

BLACK SCREEN

The sounds of a large crowd, but muffled, as if we're inside, and hearing the crowd through a window or door. FADE IN ON:

INT. SOME SORT OF LOBBY -- DAY

DAVID NORRIS, 33, is having a private moment, looking down, thinking. He wears a suit and tie. He seems relaxed and confident. Content. Completely in his element.

In one of his hands he's absentmindedly twirling a couple of individually-wrapped Ricola throat lozenges. We hear the muffled voice of someone on a PA system outside:

VOICE ON PA SYSTEM

Thank you so much for coming today--

A man in a BLUE BLAZER walks up to David.

BLUE BLAZER

Congressman Norris?

Now REVEAL that we're in the entry hall of the Admin Building at St. Johns University. A thousand people crowd the quad out front. "Norris for Senate" placards everywhere.

BLUE BLAZER

Fred O'Malley with the DNC. I've never seen a crowd this big turn out so early in the cycle.

CHARLIE TRAYNOR, 36, arrives--

CHARLIE

Just wait 'till you see how they respond to him.

David pops a cherry lozenge into his mouth and straightens his lapel pin, which is shaped like New York State.

DAVID

Don't build me up like that, Charlie. He'll be disappointed.

EXT. ST. JOHNS UNIVERSITY -- MAIN QUAD -- DAY

The crowd, many of them in their twenties, roars with approval as David walks out to the lectern on the steps of the Admin Building.

DAVID

Hi there. I'm David Norris. And I'm running for the US Senate.

The crowd goes wild.

MONTAGE -- SENATE CAMPAIGN

--David finishes a speech at the FDNY Academy's graduation. The cadets jump to their feet and give him a standing ovation.

--David shakes the hands of workers entering a Con Edison plant in Buffalo. He's a natural at this. Unlike most politicians he actually seems to enjoy campaigning.

--Flashbulbs go off as he plays a game of pick-up basketball with a group of Bronx teenagers. Charlie is nearby.

--David takes a ceremonial shovel full of dirt to begin redevelopment of an old military base upstate.

--He gives a speech at a Harlem church. Audiences watch David the way they watched JFK, the way they watch Obama today. He inspires, makes them believe, makes them want to follow him. Especially young people.

--David walks through a suburban mall happily shaking hands as cameras follow him and citizens snap pictures with their camera-phones. People crush around him. He doesn't seem to mind at all. He welcomes it. He feeds off it.

--He pops a cherry lozenge in his mouth and climbs up onto a tractor to speak to a gathering of upstate farmers, speaking into a bullhorn to compensate for his hoarse voice. Charlie stands nearby watching him speak.

INT. SHERATON HOTEL ROOM -- UPSTATE SOMEWHERE -- DUSK

David enters his hotel room. The silence contrasts starkly with the noisy energy of the campaign trail.

He turns on the TV. Scrolls through the channels. After a moment shuts it off. Total silence again. It bothers him.

He opens up his briefcase. Pulls out a thick file -- his itinerary for the next three days. Dozens of speeches and meetings across the state.

He glances at the summary page on the top. Glances down the page with his finger, stopping, almost at random, on a speech he's giving two days from now at the Westchester County Open Space Initiative.

DAVID
(testing himself)
Karen Woods, founder. Husband:
Bob.

DAVID (cont'd)
Kids: Samantha, painting, and
Ricky, Little League. John Pascal.
Wife: Anna. St. John's grad. Two
year old: Loyita....

He stops. Knows this cold. His finger runs down to a
Realtor's Association breakfast in Nassau County four days
out.

DAVID
(more testing)
Abigail "Abby" Best, Stuart
Broxterman, Chapel Davis, Milan
Sabovic, Jim Vargas...

His ability to retain this sort of information is stunning.
He doesn't need to review. It's already all there.

He closes his itinerary file. Goes to the window and looks
out at the trees.

The silence back...it's deafening.

INT. SHERATON LOBBY -- UPSTATE SOMEWHERE -- NIGHT

Charlie enters the lobby. Stops suddenly: spots David,
holding court at the hotel bar. Fifteen strangers around him
as he regales them with a story, despite the fact that he's
clearly losing his voice. Charlie walks over, pulls him
aside.

CHARLIE
What the hell? What happened to
"I'm going to have some tea, rest
my voice, and go to bed early?"
You have Diane Sawyer tomorrow and
you have to be up at four AM for us
to make it in time.

David is holding a beer in his left hand. With his free hand
he picks up a cup and saucer.

DAVID
I had some tea.
(sees Charlie's not in the
mood)
Come on, man. We're eight points
up in the polls. I've gotta cut
loose every once in a while and
have a life.

This provokes a quizzical look from Charlie. Fifteen
strangers in a crappy upstate Sheraton doesn't seem like
having a life to him....

CHARLIE
Ten.

DAVID
What?

CHARLIE
Latest poll has you ten points up.

A slow smile spreads across David's face.

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN

The sound of a busy room. Then one voice, much louder:

CAMPAIGN AIDE
Seneca County reporting: 8901 for
Lynfield, 7233 for Norris.

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL SUITE -- NIGHT

Charlie Traynor walks over to the aide who just shouted that. She's writing vote totals onto a map of New York by county.

CHARLIE
(natural optimist)
Better than I thought. I thought
we'd get killed in Seneca.

He turns to look at a large suite full of more than a dozen Norris supporters talking on phones and typing into laptops.

CHARLIE
Eddie, call Boyd! Where the hell
are the Suffolk numbers? We've got
to get the Suffolk numbers!

EXT. ROOFTOP NEAR WALDORF -- NIGHT

A light snow falls. Four MEN IN CONSERVATIVE SUITS, overcoats, and fedoras walk across the roof of a forty-story building. Their clothing is more timeless than old-fashioned. And somehow so is their demeanor.

The men get to the edge and look down over the city, almost as if it's their domain.

INT. WALDORF HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

David watches the election coverage on TV. Pundits are discussing the New York Senate race, which CNN has already called for David's opponent.

PUNDIT #1

Congressman Norris has a reputation for being very direct, even blunt, in his campaign speeches, which is great until you say too many things you wish you hadn't. Then you start to look like an amateur.

PUNDIT #2

That's bad for any candidate but it's fatal if you're running for Senate at the age of 33, your opponent keeps calling you an "impulsive kid," and you almost killed your entire political career five months ago with an act of immaturity that ended up on the front page of the New York Post.

David winces slightly. This is excruciating. Just then Charlie enters. The nerve center suite is visible through the open door behind him.

CHARLIE

Why are you still watching CNN?
They called this way too early.

David doesn't share his friend's optimism.

INT. WALDORF HOTEL SUITE -- NERVE CENTER -- NIGHT

A campaign aide with a phone to her ear shouts to the room:

AIDE

Suffolk County Numbers!

Charlie and David emerge from the private room to listen.

AIDE (O.S.)

Lynfield: 415,120. Norris:
370,233.

Charlie's energy and optimism disappear instantly.

CHARLIE

(after long beat)
I really thought we'd win Suffolk.

A senior aide walks over.

SENIOR AIDE
Kings County just came in too.

He shows a piece of paper to Charlie and David. A brutal beat...

DAVID
Well, it's over. And it's going to be a blowout...

David puts on a brave face...but this is the first moment that he realizes not only is he going to lose, but he's going to lose big. It's going to be a grand, public humiliation.

SENIOR AIDE
NBC has us up next.

Charlie takes a clicker and turns the closest TV to NBC.

BRIAN WILLIAMS
Turning now to the New York Senate race, NBC is now calling the election for Roger Lynfield. After a shockingly poor showing in both Suffolk county and in his home county, Kings, it now appears that David Norris will lose this election badly, perhaps by as much as 10 points.

EXT. ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

The four men in dark suits. The boss's name is **RICHARDSON**, early 40s. His top aide is **HARRY**, 50s.

RICHARDSON
This is a big night, gentleman.
(to Harry)
Is everything set?

Harry nods. Richardson notices his eyes:

RICHARDSON
You look tired. You should take a vacation when we finish with this. You'll have earned it.

HARRY
I'm not sure the kind of tired I feel would be fixed by a vacation.

RICHARDSON
Sure it would. Everybody needs a
vacation. Even us.

CUT TO:

INT. WALDORF HOTEL SUITE -- NERVE CENTER -- NIGHT

The staff and supporters in here have become very quiet.
Their candidate is standing in the middle of the room, but no
one can look at him. And David can't look at them either....

DAVID
(to Charlie)
I'm going to take a walk, figure
out my speech.

INT. GRAND BALLROOM -- NIGHT

Four-hundred campaign workers follow election news on big
screens in the Waldorf's Grand Ballroom. No one says a word.
The mood has gone from hopeful to funereal in sixty seconds.

INT. WALDORF LOBBY -- NIGHT

David slips through the lobby with only a few looks from the
staff. But when he gets to the door he sees that press vans
line the front of the hotel. There will be no peace for him
if he steps out there. He turns around.

ASSISTANT MANAGER
Good evening, Congressman. You're
in the Grand Ballroom if that's
what you're looking for.

DAVID
Actually just looking for a place
to be alone for a minute before I
head in there.

ASSISTANT MANAGER
None of the banquet rooms on the
third floor are in use tonight.

DAVID
Thank you.

INT. EMPTY BANQUET ROOM -- NIGHT

David stands alone looking out at the empty room. Trying to
get used to it. It's not easy.

INT. MEN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

David enters the huge, ornate, men's room and goes to the row of sinks. He pulls two Ricola cherry lozenges from his pocket. He twirls them in his hands for a moment.

Then tosses them into the trash can. He looks at himself in the mirror, fighting to hold himself together.

A sound behind him. David spins to see a **WOMAN** exiting one of the stalls. She's in a stunning ball gown and carrying an expensive bottle of champagne.

WOMAN

Hi. I hope I didn't startle you.

DAVID

What are you doing in here?

WOMAN

Hiding from security.

DAVID

Oh.... What did you do?

WOMAN

Crashed a wedding. One floor up.

DAVID

It's almost midnight. They just caught on now?

WOMAN

Ivana Trump finally realized I wasn't her niece. I think after the fifth glass of champagne my Czech accent started slipping.

In spite of David's state that gets a grin.

DAVID

Are you for real?

WOMAN

Life is short.

DAVID

Hard to argue with that.

WOMAN

You're that guy running for Senate aren't you?

DAVID

I'm "that guy."

WOMAN
You winning?

DAVID
No.

WOMAN
Too bad. The other guy's a tool.

DAVID
(laughs)
Maybe I should have made that
clearer in my ads.

WOMAN
Personally, I think mooning your
friends at a college reunion is no
big deal.
(beat)
And I don't think the Post should
have printed the photo.

David just shakes his head. He will never, ever live that
down and he knows it.

WOMAN
At least not full page.

He can't help but crack up.

WOMAN
Listen, I've done it.

DAVID
You weren't running for Senate at
the time.

WOMAN
Do you still have a chance or is it
over?

DAVID
He crushed me.

She has beautiful eyes. And an exceptional gift for
conveying empathy....

WOMAN
You must...I don't know what you
must be feeling...

DAVID
Winning would feel better. But
losing has its advantages.

WOMAN

Like what?

DAVID

The only time a politician is alone is when he's asleep...or in the bathroom. After eight years in politics that gets kind of hard to take.

She tilts her head a little, gives him a curious look.

WOMAN

Watching you, you'd never know it.

The way she looks at him, the way she says it, David knows she sees what others miss in him -- even if he isn't even quite sure what it is. Not yet.

DAVID

Thank you...

WOMAN

Well, everything happens for a reason, right? Even losing. God, I'm really rolling out the platitudes tonight, aren't I?

DAVID

It's the champagne. Brings out the Hallmark in people.

WOMAN

After it kills their Czech accents.

She offers him the bottle. He hesitates, then takes it.

DAVID

Why not? I have to think up some good platitudes for my speech.

He takes a gulp of champagne.

WOMAN

Why the hell would you do that?

DAVID

Apparently, even if I hadn't been caught dropping my drawers in the middle of a senate campaign I would have lost the election anyway because I'm too blunt.

WOMAN

(swig of champagne)
Says who?

DAVID
The TV pundits.

WOMAN
Fuck 'em. They just wish they had
the balls to be candidates
themselves.

She hands him the champagne bottle again.

WOMAN
And they work for the Man anyway.
(beat)
You going to run again?

DAVID
(drinks)
Tonight's probably not the night to
ask.

WOMAN
(finger pointing)
No, it is. Look at me. You have
to run again. Do you hear me?

She's serious about this. Intense.

WOMAN
Otherwise the country will be run
by tools like Lynwood.

DAVID
"Field."
(off her look)
"Lynfield."

A beat. She shrugs.

Then they lean toward each other...and kiss. It turns more
and more passionate. When they finally pull apart:

DAVID
Holy shit.

She seems just as surprised. They look at each other and
laugh.

Just then the bathroom door opens. It's Charlie. He sees
David and the woman.

CHARLIE
David?

WOMAN
(suddenly embarrassed)
I better go.

She exits.

DAVID

Wait--

INT. 3RD FLOOR BALLROOM AREA

The woman comes out of the bathroom. David is right behind her. Then Charlie.

DAVID

Wait.

The woman turns to face David. Suddenly two hotel guards turn the corner and spot the woman.

HOTEL SECURITY

There!

They rush toward her.

WOMAN

Gotta go.

(to David, emphatically)
Don't let the bastards grind you
down.

She spins and sprints away. The hotel guards chase her.

CHARLIE

What the hell was that?

DAVID

I'm really not sure.

David has a huge grin on his face.

DAVID

But I think I'm ready to give my
speech.

INT. GRAND BALLROOM -- NIGHT

David as he walks out from behind a curtain onto the dais. His supporters start clapping....but clearly they're heartbroken. David looks completely peaceful.

DAVID

I grew up in Red Hook and I don't
want to shock anybody but I got in
a few fist fights along the way.

Laughter ripples through the crowd. We don't know enough yet to get the joke.

DAVID

And we used to have a saying when you got in a fight: "it's not whether or not you get knocked down -- because eventually everyone does -- it's what you do when you get back up."

(beat)

Don't worry, I'm not going to moon you.

The audience explodes with laughter this time.

DAVID

But I am...

(waiting for the laughter to die down)

But I am going to get back up. I wanted to come out here tonight and give you a victory speech, a speech I've dreamed of giving for most of my life. But life doesn't always deal you the cards you want.

The audience sobered now. Reflective.

DAVID

My life changed when I was ten years old. My entire world turned upside down.

His audience knows exactly what he's talking about.

DAVID

And as I looked for something to hang on to, something to help me cope with what had happened the only thing that made sense to me was service. Finding a way to do something with my life that left this world a little better than I found it.

The audience is moved. Tears begin to well up. People dab at their eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. MADISON SQ. PARK -- PRE DAWN

The sky is just beginning to turn from black to deep blue. The park is still and silent.

A black Mercedes pulls up on Madison Ave. Mr. Richardson, again in a dark suit, gets out and enters the park.

EXT. PARK BENCH -- PRE DAWN

Harry sits on one of the benches -- a fedora in his lap to complement a gray flannel suit. Richardson arrives.

RICHARDSON
He spills his coffee when he steps out of Starbucks. The moment he comes through the door.

HARRY
Got it.

RICHARDSON
Our models indicate between 7:00 and 7:05 am.

Harry nods but he seems distant. Richardson sees this.

RICHARDSON
You planned that vacation, right?

HARRY
Two weeks.

Richardson claps him on the shoulder and leaves. Harry watches him go.

