounds, BLINDING Ben --

INT. CAMP DAVID TACTICAL OPERATIONS TOWER - CONTINUOUS ACTION

IN THE AMBIENT LIGHT, BEN'S NOW VISIBLE ON THE MONITOR:

WATCH OFFICER
Sector four, heading east along
the course at two hundred meters --

EXT. CAMP DAVID - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

ALARMS -- the Doberman's UNLEASHED as Ben LEAPS UP the fence, using the jacket to PULL HIMSELF OVER THE RAZOR WIRE -- still he SLICES his hands, legs -- suddenly the dog's JUMPING up, TEETH CLAMP into Ben's leg -- he manages to pull himself OVER and drops with a THUD -- slashed to hell -- fights shock and pain --

A GRILLE GRATE POPS UP AS GRAY EMERGES! MOVING FAST -- GRABS BEN, YANKING HIM DOWN TO SAFETY --

GRAY
I gotcha, Mr. President -- I
gotcha --

He pulls him through the grate opening into:

INT. UNDERGROUND PIPELINE - NIGHT

They LAND in a water runoff pipe.

BEN
(catching his breath,
through the pain)
... what took you... so long?

GRAY
Thought you Marines were swift and
deadly, sir.

Gray throws an arm around Ben's shoulder and starts hurrying him off down the pipe -- following the INFRARED PAINT he left behind to mark the exit path. See THE FOOTBALL in Ben's hand:

GRAY
Jesus, is that -- ?

BEN
Insurance. Emergency Action
protocols are running --
controlled chaos for at least an
hour, buy us time.

Gray can't help but GRIN, impressed. Ben offers a hand:

BEN
Ben Cahill.

GRAY
Lieutenant Colonel Madigan Gray,
sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
Thank you, Colonel.

GRAY
 Don't thank me yet... this was the
 easy part.

INT. NAVOBS NAVAL OBSERVATORY - VP'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

*

Vice President Dennet and Mrs. Dennet are sleeping when they're awoken by LIGHTS through the window as a chopper touches down outside; then LOUD KNOCKS, a RINGING beside phone -- six men BURST in; two SECRET SERVICE, a uniformed MILITARY AIDE:

MILITARY AIDE
 Excuse us, Mrs. Dennet, national
 security emergency --

She quickly gets up, throws on a robe, and is ushered out -- which freaks Dennet even more:

DENNET
 -- what's -- ? What's happening?

INT. HAWTHORNE'S ESTATE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A RINGING BEDSIDE PHONE startles Hawthorne mid-slumber. He answers, still half-dreaming:

HAWTHORNE
 -- hello?!

VOICE (V.O.)
 Sir, we have a code-word Lariat Advance, the Secret Service has assumed Command Authority. We need to move you to a secured location right now.

Hawthorne snaps up in SHOCK:

HAWTHORNE
 -- what the hell're you talking about?

EXT. VIRGINIA HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A Secret Service caravan of Suburbans ROARS through the night, lights FLASHING, sirens SCREAMING --

INT. MIDDLE SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

In back: Hawthorne and Babbit brim with rage. Cannot fucking believe this --

GENERAL BABBIT
No way of shutting down The
Football remotely -- sonofabitch
took us to high alert.

*
*
*
*

HAWTHORNE
Meaning what -- ?

*
*

GENERAL BABBIT
Our silos are open but nothing
cuts loose unless he launches --

HAWTHORNE
He's bluffing. The hell's his end-
game?

*

GENERAL BABBIT
Showing our hand to the Chinese --
tipping them off we're going pre-
emptive, let them get their
defenses up so we think
twice --

*

HAWTHORNE
-- by taking us to the brink?

GENERAL BABBIT
Start a war to stop one. China's
matching us move-for-move: intel
shows coupling of solid-fuel
missiles with warheads.

*

HAWTHORNE
We fully operational with missile
defense?

GENERAL BABBIT
Options package has their
satellites; we blind their
targeting systems, hit their
silos, send those rice runners
back to the stone age --

HAWTHORNE
Where's Deng?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENERAL BABBIT

Screaming bloody fucking murder in
five dialects from The Plaza
Hotel; demanding to be moved up in
the U.N. lineup tomorrow --

HAWTHORNE

Who do we have on Cahill? I
wanted him boxed -- I want the
earth scorched and salted --

EXT. CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN PARK (OUTSIDE CAMP DAVID) - NIGHT

FEMA WORKERS set up road-blocks for random stop-and-frisks -- a line of ANGRY DRIVERS:

GENERAL BABBIT (V.O.)

We set up FEMA quarantine
protocols for a hundred mile
radius around the camp. Anywhere
he pops up, we'll be there in
thirty minutes --

-- and we DROP DOWN INTO the RUN-OFF PIPE below the road,
where we see BEN and GRAY, hurrying along, unseen --

HAWTHORNE (V.O.)

ECHELON package -- ?

INT. NSA MONITORING HUB - CONTINUOUS ACTION

NSA WATCH AGENTS recon a blizzard of intel on hundreds of
PLASMAS: cell phone calls, internet data, CCTV city grid
feeds:

GENERAL BABBIT (V.O.)

Our people in NSA added his
voiceprint to the watch list,
they're on standby to run a
blackout drill if he picks up a
phone, makes it to a news
station --

INT. TOWN CAR (ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE) - NIGHT

-- as the Suburban caravan ROARS through the gates at
Andrews, toward a waiting E-4B 747 Jumbo conversion, the
DOOMSDAY PLANE. Aircrews and ground handlers ready her
for a hasty departure:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENERAL BABBIT

-- meantime the clever little
shit's got us flying racetracks
30,000 feet over the Atlantic.
We're benched till he reverses the
launch sequence.

HAWTHORNE

Yeah, well, I've got a different
plan -- put his Shadow in play.
Stand-ins for the wife and kid
too.

The sedan door's opened by Air Force FLIGHT CREW,
Hawthorne and Babbit are quickly escorted up the
stairway:

INT. "DOOMSDAY" PLANE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Right near the open door of the cockpit, two PILOTS nod:

PILOT #1

We're light today. May have to
serve your own drinks.

-- he says with irony, as he gestures back to the massive
main cabin, occupied ONLY BY OUR GROUP. They meet
Hawthorne's gaze with equally knowing eyes. He's having
enormous trouble swallowing the indignity of the position
they've been put in --

HAWTHORNE

(finally, angrily)
Let's go.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

A ZODIAC RAFT cuts swiftly through swells. BLOOD has
started seeping through Ben's bandage where the chip's
been cut out -- as he rewraps his hand:

GRAY

Sure you don't want something for
the pain?

BEN

Need a clear head.

GRAY

You take it well.

Ben's grateful. Reads the soldier's haunted eyes. Knows
he has a million questions:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

You were live bait, you and your men. China murders our boys in cold blood, we sail into their waters with a righteous sword... by the time I knew, it was done.

(beat)

'Sorry'... doesn't cut it.

Gray, wounds still so raw. But keeps it locked down. Focused on the mission:

GRAY

Truck's across the river. Closest secure post's Fort Detrick. We get you bunkered in, then we bring down the hammer, hard as hell.

BEN

We've got bigger problems.

GRAY

... bigger problems?

EXT. SHORELINE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

A berm by the shoreline. The Zodiac glides in, Ben and Gray jump out; Gray's mind tumbles as they drag the raft onto sand...

GRAY

Just -- assuming for a second we can even get there, U.N.'s got its own security force -- brigade of bodyguards from every country -- no way to ID friend or foe --

BEN

If you have a better idea --

-- as Gray leads him toward the FOREST, toward Gray's PICKUP TRUCK camouflaged in branches --

GRAY

The fort has a secure line, you can use it to contact --

BEN

-- there is no secure line; they'll flag my voice, cut me off and track us --

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAY -- email your diplomatic corps, record a phone video, upload it to YouTube--	BEN -- and say what? The American President's a fugitive? We go to the grave with this.	*
---	---	----------

GRAY

-- well, we got a helluva chance
of getting there.

*

BEN

My wife'll try and send word to a
Marine buddy at Quantico, flew
gunships in Desert Storm. He'll
have orders to evac us at Harrison
Island, Potomac River...

GRAY

When's the cut-off point?

BEN

If he doesn't show by 0430...
means she didn't make it.
(trying not to let
his fear own him)
And neither do we.