INT. BEDROOM -- MORNING

An alarm clock reads "5:44 am." It turns to "5:45" and the alarm goes off. A hand reaches over and taps the alarm off. FOLLOW the arm back to David Norris in a king-sized bed. He rubs his eyes, stretches his neck, and climbs out of bed.

INT. EQUINOX GYM -- MORNING

David works out. He's got the energy-level of a 25 year-old. He runs on a treadmill. Hits the heavy bag. Does sit-ups.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAVID'S APARTMENT

EXAMINE David's spacious one-bedroom overlooking Madison Square Park. His desk and dining room table is covered with stacks of paper and files. A flat screen displays CNBC:

CNBC ANCHOR (V.O.)
RSR Capital announced yesterday that David Norris would become its Vice Chairman.

INT. BATHROOM -- DAY

David shaves.

CNBC ANCHOR (V.O.)
Norris worked at Goldman Sachs for
four years before running for
Congress at the tender age of 25.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAVID'S APARTMENT

A desk is set up at one end of the living room. A new model
blackberry on the desk next to another cell phone.

CNBC ANCHOR
He served four terms in the House--

The blackberry rings.

CNBC ANCHOR
--prior to his unsuccessful bid for
Senate in last week's election.

David rushes over and picks up the blackberry. He has to
look for a second to figure out how to hit "answer."

CNBC ANCHOR
RSR, one of the country's fastest-
growing hedge funds is run by
Norris's former Goldman colleague
and campaign chairman, Charles
Traynor--

The blackberry rings again. It's very loud.

CNBC ANCHOR
...his electrifying concession
speech led commentators to--

Finally David finds the answer button as he mutes the TV.

DAVID
Hello?

CHARLIE (TEL. V.O)
Tom Frankel from the Journal is
calling you in five minutes. I
just gave him this number.

DAVID
Give him 3227. I'm not used to
this phone yet.

CHARLIE
Can't. He's going to ask you about
joining the firm. My compliance
guys say all firm business has to
be done on the blackberry.

DAVID
Really?

CHARLIE
Sarbanes-Oxley. You voted for it,
pal. In fact, you cosponsored it.

EXT. STARBUCKS -- MORNING

Through the window we see David getting his morning coffee.
He exits and LEAVES FRAME. HOLD on the door of Starbucks.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE PARK -- MORNING

Harry is snoring on his bench. David walks past.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE -- DAY

David arrives at Fifth just in time to catch the "M1 Limited-
Stop" bus arriving at the stop.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE PARK -- MORNING

Sunlight peeks through a gap in the buildings and falls on
Harry's left eye, waking him. He bolts upright. Checks his
watch. Shit! He looks around quickly. Spots David about to
get on the bus. Harry leaps up--

INT. BUS -- MORNING

As David pays, he notices Harry sprinting for the bus.

DAVID
Sir, there's someone--

BUS DRIVER
There's another M1 right behind me.

EXT. 23RD STREET -- MORNING

The bus pulls out. Harry keeps running after it.

HARRY

No...

INT. BUS -- MORNING

As David walks down the aisle a couple of passengers recognize his face...but they don't say anything.

David nears an empty aisle seat. A woman is curled up in the window seat, sleeping. She wears a funky mini-dress, knee-high argyle socks under leather boots, and a (clashing) argyle bucket cap.

David sits next to her. And stares.

DAVID

No way...

It's the woman from election night. He leans around to try to see the front of her face. It's definitely her. His eyes drift down at her legs. Just then she opens her eyes.

She recoils for a second. Then her eyes soften when she realizes who it is.

DAVID

(momentarily self-conscious)

I think we've met.

WOMAN

(deadpan)

You need a better line than that or I'll have to assume you're a pervert who likes to stare at girls' legs while they sleep.

DAVID

(smiles, game on)

Your skirt was so short I couldn't help it.

WOMAN

Dress.

DAVID

Skirt, dress, same thing.

WOMAN

If you're a pervert, yeah. All that matters is they both show leg.

DAVID

So do shorts, dear.

WOMAN

Yeah, but there's that pesky piece
of fabric right here that
interferes with your fantasy life.

She shuts her eyes and leans against the window.

WOMAN

Wake me when you have a good come
back to that.

DAVID

I have one but, unlike you, I
wouldn't say it in public.

WOMAN

(eyes still closed)
Pussy.

David laughs. Can not believe this woman. In a good way.
His blackberry RINGS. Her eyes pop open. David picks up.

DAVID

Hello...? Hello?

David looks at his phone. The signal has gone to zero.

DAVID

(to woman)
The line cut.

WOMAN

That ringer get any louder or do
you pretty much have it maxed out?

DAVID

You're relentless.

WOMAN

I never sleep through the night. I
catch up on the bus.

(beat)

You going to run again?

DAVID

I just started a new job, today.

WOMAN

(serious now)

I saw your concession speech. I
heard Bill Clinton called it the
best political speech he's seen in
20 years.

David looks back at her.

DAVID
Something got into me.

He means her. They stare at each other.

DAVID
What's the deal with you and
argyles?

WOMAN
What's the deal with you and boring
shades of blue?

David is wearing a Navy blue suit, blue shirt, and blue tie.
A beat.

DAVID
At least my clothes match.

WOMAN
That's easy if you restrict
yourself to one color.

DAVID
The belt and shoes are black.

WOMAN
Variety is the spice of life.

DAVID
There you go with the platitudes
again. I guess it wasn't the
champagne.

His blackberry goes again. RING-RING.

DAVID
Hello? Hello?

He shakes his head. It's dead again.

EXT. BROADWAY AND 19TH STREET -- MORNING

Harry runs down Broadway looking east on 19th to try to spot
the bus on Park.

INT. BUS --MORNING

WOMAN
Your phone sucks. Don't guys like
you get special phones that
actually work in the middle of the
biggest city in the country?

DAVID
Depends what the telecom lobby
thinks of your voting record.

EXT. BROADWAY AND 19TH STREET -- MORNING

Harry spots the bus passing on Park. He jams his fedora on his head and stretches his arm out--

HARRY
Now.

INT. BUS -- MORNING

David's phone rings again. As he reaches for the phone he fumbles his coffee cup, the lid comes off, and a slosh of coffee crests the brim and splashes on the woman's dress.

DAVID
Oh, Jesus....
(fighting laughter)
I'm sorry.

EXT. BROADWAY AND 19TH -- MORNING

Harry's face.

HARRY
Shit!

He's looking at a leather portfolio. We catch a glimpse inside: a complicated circuit diagram. Harry shuts the book, looks up to get a bead on the bus, then takes off down Broadway again, hoping to cut it off at Union Square.

INT. BUS -- MORNING

DAVID
I'll pay for the damage.

He pulls out his wallet. There's \$7 inside. She laughs.

WOMAN
Hope your new job pays better than
your old one.

DAVID
Give me your number and I'll send
you a check.

WOMAN
God, that is smooth. Spill coffee
on me then ask for my number.

She takes the coffee from his hands and casually takes a sip,
then turns back to him with a devilish look in her eyes.

WOMAN
Just let me spill some on you and
we'll be even.

She thrusts the cup toward his tie. David parries.

DAVID
It's my first day at the office!

WOMAN
Tell your boss some crazy chick
dumped coffee on you on the M1.
It's New York; he'll understand.

She thrusts the cup back at him--

DAVID
No!

He grabs the cup with both his hands over hers.

WOMAN
(actually pleading)
Come on. Just a little.

They struggle with the cup. Both suppressing laughter.

DAVID
You're crazy. Actually crazy.

The phone on David's lap RINGS again. She snatches it with
her free hand.

WOMAN
(into phone)
He's not here!

She hangs up.

DAVID
Who was that?

She shrugs. Sorry, pal. He lunges for his phone, but she
holds it on the other side of her body.

DAVID
What is this, third grade?

WOMAN
You forgot what that was like,
didn't you? How fun it was....

That stops him for a moment. Until the phone RINGS again.

WOMAN
Oh my God! How do you stand it?

She drops the phone into the coffee.

WOMAN
There. We're even.

He stares at her. Incredulous. They lock eyes. God knows what would come next if they were in private....

The fourth RING gurgles up through the coffee. A beat.

WOMAN
Sturdy little fucker, isn't it?

She pulls the phone out of the cup and wipes it off with her scarf, pushing the button which sends the call to voice mail. Then she reaches out her hand, as if to shake.

WOMAN
By the way, I'm Elise.

EXT. UNION SQUARE -- DAY

Elise exits the bus. David stands at the bus door watching her. She turns back to look at him.

DAVID
The morning after I lost I woke up
thinking about you.

That melts her. Instantly. All her bravado drops.

INT. BUS -- MORNING

Moments later. Through the window, David watches Elise walking down the sidewalk. Their eyes meet. She blows him a little kiss before she turns the corner. His heart skips a beat as the bus continues on down Union Square East.

EXT. UNION SQUARE -- MORNING

Harry runs through Union Square bee-lining for David's bus.

INT. BUS -- MORNING

David looks at Elise's number, scribbled on a piece of paper. He carefully tucks her number into his wallet. Then takes the most satisfying sip of coffee he's ever had in his life--

EXT. UNION SQUARE -- MORNING

Spotting David through the bus window, Harry thrusts his Fedora back onto his head and points at the bus--

INT. BUS -- MORNING

Just as David finishes his sip the plastic lid pops off the cup. A second earlier and the coffee would have poured all over his shirt. Instead it spills on the floor.

EXT. UNION SQUARE -- MORNING

HARRY

Dammit!

Harry sprints out onto Park Avenue now, right behind the bus--

HONK! Harry turns just in time to see a taxi skid into him. THUNK! He rolls up onto the hood--

INT. RSR CAPITAL -- CHARLIE'S OFFICE -- MORNING

A big corner office. The phone rings. Charlie picks up.

DAVID (TEL. V.O.)

Guess who I just sat down next to on the bus?

INTERCUTTING WITH CHARLIE

CHARLIE

Who?

DAVID

The woman from election night.

EXT. PARK AVENUE SOUTH -- MORNING

A dazed Harry lies in the road... The taxi driver who hit him jumps out of his car to see if Harry is okay....

INT. BUS -- MORNING

CHARLIE (TEL. V.O.)
The one you kissed?

DAVID
She kissed me. I just didn't
fight it.

EXT. PARK AVENUE SOUTH -- MORNING

Harry sits up... He's bruised but okay. He looks around for something. Spots his crushed hat under the taxi's front tire.

INT. BUS -- MORNING

CHARLIE (O.S.)
You're shitting me. Just randomly
you sit down next to--

He's cut off mid-word.

DAVID
Charlie?

David looks at his phone. "Call Lost" on the screen. David hits redial. Gets a fast busy.

DAVID
(to himself)
This is ridiculous.

He pockets his phone.

EXT. PARK AVENUE SOUTH -- MORNING

The taxi driver is with Harry now.

TAXI DRIVER
Are you okay?

Harry is sitting now, wincing, but still searching intently for something.

HARRY
I'm fine-- Will you hand me that?

Harry points at his leather portfolio on the pavement a few feet away. We'll come to know it as a "PLANBOOK."

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)

Are you sure you're okay?

The driver hands it to him. Harry flips to a bookmarked page and we get our first good look at that circuit diagram:

Thousands of interconnected lines. Dozens of geometric symbols at intersection points. And written notations in a language as complex as Sanskrit crossed with Chinese.

And, maybe it's just a trick of the light but several of the lines appear to re-arrange themselves on the page.

HARRY

Oh...shit....

EXT. CITY STREET -- MORNING

David's still grinning as he reaches his downtown office tower. He enters through the revolving door--

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE BUILDING -- GROUND FLOOR LOBBY -- MORNING

Empty, except for a bored-looking security guard at the other end of the lobby. David gets into an empty elevator.

INT. 41ST FLOOR LOBBY -- MORNING

David walks past the receptionist. She's on the phone. He waves as he passes by. No wave back. She must not see him.

DAVID

Okay....

David decides he doesn't need to announce himself.

INT. RSR CAPITAL OFFICES -- MORNING

David enters to find the office suite quiet.... Not a soul in sight. Not a single secretary is here.

DAVID

(loud, playful)

Doesn't anybody bother getting in before eight at this place?

David passes a couple of empty offices on his way towards a large corner suite where a secretary sits outside an office marked "Charles Traynor, Chairman." She's smiling.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(exuberant)
Susan! How are you today?
(when she doesn't move)
Susan?

David looks closer across her desk. Her face is frozen.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Susan?

He leans across her desk, touches her arm. She stays dead still. David rushes through Charlie's door:

DAVID
Call 911! Something's wrong with
Susan!

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE -- MORNING

--and rushes in to find that Charlie is frozen too -- with the phone up to his ear. Like he's in a wax museum.

He is surrounded by four men in bulky, metallic silver protective suits (think airport firefighter gear).

One of the men adjusts three metal probes which are attached to the left side of Charlie's skull.

DAVID
Jesus!

Three men in business suits talking by the window spin to see David. It's Mr. Richardson and two aides we recognize as the "security guards" who chased Elise away on election night.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing?!

Richardson blinks. Clearly surprised. Then:

RICHARDSON
Grab him!

David bolts out of the office as they lunge at him--

INT. RSR OFFICE FLOOR -- MORNING

David sprints toward the door he came in. It closes as he gets there. He grabs it. It's locked.

He sprints away into an internal hallway. Richardson emerges from a door in the middle of the hallway.

David jumps a mile. It's physically impossible that Richardson could have gotten there that fast.

RICHARDSON
You can't get away, David.

David spins and rushes back into the main office, then down an internal staircase to the floor below. Jumps the last five steps and hits the floor hard.

As he comes up he runs smack into another RSR employee who is frozen solid.

David curses, then dives around the frozen employee to find Richardson, coming out of another office down the hall.

Again, physically impossible for him to get there that fast--

David spins and-- A DISTORTED WIDE ANGLE SHOT of a chloroform rag shoved right at us. FOCUS GOES IN AND OUT....

FROM DAVID'S POV, BLURRY FOCUS as he's carried toward one of the large corner offices on the 40th floor.

The nameplate reads "Steve Kincaid."

Richardson opens the door and ushers his men, carrying David, inside --

Except when they walk through the door they're not in an office 40 floors above lower Manhattan, they step inside a large warehouse....

Their movement completely violates the laws of physics.

BLACK SCREEN

Silence. Then voices come up slowly:

RICHARDSON (O.S.)
Yes, sir. No, sir. No, sir. I understand that, sir. Absolutely. I'll do that, sir.
(beat)
What a goddamn mess.

MCCRADY (O.S.)
Was that Donaldson?

RICHARDSON (O.S.)
Yes.

MCCRADY (O.S.)
What do you want to do?

FADE UP -- BLURRY AT FIRST -- to DAVID'S POV of the warehouse David caught a glimpse of just before he passed out.

A half-dozen members of the "Intervention Team" (the Silver Suits) stand nearby. Richardson and **MCCRADY** (one of the men from the rooftops) stand behind David, about 20 feet away.

RICHARDSON (O.S.)
Can you reset him?

MCCRADY (O.S.)
I don't think we have the authority
in a situation like this.

RICHARDSON (O.S.)
Call legal-

BURDENSKY (O.S.)
Legal just arrived.

INT. WAREHOUSE -- DAY

REVEAL **BURDENSKY**, a 50 year-old in a pin-stripe suit, carrying a briefcase. He walks to Richardson.

BURDENSKY
Re-setting's off the table. This
is our fault.

Richardson glances irately at Harry, who stands by himself off to the side, clearly disgraced.

David, who is tied to a chair facing away from Richardson, cranes around to see who's talking.

DAVID
Hey.

The suits stare back in silence for a beat, then turn back to talking amongst themselves -- though at a lower volume.

RICHARDSON
What are my options?

BURDENSKY
(ignoring David)
You could bullshit him but you'll
never be completely successful.

DAVID
Can somebody tell me what's going
on?

BURDENSKY
(still ignoring him)
The questions will burn in him till
the day he dies. You'll have to
monitor him constantly...

ON DAVID

He can hear little snippets of what Burdensky's saying--

BURDENSKY (PARTIALLY AUDIBLE)
...to make sure he doesn't talk...
the endless ripple effects...

REVEAL David untying the rope restraining him.

ON THE SUITS

BURDENSKY
If it were me, I'd level with him.

RICHARDSON
Completely?

BURDENSKY
That's the only way to extinguish
his curiosity.

Richardson turns and studies David. Then walks over to him.
An uncomfortable pause.

DAVID
Who are you guys?

RICHARDSON
We're the people who make sure
things happen according to Plan.

David stares back at him for a moment.

Then leaps up. His rope comes off and the chair falls. He
sprints toward an open door forty feet across the warehouse.

Richardson makes a little gesture with his hand--

CLOSE-UP OF THE FLOOR

It cracks...and displaces upward...so it's uneven just as
David's foot comes down on it.

BACK TO WIDE SHOT

David trips and goes flying--

MOMENTS LATER

David is dragged back to the center of the room and placed back in his chair in front of Richardson.

RICHARDSON
Did you really think I couldn't see
that coming?

David dabs blood from his lip, which split during the fall.

RICHARDSON (CONT'D)
I can read your mind!

David stares back.

RICHARDSON (CONT'D)
Yeah, really....
(beat)
Choose a color.
(barely a beat)
Blue. Choose a number.
(even less time)
Seventeen.

David's jaw drops slightly. Richardson was clearly right.

RICHARDSON
Now, why are you still deciding
whether or not to run?

David's hands go to his head, involuntarily, an atavistic response, as if somehow that will keep his thoughts from spilling out into view.

RICHARDSON
You saw the futility of that back
at the office.

David's entire reality has finally been bent to the breaking point. He can't hang on any longer to an explanation for all this based in the world he's known to date...

DAVID
What the hell is happening to me?

RICHARDSON

You just saw behind a curtain you weren't even supposed to know was there, Mr. Norris. It's jarring. I'm sure.

DAVID

I just...came to work...

RICHARDSON

It wasn't your fault. Your Path through the world this morning was supposed to be adjusted.

(glancing bitterly at Harry, in the corner)

Your coffee was supposed to spill onto your shirt as you left Starbucks near your apartment. You would have gone up to change and arrived at work ten minutes later than you did. By then we would have left.

(beat)

People call it "chance" when their coffee spills or their internet goes down or they misplace their keys. Sometimes it is. Sometimes it's us...nudging you back on Plan.

David takes all this in. He's still shell-shocked.

DAVID

Whatever you were doing to Charlie back there...it wasn't misplacing his keys.

RICHARDSON

Sometimes when nudging a person back on Plan isn't enough we intervene directly.

DAVID

Why Charlie? What did you do to him.

RICHARDSON

You need to worry about getting back on your Plan, David, not worry about us putting him back on his.

David stares back, still trying to get his bearings.

RICHARDSON (CONT'D)

Only a handful of human beings know what you now know, David. We're determined to keep it that way.

RICHARDSON (CONT'D)

So before I let you go, you need to understand something: If you ever reveal our existence we will erase your brain. Your memories, your emotions, your entire personality will be expunged. Your friends and family will think you've gone crazy. You won't "think" anything because a blank slate can't "think."

David stares back.

RICHARDSON

Do you understand what I just said?

DAVID

Yes....

RICHARDSON

Not a word. Not one word about us.
(long beat as he studies
David's face)
Okay....you're free to go.

David stands there a moment...not sure it's real. Richardson points at the door. David walks toward it.

Just then another man comes up to Richardson.

NEW MAN IN SUIT

There's a woman.

RICHARDSON

(sighs)
There's always a woman....

Richardson motions to his men.

AT THE DOOR

Two men come through from outside and block David's exit.

DAVID

He said I could go.

CENTER OF ROOM

NEW MAN IN SUIT

You won't believe who she is.

He holds open a Planbook for Richardson to see.

RICHARDSON
How is that possible? Why didn't
we get an alert?

NEW MAN IN SUIT
He wasn't supposed to be on that
bus. He was supposed to be
changing his shirt in his
apartment... It was a controlled
situation. It was supposed to be.

The new man looks at Harry.

AT THE DOOR

David looks back at Richardson.

DAVID
You said I could go.

Richardson walks over to him.

RICHARDSON
You ran into a woman named Elise on
the bus this morning?

DAVID
(going very still)
Why does it matter?

RICHARDSON
You weren't ever supposed to see
her again.

DAVID
Why do you care?

RICHARDSON
Because, David, you can't be with
her. And we didn't want to have to
resort to this--

Four big guys grab David and pull his arms backwards like
prison guards incapacitating a prisoner. Richardson reaches
into David's pocket and pulls out his wallet--

DAVID
What the hell-- What are you--

Richardson removes the piece of paper that Elise wrote her
number on from David's wallet--

DAVID (CONT'D)
No--

Richardson places the wallet back in David's pocket, then pulls out a lighter--

DAVID (CONT'D)

No!

And burns Elise's number. David strains and tries to pull loose from the vice-like grip of the four Intervention Team men. But he can't get free.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What is wrong with you people?!

Richardson drops the paper on the floor and lets it burn.

ON David's reaction CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE -- DAY

David exits through a steel door. It clangs shut behind him.

He stands there unable to proceed for a long beat then starts walking to the corner to orient himself.

Down one street he spots the Manhattan Bridge, down the other the Brooklyn Bridge. He's in DUMBO.

INT. BROOKLYN COCKTAIL LOUNGE -- AFTERNOON

David sits alone at the bar. His hand trembles slightly.

BARTENDER

You're David Norris, right?

David barely manages a nod.

BARTENDER

Can I get you a drink?

DAVID

Ice water.

BARTENDER

That's it?

David nods. Harry arrives.

HARRY

We should talk. But not here. Go back to work and I'll contact you later today with a place to meet.

DAVID

Okay.

Harry can see that David is still very shaken.

HARRY

The world's exactly the same as
it's always been. You just
understand it more completely now.

(beat)

Hang on to what mattered before you
knew any of this and you'll be
fine.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE -- DAY

A thousand-yard stare on his face, David walks toward
downtown Manhattan amid dozens of pedestrian commuters.

INT. RSR OFFICES -- DAY

David enters. Stares at his new colleagues going about their
business as if nothing happened.

INT. 40TH FLOOR -- DAY

David stands in front of the corner office labeled "Steve
Kincaid." He hesitates, then opens it. He sees an empty
office with a killer view of New York Harbor. It's strangely
disorienting for him.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Mr. Kincaid's in the finance
meeting, Congressman. Main
conference room.

David turns to see her.

DAVID

Thanks.

David walks away, still trying to get his bearings in the new
reality he now knows. Charlie comes around a corner.

CHARLIE

There you are. I called your cell
ten times. You left me hanging.

DAVID

Sorry...

CHARLIE
(seeing the look in
David's eyes)
Are you okay?
(off David's nod)
Come on, we're late. Happy first
day by the way.

They head towards the conference room.

CHARLIE
You sure you're okay.

DAVID
Fine. How about you?

CHARLIE
Great. Why?

DAVID
No headaches or--

CHARLIE
I feel fantastic, man. Is it just
me or is this an odd conversation?
(off David's non-response)
What the hell happened with the
girl?

DAVID
After the meeting.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM RSR CAPITAL -- DAY

LONG SHOT from outside the building. The firm's partners sit
at their weekly investment committee meeting. David watches
Charlie intently, looking for what's changed...

INT. RSR CAPITAL OFFICES -- DAY

David and Charlie walk back to David's office.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Please explain to me why you don't
have an ear-to-ear smile right now.

They enter--

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE -- DAY

David hesitates. It's like his friend is an alien...but then
again he's totally normal.

DAVID
I lost her number.

CHARLIE
You lost her number?

DAVID
(searching for something)
I was pickpocketed.

CHARLIE
Come on. You can't be serious.
(off David's look)
You're serious.... Oh, man...dude.
I'm sorry.... I'm really sorry...

EXT. PIER -- ADJACENT TO WEST SIDE HIGHWAY -- DAY

David sits on a bench looking at the water. The wind picks up and he puts his hands in his coat pockets to keep them warm. His right hand feels something. He pulls out a ticket for the 4 pm Circle Line tourist boat cruise.

EXT. CIRCLE LINE CRUISE -- DAY

The boat pulls away from the dock. It's misting rain so there's only a smattering of tourists on-board. David stands looking back at Manhattan. Harry is next to him.

HARRY
A lot of people just collapse when they see what you've seen. Their personal choices suddenly seem meaningless to them. Life starts to feel pointless.

DAVID
I was raised to believe there's something behind the curtain. I just never pictured it quite like this.

HARRY
Most people don't.

Harry looks over his shoulder, scans for any signs of his colleagues. He's far from relaxed.

HARRY
How are you feeling?

DAVID
You should know. You can read my mind, right?

Harry hesitates...as if he's not sure how much to tell David, how far to go with this. Finally:

HARRY
Richardson was just trying to scare you.

DAVID
He knew what color I was thinking.

HARRY
Because he set it up as a choice.
"Choose a color. Choose a number"

DAVID
So?

Harry looks away. He's crossing a line. He's really putting himself out there:

HARRY
We can't read your mind or hear your thoughts. But before you make a choice your brain weighs options, and we perceive that. We know if you're going to go off Plan or not because, as long as we're close enough, we can sense it when it's about to happen.

DAVID
It's like a sixth sense for you?

HARRY
Seventh, actually.

DAVID
What did they do to Charlie?

HARRY
Made some small change in the way he assesses risk.

DAVID
What type of risk?

HARRY
(this is beside the point)
I don't know. Something arcane.
Something to do with mortgage-backed securities.

DAVID
That's all?

HARRY

Yes.

DAVID

What would your colleagues do to you if they knew what you were telling me?

This is precisely what Harry has been worried about.

HARRY

That's why we're meeting out here.

DAVID

They're not following me?

HARRY

We don't have the manpower to follow everybody all the time. They're checking in on you. Just not here. Not right now.

ON David's face considering this.

EXT. UPPER DECK -- DAY

Moments later. They stand out of earshot of the few tourists up here.

DAVID

Why are you helping me?

HARRY

I have my reasons.....

David studies him. Harry's clearly not ready to go into them.

DAVID

Why do they care if I'm with Elise?

HARRY

Your entire reality gets shattered this morning and you want to know about a woman?

DAVID

Why do they care?

Harry looks back at him. Taken aback a bit by how much David seems to care.

HARRY

I don't know.

DAVID
You have no idea?

HARRY
All I know is, given the amount of
resources they've used, keeping you
from her is pretty important to
them.
(off David's silence)
You're going to look for her aren't
you?

Again, David is silent.

HARRY (CONT'D)
There are twelve million people in
this city. On a slow day. You're
not going to find her, you do
realize that, don't you?
(beat)
Even if a hypnotist pulled her
number out of the recesses of your
brain, no matter how many times you
called it, you'd never get
through...

DAVID
(his face hardening)
They send you here to tell me that?

HARRY (CONT'D)
You want my advice? Forget about
her. Accept that you'll never see
her again. Move on with your life.

ON David as Harry's words sink in.

FADE TO:

EXT. MADISON SQUARE PARK -- MORNING

Huge shafts of morning sunlight cut across the park outside
David's apartment. The trees are blooming. It's Spring now.

INT. BEDROOM -- MORNING

An alarm clock reads 6:29 am. David lies alone in bed. He's
already awake, staring at the ceiling....

After a long beat the alarm clock rings. David shuts it
off. But then just lies there...

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

It's the same apartment -- except it's bigger now. Instead of two large windows on the park, his apartment is now six windows across. (He has bought the two one-bedrooms next to his and knocked the walls down). Three years have passed.

No files on the table, like there were the last time we were here. David is on the phone in a new park-view study.

CHARLIE (PHONE V.O.)

How are you feeling about the speech?

David has not noticeably aged and yet he's more tempered and subdued than when we last saw him. We hear it in his voice:

DAVID

I'm ready.... I changed a few things last night.

CHARLIE (PHONE V.O.)

Tell me at breakfast.

THROUGH THE WINDOW AT DAVID

David finishes his call, then looks out the window. There is a detachment in his eyes that didn't exist before. After a moment, he gets his coat and heads for the door.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE PARK -- MORNING

David exits Starbucks with a coffee. He walks across the park toward the same Fifth Avenue bus stop he did three years ago. Even his posture and gait are different.

INT. BUS -- MORNING

David enters the M1 bus. He feeds his Metrocard into the reader as he looks down the aisle scanning the riders...more out of habit than actual hope. He walks back to take a seat.

INT. BUS -- MINUTES LATER -- MORNING

David stares idly out the window. His Blackberry buzzes with a text message. Looks down at it. Then looks back out the window. Suddenly his eyes snap into focus.

DAVID'S POV: The bus passes a woman walking on the sidewalk.

David's head whips around, only able to see her from the back now. She walks like Elise. She's dressed in the same eclectic style. He slams the red "next stop" strip, jumps to his feet, and runs to the front of the bus.

DAVID
Stop the bus.

DRIVER
The next stop--

DAVID
Now.

EXT. EAST VILLAGE -- MORNING

The bus stops. David jumps out on Broadway. FOLLOW him as he takes off across the street and runs down 12th. He catches up to her at University Place.

DAVID
Elise!

The woman turns around.

And it's her...

ELISE
David?

DAVID
Hi.

ELISE
Wow.... How are you?

Reeling from the adrenaline, David takes a moment, then:

DAVID
(from the heart)
I rode the M1 to work every day for the last three years hoping one day I'd run into you again.

She's amused, rather than moved, because she doesn't buy it.

ELISE
Calling would have been easier.

DAVID
I couldn't.

ELISE
Girlfriend wouldn't let you?

DAVID
No girlfriend.

She looks at him with continued skepticism. But his expression is dead serious.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Can we go somewhere and talk?

She hesitates. It hurt when he didn't call. She's angry at herself for that, but it's the truth.

ELISE
(re: his suit)
Don't you have to get to work?

DAVID
I just got sick.

ELISE
"I haven't seen you in three years -
- You make me sick" is not an
ideal come-on. For the record.

David smiles. She's softening. A little. His phone vibrates. He pulls it out of his pocket.

DAVID
One second.
(picking up)
Charlie, I can't make breakfast.

CHARLIE (PHONE V.O.)
Why not?

DAVID
And...I might have to push the
speech.

CHARLIE (PHONE V.O.)
What? Are you crazy?!

DAVID
I just ran into Elise.

He hangs up.

ELISE
You just hung up on your best
friend.

DAVID
We've known each other since we
were kids. We have a shorthand.

He's not being flip or clever or smooth. He's being matter-of-fact. Serious.

ELISE
What speech?

DAVID
Doesn't matter. Let's take a walk.

His focus on her is absolute. But she's wary of getting reeled in again.

ELISE
Where?

DAVID
Somewhere far. We have a lot to talk about.

ELISE
I don't think you should cancel your speech. What if I don't like you at the end of our walk?

DAVID
I'll take my chances.

ELISE
Seriously, my number hasn't changed. Just call me like you didn't last time.

DAVID
My speech will always be there, you might not be.

ELISE
(amused/indignant)
I was there, David. You didn't call me!

DAVID
Walk with me and I'll explain that.