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - CENTRAL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Overhead lights POP POP POP TO LIFE. As Sam, Blake, and
Marisa enter the shelter, the massive BLAST DOOR SHUTS
behind them, impenetrable steel lock cycling home with a
CLANG --

INT. SHELTER INFIRMARY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

They thunder in, Sam half-carrying Blake, who struggles
to pull off her jacket, checks her shoulder wound:

SAMANTHA

I know you're hurt; I need you to
help me get on the tac-sat
console --

INT. TAC-SAT COMMAND ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Blake flips a switch. The room starts POWERING UP. The
Tac-Sat console activates: "ENTER POTUS COMMAND CODE."
Blake, in PAIN, opens a WEAPONS ARMORY and starts
stockpiling weapons.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam pulls out a PIECE OF FOLDED PAPER etched with BEN'S HANDWRITING, reads from it/ starts typing in the Presidential command codes. The screen responds:
"HELLO, MR. PRESIDENT."

*
*
*

MARISA

... Mom?

FEAR in the girl's voice. Sam and Blake TURN -- a plasma running a CNN BROADCAST chills them to the bone: from a distance, "Ben" waves as he boards Marine One at Camp David; DOUBLES OF SAM AND MARISA TOO, their backs to the press, equally distant from camera and therefore unidentifiable as fakes:

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)

-- as the President boards Marine One with his family, many are wondering if there's any hope of avoiding the grave prospect of --
(realizing the portent)
War with the People's Republic of China --

*
*
*
*

MARISA

(scared, confused)
-- who're -- that's Dad -- that's me -- what's happening?

Sam pulls her daughter closer, doesn't know what to say as she meets eyes with Blake: this can't be good. A BEEPING turns Blake's attention to:

*
*

ANOTHER SCREEN: "EMERGENCY ACTION PROTOCOLS: ACTIVE" --

*

Lists of TIER ONE PERSONNEL being moved to bunkers. For example: "DENNET, JOSHUA -- T1 -- CURRENT LOC: 1 OBSERV. CIRCLE/WHITE HOUSE..."

*
*

AGENT BLAKE

Continuity of Government protocols are running --

SAMANTHA

(heartened)
-- he made it out --

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT

The Air Force E-4B "Doomsday Plane" roars over the Atlantic flanked by two C-37A's, the three break off heading in different directions -- we STAY WITH the Doomsday:

*
*
*

INT. "DOOMSDAY" PLANE - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION *

A MONITOR in the tech room FLASHES the same scrolling
CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT LIST. People/Locations. We
read: *

HAWTHORNE, JAMES. CURRENT LOC: EB-4 747 DOOMSDAY. *

KNOWLES, QUENTIN: -- T1 -- CURRENT LOC: EB-4 747 DOOMSDAY *

BABBIT, LLOYD: -- T1 -- CURRENT LOC: EB-4 747 DOOMSDAY *

Down the line, every member of the group. Dinsmore,
Knowles. Now the screen blinks: "ALL TIER-ONE PERSONNEL
SECURE." *

REVERSE ON HAWTHORNE *

Staring at this with a dawning sense of foreboding,
instincts alert... Babbit appears behind him: *

GENERAL BABBIT *

We have 100 percent
accountability. *

A beat -- as Hawthorne realizes: *

HAWTHORNE *

I think that was the point. Who
sees this? *

Babbit. Getting it now. Shit: *

GENERAL BABBIT *

Anyone with... executive top
secret clearance. *

HAWTHORNE *

... he activated the launch
sequence to get us all in the same
goddamn room. *

Turns to the OTHERS. They know what this is. What Ben's
doing: *

DINSMORE *

Sonofabitch knows who and where we
are now. *

FUMING SILENCE, the affront of Ben's one-upmanship a
knife-twist to them all. And they're looking at
HAWTHORNE. The man responsible. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE

Everything's on the table.
Everything.

(humbled, grave)
It's still correctable. If we
act, across the board.

KNOWLES

Has to be unanimous.

Babbit is the first to say:

GENERAL BABBIT

Aye.

Dinsmore, to his left, repeats. A beat, and then
Knowles, in the next seat, repeats. And one by one, with
growing speed, the others do as well. They've just
resolved to kill the President and his family.

HAWTHORNE

(finally)
Prep the transfer of power.

Knowles picks up a phone, starts giving orders as Babbit
opens up a CASE -- inside is:

A LONG-RANGE REMOTE DETONATOR. He ACTIVATES it, readying
the trigger and PRESSES IT:

INT. MARINE ONE (OVER PENNSYLVANIA) - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The FIRST FAMILY DOUBLES sit in the cargo hold. Odd
silence. Finally, the CAHILL DOUBLE turns to an AGENT
across the hold:

PRESIDENT DOUBLE

What's our ETA -- ?

BOOOM!!! From the back of the chopper, DEBRIS AND SMOKE
AND A RUSH OF OUTSIDE AIR FILLS THE CABIN! SOMETHING'S
JUST DETONATED IN THE ENGINE! The MARINE PILOTS fight
the controls, emergency warning panel FLASHING MADLY:

MARINE OFFICER PILOT #1

(into his helmet mic)
Mayday! Mayday! Marine one, five
miles southwest Chesterville,
going down, going down!

THE DOUBLES SCREAMING -- THE LITTLE GIRL -- AS:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OUT THE WINDSHIELD: TILTED 90 DEGREES -- IMPOSSIBLE G-
 FORCES -- SHAKING WILDLY -- A DENSE FOREST AREA GROWS
 HUGE AS WE SPIRAL TOWARD IT, AND IN THE LAST SECONDS
 BEFORE IMPACT, WE --

CUT TO:

INT. NAVOBS NAVAL OBSERVATORY - VP'S QUARTERS - DAWN

Vice-President Dennet paces his quarters in his bathrobe,
 unravelling; he's been locked here awhile, trying to
 figure out what's happening. A HULKING Secret Service
 Agent stands by the door, barring him from leaving:

DENNET

(finally)

Look, I don't do well on half a
 wink, so if you'll please tell me
 what the hell's so goddamn -

-- the door OPENS: the STAFF SECRETARY enters, grave:

STAFF SECRETARY

Mr. Vice President, we have some
 very bad news. There's been an
 accident, Marine One -- the
 President's been killed.

DENNET

Oh, Chri-- Christ --

STAFF SECRETARY

We're preparing for an emergency
 transfer of power.

And they're leading him OUT... toward the Presidency.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

Off the highway, a 24-Hour truck stop -- MOVING THROUGH
 BIG RIGS, we FIND a HIDDEN CAR: Gray appears with Ben,
 unlocks the door... as Ben's eyes go to the truck stop
 diner window...

At first, we don't see what he does... but his FACE tells
 us it's shocking... as he moves closer, we ANGLE AROUND
 to reveal the TV in full: live footage of Marine One,
 having just crashed. The ANCHOR tries to maintain
 composure:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CNN BROADCASTER (V.O.)

I've just received word that...

Marine One, the Presidential
helicopter, carrying the First
Family --

(voice breaking)

-- has crashed. There are... no
survivors.-- and slowly, the STUNNED PATRONS are all moving toward
the TV... a hush falls...

CNN BROADCASTER (V.O.)

No word on whether... I'm sorry,
when the oath will be administered
to Vice-President Dennet, placing
him in charge of --

BEN

-- LIKE HE'S BEEN HIT WITH A SLEDGEHAMMER.

As one of the patrons turns... NOTICES A MAN BY THE
WINDOW WHO LOOKS A HELLUVA LOT LIKE THE PRESIDENT... the
fuck?The patron moves closer, but Ben's already turned away --
moving -- and the patron's out the door, hurrying to
confirm what he saw -- but all he sees is:

GRAY'S CAR

Speeding away --

INT. GRAY'S CAR (HIGHWAY) - NIGHT

Gray pins the pedal; Ben's white-as-sheet, gutstruck...

GRAY

Secret's sure as shit in the grave
now.

(beat)

What's our next move, sir?

Ben barely knows what to think, let alone what to say...
just trying to keep it together, stay focused... but the
truth is, he has no idea how to get out of this one.
Quietly:

BEN

Nothing changes. After their next
move comes our next move.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And we HOLD ON him, rocked to his core...

*

INT. BUNKER - TAC-SAT COMMAND ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Monitors and TVs pre-set to news channels have turned on.
At the console, Sam's just stunned: their deaths have
been staged. They're never gonna make it out of here
alive.

*

*

CNN BROADCASTER (V.O.)