She's still dubious. His phone vibrates. This time he turns it off.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(a statement of fact)
I'm not losing you again. I'm not letting you out of my sight.

ELISE
Stalker.

DAVID
Can we walk?

The moment she finally relents, CUT TO:

FOLLOWING SHOT

Polished black shoes running down a corridor on an impossibly shiny black floor with inlaid decorative silver borders.

INT. ELEGANT OFFICE -- DAY

Mr. Richardson sits at a large desk. The design is Art Deco crossed with Albert Speer. Downtown Manhattan is visible out the 30th floor window. Richardson's aide enters.

MCCRADY
We have a problem.

EXT. GRAMERCY -- DAY

David and Elise walk north.

ELISE
It's been years, David. How do you know I don't have a boyfriend?

Oh, shit. He hasn't even had time to think about that.

DAVID
Do you have a boyfriend?

ELISE
Would it matter?

DAVID
(trapped)
Uh...yeah...

ELISE
So all the stuff about me being in your mind constantly for the last three years was just talk.... The truth is you don't have any real conviction.

DAVID
It wouldn't matter.

ELISE
So you don't care about being a home-wrecker?

DAVID
Okay...if you were married it would matter.

ELISE
Now you're just trying to say what you think I want to hear.

A beat. She lets David twist in the wind...

ELISE
I'm single.

ON David's face: relief....

ELISE
Now let's hear your bullshit excuse for never calling me.

DAVID
I didn't have your number.

ELISE
What?

DAVID
It was taken from me. I was mugged.

ELISE
Oh, come on.

DAVID
Your number was in my wallet and they took it.

ELISE
Come on....

DAVID
I'm serious. What else could possibly explain my fawning all over you on that bus three years ago...and again today and not calling you in between?

ELISE
(duh)
Um, you had a girlfriend and you felt guilty. I have a thing about being lied to, David.

DAVID
I swear to God I didn't have your number. I swear on my parents' graves.

DAVID (cont'd)
I didn't even have a last name to try to track you down. Do you know how many pages come back when you type "Elise" into Google?
(beat)
And none of them were you.

ELISE
(after a beat)
You really are smooth.

DAVID
That's not fair.

ELISE
It's okay. I like it. I probably shouldn't, but I do.
(beat)
It's Sellas. Elise Sellas.

INT. RICHARDSON'S OFFICE -- DOWNTOWN -- DAY

McCrary holds open his Planbook to show Richardson an ever shifting diagram.

RICHARDSON
Tell me you're kidding. How could our Path-analysis miss this?

McCrary just shakes his head, mystified... Richardson walks to the closet and pulls out his fedora.

RICHARDSON
Where are they now?

MCCRADY
Central Park. Bethesda Fountain.

INT. CENTRAL PARK -- DAY

David and Elise walk past Bethesda Fountain.

ELISE
I read somewhere you're running again.

DAVID
I haven't announced yet but...soon.

ELISE
I hope I had a little something to do with that.

DAVID
That concession speech I gave sure
did. You had everything to do with
that.

Elise smiles.

DAVID
You know entirely too much about me
given how little I know about you.

ELISE
According to Cosmo I'm supposed to
keep it that way.

DAVID
According to Maxim, I'm supposed to
"maintain eye contact and ask you
what you do for a living."

It's the first witty comment he's made this time around.
He's just barely starting to loosen up.

ELISE
(laughs)
I'm a dancer.

DAVID
Oh...

ELISE
Not like that, you pervert. In a
dance company. The Manhattan
Modern Ballet.

DAVID
I think you have the wrong idea
about me.

ELISE
I think it was the first thing that
crossed your mind.

DAVID
Is there a performance of this
company coming up that I could
watch?

ELISE
Actually, we have a show opening
tomorrow night.

DAVID
I'm there. You hungry yet?

He points at the Boathouse restaurant a few hundred feet down the path they're on.

ELISE

Yeah...

(beat)

But I'm not putting out just because you're buying me brunch.

DAVID

We could wait an hour and call it lunch.

ELISE

I bet lines like that work wonders with the "dancers" you normally hang out with.

DAVID

So unfair....

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

Richardson and McCrady step out of a small outdoor bar structure. They spot David and Elise walking in the side door of the restaurant.

Somehow Richardson and McCrady have travelled from downtown Manhattan to the middle of Central Park in the time it took David and Elise to walk 100 feet....

INT. BOATHOUSE RESTAURANT -- DAY

David and Elise are at a table next to the lake.

WAITER

Good morning. It's good to see you again, sir.

DAVID

Thank you. You're...
(pulling it from the
recesses of his brain)
Paul, right? De...Santo?

WAITER

Wow, yeah. How did you remember that? It's been a year.

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

Richardson surreptitiously watches David and Elise while McCrady consults his Planbook. A RICHARDSON AIDE steps out of the same door Richardson and McCrady came through.

RICHARDSON AIDE
Morris is on the artistic director.
Melton is on Charlie Traynor.

RICHARDSON
This whole thing will be over in an hour.

MCCRADY
(disturbed by something he sees in his Planbook)
We may not have that long.

RICHARDSON
What?

INT. BOATHOUSE RESTAURANT -- DAY

The waiter leaves David and Elise.

ELISE
How do you do that? I can't remember the names of people I just met.

DAVID
(points at himself)
David.

ELISE
Right. Thanks...

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

MCCRADY
Her decision tree is diverging from our models.

RICHARDSON
(confident)
36 hours without contact and she'll never speak to him again. I've studied her file. Her deepest fear in life is--

MCCRADY
No, something is wrong. I'm
already seeing inflection points.

Off Richardson's surprised look--

INT. MAIN DINING ROOM -- DAY

David and Elise eat brunch.

ELISE
Ballet is basically impossible to
do correctly.

DAVID
Why?

ELISE
You just do absurd things with your
body. The movement is completely
unnatural. It requires incredible
strength in all sorts of random
muscles. And you have to be born
with ridiculous amounts of
flexibility in your hip or you'll
never be any good.

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

McCradly examines his Planbook diagram. With each new update
of the diagram red "inflection points" move across the pages
toward a heavy black "present time" line on the right side of
the right page.

Richardson points at the red point closest to the present
time line.

RICHARDSON
What's that?

MCCRADY
If they kiss....

RICHARDSON
(disbelieving)
A kiss, that's all it takes?

MCCRADY
A real kiss. But once they do that
every possible adjustment that's
strong enough to break them up will
cause ripples over your limit.

RICHARDSON
If Melton and Morris do their jobs
right we'll be okay.

But Richardson is clearly worried.

INT. MAIN DINING ROOM -- DAY

David and Elise.

ELISE
In the history of ballet there've
only been a handful of people who
actually did ballet the way it's
supposed to be done. For me that
just made it completely addictive.

DAVID
Do you ever get nervous when people
watch you?

ELISE
Not really. Do you get anxious
when you make a speech?

DAVID
I get more anxious alone in my
apartment than in front of an
auditorium full of people.
Everything's backwards for me.

VOICE (O.S.)
I hate to interrupt.

They turn to see Charlie Traylor.

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

Richardson turns to a colleague, Melton, who steps through
the "bar house" door.

RICHARDSON
(re: Charlie's arrival)
Nice work.

INT. BOATHOUSE RESTAURANT -- DAY

DAVID
How did you find me?

CHARLIE
Does it matter?
(to Elise)

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Elise, pleasure to see you again.
(to David)
There's a crowd of people standing
around downtown waiting for you.

ELISE
Your speech?

CHARLIE
He's announcing today.

ELISE
At the speech?

DAVID
It's okay.

CHARLIE
What's okay? It's not okay. The
one thing you can't be this time
around is impulsive. That's why
we're announcing the way we are,
that's why--

ELISE
God, don't skip this for me.

DAVID
I told you I'm not letting you out
of my sight.

CHARLIE
David, what the hell?

DAVID
(to Elise, realizing a way
out of his dilemma)
Come with me. Come and watch.

ELISE
(smiling)
Okay.

Her phone buzzes with a text message.

CHARLIE
(to both of them)
Great. Perfect solution. Now,
let's pay and get you over there.

Charlie waves the waiter over to give them the check.

ELISE
Now?

CHARLIE
The speech is in 30 minutes.

ELISE
I can't then.
(indicating text message)
They just moved my dress rehearsal
to noon.

David's own sixth sense kicks in. Has he been discovered?

DAVID
We can reschedule the speech.

ELISE
David!

CHARLIE
(to Elise)
Thank you.

David looks around for anything out of the ordinary, any sign of Richardson or his men. But they stay out of view. He thinks they're not on to him yet.

ELISE
I'll meet you right after the
rehearsal.

DAVID
Where does your company perform?

ELISE
We're not in our space. There was
a power outage or something.
(checking the text)
We're using a space on Murray and
West Broadway today.

CHARLIE
(realizing)
That's four blocks from where
you're speaking.

David reacts: Richardson can't be behind that.

CHARLIE
You can literally walk there after
the speech.

David nods, his suspicions fading.

CHARLIE
(checking watch)
But we've got to leave right now.

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

Richardson and his team watch as David, convinced now he's still undiscovered, stands up and heads to the door with Charlie and Elise.

MCCRADY
The "four blocks" thing was a brilliant move, boss.

RICHARDSON
(putting his hat on)
We're not out of the woods yet.

He looks down at the inflection points in McCrady's Planbook.

INT. BAR AREA -- DAY

David and Charlie and Elise walk toward the side entrance.

ELISE
(pointing west)
I've got to go that way...to stop by my apartment and change.

DAVID
Okay...

David and Elise stop to say goodbye to each other.

ELISE
You know, the speech on election night, you said I inspired you... I wish I could do that again now.

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

Richardson makes a small hand motion in Charlie's direction.

INT. BAR AREA -- DAY

Charlie's iphone buzzes. It's an alarm reminder. A text appears: "15 minute sound check." He's a few feet from--

DAVID AND ELISE

David leans toward Elise--

CHARLIE
(interrupting)
David, the speech starts in 15
minutes. We have a 25 minute
drive.

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

Richardson makes a gesture at the TV by the bar. The picture
changes (though we can't see to what).

He then moves a water glass on their table. The sun hits the
glass and reflects into the bar area where--

INT. BAR AREA -- DAY

--the reflection catches the eye of a 40 year-old woman
having a coffee at the bar with her 65 year-old mother.

Turning so the sun is out of her eyes causes the daughter to
notice the TV: an image of David's famous concession speech
from three years ago. A screen graphic reads "Announcing
Today?"

As the daughter turns back to look at her mother, she notices
David, over her mom's shoulder....

DAVID AND ELISE

David squeezes her hand...and leans in again--

DAVID
I just want to say--

VOICE (O.S.)
I hope the rumors are true,
Congressman.

David pulls back from Elise, suddenly self-conscious, turns
to see the 40-year old woman Richardson just manipulated.
She points at the TV report on David's announcement.

40 YEAR-OLD WOMAN
You have my vote.

65 YEAR-OLD WOMAN
Mine too...and I usually disagree
with her.

DAVID
Thanks. Thanks a lot.

David turns back to Elise.

ELISE
(needling)
Well, you're really just a hit with
women of all ages, aren't you?

CHARLIE -- A FEW FEET AWAY

On the phone.

CHARLIE
I'm wrangling him right now--

DAVID AND ELISE

DAVID
Whatever happens...I'm not going to
let anything stand between us this
time.

It's such an odd thing to say, if you don't know what David
has gone through. She gives him a quizzical look. But
she's also moved by his tone.

ELISE
Okay.... I believe you. Of course
I tend to believe in the wrong
people. Especially men.

It's the kind of quip that's more truth than jest.

DAVID
Not this time.

He leans in to kiss her--

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

A horrified look from Richardson--

INT. BAR AREA -- DAY

David kisses Elise on the cheek. But he lingers...

Then pulls away without going further....

DAVID
I'll see you in two hours.

EXT. BOATHOUSE PATIO -- DAY

Richardson and his colleagues all breathe a large sigh of relief...as they watch David leave.

MCCRADY
We're okay...

RICHARDSON
That was way too close. What the hell is going on with this case?

INT. TOWN CAR -- DAY

David and Charlie ride in the back. Charlie looks at David.

DAVID
What?

CHARLIE
I've just never seen you like that.

David can't possibly explain.

CHARLIE
"I'm going to postpone my announcement to have brunch with a woman?" Postpone any speech. I know she made an impression on you but this is...

Charlie just shakes his head, unable to comprehend. A beat.

CHARLIE
What is it about her?

DAVID
(beat)
I don't know...

EXT. RSR FINANCIAL BUILDING -- DAY

David pulls up outside. Hundreds of his supporters and the press are waiting for him. He gets out of the car to cheers.

INT. BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET FROM RSR FINANCIAL -- DAY

Richardson stands with McCrady on the upper level of a two-story lobby looking out at David arriving for his speech.

INT. ELISE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Elise changes into her dance gear. Big smile on her face. She spots something on her bookshelf (we can't see what) and her smile fades. She takes it and puts it in a drawer.

Her phone vibrates. She has a text message: "Power back on at MMB. Rehearsal at noon."

INT. BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET FROM RSR FINANCIAL -- DAY

McCrary hangs up a silver cell phone and nods at Richardson: "it's done." Just then Richardson's phone buzzes. The caller ID says: "Mr. Donaldson."

RICHARDSON

Richardson. Yes, sir. Believe me, it was a surprise to me too. But I think we have it under control.

INT. DANCE STUDIO -- DAY

Elise and her friend, LAUREN, 20s, stretch between routines. An unexpected smile spreads across Elise's face.

LAUREN

Oh, you're done. You're gone....

MINUTES LATER -- DAY

A half-dozen news organizations film the speech.

DAVID

...I'm here today to honor that, and to announce my intention to run for the United States Senate...

INT. DANCE STUDIO -- DAY

LAUREN

Just tell me if he disappears one more time you'll never take his call again.

ELISE

Don't worry. That's definite.

EXT. RSR FINANCIAL BUILDING -- DAY

The audience applauds energetically. David nods "thank you" and steps away from the lectern they set up. He shakes two or three people's hands but then heads inside the building.

INT. LOBBY OF RSR FINANCIAL -- DAY

David huddles inside with Charlie. Reporters outside are in front of their cameras filing their stories amidst the lingering crowd.

CHARLIE
Good Morning America at 7am
tomorrow, then you have the bankers
group... David, are you listening?

David's staring out the window. The sunlight has caught the building across the street just right to illuminate Richardson and McCrady on the second floor.

INT. BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET -- DAY

RICHARDSON (INTO PHONE)
I'll keep you posted, sir.

Richardson hangs up the phone and turns to look out at David. As he does he realizes David can see him.

RICHARDSON
Dammit!

Richardson steps back out of the sunlight.

MCCRADY
What?

RICHARDSON
Get out of the sunlight.

McCrady, notices David looking, jumps back out of the light.

RICHARDSON
(fuming)
I cannot get a break on this case.

INT. LOBBY OF RSR FINANCIAL -- DAY

Charlie is trying to understand what David's staring at.

DAVID
I have to see Elise now.

CHARLIE
After you go back out there and
talk to the New York channels--

DAVID
Tomorrow. After GMA.

He heads for the door. Charlie follows.

CHARLIE
No, we need this on the nightly--
(catching up to David and
stopping him)
David...

Charlie looks at him for a moment, searching for the right words to say to a friend...

CHARLIE
Every time we get close...you do
something to derail it.

A beat. There's a truth to that. David knows it. But--

DAVID
This is different. Trust me, it's
different.

David leaves.

EXT. WEST BROADWAY AND MURRAY ST -- DAY

David looks at the piece of paper. An address on West Broadway for "Nyman Studios." He's standing at the locked front door. No one inside. Richardson is on to him.

The surprise on his face turns to anger...then resolve.

He dials Elise's number on his cell. Gets voicemail.

DAVID
Elise...I doubt you'll ever get
this message but--

JUMP CUT

David dials 411.

DAVID
Can I have the number for the
Manhattan Modern Ballet....

He looks down to see his phone has zero bars...

INT. FURNITURE STORE -- DAY

David goes to the saleswoman.

EXT. FURNITURE STORE -- DAY

Through the window we see he saleswoman dial a number...then look at the phone and shrug. It's dead. She and David go to her computer. She looks at it, puzzled. It's dead too.

PULL BACK to REVEAL Richardson and McCrady.

MCCRADY
He's going to go next door.

Just then David exits the furniture store and goes next door to a clothing store--

MCCRADY
You can't keep the phones and internet down on the whole block for too much longer without running into ripple problems...

INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE -- DAY

David enters and goes to an agent.

INT. REALTOR'S DESK -- DAY

The agent Googles "Manhattan Modern Ballet." Nothing shows up.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Could it be called something else?

DAVID
Do you have a phone book?

JUMP CUT

David gets to the phone book page that ends with "Manhattan Mobile Phone Company." The next page is torn out. David slams his fist down.

EXT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE -- DAY

David exits the office to find Richardson on the sidewalk. With McCrady nearby.

RICHARDSON

There is an entire world of women out there. I thought I made it clear this one was off limits.

David takes off walking.

DAVID

I must have forgotten. It's been a while.

RICHARDSON

Doesn't change the fact.

David looks around, trying to figure out his next move.

DAVID

Why are you so determined to keep us apart?

RICHARDSON

You know why.

DAVID

The Plan? If there is a Plan you misread it.

RICHARDSON

There's no misreading what the Plan says about you and Elise. It's unequivocal.

DAVID

Then your Plan's wrong.

RICHARDSON

Do you realize who wrote this Plan?

DAVID

I don't care.

Richardson grabs him and pushes him against a brick wall.

RICHARDSON

Well you should. You need to learn a little more respect.

David shoves him off. Looks like he might take a swing at Richardson. Then his eye catches the complex diagram that McCrady is looking at in his Planbook.

DAVID
Why are you keeping us apart?

RICHARDSON
Because the Plan calls for it.
Because--

DAVID
(flaring)
You put us together three times--

RICHARDSON
That was chance. That wasn't us.

DAVID
Three times? Bullshit! If I'm not
supposed to be with her then why do
I feel like this?

RICHARDSON
It doesn't matter what you feel.
It matters what's in black and
white.

David's ready to explode at him when he sees something in
Richardson's eyes. David stops...then his whole expression
changes....

DAVID
You don't know, do you? You don't
know why they're keeping us
apart...

RICHARDSON
(covering)
It's not something your mind could
comprehend.

DAVID
You're in a nice suit but the
reality is you're just a minion
aren't you?

David pushes past Richardson and walks into a busy
restaurant. McCrady quickly consults his Planbook.

MCCRADY
He's deciding how to--
(realizing)
Uh..oh--

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT -- DAY

David strides in and goes right to a chair. Stands on it.

DAVID
(loud)
Excuse me ladies and gentleman--
(as people turn and look,
recognize him)
I'm sorry to disturb your lunch. I
have a bit of an emergency. Is
there anybody in this room who's
ever seen a performance of the
Manhattan Modern Ballet?

EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT -- DAY

From outside, Richardson and McCrady watch.

RICHARDSON
Son of a bitch.

MCCRADY
He's smart. He's very smart.

David exits the restaurant from another door. He hurries
toward West Broadway.

EXT. WEST BROADWAY -- DAY

Not a taxi in sight. David looks for one in vain. Suddenly
Richardson emerges from a storefront and goes to David.

RICHARDSON
Maybe you should try the subway.

David holds him in a steely gaze.

DAVID
Don't all those cab drivers you're
diverting have Plans too? What
about all the other people looking
for cabs in this part of the city
right now? What about their Plans?
The ripples must be endless...

Richardson is taken aback that David has figured this out.

DAVID
I don't care what you put in my
way, I'm not going to give up.

David walks off, leaving Richardson standing there.

MINUTES LATER -- DAY

Richardson and McCrady watch David looking for a taxi at a very busy intersection.

MCCRADY
You've got two more minutes keeping taxis off West Broadway before--

RICHARDSON
(frustrated)
I need something that's going to keep him in place longer--

EXT. LEONARD ST -- DAY

On foot, David heads West towards Hudson St. Several taxis pass with their roof lights off. Suddenly, down the street, he sees one with his roof light on. He runs for it when--

CRASH -- twenty feet in front of him two cars collide. Metal crunches and glass breaks. This is no fender bender--

DAVID
Jesus.
(looks for Richardson)
Is this how far you people will go?!

He rushes toward the accident--

EXT. SITE OF ACCIDENT -- DAY

An hour later. Four police cars and an ambulance. They are treating one of the accident's victims for minor scrapes. David is getting interviewed by a police officer.

POLICE OFFICER
Unfortunately you're the only witness, Congressman.

DAVID
How much longer?

POLICE OFFICER
A few more minutes. I'm sorry. I know you have to meet somebody.

DAVID
I didn't say I had to meet anyone.

POLICE OFFICER
Well...I just assumed--

EXT. ROOFTOP -- DAY

Richardson is watching David get interviewed--

RICHARDSON
Amateur! That's an amateur's
mistake!

BACK TO SCENE -- EXT. SITE OF ACCIDENT -- DAY

DAVID
You're not a real cop, are you?
You're one of them. Somebody could
have been killed in that crash!
Doesn't that make you--

"POLICE OFFICER"
Sir, calm down.

But David's already walking away.

DAVID
Sergeant!

He goes to the highest ranking guy on the scene.

DAVID
I know you need a statement from
me, but do I have to stay here to
give it to you or--

SERGEANT
No, sir, we know how to get in
touch with you.

DAVID
Thank you. Is this man under your
command?

David turns to see that the "Police Officer" who was
interviewing him is gone.

EXT. HUDSON ST -- DAY

David gets into a taxi.

INT. TAXI -- DAY

DAVID
17th Street between 10th and 11th.
And sir, you might have to break
some traffic laws getting there.
So take this.

He hands him a \$100 bill. A light that just turned green
goes yellow--

DAVID
Go through that--

The driver blows through it as it turns red.

ACROSS THE STREET

Richardson and McCrady are in front of a hip cafe arguing.

RICHARDSON
I want more red lights--

MCCRADY
(consulting Planbook)
There are too many ripples in the
system. Cumulative effects are
coming into play.

RICHARDSON
A traffic jam.

MCCRADY
That's even worse. We have to get
more localized.

Richardson looks at the taxi disappearing up Hudson.

RICHARDSON
He's getting out of range!

INT. HIP CAFE HALLWAY / KITCHEN -- DAY

Richardson and McCrady rush through the cafe and into the
KITCHEN, surprising the CHEF so completely that he can't even
manage a word before they throw open the insulated door to
the COLD PANTRY and run inside.

CHEF
Hey!

The chef charges over and pulls open the door to find -- refrigerated food. And nothing else. Richardson and McCrady have disappeared. The chef blinks.

INT. ART GALLERY -- DAY -- CONTINUOUS ACTION

Richardson and McCrady rush from a storage room to the showroom of a fancy art gallery. Patrons stare as they rush straight out the front door and onto Gansevoort Street.

EXT. 8TH AVENUE -- DAY

David's taxi is hitting all the lights now.

EXT. GANSEVOORT ST -- DAY

Richardson and McCrady move swiftly down the block. Richardson heads up the stairs of a brownstone. Opens the door to see a street in Chinatown. He slams the door shut.

RICHARDSON

Wrong one.

(thinks)

Two doors down. God, I hate downtown!

EXT. 17TH ST -- DAY

David's taxi heads down 17th from 8th Avenue.

EXT. 17TH ST -- DAY

Richardson and McCrady step out of the service door of a building on the corner of 10th Avenue and 17th.

They can see a taxi pulling up in front of the Manhattan Modern Ballet building down the block. They run towards it.

MCCRADY

(re: Planbook)

I've got inflection points. All they have to do is catch sight of each other this time--

RICHARDSON

What?

EXT. / INT. DANCE STUDIO -- DAY

David opens the door to Elise's dance company, oblivious to Richardson's pursuit.

INT. DANCE STUDIO LOBBY -- DAY

LAUREN, is nearby as David speaks to the receptionist. MUSIC comes from a door across the room.

RECEPTIONIST
Is she expecting you?

He nods.

LAUREN
I hope you realize how lucky you are. I'm the friend. Lauren.

EXT. 17TH ST -- DAY

Richardson dons his fedora as he races toward the studio.

RICHARDSON
Can I block the front door?

MCCRADY
He's already through it.

RICHARDSON
The next one!

INT. DANCE STUDIO -- DAY

Lauren walks David toward the door with the music behind it.

LAUREN
It goes without saying that I'll kill you if you hurt her.
(beat)
And by the way, congratulations on your announcement.

EXT. 17TH ST -- DAY

Richardson and McCrady down the street.

MCCRADY
(re: diagram, confused)
There are several next ones--

RICHARDSON
(exasperated)
I'm blocking them all--

His hand stretches out (as Harry did early on in film).

MCCRADY
Wait, he's--

INT. LOBBY / DANCE STUDIO -- DAY

MUSIC pours out as David opens the door. A quarter of the way open, the door stops dead.

EXT. DANCE STUDIO -- DAY

Richardson grabs the front door and pulls. It's sealed shut. It won't budge.

RICHARDSON
What the--

MCCRADY
Hat! Hat!

McCrady is behind him. He points at Richardson's fedora, which is on the sidewalk. Fell off when he ran. Richardson sprints to grab it--

INT. LOBBY OF DANCE STUDIO -- DAY

David looks through the narrow space of the open door and sees Elise dancing. The piece she's practicing fuses the grace of ballet with the raw emotion of modern. She's breathtaking.

DAVID
I'm in serious trouble here....

EXT. / INT. DANCE STUDIO -- DAY

Richardson dashes back to the door--

MCCRADY
(consulting folio)
Forget it! He's already there...

Richardson charges into the lobby to see David staring through the partially open door to the rehearsal room....

RICHARDSON

Dammit!

McCrary's phone buzzes. He pulls it out and looks at the caller ID.

MCCRADY

(dread)

It's Mr. Donaldson.

Richardson pulls the fedora off his head and crushes it in his hands.

David turns just in time to see this. At the same time David realizes the door is no longer "stuck."

RICHARDSON

Celebrate while you can. They'll just kick it upstairs now. You have no idea what you're up against.

David just looks at him. He'll deal with that when it comes...

MCCRADY

Sir?

Richardson grabs the phone and answers -- going outside to talk.

David turns back to the dance studio. He opens the door to get an unobstructed view of Elise. She spins, arches, dips. David can't take his eyes off her.

When the artistic director pauses the routine to give notes, Elise gives David a little wave. Then they start again.

David looks back out at Richardson on the street, but he's gone...

INT. ADJUSTMENT BUREAU HEADQUARTERS -- DUSK

A defeated Richardson trudges up a long flight of stairs.

INT. HALLWAY -- DUSK

Richardson walks down a hallway with an impossibly shiny black floor and enters a doorway marked "Mr. Donaldson."

INT. MR. DONALDSON'S OUTER OFFICE -- DUSK

Two secretaries look up at him.

SECRETARY #1
He's waiting for you.

INT. MR. DONALDSON'S OFFICE -- DUSK

Much larger than Richardson's office and on a higher floor.

MR. DONALDSON, 45, sits at his desk reading a document. After a moment he signs it at the bottom and looks up, REVEALING Richardson, who is standing awkwardly in front of his superior's desk.

Donaldson motions for him to sit down.

INT. DANCE STUDIO -- DUSK

David talks to Elise, who's showered and dressed now.

DAVID
You're incredible. How did you get that good?

ELISE
It's all I do. It's the only thing I ever wanted to be. And I started young.

DAVID
How young?

ELISE
By third grade I was going every day after school.

DAVID
That's a lot of motivation for an eight year-old.

She waves to the other dancers and receptionist in the lobby and they exit on to--

EXT. 17TH ST -- DUSK -- CONTINUOUS

ELISE
We moved around a lot then. Dance was kind of my stability.

DAVID
Sure...it was the only constant in your life, aside from your parents...

ELISE
Really more the dance.

She doesn't make a big deal of it but we get it.

DAVID
Oh...

David's phone buzzes. Caller ID shows it's Charlie.

ELISE
I take it this is an unauthorized
social break.

DAVID
I'm a candidate for the US Senate.
I don't have to punch out when I
leave.

David sends the call to voice mail.

ELISE
Charlie?

DAVID
Couple hours while I'm out of touch
won't kill him.

ELISE
Couple hours, huh? Well, we better
make them count.

EXT. EAST VILLAGE -- DUSK

A taxi pulls to a stop. David leans over Elise to look out
the window as he waits for change from the driver.

DAVID
What's this?

ELISE
What's it look like?

We see the reflection of a dance club in the window.

DAVID
I'm a terrible dancer. I don't
dance.

Elise climbs out. David follows.

ELISE
You don't now. By the end of the
night, you will.

They walk towards "Plan B", a hip joint with zebra wallpaper and fake palm trees. Salsa music pulses from inside.

DAVID
You're going to teach me to dance
in one night? Not happening.

ELISE
Are you doubting me?

DAVID
Yes.

She spins and shoves him against the wall. Forcefully kisses him. Then pulls free.

ELISE
Don't.

She turns and walks into the club. David stands there.

DAVID
Holy shit...

INT. DONALDSON'S OFFICE -- DUSK

Richardson sits across from Donaldson.

DONALDSON
The disciplinary rules require me
to demote you in rank and re-assign
you to a less desirable post.

Donaldson fingers the document he just signed.

DONALDSON
I'm going to interpret those rules
loosely. I'm going to go easy on
you because I feel the deck was
stacked against you.

In a WIDER shot we see that both Burdensky and Donaldson's AIDE sit nearby.

DONALDSON
I'm talking about the intense
chemistry between them, the
constant inflection points, and the
kicker of course: you pulling them
apart only to have "chance" put
them back together. Twice. That
seemed impossible. So I asked
Burdensky to do some research this
morning, which he just completed.

BURDENSKY
It seems like these two were meant
to be together because they were
meant to be together....

RICHARDSON
What?!

BURDENSKY
Were, in the past, in an earlier
version of the plan. Actually a
dozen earlier versions.
(beat)
God knows how many artifacts
pushing them together are left in
the current plan.

INT. PLAN B -- DUSK

A live salsa band has just started. Elise demonstrates Mambo
for David. Couldn't be farther from the style of dance he
just saw her rehearse. But she's amazing at it.

DAVID
Serious, serious trouble...

MOMENTS LATER

Salt, Patron, lime...and two glasses down on the bar.

ELISE
Ready?

DAVID
Nope.

ELISE
Perfect.

She yanks him onto the dance floor.

INT. DONALDSON'S OFFICE -- DUSK

Donaldson, Richardson, Burdensky.

RICHARDSON
Why was it changed?

DONALDSON

Something important. They went from "meant to be together" to "red-letter denied relationship" in a single Plan revision a few years back. As for why, specifically, that's apparently above even my pay grade...

INT. PLAN B -- NIGHT

David and Elise dance. He sucks, but doesn't care. A couple of people in the club recognize him and give him thumbs up...

INT. ADJUSTMENT BUREAU HEADQUARTERS -- NIGHT

Burdensky and a dejected Richardson walk down the hall.