-- once again, President and Mrs.
Benjamin Cahill -- along with
their young daughter -- killed in
a tragic helicopter crash, their
remains yet to be recovered -- Air
Force officials say it's too soon
to suggest mechanical failure --

*

*

*

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*

*

MARISA

(confused, scared)
Mom... did -- we're not dead --

*

SAMANTHA

It's a lie, it's all a lie --
you're fine, and you're gonna be
fine --

*

*

*

-- but even Sam knows her daughter doesn't trust the tone
in her voice; Marisa notices another monitor, points:

*

MARISA

-- what's that?

CCTV view from outside the blast door. A COMMANDO UNIT
OF SECRET SERVICE AGENTS, along with AGENTS MORGAN AND
CRISAFI. Kevlar, MP-5s. Sam and Blake lock eyes: not
good.

EXT. FALLOUT SHELTER - BLAST DOOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The commandos are setting up a "BURNING BAR." Rods of
magnesium connected to tanks of oxygen. One of the
commandos IGNITES the burning bar with an acetylene
torch, adjusts the flame.

A second commando turns on the oxygen tanks and BOOM --
THE FLAME'S SO WHITE HOT IT'S GREEN. The heat hits the
central lock mechanism and starts BURNING THROUGH --

Another commando starts working on the FIBER OPTIC
HOUSING. Trying to remove the deadbolt to the bunker
power/phone lines:

INT. COMMAND BUNKER - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Marisa backs away from the monitor, looks to her mom, terrified:

SAMANTHA

(best smile)

Honey, there's a kitchen, see if you can get Agent Blake some water.

Blake nods, half smiles: that'd be nice. As Marisa exits -- Sam says urgently to Blake:

SAMANTHA

They can't intercept a call down here, right?

AGENT BLAKE

Not remotely, but they'll follow the fiber optic line outside the bunker -- first thing they'll cut.

Sam turns back to the Tac-Sat and keeps typing furiously, reading/copying Ben's handwritten scrawl off the piece of paper:

"TO: William.Sadowski@usmc.mil."

Then: "Darkhorse: need four marine fire team uncompromised one commo specialist, full tactical load out and a bird... Rendezvous Point MB 6754 8769, 0430 -- the Quarterback."

*
*

Suddenly SCREENS flicker, LIGHTS too -- and we can't tell if the message is getting out --

*
*

EXT. FOREST (HARRISON ISLAND) - CLEARING - SUNRISE

In a forest clearing, Gray sets up 5 IR CHEM-LIGHTS, beacons to vector a chopper in. Ben looks to the skies, waiting. Willing that chopper to come and prove his family's still alive.

*
*

GRAY

They're alright, sir.

Ben half-nods. Trying to convince himself:

GRAY

Bunker doors're double-titanium. Even with the best equipment... seven, eight hours before anyone can cut through.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
Assuming they made it.

GRAY
(a beat)
We'll know when the chopper shows,
sir.

BEN
My friends call me 'Ben.'

GRAY
(circumstance versus
training)
Do my best.

Wind jostles the trees...

GRAY
You were with the 1st Marine
Division in the Gulf?

BEN
Al Wafrah. Kuwait.

GRAY
Heard it was some firefight.

Ben's eyes. Secrets held. Hardest with a fellow
soldier.

BEN
I read your file.
(beat)
Six months in Womack. You get the
full workup?

Gray starts digging in his kit bag, avoiding Ben's eyes:

GRAY
Yeah.

BEN
Hard knock, isn't it.

Gray nods, soulsick. A beat.

GRAY
Easy to pull the trigger, that's
what they train us for. Good guys
and bad guys. Nice and simple.
(beat)
But deep down you know you're
losing parts you can't ever get
back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben nods. Gray looks at him. Knows Ben's been there:

GRAY

I saw that picture. Tore you guys
to pieces, but you came out...

Ben looks off. What he says next pours out
involuntarily. Equal parts conscience-cleansing,
catharsis, and confession:

BEN

The picture's a lie.

Gray REACTS. Ben's eyes are alive with the painful
memory:

BEN

There was an ambush. They hit us
hard and fast, but they fell back.
After we secured the area, we
swept the trucks for wounded. Saw
one of our guys on the ground, leg
shot up. Picked him up. To get
him to a medic... a combat
cameraman took my picture, looked
like I was under fire... but it
was over.

(beat)

Twenty years later, picture pops
up in all the papers... they paid
him to say I saved his life.

(beat, shame)

I just kept my head down.

Gray, just staring. But understanding. Sympathizing.

GRAY

Ben?

(as Ben looks up)

I don't care if I make it out of
this alive. I just need to
know... I'm working for the good
guys.

Beat.

GRAY

This time I am.

Ben looks back at him. Hearted. GRATEFUL. And then --

A SOUND in the distance: THUMP-THUMP-THUMP. CHOPPER
BLADES. The men lock eyes -- hope: Ben's family is
alive!

EXT. SKIES ABOVE FOREST - MORNING

*

A BLACKHAWK UH-60Q MEDEVAC CHOPPER soars over thick forest just beyond Quantico. Sadowski's at the stick.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - CONTINUOUS ACTION

As the Helo comes in on a hard flare tactical landing, Gray leads Ben from the shadows to the side of the bird. Both of their heads duck low as the rotors wind down. Gray slides back the crew door, revealing...

FOUR YOUNG MARINES. Most are 18 or 19 years old. Tough, well-trained, but not trained for this. When they see their President, their eyes POP:

CORPORAL SOROS

Jesus, God...

BEN

President's hard enough, but thanks --

*

*

*

LT. COL. SADOWSKI

Ten-hut!

As Ben and Gray hop in, the boys SNAP SALUTES:

BEN

As you were --
(to Sadowski)
Thanks for coming --

Sadowski's still pretty stunned by all this:

LT. COL. SADOWSKI

Goddamn, sir, I thought this was a drill.

BEN

Wish to hell it were.

LT. COL. SADOWSKI

These kids are just finishing up their training at Quantico. Private First Class Dispaltro, Rifleman; Lance Corporal Soros, Comm; Private Katsnelson, Machine Gunner; Private Johnson, Assaultman.

BEN

(to Comms Officer)
'Soros' -- that Greek?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORPORAL SOROS

Yessir, very Greek, sir.

BEN

You know code?

CORPORAL SOROS

Sensor, Morse, Tapal -- the French version -- and a little Cherokee, sir.

GRAY

And you're only a corporal?

CORPORAL SOROS

It's an injustice.

BEN

No injustices in the Marines, Corporal, we leave that to the Army.

Soros tries not to grin --

BEN

Can you patch me through to the executive command bunker if I give you the number and access codes?

Soros holds up an STU (secure) phone:

CORPORAL SOROS

Right here, sir.

BEN

Get started --

(to the men)

Fellas, you've heard conflicting rumors about me; you're gonna hear more. I'm still your commander 'til I tell you otherwise, and what I'm asking you to do will probably get us all killed. But you have to believe me when I say: if we don't, the country you're wearing uniforms for won't exist. Understood?

THE MARINES

Sir, yes, sir!

BEN

(to Sadowski)

Let's roll -- head toward New York.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The boys are reeling. Tense faces, none of them sure how to react, what to even think -- but nonetheless stoic and ready. Ben and Gray strap in and slip on helmet headsets, Sadowski works the controls -- the chopper RISES, ROARS OVER CAMERA --

EXT. U.N. PLAZA - SOUTH GATE - DAY

A massive steel HANDGUN, its nozzle tied in a knot, is the MONUMENT that stands in the U.N. PLAZA. DELEGATES arrive. NEWS HELICOPTERS hover, DEMONSTRATORS chant against the looming war. An NYPD SHARPSHOOTER TEAM surveys from rooftops --

MSNBC REPORTER (V.O.)

... Chinese officials deny any knowledge of -- and bristle at the notion of any involvement with -- the death of President and Mrs. Cahill. They say President Deng does not plan to alter his message on the General Assembly floor, beyond calling for a moment of silence before a firm rebuke -- perhaps even an outright declaration of war -- with the United States...

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We see a LONG MOTORCADE of BLACK LIMOS, BULLETPROOF S.U.V.'s, and POLICE ESCORTS pull up. Out steps CHINESE PRESIDENT DENG: a round-faced man in his 60s, large-framed glasses. He moves into a waiting phalanx of AIDES and Chinese Security, including AMBASSADOR MADAME SOONG LI, with a humbled look -- in CHINESE:

*

MADAME SOONG LI

(subtitle)

Apologies. I thought this American President... was going to be different.

*
*

PRESIDENT DENG

(subtitle)

No American President is different.