RICHARDSON

You spend your whole career hoping that one day you'll get a "red-letter" case. Something you can really make a name for yourself with. Finally I get one...and it's...booby-trapped....

CLOSE ON THE BAR

Another set of shot glasses hit the bar. UP to REVEAL David and Elise.

ELISE

Okay, we've already used up an hour, we better hurry.

She pulls him toward the exit.

DAVID

Hurry where?

INT. MUSTANG CLUB -- NIGHT

Elise does a sexy, street variation on a two-step to an up-tempo pop-country ballad. David tries to follow along, mostly by bobbing his head with the beat. Sort of with the beat.

ELISE

You've got to let yourself feel the music.

DAVID
I've been told I have trouble
feeling.

ELISE
Whoever said that hasn't seen you
speak.

DAVID
That's different. I mean--

ELISE
What?

DAVID
In private. With women. Although
that might be changing. Is there
any style of dance you can't do?

EXT. HUNTER'S POINT, QUEENS -- NIGHT

David and Elise walk from the waterfront to the street.

ELISE
Next stop, the best 80s club in the
city. You ready?

DAVID
To make an ass of myself for the
third time in one night? Sure.

ELISE
(points)
Race me to that light. You lose,
you dance, I watch. You win, I
dance, you watch.

DAVID
What are the rules of the race---

ELISE
No rules.

DAVID
Hmmm, could get ugly....

He looks down an alley as if he's noticed something. When
she looks, he takes off like a bat out of hell--

ELISE
You bastard!

He's got a good lead, so he flips around and runs backwards.

DAVID
Quit complaining and run.

She catches up. He spins and digs it out. He can't dance, but he sure can run. He pulls away and wins.

DAVID
Yes!!!!

He pumps his arms in a victory dance.

ELISE
(pissed smile)
That was good. That was very good.

DAVID
You said "no rules".

She punches him in the stomach. Hard. He crumples, completely unprepared for it.

DAVID
(it hurts)
Sweet Jesus! Christ on a crutch!

ELISE
(giggling)
You said you had trouble feeling.

DAVID
You're insane.

ELISE
We need a cab.

He's laughing through the pain.

DAVID
I'm serious. You're a maniac. You should come with a warning label.

ELISE
I do. You just can't see it with my clothes on.

OFF David biting his lip...and PRE-LAPPING the music--

INT/EXT. A WAREHOUSE CLUB, RED HOOK DOCKS, BROOKLYN -- NIGHT

David and Elise walk into the synthesizer prelude to "I Can't Wait" by Nu Shooz.

DAVID
Doesn't this song make you feel
like you're at your high school
prom?

ELISE
I was six when it came out. So,
not really.

Brutal. David just shakes his head and smiles as she pulls
him to the dance floor.

MUSIC
Baby...I-I-I can't wait--

STROBE LIGHTS

As the song kicks in and David and Elise start dancing.... A
couple of kids next to them notice David and start pointing
and signaling their approval--

The kids who first spotted David have alerted a few others.
More people in the crowd cheer him on.

INT. DONALDSON'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Donaldson stares pensively out the window, looking down over
the city.

DONALDSON'S AIDE
So we're going operational? This
is exciting. It's been a while.

DONALDSON
We're not going operational. No
one ever made it to my job by
taking stupid risks.

DONALDSON'S AIDE
So what are--

DONALDSON
We're going to kick this case
upstairs...to someone with the
latitude to clean up this mess
without breaking into a sweat.
We're going to walk this upstairs
to Thompson.

DONALDSON'S AIDE
Thompson? Are we even allowed to
go to him directly? He's a Senior
VP.

DONALDSON
Exec VP.

DONALDSON'S AIDE
Isn't he the one...when he was in
the field his nickname was--

DONALDSON
"The Hammer?" Yes. He'll crush
this romance with the flick of his
hand. And he'll thank me for
giving him the opportunity.

STROBE LIGHTS

David and Elise dancing.

MUSIC
*Cause I can't wait, this is what
I've been waiting for--*

People on the dance floor are literally screaming in support.

EXT. RED HOOK -- NIGHT

David and Elise stand on the pier outside the dance club.

ELISE
You grew up over there?

She indicates a residential area just behind the docks.

DAVID
(pointing)
I spent ~~my~~ entire childhood three
blocks up Carroll Street. We
didn't move around a lot.

ELISE
What were you like as a kid?

DAVID
Before sixth grade I spent about
half my time in the principal's
office.

ELISE
You? Really?

DAVID
The only person who spent as much
time down there as me was a girl I
had a huge crush on so I didn't
mind too much.

A smile spreads on Elise's face.

ELISE
(re: the docks)
Did your dad work here?

DAVID
No.... My dad filled vending
machines.

ELISE
And you're going to be a
senator....

DAVID
After my brother died my Dad wanted
to get me out of town for a while.
We went to Washington and the day
we arrived he took me to the
Capitol. We ended up sitting in
the Senate gallery all day.
(re: Financial District
across the river)
We could see that from the end of
my block, but he never once
encouraged me to go to Wall Street.
His idol was JFK. He thought
business guys were selfish.

ELISE
So...are you doing all this for
him?

DAVID
I want to matter. I don't think
that's just for him....

Elise tucks her head into his shoulder.

ELISE
I don't want tonight to mess
anything up for you, for the
campaign.

DAVID
Just make sure I make it to Diane
Sawyer on time and I'll be fine.

Elise looks at him for a long beat.

ELISE
You're different...somehow you make
me believe...

DAVID
Believe what?

ELISE
Just...believe, period.

EXT. ELISE'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT
PUSH IN on the window of an apartment.

INT. ELISE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

David and Elise make love, FOCUS so SHALLOW that even their faces are not always sharp.

INT. ELISE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

David and Elise lie together, spent.

ELISE
(vulnerability we barely
glimpsed before this)
I don't let people in, David. And
I never let them in this quickly.

David pulls her close. He can't see her eyes. But we can.
She's struggling with something more...

ELISE
I haven't lead a perfect life.

DAVID
I don't want perfect.

ELISE
(emotion welling)
I'm trying to say...I'm not sure
somebody running for office can
have me in their life.

David turns her around so he can see her face, so he knows
for sure she hears this:

DAVID
I haven't stopped thinking about
you since the moment I met you. I
want you in my life--

ELISE
There are skeletons in my closet,
David. The kind that--

DAVID
Listen to me--

ELISE
The kind that people use against--

DAVID
Elise, listen! I don't care.
We'll work it out.... I've spent my
whole life wondering why it takes
auditoriums of people to fill the
empty space inside me. Then I met
you...and realized it doesn't.

She looks at him. He means it.

ELISE
You scare me.

DAVID
(after a beat)
That wasn't the effect I was going
for...

She smiles...then laughs out loud--

SAME -- LATER

David and Elise sleep peacefully. REVEAL MR. THOMPSON, late
50s, standing next to the bed in a suit, with a fedora on.

EXT. ELISE'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT

Thompson exits through the front door. Three aides are
waiting for him.

THOMPSON'S AIDE
What do you want to do?

THOMPSON
Let it happen again.

Thompson's aides seem surprised by the answer.

INT. ELISE'S APARTMENT -- MORNING -- FRIDAY

David wakes to find Elise looking at him.

DAVID
You been up long?

ELISE
No.

DAVID
Did you wake up in the middle of
the night?

ELISE
Slept straight through.

DAVID
I thought you never sleep through.

ELISE
I don't.
(beat)
I told you, you scare me.

He kisses her.

DAVID
I won't hurt you.

They kiss more...and then get swept up by it....

LATER

They lie in bed, post-coital, drained. Blissful. Until the
phone rings. It's 6:17 am. Early for a call.

ELISE
Hello? Why are you calling?
(listens)
No...I....Look, I have to go...

She hangs up. David looks at her.

DAVID
What's wrong?

ELISE
That was my ex. Adrian.

DAVID
Oh... I didn't-- I guess we hadn't
gotten to that stuff yet...

ELISE
He hasn't called since we broke up.

DAVID
How long?

ELISE
Three months.

DAVID
Was it serious?

An awkward beat. Elise opts for complete honesty.

ELISE
We were engaged.

DAVID
What happened?

Complete honesty.

ELISE
He left...

David can feel this in the pit of his stomach now.

DAVID
What an idiot.

ELISE
You don't know me that well yet.
You're still in the wishful
thinking phase.

(beat)
Truth is I should have left him a
long time before he left me. It
was a painful relationship. It
hurt to be in it, every day.

DAVID
But it was hard to leave.

ELISE
He knew what buttons to push.

DAVID
Is that him?

David points at picture of Elise with an attractive man, arms
around each other. Elise looks surprised, shocked even, to
see the photo on her bookcase. She nods.

ELISE
David.... It's not.... It's over
between us. Completely over...I
want to be clear about that. I'm
pretty sure yesterday was the most
perfect day I've ever had.

DAVID
Me too.

David looks at the clock.

DAVID
I have this Diane Sawyer interview.

It comes out awkward.

ELISE

I know.

So did that. They look at each other. Then David reaches for his clothes--

ELISE

Can I come? My dress rehearsal's not until nine.

David's face lights up.

ELISE

I'm afraid if I let you out of my sight...you know...I might never see you again...

A smile creeps across his face....

INT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA STUDIO -- DAY

Diane Sawyer interviews David.

DIANE SAWYER

You've overcome enormous obstacles in your life and risen to such heights so quickly... People are fascinated by you.

DAVID

Only people who haven't spent enough time with me to know the truth.

INT. GREEN ROOM -- DAY

Elise watches the interview on a big monitor. A soundproof window allows her to see directly into the studio.

DIANE SAWYER

As a speaker and politician you've been repeatedly compared to JFK.

DAVID

By my campaign manager mostly.

DIANE SAWYER (ON TV)

(grins)

You're the youngest person ever elected to Congress. Which you celebrated by getting in a bar fight on inauguration night.

DAVID

With a childhood friend. So I don't think that counts. And, truthfully, that's how we celebrate things we're I'm from.

INT. STUDIO -- DAY

DIANE SAWYER

(grinning bigger now)

Let's just say you have a habit of getting into the press for...other uniquely human things as well--

DAVID

Is that a euphemism, Diane?

She laughs.

DIANE SAWYER

Most politicians...

INT. GREEN ROOM -- DAY

DIANE SAWYER (ON TV)

...run away from the embarrassing things they've done. You crack jokes about them. You embrace them. Especially since your concession speech three years ago which started as a stand-up routine and brought tears to my eyes by the end when you talked about losing your mother to cancer and then your older brother, Pat, to an overdose, both when you were only ten years old.

INT. STUDIO -- DAY

DAVID

I think Americans are tired of electing automatons whose every word and move is stage-managed so as not to offend anyone. I think they want somebody who doesn't hide who he is or what he really believes. I guess I'm hoping they want to elect someone who's actually like them.

(laughs)

But I could be very wrong about that.

DIANE SAWYER
And if you are?

DAVID
You'd be surprised at the number of
underwear companies that have
approached me to be their
spokesman.

Diane bursts out laughing. The floor techs are laughing too.

INT. GREEN ROOM -- DAY

And so is Elise. She's completely smitten. ON THE TV:
Diane turns to the camera, trying to stop laughing.

DIANE SAWYER (ON TV)
Unfortunately, we're out of time.
David Norris, announced his
candidacy for US Senate yesterday.
Thanks for stopping by.

It goes to commercial.

INT. STUDIO -- DAY

David stays to speak to Diane for a moment..as we MOVE to
find a stagehand who is shifting the position of one of the
big video cameras used to tape the show. We catch a glimpse
of his face and see it's Thompson's aide.

INT. GREEN ROOM -- DAY

The "stagehand" moves the camera so it's blocking the window
giving Elise line-of-sight to David and Diane.

Just then a man with an ABC ID enters the room to speak to
Elise. (We only see his lower half.)

ABC ID
Ma'am, Congressman Norris asked me
to give you a message.

We MOVE UP from his ID to REVEAL that the man is another one
of Thompson's aides.

THOMPSON AIDE #2 (ABC ID)
He was just called into a meeting
that he says is urgent. He says
he'll call you later and see you at
your show tonight.

INT. STUDIO -- DAY

David and Diane say goodbye to each other. He salutes the floor staff, who actually applaud. They love him.

DIANE SAWYER

(to David, re: earpiece)
They're saying your girlfriend --
can we call her that? Is this one
going to last more than a month?

DAVID

You can call her that. And yes.
Definitely.

David is looking at a text from Elise as he speaks. It says:
"I want to go to bed with you."

DIANE SAWYER

They're saying she's getting a tour
of the control room in studio C.
Can somebody take Congressman
Norris to studio C?

Thompson's aide signals David to follow him. David does.
They walk through a couple thick doors into the corridor.

INT. CORRIDOR -- DAY

Thompson's aide leads him through a heavy door marked "Studio
C" into a vestibule and then through another heavy door into--

INT. "STUDIO C" -- DAY

A partially-built set in the center of an empty stage. Elise
isn't here. Thompson's aide feigns surprise.

THOMPSON'S AIDE #2

They said she was here.... Hang on.

David pulls his blackberry out sees there is no signal. He
looks up to see Thompson's aide exit through the stage door.

It suddenly clicks for David, and he rushes to the door.
Yanks on it. It's locked.

DAVID

God dammit!

INT. CORRIDOR -- DAY

Through the thick window of the outer door we can see David pounding on the window of the inner door.

But we can't hear a sound.

PULL BACK to REVEAL Thompson's aide removing the "Studio C" placard. Beneath is the true designation: "Studio D."

PAN to REVEAL three Thompson aides removing a false wall that was hiding a bunch of construction equipment and setting up "No Entry -- Construction Zone" signs.

QUICK CUTS -- FRANTIC HANDHELD

- 1) David across the room tugs on another exit. It's locked.
- 2) David pulls a fire alarm. Nothing.
- 3) David slams on the door with a two-by-four.

LONGER CUTS -- COMPOSED DOLLY SHOTS

- 1) Diane Sawyer talks about the issue of the day as we pull back and show her co-hosts on the couch.
- 2) Elise arrives in the lobby of the Manhattan Modern Ballet for her company's dress rehearsal.

INT. STUDIO D (EARLIER "STUDIO C") -- DAY

David sits. His tie loose now. His jacket off. He glances at his blackberry. The time reads 4:13 pm. He yells in frustration.

VOICE

If people could hear you out there
it wouldn't be a very good
soundstage, would it?

David turns to see Thompson, in the now familiar dark suit and fedora.

THOMPSON

My name's Thompson.

DAVID

What happened to Free Will?

THOMPSON

Who said anything about Free Will?

David stares back at him.

THOMPSON

You know, we actually tried Free Will before. After taking you from hunting and gathering to the height of the Roman Empire we stepped back to see how you'd do on your own. You gave us the Dark Ages -- for five centuries -- until finally we decided we should come back in.

(beat)

The Chairman thought maybe we just needed to do a better job of teaching you how to ride the bike before we took the training wheels off again. So we gave you the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Scientific Revolution...we spent six hundred years tempering your passions with reason then in 1910 we stepped back again. Within fifty years you brought us World War I, the Depression, Fascism, the Holocaust and capped it off by bringing the entire planet to the brink of destruction in the Cuban Missile Crisis. A decision was taken at that point that we should step in again before you did something even we couldn't fix.

(beat)

You don't have Free Will, David, you have the appearance of Free Will.

DAVID

You expect me to believe that?

THOMPSON

(bored shrug)

You have Free Will over what tie you pick in the morning, or what beverage to order at lunch. But humanity just isn't mature enough to have control over the important things.