INT. SHELTER INFIRMARY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Sam, Blake, Marisa thunder in -- Blake's getting worse, tries to stay conscious as Sam helps her onto the infirmary table:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT BLAKE

Okay -- listen: the bullet passed right through my upper arm close to the artery -- I need you to clean and dress it, then make a tourniquet. I'll talk you through it.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, okay --

AGENT BLAKE

-- find a clean cloth,
gauze, adhesive tape,
alcohol --

SAMANTHA

-- Marisa, help me --

Marisa stumbles back, her face pale, ghostly -- eyes wet:

MARISA

-- Mom --

SAMANTHA

-- please, baby, just do
it --

The force of her mother's voice somehow steadies her -- terrified but going with it, Marisa nods and they ransack the place in about ten seconds, grabbing everything they need --

AGENT BLAKE

The alcohol's for your hands --
both of you --

Sam unscrews an alcohol bottle, pours it on her hands, then Marisa's --

AGENT BLAKE

Gimme the bottle --

Without hesitating BLAKE POURS ALCOHOL RIGHT INTO HER OPEN WOUND, wincing but staying strong -- Sam's eyes just CLOSE --

AGENT BLAKE

Good, okay, Marisa: I want you to use your thumb and just apply pressure right here -- right between the muscles -- feel that?

With trembling hands, Marisa presses on Blake's arm as shown --

MARISA

-- yeah -- ?
-- like this?

AGENT BLAKE

-- just press real hard --
-- that's excellent --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And despite the insanity, Blake's steady kindness manages to draw out a little smile from Marisa, a moment not lost on Sam:

AGENT BLAKE

Put gauze over the wound, tie it
up with tape -- just tight enough
to control the bleeding --

Sam works quickly, trying to stay cool --

SAMANTHA

Talk about something --

AGENT BLAKE

What?

SAMANTHA

(fighting for focus)
Just talk. Tell me anything.

Blake keeps trying to breathe steadily, keep her composure:

AGENT BLAKE

His name's Victor. My husband.
Vic.

SAMANTHA

(just wants to lose
it)
Yeah? What's Vic do?

AGENT BLAKE

... he's a botanist. Johns
Hopkins... crop studies...
boring... evens us out... he does
plant genetics, I take bullets...

Tries to smile. So does Sam. A RINGING PHONE on the Tac-Sat makes everyone jump. What if it's them? What if it's Ben? Sam MOVES to the console, picks up, tentatively:

SAMANTHA

Hello...

INTERCUT:

INT. MEDEVAC CHOPPER - MIDAIR

Ben's MID-AIR with the Marines, in the cargo hold -- hearing her voice, his eyes SHUT, overcome with relief and longing:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

Honey, it's me --

SAMANTHA

-- Ben, thank God --

BEN

You're safe? Marisa?

SAMANTHA

Fine, we're fi--

(static)

-- we're locked in! Are you okay?

BEN

Am now --

SAMANTHA

She wants to talk to you --

Marisa grabs the phone, already starting to cry --

MARISA

Hi, Daddy --

BEN

Hi, baby --

MARISA

(breaks down)

Please come get us, okay? Please.

Ben's heart is ripped from his chest. Tries to sound strong:

BEN

I will, honey. I promise -- and
I'll never leave you again. I
swear.

Sam gently moves the phone away from Marisa; trying to be a strong mother, and a strong, supportive wife:

SAMANTHA

(holding back tears;
to Ben)

Pushover...

BEN

(shaking his head, so
regretful)

I'm sorry...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

We'll find each other, Ben... we
always do.

(beat)

Tell me what you need.

That reaches him through his desperation. Galvanizes
him.

BEN

Get on the Secret Service secure
site, find the UN's security
profile --

Sam turns to Blake, on the gurney --

SAMANTHA

I need the Secret Service secure
site --

AGENT BLAKE

(biting back pain)

Go to 'www.ss.gov' -- I'll talk
you through it --

*

Sam does -- the SECRET SERVICE DATABASE appears, an
OPTIONS MENU that interfaces with DOZENS OF FEDERAL
SITES:

SAMANTHA

(into phone)

-- Ben, I'm in --

BEN

I need the transponder codes for
helicopters flying into NYU
Medical Center --

Sam WHIRLS to Blake --

SAMANTHA

-- how do I find transponder
codes -- ?!

AGENT BLAKE

-- on the menu -- pull up 'New
York Center Air Traffic Control,'
should be a link to emergency
medical transportation services --
the code'll be front and center --

Sam frantically scrolls the S.S. database, trying like
hell to find her way through this -- sees: "N.Y. ATC --
DAILY TRANSPONDER CODE: 1786."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

I see it -- the code's 1786!!

Ben turns and SHOUTS to Sadowski:

BEN

Squawk 1-7-8-6! Tell them we're
carrying a car crash victim,
Urgent Critical --

SADOWSKI

Roger!

-- as Sadowski sets the code into the chopper's
TRANSPONDER --

BEN

(back to phone)
Now pull up tactical coverage at
the UN, find out which access
portals they're securing --

SAMANTHA

(whirls to Blake)
-- tactical coverage at the U.N. --

Blake's REALLY starting to lose it --

AGENT BLAKE

Go to 'Current Ops'... isolate
UN... right there, tactical
situation...

Flash of STATIC over comms -- Sam finds "Current Ops" --
CLICKS: "U.N." -- CLICKS: "Tactical Situation" --

BLUEPRINT SCHEMATICS appear of all U.N. BUILDINGS -- Sam
tries desperately to read and metabolize the blizzard of
intel:

SAMANTHA

-- uh -- I think -- looks like out
of five access portals, the four
around the plaza are locked
down...

(noticing something)
Wait, there's --

EXT. FALLOUT SHELTER OUTSIDE BLAST DOOR - CONTINUOUS
ACTION

A WHITE-HOT-FLASH: the BURNING BAR has cut several inches into the blast door's lock mechanism -- a LOUD CLANGING as the steel shifts, revealing a FIBER OPTIC CHAMBER in the wall --

INTERCUTTING - INT. MEDEVAC CHOPPER/INT. BUNKER

The VIOLENT SOUND resonates over the comm line as the commandos BATTER the door to the bunker -- STATIC --

BEN

Sam?! What's going on?!

Sam turns to see Marisa crying, but has to FOCUS on the screen:

SAMANTHA

(shaky; urgent)

Ben, get to FDR drive! It says there's an old access portal under the conference center -- it's a tunnel that links to the General Assembly build--

-- TCCCHHHT! The phone cuts out!! They've severed the line outside. All lights OFF but the glowing monitors -- scary --

IN THE CHOPPER

BEN

-- Sam? Sam?
(slams down phone)
SHIT!

GRAY

-- what happened -- ?

Ben stares into space, his heart tearing in half... they could be dead...

GRAY

Sir --
(then)
Mr. President. What'd she say?

Ben looks up to meet Gray's stare. They have to act now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

FDR Drive. There's an underground
service tunnel -- NYU Medical
Center's nine blocks from the
U.N., land there --

Sadowski shouts "Roger!" and the chopper BANKS HARD --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - ROOSEVELT ROOM - DAY

*

DENNET'S HAND touches a HOLY BIBLE. He swallows,
terrified. Hawthorne meets eyes with the attending
SUPREME COURT JUSTICE --

*

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

Mr. Vice President, please raise
your right hand.

Dennet does. It's TREMBLING...

INT. MEDEVAC CHOPPER - CARGO HOLD - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Manhattan out the windshield. Sadowski, at the stick:

LT. COL. SADOWSKI

(headset)
Roger, New York Center --
(shouts over
shoulder)
We're cleared to land at NYU
Medical! 3 minutes!

GRAY

Load up!

Everyone starts strapping on body armor; Ben too. Gray
looks at him somberly...

*

*

GRAY

Even if by some miracle we pull
this off... they're still out
there.

*

*

*

*

Something FLICKERS in Ben. Some plan we're not yet privy
to.

*

*

BEN

(finally,
cryptically)
I'll handle it.

*

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Quiet beat. Then he notices PRIVATE JOHNSON'S HANDS TREMBLING as he loads his weapon; he's trying to hide it, but failing --

*

*

BEN

Hey.

(as Johnson looks up)

Set your weapon on the deck.

(as Johnson does)

Hold your hands up to your mouth.

Blow on the tips of your thumbs,

slows your heart rate.

*

Johnson looks at Ben oddly, but follows orders. We see a noticeable change in him. Already looks less tense. Surprised.

BEN

(kindly)

We good?

JOHNSON

Thank you, sir.

And this seems to put them all at ease. Gray goes to work:

GRAY

Eight mags apiece, lay your hands on 'em!

Each Marine feels his kit; counts eight mags:

MARINES

CHECK!

GRAY

Frag, lay your hands on 'em!

MARINES

CHECK!

GRAY

Aid kit, smoke, knife!

MARINES

CHECK!

GRAY

Listen up! The President's asking you to put your asses on the line!

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAY (CONT'D)

You've never been tested under fire, but you're Marines -- and when challenged, a Marine meets that challenge knowing he's the baddest motherfucker in the fight! In 234 years the Corps has never let a Commander-in-Chief down, I know you won't today! Ooh-rah!!

MARINES

OOH-RAH!

GRAY

We're all with you, sir!

Ben locks eyes with every man in the chopper. Men ready to die for him. OFF Ben, overwhelmed, beyond grateful:

*
*

INT. AIR FORCE E-4B "DOOMSDAY PLANE" - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

FAST CAMERA MOVES THROUGH the flying command center -- BABBIT hangs up a phone and hurries across the space to HAWTHORNE:

*
*

GENERAL BABBIT

We're rolling with Denet --

-- as QUENTIN KNOWLES also hangs up a phone, turns, WORRIED:

*
*

KNOWLES

We have a problem: four Marines at Quantico didn't show up for role call under the command of a Lieutenant Colonel William Sadowski --

(as Babbit stops cold)

Flight Office says he commandeered a medevac chopper thirty minutes ago -- turns out he and Cahill went to Annapolis together.

It hits: that's why Ben wanted to visit the base.

HAWTHORNE

Sonofabitch -- Who do we have on the ground?!!

*
*
*

EXT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - STREET LEVEL HELIPAD -
CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben's chopper touches down at the NYU medical hospital helipad. A shocked MEDICAL TEAM recoils when ARMED SOLDIERS spill out, circling Ben -- passing by -- was that the President?

INT. "DOOMSDAY PLANE" - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Hawthorne, Babbit and Knowles BURST in, moving to a TECHIE running a TRACE on Ben's chopper:

*

GENERAL BABBIT

What's their flight path?

NSA SECURE OPS TECH

Sir, they were squawking a Life-Flight transponder code and set down at NYU Medical --

GENERAL BABBIT

(realizing: shit)

He's trying to get to the UN. Get me a secure Comm Link to Jeremiah --

EXT. UNITED NATIONS BUILDING (NEW YORK) - CONTINUOUS ACTION

At a COMMAND POST, the Secret Service AIC (Agent In Charge), AGENT JEREMIAH:

*

NSA SECURE OPS TECH

(earpiece)

01, this is 12, I have Babbit for you --

AGENT JEREMIAH

12, this is 01, go for Jeremiah --

INT. "DOOMSDAY PLANE" - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

GENERAL BABBIT

You have incoming Marines with 'Traveler' -- they landed at the Medical Center one-zero minutes ago! Calls from the hospital said they headed down the FDR! Zero liabilities, confirm!

EXT. UNITED NATIONS BUILDING (NEW YORK) - CONTINUOUS
ACTION

AGENT JEREMIAH

Confirmed.

GENERAL BABBIT (V.O.)

I want this quiet, total
lockdown -- nothing in the open --

Agent Jeremiah BARKS ORDERS into his wrist mic --

AGENT JEREMIAH

204 this is 202, Priority One
Alert --

INT. U.N. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

12 AGENTS in posts around the building -- hear over
earpieces:

AGENT JEREMIAH (V.O.)

-- displace from parking garage to
FDR Tunnel access point. Link up
point at service stairwell.

The men SNAP into action, RUNNING into the UN building
and down into the --

INT. TUNNEL SYSTEM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Pulling silencers out of their coats -- screwing them on
their MP-5s as they MEET with Agent Jeremiah --

EXT. SERVICE ROAD BELOW FDR (NEW YORK) - CONTINUOUS
ACTION

Ben's team runs down the service road near the FDR tunnel
in two tactical columns. No talking. All focused on
getting to the tunnel --

INT. FDR TUNNEL - OUTSIDE ACCESS POINT DOOR - CONTINUOUS
ACTION

A LOW ROAR of passing traffic. Ben, Gray, the Marines,
concealed in SHADOW. Gray signals "Hold" -- the men
STOP, surrounding Ben protectively. Gray scans an ACCESS
DOOR:

GRAY

No guards. Her intel's good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He signals them, they take positions around the door:

GRAY

When we're through the door, Alpha
leads in, three man stack. Bravo
trails.

The men nod, ready weapons, nervous. Ben offers a kind
word:

BEN

No different than a Paris Island
live fire exercise... stick to the
basics, we'll do fine.

Gray racks the slide on a SIG 229 .40 Cal handgun, hands
it to Ben:

GRAY

Stay behind me, keep your head low
-- no matter what happens, don't
break ranks.

BEN

Like hell --

GRAY

Sir, please don't argue with me.
If you don't make it, none of this
means a goddamn thing.

Ben's fighting his every instinct. Can't deny Gray's
right. Has to deny his gut. Might even have to let
these brave men die for him. Sadowski grins -- the
camaraderie of an old friend:

SADOWSKI

Quarterback stays in the pocket.
And this football's nuclear.

Ben's jaw clenches. Bitter pill. One he must accept.

BEN

That's not what worries me.
(beat)
You Army guys can't shoot for
shit.

Small moment of levity. A few of the men manage thin
smiles. Gray draws a small SHOTGUN from his back and
aims it at the lower hinge. BANG! Cocks it, aims at the
upper hinge -- BANG! A swift KICK and the door flies
OPEN --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAY

Alpha, move --

ALPHA TEAM HEADS into the tunnels first -- then B Team, covering Ben, the Football strapped to his back --

INT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER - DAY

Under the blue-glow from one of the monitors, Agent Blake is ghost-white. Losing way too much blood, drags herself off the gurney -- hands Sam a Beretta:

AGENT BLAKE

You need to take this --

SAMANTHA

-- no way --

AGENT BLAKE

Sooner or later, they will get through the door... we make a stand, or we die...

(demonstrates, about to lose consciousness)

It holds 15 rounds... when the mag's empty... slide goes back like this... stay low, point and... shoot...

Blake PASSES OUT. Sam tries desperately to revive her, eyes flick to the COMMANDOS on the monitor still burning their way into the main entrance:

SAMANTHA

Hey, hey! Don't you pass out on us -- I can't do this without you!

INT. TUNNELS LEADING TO THE U.N. - CRATE WAREHOUSE -
CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben, Gray, and the soldiers move through the tunnels in a skirmish line, entering an old CRATE WAREHOUSE. Protecting Ben. Gray signals Dispaltro, who rounds a corner and --

PFFT! A SILENCED GUNSHOT -- Dispaltro's shoulder EXPLODES and he goes down -- wounded but not dead -- AN AMBUSH:

*
*

AGENT JEREMIAH'S TEAM OPENS FIRE with a barrage of SILENCED MP-5 FIRE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben, Gray, and the Marines drop behind immediate cover, TRAPPED but returning fire from the crates, GRAY ACTING AS A HUMAN SHIELD FOR BEN:

But Ben peers through crates, SHOUTS to Gray:

BEN
2 AGENTS AT 2 O'CLOCK! 40 METERS
OUT! TAKE OUT 11 AND 9 O'CLOCK!

GRAY
BRAVO TEAM: TARGET 2 O'CLOCK, 40
METERS!

KATSNELSON
ROGER THAT!

KATSNELSON AND SADOWSKI provide cover fire, shooting at the enemy positions Ben pinpointed. SOUND OF MARINE RIFLES and MACHINE GUNS overshadows the Secret Service's silenced sub-machine guns and Sigs.

FWOOM! Katsnelson FIRES a round from his M-203 grenade launcher -- EXPLOSION -- SS AGENTS disappear in a cloud of debris -- as Katsnelson reloads, Gray SHOUTS:

GRAY
LET'S MOVE! BOTH TEAMS ON LINE!
SMOKE!

Throwing smokes, the team advances 20 more feet before a four-man stack of AGENTS comes through a door FIRING -- Gray pulls a flash bang, heaves it towards the agents -- PHOOM! FLASH! DISORIENTED AND BLIND, two Agents cover their eyes, others REACT to the intense smoke from the flashbang, coughing and hacking --

BEN
TWO AGENTS, THREE O'CLOCK, THIRTY
METERS!

BEHIND A CRATE

Gray spots TWO AGENTS -- raises his weapon, DROPS THEM BOTH in 2-round controlled pairs:

GRAY
KATSNELSON! COLONEL! SET HERE
AND LAY DOWN SUPPRESSING FIRE! A-
TEAM: PREPARE TO BOUND FORWARD!