DAVID

If you're in control of the important things then you're incompetent cause when I look around at the world these days it seems pretty fucked.

THOMPSON

It's still here. If we'd left things in your hands, it wouldn't be.

DAVID

Why are you trying to keep me from Elise? Or are you just another lackey who doesn't really know?

Thompson studies David for a long beat. Then decides it's time to level with him.

THOMPSON

We put Elise in front of you three years ago to inspire you to give that speech -- the speech that pulled you back from the brink of oblivion and, overnight, made you the front runner for this coming election. The intervention on Charlie was to prevent the hedge fund you had just become vice chairman of from going belly up in the sub-prime crisis, bringing two major banks down with it, and in the process making you unelectable.

David blinks. Tries to process this....

DAVID

Are you saying you want me to win this election?

THOMPSON

This one and six more after it. And I'm not just talking about elections for Senate.

It slowly dawns on David what Thompson is saying...

THOMPSON

You can matter, David. Really matter. What you wanted your whole life. What your father wanted when he took you to the Senate gallery when you were ten. What your brother wanted when he made you promise, the day before he overdosed, that you wouldn't be like him.

DAVID

Stop. Don't tell me this.

THOMPSON

Why do you think you have that yearning to be in front of people...and that terrible emptiness when you're not?

DAVID

Stop.

THOMPSON

David you are meant to change the world. But that doesn't happen if you stay with her.

DAVID

Why does it matter to you who I love? Some skeleton of hers is so bad I won't get elected? I don't believe that!

THOMPSON

It's not about her...it's about you, what being with her does to you.

DAVID

What does that mean?! I'm better with her than I ever was alone. You just said it. That speech--

THOMPSON

Yes. The speech... Put it this way: in small doses, Elise was the cure. But in large doses.... When you're enthralled with someone she rubs off on you.

DAVID

Stop. Just stop.

THOMPSON

David, the president can't be a loose cannon--

DAVID

Stop talking. It's not working.

(beat)

I'm a politician. I spend my life with professional liars. With people who decide what they want and then figure out the story they have to tell to get it.

THOMPSON

Why do you refuse to accept what should be completely obvious by now? You've seen what we can do. You can't doubt we are who we say we are.

DAVID

I don't care who you are. I don't care who's orders you're following.

THOMPSON

You can't outrun your fate, David.

DAVID

Who said anything about running.

THOMPSON

Maybe we should just reset you.

DAVID

We both know if you could have we wouldn't be standing here having this conversation....

Thompson stares back. He's never dealt with such temerity....

THOMPSON

You fight us, we will take everything from you.

DAVID

You already did once. And I'm still standing....

(beat)

I always knew you were out there. We all do. It's the one thing we have in common. Whether we call it God or the Devil or Fate we all know you're out there, fucking with us....

THOMPSON

You'd still be living in caves if it weren't for us.

DAVID

(welling emotion)

You crush our dreams because they don't fit with your Plan. Your Plan that has no space for me falling in love but somehow has room for Tsunamis and cyclones and Darfur and AIDS. Fuck your plan. I reject it. I reject you.

(MORE)

DAVID (cont'd)
The only thing we have in this
fucked up world are the choices we
make. And there's nothing you can
do to me that will get me sign them
away.

(beat)
Kill me. Or erase me. Or let me
go.

Thompson stares back at him, dumbfounded. A long silence,
then:

THOMPSON
It's 6:20. If you leave now,
you'll make Elise's show.

David's eyebrows go up. Huh? Thompson is letting him go?

EXT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA STUDIOS -- DUSK

David jumps into a taxi.

INT. TAXI -- DUSK

David sits in the back seat, taking everything in, turning it
over and over in his head....

INT. THEATER -- ELISE'S DANCE COMPANY

Elise and two of her colleagues finish a dance piece. The
audience explodes into applause.

The house lights come up half way as the stage is readied for
the next piece. David is startled to see that the man in the
aisle seat next to him is Thompson.

THOMPSON
She's a beautiful dancer.

DAVID
What do you want?

THOMPSON
There's one more piece to all this
I haven't told you. I guess I
didn't have the heart. If you stay
with her, it doesn't just kill your
dreams, it kills hers.

DAVID
What?

THOMPSON

Elise is about to become one of the most famous dancers in the country...and eventually one of the greatest choreographers in the world.

(beat)

If she stays with you...she ends up teaching dance to eight year-olds.

DAVID

I don't believe you. I thought we already established that.

A beat.

THOMPSON

When you look back at all this, David, just remember, we tried to reason with you.

Thompson gets up and leaves...just as the lights go down for the next dance.

David watches him go...then turns around just in time to catch Elise's entrance into the dance -- a graceful jump.

When she lands, her ankle cracks, and she falls. The audience gasps.

INSERT: a floor board tilted oddly. It goes back to normal.

FIND THOMPSON: His hand slightly outstretched.

THE AUDIENCE instantly knows something is wrong. David jumps up and runs down to the stage door. A dancer comes from off stage and helps Elise off the floor as the show continues.

INT. BACK STAGE -- NIGHT

A company staff member is examining Elise's ankle while the show goes on.

David arrives. Sees Elise's face. Tears streaming down her cheeks. Seeing David...

ELISE

If it's broken...my career's over.

DAVID

Don't say that. Don't.

INT. TAXI -- NIGHT

The taxi rushes to the hospital. David holds her. Silently trying to comfort her. But he can't look at her.

EXT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

David carries her from the taxi into the emergency room....

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- NIGHT

David sits in a black chair, alone, staring at the floor.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM -- NIGHT

Elise lies on an exam table as a tech x-rays her ankle.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- NIGHT

David is still staring at the floor. He looks up to see Thompson.

THOMPSON

I always hear people saying "you can't blame yourself for what happens to other people," but in this case, really, you can.

David stands up...

...and punches Thompson in the face.

Thompson is knocked onto his ass.

People in the waiting room stare at David. Almost everyone here knows his face. He looks at them, unable to summon his usual wit.

THOMPSON

This is what you do, David.

(getting up)

This is what you did the first night you got elected. This is what you did at that college reunion. We give you opportunities people would kill for and you squander them with impulse. It doesn't take a genius to see Elise isn't exactly going to help you with that.

(MORE)

THOMPSON (cont'd)
You want to know why you can't have
her? Look in the mirror.

Thompson leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM -- NIGHT

More X-rays of Elise's ankle. An orthopedic surgeon enters
and examines the images on the computer screen.

Elise, her face, still red and tear stained tries to read the
surgeon's face

ELISE
How bad is it?

The surgeon turns to her with a classic doctor's detachment:

SURGEON
Elise--

EXT. HOSPITAL COURTYARD -- NIGHT

David sits alone on a bench. Thompson arrives.

THOMPSON
You're an educated man. You've
read the Greek tragedies. In the
end Fate always wins....

David looks back at him in steely silence.

THOMPSON
It's a sprain.

DAVID
Really?

THOMPSON
This time.
(beat)
Do you really want to watch her
lose the only thing she's ever
cared about? You just got the
tiniest taste of what that looks
like....

The thought makes David ill.

THOMPSON
Walk away. If you truly love her,
walk away. She'll hate you for
it...but that way she'll be able to
let you go quickly. You can give
her that at least.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

David stands alone. Stares at the floor. Finally confronting the fact that he can't beat the forces arrayed against him. Finally ready to make the choice being forced upon him.....

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM -- DAY

David enters to find Elise with a huge smile on her face.

ELISE
It's a sprain! It's just a sprain!

David gives her a tight hug.

ELISE
It's going to be okay. The doctor said it would heal in a month...maybe even less.

DAVID
You're going to be fine.

ELISE
They want to do an MRI...to assess the ligament damage but...

They break from their hug.

DAVID
It's going to be fine. And as incredible of a dancer as you already are, you're just going to get better and better....

David embraces her again, so she won't see the tears welling in his eyes.

DAVID
I...I have to go make a few calls.

His voice cracks. Elise notices.

ELISE
You okay?

DAVID
I'm just...happy for you...

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

David walks down a long corridor away from Elise's room.

EXT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

David exits the building. Thompson is waiting by the door.

THOMPSON

You're doing the right thing,
David. Not just for her, and the
world...but for yourself.

David looks at him for a beat, then turns and walks away into
the night.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DINER -- UPSTATE NEW YORK -- MORNING

CLOSE on a TV screen, then PULL BACK to REVEAL the diner.

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)

David Norris, who has spent the
last two days campaigning in the
tri-lakes area, got some welcome
news yesterday when the latest New
York Times poll gave him a sixteen
point lead over his opponent less
than a month before election day.

FIND Charlie. He sits at a booth eating breakfast as he
watches TV behind the counter.

Charlie glances out the window and we FIND David standing on
the back of a pickup truck speaking to eighty people in the
parking lot. It's Autumn now.

Something about his speaking style has changed. He's not as
animated or passionate. He doesn't seem to enjoy it as much
as he did three years ago.

Just then a campaign aide arrives at Charlie's table.

CHARLIE

How's he doing?

CAMPAIGN AIDE

They still love him.... Papers?

The aide hands Charlie a stack of papers: three local papers,
the Times, the Journal, and the three big NYC tabloids.

CHARLIE

Thanks.

The aide leaves. Charlie glances at the front page of the Times, then reaches for the New York / Region section. As he does the front page of the Arts section catches his eye.

There is a big photo of Elise, doing an "airborne split," accompanying an article titled "Dance Takes a Quantum Leap."

Charlie glances through the window at David who is climbing down from the pickup truck to applause from his parking lot audience.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- MORNING

David shakes hands with people in the aftermath of his speech. They really do love him.

INT. DINER, UPSTATE NEW YORK -- MORNING

Charlie reads the New York Times article. It begins:

"Once in a generation a piece is created of such astounding originality and virtuosity that it single-handedly reshapes the world of dance."

FOLLOW DAVID

As he makes his way towards the diner from the parking lot, shaking hands and allowing his picture to be taken.

INT. DINER, UPSTATE NEW YORK -- DAY

David sits down with Charlie.

DAVID
I'm starved.

CHARLIE
I'm going to show you this because you'd find out eventually and because I want to be here when you do.

Charlie turns the Arts section around for David to see it.

Elise's photo has a noticeable impact on David. He glances at the article for a moment.

Then Charlie points down near the bottom, at a particular sentence:

"The show's choreographer, Adrian Troussant, and lead dancer, Elise Sellas, are partners on and off stage and plan to marry in New York next week."

David stares at the words....

CHARLIE

David?
(off no response)
David?

DAVID

I think I need...I...

CHARLIE

Take a day off. Take a couple.
We're sixteen points up.

DAVID

(hollowed out)
Even I can't blow a lead that big.

EXT. RED HOOK, BROOKLYN -- NIGHT

It's pouring rain. David walks down Carroll Street. Most of the row houses display "Norris for Senate" signs.

Most of the housing here is run-down but this block is clearly in the early stages of gentrification.

David pays particular attention to one row house as he passes by. Was this his house?

EXT. / INT. NEIGHBORHOOD BAR -- NIGHT

There's a "Norris for Senate" sign prominently displayed in the window. David enters this classic dive bar and goes to the bartender.

DAVID

Do you still serve neighborhood
guys here or just the tourists?

The bartender smiles big. A couple people at the bar notice him. Then others notice and they start whooping it up for him. He doesn't know any of them...but they sure know him.

EXT. RED HOOK DOCKS -- NIGHT

David sits under the huge aluminum roof on one of the piers, holding a bottle of beer in a soaked paper bag.

There are no walls to this structure so rainwater pours off the roof on all four sides forming virtual walls.

A figure in a suit approaches David from behind. He turns to see the man.

DAVID
Why are you here?

REVERSE to REVEAL Harry, in a suit and raincoat.

HARRY
I would have come earlier but I had to wait for the rain.
(off David's confusion)
Water interferes with their ability to sense your decision tree. That's why we met on a boat last time.
(beat)
I guess I'm here to set the record straight.

DAVID
About what?

HARRY
Thompson was lying when he said they couldn't let you be with Elise because it would bring out your reckless side.

DAVID
Why, then? Why do they care so much?

HARRY
Because...she's enough, David. If you have her you might not need to fill the void inside you with votes and applause and dreams of one day becoming president...

It's as if Harry has looked straight into David's soul.

HARRY
I've watched you a long time. They're right to want you in the White House. It would be good for the world. That's important but it can't be the only thing that matters.

DAVID
Why are you so different than they are?

A long beat, then:

HARRY

You know, your Dad was a smart man. He could have been a lot more -- and he wanted to be. So did your brother. But the Plan didn't call for that.

This hits David hard.

HARRY

In my job, you implement the Plan....

(emotional)

And most of the time...you don't even know why....

(beat)

I'm sorry....

DAVID

My mom?

HARRY

That wasn't me... That wasn't us at all.

David takes all this in. After a long beat he takes a drink. Then he offers the bottle to Harry, who hesitates, then takes a drink as well.

DAVID

When Thompson told me the choice was Elise or the White House I barely hesitated.

HARRY

I know.

DAVID

But the truth is after making that choice I went into a free-fall.... Don't get me wrong, it killed me to see Thompson hurt her...but I used it as an excuse. I think I left her more to save my career than hers.

(struggling)

Thompson wasn't lying. The press is already talking about me as a future president. I'm phoning in my speeches and I'm still sixteen points up in the polls.

HARRY

The public loves you.

DAVID
Before I met Elise that was all
that mattered. Now I hardly
notice. She's all I think about.
(beat)
Do you know where she's getting
married?

HARRY
Front of a judge. Tomorrow
morning.

DAVID
Is she happy with him? Tell me she
is and I'll walk away.

HARRY
Thompson won't let you get near
that courthouse.

DAVID
Harry...is she happy?

HARRY
No.

A beat.

DAVID
I have to get her back....

Harry knows how unlikely that is.

DAVID
Will you help me? Just help me
get to her....

HARRY
They'll sense you coming a mile
away.

DAVID
What if I could move as fast as you
can?

HARRY
What do you mean?

DAVID
Teach me about the doors.

HARRY
How do you know about that?

DAVID

The first day, after they caught me, they carried me through one. I thought it was a hallucination at first. Eventually I realized it's how you move around so fast.

(off Harry's reluctance)

If you don't want to help me because of what they'll do to you...okay, that's your choice. But if this is about protecting me then shouldn't the choice be mine?

HARRY

Do you have any idea how complicated it is to navigate through those doors...how many thousands of permutations there are in even a simple several block journey?

DAVID

You know, when I do town hall meetings I usually get introduced to forty or fifty people between when I walk through the door and when I start speaking. But when I'm done with the speech I can call on each one of them by name.

A beat...

HARRY

I've seen you do that.

They share a look.

HARRY

(taking the leap)

The rain is supposed to stop in the next hour. We're going to need all night to do this. And we're going to need a place surrounded by water to do it.

MOMENTS LATER

Harry and David stand outside a door to a dock office at the end of the pier. Harry dons his hat.

HARRY

Put your hand on my shoulder. And don't let go until we've crossed the threshold.

David complies. Harry opens the door.

DAVID
Are they ever locked?

HARRY
Maybe if you have a defective hat.

They step through the door and onto--

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS -- NIGHT

Harry notices as the rain slows to a drizzle.

HARRY
Hurry.

Harry runs David to the front door of a brownstone. Opens the door. They move through it into--

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- NIGHT

Harry stops. David takes his hand off Harry's shoulder. Still amazed by what they just did.

HARRY
We're underneath Canal Street,
which was a canal before it was a
street. This is the city's pumping
station for downtown Manhattan.
We're ten blocks from the
courthouse.

EXT./INT. ELISE'S DANCE COMPANY -- NIGHT

Elise enters, smiles at the receptionist.