They do; Ben readies his weapon -- Gray SHOUTS:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAY
DO NOT ENGAGE! STAY BEHIND ME!

Every instinct in Ben hates being sidelined as a non-combatant, but it's the only choice:

GRAY
 ALPHA READY?!

MARINES
 READY!

GRAY
 MOVE!

Sadowski and Katsnelson stay behind, LAY DOWN A WITHERING FIELD OF FIRE with their M203's -- THUMP THUMP BOOM BANG, giving A-TEAM cover as they MOVE OUT, Johnson covering the left flank, Soros right; Gray up front, Ben just behind him, moving in a ZIG ZAG to make themselves tougher targets -- shooting from the shoulder, sweeping across their respective fields of fire:

SOROS
 TWO AGENTS, ELEVEN O'CLOCK! MOVE MOVE, DON'T STOP!

BEN, GRAY, THE MARINES RACE TO THEIR NEXT COVER POINT --

PFING! JOHNSON TAKES A ROUND IN THE LEG AND GOES DOWN!
 THIS IS HAPPENING TOO FAST!

*
 *

Sadowski yanks a wounded Johnson to his feet:

JOHNSON
 AAAH, SHIT!

SADOWSKI
 KEEP MOVING, MARINE!

Johnson grits his teeth as the group makes it behind:

ANOTHER ROW OF LARGE CRATES

Ben tears open a first aid kit, helps tie an "Israeli" bandage around Johnson's leg --

*

BEN
 Went clean through! Hold this
here --

With his good hand, Johnson holds the bandage as Ben wraps:

BEN
 Still got some fight in you?!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHNSON

Get me back in this shit, sir!!

Johnson does a one-arm mag change as the other Marines switch mags on their rifles and reload 203's --

GRAY

LOADING!

They shoot in rotation, working as a machine, as:

BEN -- sees a STAIRWELL across the way leading up to the U.N.: *

BEN

EYES ON THE STAIRS! THERE'S A
CROSS BAR ON THE DOORS, WE CAN
LOCK THEM OUT FROM THE OTHER SIDE!

GRAY

GOT IT! WE MOVE IN A WEDGE, I'M
ON POINT! SMOKES!

They throw more SMOKE GRENADES. The unit MOVES OUT AGAIN, using smoke for concealment -- they make it ten yards when suddenly --

CRACK! GRAY takes a bullet in the shoulder and GOES DOWN -- *

BEN, SADOWSKI, KATSNELSON, SOROS and the wounded JOHNSON and DISPALTRO drop to their stomachs, taking cover behind more crates but: *

Gray lies there, exposed, out in the open, grimacing --

BEN RUNS BACK AND GRABS GRAY, DRAGS HIM TO SAFETY BEHIND A CRATE AS BULLETS SHRED GROUND ALL AROUND THEM -- *

GRAY

I TOLD YOU NOT TO --

-- NEGATIVE!! STAY DOWN!

BEN

GIMME YOUR SMOKE
GRENADES!!!

-- I'M NOT ASKING! WE HAVE
FIVE SECONDS BEFORE THEY
LOCK THIS CRATE DOWN AND
BURY US HERE!

Gray knows he's right, shit! Shoves the SMOKE GRENADES at Ben who takes command, a Marine again:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

SADOWSKI, YOU, DISPALTRO AND
JOHNSON LAY DOWN COVER FIRE FOR
US, GRAY AND I'LL MAKE A RUN FOR
THE STAIRS!

*

SADOWSKI

WE GOT IT, SIR, GO!!!

*

*

BULLETS SCREAM around them -- Sadowski takes a firing
position -- so do Dispaltro and Johnson, still bleeding
out:

*

JOHNSON

SET!

Ben THROWS his grenade, it BILLOWS -- clutches the
FOOTBALL to his chest --

*

BEN

BOUNDING IN THREE! TWO! ONE! GO
GO GO!

Sadowski unleashes a barrage, Johnson and Dispaltro
heroically throwing frags and firing their M-4 at the
Agents as Soros and Katsnelson prep to move the wounded
to the stairwell --

*

*

*

*

AGENT JEREMIAH -- PEERING OUT FROM A SHREDDED CRATE --

*

Through smoke and debris he SEES BEN AND GRAY DISAPPEAR
INTO THE STAIRWELL -- followed a beat later by SADOWSKI
and his Marines, the able-bodied helping the wounded --

*

*

*

AGENT JEREMIAH

*

SHIT!

*

He SCRAMBLES for his hand-mic --

*

INT. ADJACENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- Ben and Gray SKID into the corridor, Sadowski and the
boys following. Sadowski SLAMS the heavy doors CLOSED --
BARRING them -- SAFE -- Gray turns to see: BEN SHOT IN
THE CHEST! Eyes WIDE, GASPING -- as Gray RIPS Ben's
chest armor back, revealing it's just a FLESH WOUND on
Ben's clavicle --

*

*

*

GRAY

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN, STICK WITH
ME! THE SAPI PLATE TOOK THE
ROUND!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
(grimacing)
I'm okay... I'm good... I need you
to double up on it so it doesn't
bleed through...

Gray TEARS open his kit for BANDAGES, starts patching the
wound:

INT. "DOOMSDAY PLANE" - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

A COMMS RECEIVER BEEPS -- Babbit snatches it up and
immediately HEARS GUNSHOTS over the radio:

AGENT JEREMIAH (V.O.)
12 this 01 over!

GENERAL BABBIT
This is 12 --

INTERCUTTING - INT. TUNNELS UNDER U.N.

Jeremiah SHOUTS into the mic against GUNFIRE, finger in
his ear:

AGENT JEREMIAH
Traveler breached our line! He's
in the UN!

HAWTHORNE -- MEETS EYES WITH BABBIT -- A HEARTBEAT OF
DECISION --

HAWTHORNE
Won't matter. Let him have his
day in court... then kill the
pissant.

GENERAL BABBIT
(into comms)
01, how many sniper units do you
have on the roof?!

QUENTIN KNOWLES AGENT JEREMIAH
Wait a minute -- -- THREE --

GENERAL BABBIT
Have them take Traveler when he
leaves the building!

QUENTIN KNOWLES
WAIT: he knows who we are, it's
too transparent --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWTHORNE

-- what's he gonna do, take us to
traffic court?

QUENTIN KNOWLES

-- we have protocols for a
reason --

HAWTHORNE

Quentin? All due respect, Cahill
lives and your fucking protocols
don't --

INT. U.N. - FOYER TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY - CONTINUOUS
ACTION

Outside the grand U.N. Floor, THREE-DOZEN NATIONAL
SECURITY and DIPLOMATIC AIDES are milling; one suddenly
REACTS at something he sees:

U.N. ATTACHE

Oh my GOD ---

THE PRESIDENT -- dirty and disheveled -- adrenaline
overriding pain -- RUNS toward the General Assembly with
Gray, Sadowski, Katsnelson, and Soros, into the slack-
jawed crowd:

BEN

-- who's the M.O. -- ?!

-- the MILITARY OFFICER rushes forward -- Gray's hand
shoots OUT to keep the guy a foot back -- Ben tosses out
orders, rapid-fire, sending waves of them scrambling in
SEVENTEEN DIRECTIONS:

MILITARY OFFICER

I, I am, Mr. President, but Secret
Service has tactical command,
because you're... we heard you
were --

BEN

-- as of this second, you don't
carry out a single order that
doesn't come from me. I need EMTs
sent to the maintenance tunnel
staircase now, two casualties both
urgent critical --

MILITARY OFFICER

-- YesSIR --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

-- find the U.N. Naval Liaison
Officer, I want him to get me in
touch with the 2nd Fleet, which
ship's handling Air Defense for
the North Atlantic, he's got five
minutes to tie me in, go --

(to an AIDE)

What're you, 42 regular? I need
your suit --

NATIONAL SECURITY AIDE

-- my suit -- ?

BEN

-- who's the Diplomatic Aide?!!!

DIPLOMATIC AIDE

-- HERE, SIR! --

-- Uh -- I've read some of
the authorizing --

BEN

-- War Powers Act, how
versed are you -- ?

-- Find me the best
Constitutional lawyers in
the building: I want
everything there is to know
about suspension of habeas
corpus.

INT. U.N. - ANTECHAMBER - HOLDING AREA - CONTINUOUS
ACTION

The CHINESE SECURITY CHIEF approaches Madame Li, looking
concerned. Whispers something in her ear. She REACTS --

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HOLDING ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben, buttoning up his NEW SUIT -- MOVES toward Deng's
holding room with Gray and the phalanx of Military
Officers and Diplomats -- someone hands him a WASHCLOTH,
he wipes his face and slips on his jacket, WINCES from
the bandaged bullet wound:

BEN

Hope you tie a decent bandage.

GRAY

Hope you bleed slowly.

And STOPS at the door to the room:

BEN

Watch their translator. Make sure
every word's to the letter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gray nods. Sadowski and the Marines position around the door, a protective line. Ben SNAPS into control-mode, enters with Gray:

*
*
*

INT. UNITED NATIONS - HOLDING ROOM - DAY

There stands DENG, hard as nails, staring back at the American President. And Ben knows the Chinese president believes human society is layered into hierarchies of power that are absolutely impermeable. So when Ben enters the room, he is self-sure, the bearing and poise of a King. This is how he must be perceived to protect America, and keep its darkest secret. The hitch? He's still SHOT, in pain, and trying not to reveal that either:

BEN

Mr. President... this is not how I imagined our first meeting. But if we looked to standard practice and protocol, we wouldn't be meeting at all.

Deng is SILENT. Just those hard, cold eyes, looking out his glasses at Ben. He speaks through Madame Li, who TRANSLATES:

*
*

DENG

(through Li)

You suggest you are here to slice through your bureaucracy, yet you have slaughtered one of our leaders. Our satellites have detected your nuclear readiness; we too are now on high nuclear alert. The war drums are pounded: You have struck the first beat.

*
*
*
*

Ben looks to Gray: is that exactly what he said?

*

GRAY

(quietly, to Ben)

To the letter.

*
*
*

DENG

(through Li)

And, according to reports in your media, you are hardly in control of your country anymore. Nor in a position to negotiate.

*
*
*
*
*

And Ben knows he can't deny these truths, but neither can he dwell on them, nor betray his feelings about them.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And then, at the worst possible time, his eyes FLICK DOWN
and notice a SMALL TRICKLE OF BLOOD dripping along the
cuff of his shirt --

Ben CUPS his hand and CATCHES THE BLOOD in his palm.
Clenches it shut. Hoping -- praying -- Deng hasn't
noticed. And says --

BEN

Our media's not what it used to
be.

He sets the FOOTBALL on a table:

BEN

It doesn't matter how we got here,
or who's responsible. Our only
duty, as leaders, is to prevent
this war.

DENG

(through Li;
skeptical)
And your offer is...?

BEN

I did not order your citizens to
be killed, but those who did will
be brought to justice.

Long pause. Deng's still hard. Weighing this. Until
MADAME LI interjects, in SUBTITLED CHINESE --

MADAME LI

I believe him, Mr. President.

Deng looks at her ANGRILY:

PRESIDENT DENG

*This could be a ruse. We stand
down, he hits us even harder.*

She lowers her eyes; she's overstepped. Gray MURMURS,
grave:

GRAY

No-go.

And so... Ben OPENS the Football. Punches in his code:
"LAUNCH SEQUENCE TERMINATED..."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

I've downgraded our state of
readiness; your satellites will
confirm that our missile silos are
now closed.

(beat)

We are interdependent, Mr.
President. Others would have us
act as enemies; you and I... we
don't have to.

OFF Deng, weighing Ben as much as the choice before
him... and for now, that's where we leave it as:

EXT. ROOFTOPS OVERLOOKING UN BUILDING - DAY

THREE SNIPERS -- racing upstairs -- onto three
triangulated rooftops -- lying behind ledges -- covering
the UN exits below:

SNIPER LEADER

(headset)

Condor, this is 219 in position --

INT. "DOOMSDAY" PLANE - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The sniper's VOICE over comms:

SNIPER LEADER (V.O.)

219 in position --

GENERAL BABBIT

Roger --

But Knowles and Hawthorne are SQUARING OFF --

QUENTIN KNOWLES

James, think: too few alibis, too
many loose ends -- the
international press corps, thirty
countries' security forces are
fifty feet away from him --

HAWTHORNE

-- we've covered up worse --

QUENTIN KNOWLES

Because we weren't being sloppy!

INT. TRANSLATOR BOOTH - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- the room's been CLEARED for Ben, Gray, in emergency conference with the UN SECRETARY GENERAL and an INSTA-CABINET of assembled LAWYERS -- we WHIP AROUND for:

SECRETARY-GENERAL
Article one, section nine
does stipulate, 'in cases
of invasion or rebellion,
public safety may
require' --

LAWYER #1
-- you're talking
suspension of the
Constitution, martial law,
there's a legal threshold
as well as a public --

LAWYER #2
(checking watch)
-- not after five p.m.; ex parte
Milligan, when regular courts are
closed, a President can impose
total and complete military --

AMBASSADOR
-- still a chain of command, at
the very least his defense
Secretary would have to affirm
that military courts can't even --

Ben INTERRUPTS -- solemn, resolved:

BEN
What's your name?

AMBASSADOR
Ambassador William Stevens --

BEN
Raise your right hand --
(as he does)
-- do you solemnly swear to
support and defend the
Constitution against all enemies,
foreign and domestic?

AMBASSADOR
(what's happening?)
Uh -- do I -- yeah --

BEN
Good, you're my new Secretary of
Defense --

The UN NAVAL LIAISON urgently intersects with a SECURE
PHONE:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

UN NAVAL LIAISON
 Sir, I have 2nd Fleet Operations,
 Captain Wilder on the U.S.S.
Roosevelt.

Ben takes the phone, quarter-beat pause at what he's
 about to do -- then, firmly:

BEN
 Captain Wilder, this is Ben
 Cahill --

INTERCUT - INT. U.S.S. ROOSEVELT - BRIDGE

CAPTAIN WILDER, stunned. Stands on the bridge of a
 Nimitz Class Aircraft Carrier, a squadron of F-18's on
 the flight deck out the window:

CAPTAIN WILDER
 Yessir, Mr. President --

Ben -- an impossible breath --

BEN
 Under Article 1, Section 9 of the
 Constitution, I'm declaring a
 state of marital law. And I'm
 about to order you to do the
 hardest thing you've ever done --

And before we get to hear what it is, we --

CUT TO:

EXT. UN BUILDING - COURTYARD - DAY

A MILITARY CHOPPER circles the courtyard as UN POLICE
 clear the space -- Ben's transport --

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

BEN -- MOVING -- FAST -- OFF THE PHONE NOW -- down the
 corridor toward the exit -- grim, but resolved -- passing
 a SECRET SERVICE AGENT who says into a wrist mic:

AGENT
 Traveller's moving toward south
 exit, 20 seconds out --

EXT. ROOFTOP FACING SOUTH EXIT - CONTINUOUS ACTION *

The LEAD SNIPER hears that over his earpiece -- POV
THROUGH SNIPER SCOPE: a crowd of PRESS waiting at the
South exit -- the minute Ben steps out, he's a dead man: *

SNIPER LEADER (O.S.)
(headset)
Target identified -- target window
in two-zero seconds -- *

INT. "DOOMSDAY" - PASSENGER CABIN - 30,000 FEET - DAY *

Babbit BARKS into the RADIO as Hawthorne and Knowles
ARGUE -- the men all STARE, unsure, fraught with their
own indecision -- *

GENERAL BABBIT
Stand by -- HOLD, 219: do not
fire until I give the order --
(to the room)
Twenty seconds -- *

HAWTHORNE
It's now or never. Do we have a
unanimous vote? *

FACES -- UNSURE -- *

SNIPER LEADER (V.O.)
15 seconds -- Condor: awaiting
orders -- *

INT. UN FOYER - CONTINUOUS ACTION *

Ben, Gray, the entourage are almost at the glass double
doors of the South entrance -- outside, the chopper
WAITS: *

EXT. ROOFTOP FACING SOUTH EXIT - CONTINUOUS ACTION *

POV THROUGH SNIPER SCOPE: LOCKED ON THE DOOR -- AS BEN
STEPS OUT AND ENTERS THE CROSSHAIRS: *

SNIPER LEADER (O.S.)
(headset)
Target acquired, awaiting 'go' -- *

INT. "DOOMSDAY" - PASSENGER CABIN/COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Impossible tension -- finally, Knowles NODS along with all the others -- Hawthorne MOVES for the radio, clicks the comms to deliver the "go" order, almost SMUG:

HAWTHORNE
219, this is Condor, you have --

BUT SUDDENLY: BEEP BEEP -- THE COCKPIT RADAR WARNING ACTIVATES:

EXT. SKIES ABOVE ATLANTIC - DAY

TWO AIM-120 AMRAAM MISSILES ROCKET TOWARD THE PLANE!!!

INT. "DOOMSDAY" - PASSENGER CABIN/COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS ACTION

HAWTHORNE -- SHOCK -- SEES THE MISSILES INCOMING OUT THE WINDOW -- NO TIME TO REACT AS:

EXT. SKIES ABOVE ATLANTIC - CONTINUOUS ACTION

KA-BOOM!!! THE DOOMSDAY PLANE EXPLODES! Shrapnel mushrooming in a thousand directions, down into the Atlantic as --

TWO F-18'S BLAST INTO FRAME, HAVING FIRED THE SHOTS.

EXT. ROOFTOP - SNIPER'S FIRING POSITION - CONTINUOUS ACTION

STATIC FLASH over the Sniper's headset, his comms CUT OFF:

SNIPER LEADER
Condor, radio check, over --

-- NOTHING -- and so, without confirmation, the Sniper un-
asses his position -- moves coldly toward the rooftop
access door and is GONE --

EXT. UN SOUTH ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben -- SAFE!! -- is led by Gray toward the waiting
chopper -- they climb in -- the UN Naval Liaison cups a
phone and SHOUTS against the rotor roar:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

UN NAVAL LIAISON
Mr. President, target's been
neutralized.

*
*
*

Off Ben -- a thousand emotions in his eyes as he nods
somber thanks, feeling the full weight of what he's done.

*
*

BEN
(to pilot; URGENT)
LET'S GO!

*
*
*

The chopper doors CLOSE and it RISES into the sky --

*

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - DAY

BANG! The white-hot BURNING BAR SHATTERS the bunker
lock! The Secret Service commandos streak through in a
skirmish line --

SNAP CUT TO:

*

INT. COMMAND BUNKER - CREMATORIUM - SAM AND MARISA - DAY

-- both scrambling to pull Blake's body toward the
CREMATORIUM -- pull the STEEL DOOR closed, lock it --

EXT. FALLOUT SHELTER - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CREMATORIUM -
CONTINUOUS ACTION

The commando unit presses on, gun muzzles ready to
unload. Team leader holds up a clenched fist, signalling
the squad to stop. Sees the CLOSED CREMATORIUM DOOR.
Points: in there.

INT. CREMATORIUM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Marisa's sobbing. Sam readies BLAKE'S GUN, puts an arm
around her daughter, scared to death but trying to seem
strong...

SAMANTHA
It's okay... shhh, we're gonna be
oka--

CLANG! A HORRIFIC THUD as the commandos try to SLAM
THROUGH THE DOOR! Marisa SCREAMS! Sam aims the gun at
the door, tears streaming down her own face, this is it --

SAMANTHA
Close your eyes, baby...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLANG! As we PUSH IN ON Sam and Marisa, until it's just their TERRIFIED FACES IN MAXIMUM CLOSEUP...

And then -- from outside the door, they HEAR: A BARRAGE OF GUNFIRE! DEAFENING, A FIREFIGHT -- WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

*
*
*

Finally STOPS... and it's SILENT... and through the smoke, Sam and Marisa realize they're still alive... MALE VOICES shouting "Clear!" And then --

GRAY (O.S.)

Make room for the President!!

Samantha's eyes open in confusion --

BEN (O.S.)

Sam?!

The gun is already out of her hands CLANKING to the floor -- a HOSTAGE RESCUE TEAM rushes in to secure the room, lead by GRAY and SADOWSKI! The bodies of the DEAD AGENTS are strewn across the floor outside -- and from the smoke emerges:

*
*

... BEN! Sam and Marisa rush into his arms, he sweeps them up, hugging them with primitive, desperate force as he kisses their sobbing faces... as the Rescue Team secures the bunker... Gray rushes to Blake, feels for a pulse:

GRAY

We got a heavy bleeder, still alive, get the E.M.T.s in here!

The men lift her up and rush her out as Ben and his family follow, holding each other. Ben meets eyes with Gray -- and with it, a smile of brotherhood. Deepest gratitude.

*

And for Gray, it's the "win" his soul needed. A CHOIR HYMN begins...

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The First Family, huddled together, re-enter the White House... surrounded by Gray, Sadowski, the Marines and Hostage Rescue Team...

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MSNBC REPORTER (V.O.)

... this was a rather spectacular failure of the Air Force's flight tracking system; Marine One always flies in a group with as many as five identical Sea King Helicopters. As it turns out, it was the President's support 'helo' that went down, not Marine One itself. Once again, contrary to previous reports, President Cahill is alive and well and very much in command, having brokered a landmark peace agreement with the People's Republic of China...

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*

As that CROSSFADES... INTO BEN'S OWN VOICE:

*

BEN (V.O.)

I come before you today, before the representatives of the people, admitting that I have acted against the letter of our Constitution.

*
*
*
*
*
*

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - PRE-DAWN

HYMN CONTINUES as Agent Blake lies in a hospital bed, eyes closed. Sam in a chair bedside her, asleep. Slowly, Blake's eyes open. She moves a little. It stirs Sam, who sits up. They meet eyes. Blake clears her throat... a very hoarse:

*
*
*

AGENT BLAKE

Not bad... Sam.

The use of Sam's first name takes her by surprise. Then Blake does something we've never seen: she SMILES.

BEN (V.O.)

Its letter, but not, in my belief, its soul or its spirit.

*
*
*

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

THREE CASKETS. As they are ADORNED in AMERICAN FLAGS.

*

BEN (V.O.)

You are the body that is charged with protecting the Constitution, defending it, amending it.

*
*
*
*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And you alone -- along with our
 Courts -- may decide how it can be
 interpreted.

*
*
*

An Honor Guard funeral for GONZALES, HETTRICK, HICKS.
 Large photos on prominent display by open graves. As
 HYMN CONTINUES, we witness a FLAG FOLDING CEREMONY.
 Posthumous medals conferred by Ben. Purple Hearts in
 repose in velvet boxes on caskets.

RIFLES CRACK: a 21-gun salute. F-22's RIP THROUGH THE
 SKIES --

*

GRAY -- watching, apart from the mourners. Down the
 hill. Eyes full of emotion, but the face still stoic.
 Closure.

BEN -- SNAPS A SALUTE as the coffins lower. Finally,
 turns to find Gray... but he's GONE. A ghost.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAWN

Ben, cleaned up, sharp suit, moves down the corridor
 toward the Oval. Though he seems uncertain of his fate,
 he moves with a confidence we haven't quite seen
 before... a sense he may finally own this place.

*
*
*
*

TECHNICIANS are in the process of REMOVING ALL SECURITY
 CAMERAS from the walls.

BEN (V.O.)
 Lincoln suspended habeas corpus to
 round up the subversives of his
 day. To protect the union, he
 said.

*
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*

EXT. THE CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

*

The dome against a blue sky. American flags snap in the
 wind.

*
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*
*
*
*

BEN (V.O.)
 Was he right? The answer may be
 found in the flag you see flying
 over this building.

INT. FLOOR OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - DAY

*

And finally we understand where his voice is coming from:
 a closed door, joint session of Congress; no reporters,
 no staff, just 535 gray-haired Congressional
 Representatives and Senators on a long dais... and Ben
 standing alone in the "Well" before them. Facing his
 fate:

*
*
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*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

Congress backed him up after the
fact. And you, too, can make
right what I did. But you can
also make this proceeding
public... and impeach me.

As we PUSH CLOSER... toward a face that at this moment,
can only be described as "Presidential":

BEN

And if you believe I was wrong...
then you should, and you must.
(beat)
I await and accept your verdict...
with humility.

And from behind the rostrum, a middle-aged WOMAN
intones --

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE (WOMAN)

Mr. President, we will consider
your testimony, and inform you of
our vote very shortly.

BEN

Thank you, Madame Speaker.

And Ben walks purposefully from the well. OUT the door.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ben stands alone by the window, staring out at
Washington. Whatever comes next, he has made peace with
himself. A PHONE RINGS on the Resolute desk. Ben turns.
RING. RING. And with a stoic breath... reaches for it.

We HOLD ON his face. Listening. A reaction we can't
interpret.

BEN

(finally)
Thank you.

Hangs up the phone. Still, we don't know. Until he...
moves around the Resolute desk... and SITS. Leans back
in the chair. The leather upholstery creaks quiet
welcome.

BEN PUTS HIS FEET UP ON THE DESK. IT'S HIS NOW.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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BY WARNER BROS. PICTURES
SCRIPT PROCESSING DEPARTMENT
(818) 954-4632**