ELISE
Floor open?

RECEPTIONIST
(seeing Elise's red eyes)
You okay, sweetie?

ELISE
I just feel like being on the
floor.

RECEPTIONIST
Everything still on for tomorrow?

Elise nods, trying to cover her ambivalence.

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- NIGHT

MUSIC BEGINS: something that recalls the sensei-pupil scenes in martial arts movies, but at the same time something fluid and lyrical (e.g. Yoshida Brothers, "Beyond the Deep Sea.")

Harry rolls out a block-by-block map of lower Manhattan. There are intricate red pen markings all over the map.

HARRY

Lower Manhattan is a nightmare. Layer upon layer of substrate -- that's what we call the system of doors -- has been added over time. That makes it a lot more complex to navigate down here than it is uptown. And a lot slower.

Harry dumps out several hundred photos of doors, interior and exterior, all below Canal Street.

HARRY

You ready?

DAVID

Let's go.

Harry smiles and holds up a photograph of the Manhattan County Court Building in Foley Square.

HARRY

Your destination. Courtroom Six.

INT. ELISE'S DANCE COMPANY -- NIGHT

The MUSIC CONTINUES. SOURCE music here. Elise dances to it, freestyle. The fluidity and extension of ballet, but none of its formality or stiffness.

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- NIGHT

DAVID

(struggling to remember)
North Moore St. Just south of the coffee shop... Red door. I come out on Broadway, near Leonard St.

Harry looks at a photo of what David just described.

HARRY

Good. Keep going.

INT. DANCE COMPANY -- NIGHT

Elise continues to dance....

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- NIGHT

DAVID
(eyes closed, trying to
picture it)
There's an alley in front of me.
Third door on--

HARRY
Thompson's there.

DAVID
Okay...so...
(thinks, then has it)
I hightail it East to Lafayette --
no, it's Crosby Street there.

INT. DANCE COMPANY -- NIGHT

Elise dances....

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- NIGHT

HARRY
Anyone wearing a hat is a threat.
When he realizes what's going on,
Thompson is going to pull out all
the stops. He's going to get
reinforcements. Lots of them. I
don't care if you see a guy wearing
a Yankees cap, a yarmulke, or a
bowler, assume he's working for
them.

DAVID
Okay, you said he's right in front
of me, right?

Harry nods.

DAVID
I'd knock the Yankees cap off his
head and go through the door before
he has a chance to pick it up....

A thin smile forms on Harry's face and grows....

HARRY
Good...good...improvisation. We
have trouble with that....

INT. DANCE COMPANY -- NIGHT

Elise dances...

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- NIGHT

DAVID
How am I doing?

HARRY
Don't get cocky. You know ten
permutations out of ten thousand.
Get back to work.

MONTAGE

Harry drilling David with photo after photo of Manhattan
doors INTERCUT with Elise dancing...until she finally quits
from physical and emotional exhaustion.

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- NIGHT

David rubs his head. He's exhausted too. Mentally.

HARRY
Your brain can only put so much in
at once. Take a break.

David nods. His eye goes to Harry's leather Planbook. He
motions to it -- a question: can he look at it? Harry opens
it up to a page in the middle. David's eyes look over the
impossibly complex circuit diagram.

DAVID
Could I ever learn to read that?

Harry shakes his head. Impossible.

DAVID
No matter how hard I tried?

HARRY
For the same reason you can't
breathe underwater or flap your
arms and fly. You're not built to
do it.

DAVID
(re: circuit diagram)
Is that me?

HARRY
Elise. Her decision tree. What it
was a few hours ago, before the
rain, before we were down here.

David looks at it, then looks away.

DAVID
I want to ask you what it
says...what she's thinking...but
somehow that feels...wrong.

HARRY
You know what she's thinking, David
-- as much as you need to know.
The rest...well...you're built to
feel that.

EXT. DANCE COMPANY -- NIGHT

Elise exits to the street, pulls a scarf around her neck..

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- NIGHT

David closes the Planbook.

HARRY
You ready to get back to work?

DAVID
Whatever it takes.

Something about that strikes Harry....

HARRY
Your father used to say that.

Off David's reaction--

INT. ELISE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Elise enters, turns on the light...

She picks up the computer printout of her court appointment
to be married. A Post-it note on top of the printout reads:
"Our last night apart.... Love, Adrian."

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION-- NIGHT

David and Harry examine photos of a blue door at the side of a Tribeca restaurant.

DAVID
The fastest path is getting to the blue door right off the bat...

HARRY
But you're exposed the whole way there. It's a lot riskier than leapfrogging through doors--

DAVID
But if I can make it...I'll have caught them completely by surprise.

HARRY
Assuming you make it.

INT. ELISE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Elise turns out the light, curling up in her bed. FADE MUSIC
OUT AND SLOW-FADE PICTURE TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN -- MORNING

The early morning sun slices through the urban canyons.

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY COURT BUILDING -- 5TH FLOOR -- DAY

ADRIAN -- the guy from the photo in Elise's apartment -- stands at the COURT REGISTRAR's window.

COURT REGISTRAR
Do you have your license?

Adrian hands her his marriage license.

COURT REGISTRAR
Is your fiancee here?

ADRIAN
Getting out of a cab downstairs.

The registrar glances at the license to make sure it's in order. Then stamps it: "Judge Williams, Docket #23".

COURT REGISTRAR
Courtroom Six.

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- MORNING

Harry comes down from topside, with his Planbook in hand.
David is waiting anxiously down here.

HARRY

You got lucky. It's raining again.

DAVID

The marriage is scheduled for ten
minutes from now.

HARRY

You can't jump the gun on this.
Getting there too early is almost
as bad as getting there too late.

Harry looks at his updated Planbook and consults his watch.

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY COURT BUILDING -- LOBBY -- DAY

Elise and Lauren step into a polished brass elevator from New
York's Tammany Hall days. Her look is distant, disconnected.
Not what you're supposed to look like on your wedding day.

INT. UNDERGROUND PUMPING STATION -- MORNING

David is rearing to go. Finally, Harry's watch alarm beeps.

HARRY

It's time.

David breathes a sigh of relief. Harry takes the hat off
his head and hands it to David.

HARRY

Good luck.

DAVID

I'm going for the blue door.

HARRY

Of course....

MUSIC CUE (something with relentless, pounding energy of the
Verve Remix of Sarah Vaughn's "Fever").

HARRY

Run fast.

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN -- ALLEY -- DAY

David blows through a drab utility door into an alley. He careens around a corner onto Greenwich Street and starts an all out sprint--

INT. THOMPSON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Rain pelts the window as Thompson reads the newspaper. Thompson's Aide rushes in.

THOMPSON'S AIDE

It was a momentary flash, and given the weather we can't be sure, but it looks like Mr. Norris may be--

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN -- DAY

David runs through a puddle as he races down Greenwich St. through the pouring rain.

INT. THOMPSON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Thompson rushes out of his office followed by his aide.

THOMPSON

Do we have a proctor at the wedding?!

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY COURT BUILDING -- FIFTH FLOOR -- DAY

Adrian kisses Elise.

ADRIAN

Hi, honey.
(notices her face)
You okay?

ELISE

Just a little queasy.

ADRIAN

Why?

ELISE

I'm not sure. Nervous... I just need a minute in the bathroom.

INT. COURTHOUSE LADIES ROOM -- DAY

Big old marble sinks, heavy wood doors. Elise enters, tears welling in her eyes....

INT. ADJUSTMENT BUREAU HALLWAY -- DAY

Thompson rushes down the hall. Three aides with him now.

THOMPSON
Cars! Cars! From here it's faster
in the cars!

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN -- GREENWICH STREET -- DAY

David can see the blue door. He races toward it.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT -- PINE STREET -- DAY

Thompson rushes out the front door of a perfect Art Deco tower and jumps into his black Mercedes.

THOMPSON
(to his assistant)
Where is he now?!

THOMPSON'S AIDE
Greenwich Street--

They jump in and the car peels out, followed by two others.

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN -- GREENWICH STREET -- DAY

David hits the blue door. Bang. He's through it like lightning and comes out--

EXT. FOLEY SQUARE -- DAY

He comes out of a building directly across from the courthouse from Harry's photos.

INT. MERCEDES -- DAY

Thompson and McManus speeding North.

THOMPSON'S AIDE
Whoa!

THOMPSON

What?

Thompson's Aide is speechless as he stares at his Planbook.

THOMPSON

What?

THOMPSON'S AIDE

He just went into the substrate....

Off Thompson's reaction:

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY COURT BUILDING -- LOBBY -- DAY

A soaking wet David blows through the front door and skids to a stop at the security line--

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

Adrian and Lauren wait in the courtroom.

COURT CLERK

Docket #22 please come forward.

The guy next to Adrian stands up. Adrian throws a panicked look at Lauren.

ADRIAN

We're next. Will you check on her?

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY COURT BUILDING -- LOBBY -- DAY

Three people in line in front of him. He's not going to make it. David goes to the front.

DAVID

It's an emergency.

NEW YORKER

We all have emergencies, pal.
(then realizing)
Are you David Norris?

INT. COURTHOUSE LADIES ROOM -- DAY

Lauren wipes tears from Elise's face.

ELISE

Am I making the biggest mistake of my life?

LAUREN
(carefully)
I can't answer that question for
you, Elise. But I will say--

ELISE (pulling self together) I'm okay.
LAUREN If you have doubts--

ELISE
I'm just nervous. You haven't done
this yet. It's overwhelming....

LAUREN
Elise--

ELISE
I'm okay. I'm going to clean up.
Tell Adrian I'll be right there.

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY COURT BUILDING -- LOBBY -- DAY

David throws his keys on the X-ray belt, goes through the
metal detector, then bolts without waiting for his keys----

SECURITY OFFICER
Congressman! You left your--

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

Lauren returns to sit next to Adrian. She holds up one
finger -- one more minute.

MOVE to REVEAL a suspicious-looking man stepping into the
courtroom in a fedora. He scans the room intently, then
consults his Planbook. A bailiff makes him remove his hat.

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY COURT BUILDING -- STAIRCASE -- DAY

David races up the stairs--

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

COURT CLERK
Docket #23 please come forward.

Adrian looks at Lauren. Stands. Motions urgently for Lauren
to get Elise from the bathroom--

EXT. MANHATTAN COUNTY COURT BUILDING -- FOLEY SQUARE -- DAY
Thompson's three Mercedes skid to a stop outside.

INT. 5TH FLOOR LOBBY OUTSIDE COURTROOM -- DAY

Lauren exits the courtroom just as David bounds up the last few stairs to reach the fifth floor.

LAUREN
David?!

DAVID
Where is she?

Water drips from his clothes onto the marble floor.

LAUREN
You want to explain to me--

DAVID
(no time)
Where is she?!

(softening)
I'll explain to her--

Lauren points at the ladies room. David nods "thanks" and enters--

INT. LADIES ROOM -- DAY

Elise turns to see him and stops cold.

ELISE
David....

Her eyes are puffy from crying.

DAVID
Hi....

ELISE
Why are you doing this to me?

Just then the door bursts open. The suspicious man from the courtroom--

David elbows him in the face. The man drops.

ELISE
David!

David calmly turns back to her.

DAVID
You're not supposed to be weeping
on your wedding day, Elise.

Elise fights the emotion again welling inside.

DAVID
You were never happy with Adrian.
You told me that.

Elise puts her head in her hands.

ELISE
This is so screwed up. Oh, God...

DAVID
I love you. I know I've acted
strangely. But, I love you.

ELISE
Don't do this to me.

DAVID
I've never felt anything like this
in my life.

ELISE
If you care so much, why the hell
did you disappear on me in that
hospital?

DAVID
I...

ELISE
What are you hiding from me? Why
did you disappear?! Again! You
fucking bastard! Why?

Tears are streaming down her face.

DAVID
They'll reset me...

ELISE
David--

DAVID
They'll scramble my brain--

ELISE
David, stop talking like this!
Stop!

David looks back at her... Just looks at her. Then he leans over and wipes a tear from her face. And he decides....

He just decides.

DAVID
But at least you'll know the truth.
(beat)
I saw behind the curtain, Elise. I
saw this.

He opens up Harry's Planbook. Elise sees the intricate "wiring diagrams." Sees the lines shift on the page. It startles her.

DAVID
It's not in their "Plan" for us to
be together. So they're trying to
stop us.

INT. STAIRCASE -- DAY

Thompson and minions rush up the stairs.

THOMPSON'S AIDE
Oh my God.... He just revealed us.

INT. LADIES ROOM -- DAY

Elise stares back at him.

ELISE
Stop talking like a crazy person.
Stop making things up--

DAVID
They said if we were together
they'd take dance from you and
politics from me. They hurt your
ankle that night. They--

The door flies open again. David picks up a trash can and clobbers the fedora-wearing man who enters. He drops.

INT. STAIRCASE -- DAY

Thompson spins to his aide, finger in his face.

THOMPSON
Call the Intervention Team! Tell
them it's a square-one reset!

INT. LADIES ROOM -- DAY

An NYPD shield on the belt of one guy David knocked out.

ELISE
Jesus...the cops are after you?!

David grabs the shield and uses it to wedge the door closed.
Kicks it in so it's jammed tight.

DAVID
He's not a cop. He's one of them.

Another body slams into the door now. But the shield holds
it shut.

ELISE
Who's "them?"

SLAM! SLAM! The door cracks--

ELISE
Jesus, David! What's going on?!

David is impossibly calm. He puts his hat back on.

DAVID
I'm going to show you.

He takes Elise's hand, opens the bathroom door, and walks her
across the threshold into--

EXT. SOHO -- DAY

David and Elise step through a door onto a street in Soho.
She stops. Awed. Unable to speak.

DAVID
Come on. We need to lose them.

David walks her across the street and picks a door at random,
opens it--

EXT. DOOR -- DAY

David and Elise exit through a door. Her jaw drops.

REVERSE TO REVEAL Central Park's Sheep Meadow spread before
them. (They've exited from the building on its north edge).

Elise steps out onto the grass, touches it, falls to her
knees in the rain, completely overwhelmed...

INT. 5TH FLOOR LOBBY / INT. LADIES ROOM -- DAY

A bevy of men in hats push the ladies room door open and rush in. They're shocked to see it's empty....

EXT. SHEEP'S MEADOW -- DAY

Elise looks at David

DAVID

The rain slows them down but they can track us. We have two or three minutes. Maybe less.

Elise is still speechless. He takes her hand.

DAVID

The ten year-old in me always mixed up winning elections with being loved. Then I met you...

(beat)

The thing is, if they'd let me be with you I wouldn't have left politics. I just would have been in it for all the right reasons.

David pauses for a moment. He can see this so clearly in his head. How can it not be right?

DAVID

Now you know. You know everything. And you have to leave me.

ELISE

What?

DAVID

They'll take dance from you. You saw what they did before.

The foundations of her world have just collapsed...but somehow she pulls herself together to say this:

ELISE

No.

DAVID

You're not safe with me. If you don't leave--

She puts her finger to his lip. Shhhh....

ELISE
It doesn't make any sense but,
right now I feel safer than I've
ever felt before.
(beat)
I'm staying....

INT. THE CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE -- DAY

The Chairman's Office is the size of the reading room at the New York Public Library. Thirty foot high ceilings. A dozen assistants perform various tasks very quietly, giving it more the feel of a papal court, than a corporate office.

We see THE CHAIRMAN from behind only...but we can still tell he is utterly calm and in complete control.

An aide comes to The Chairman's desk, sets two open leather folios in front of him.

AIDE TO THE CHAIRMAN
Mr. Thompson has made an emergency
request for the Intervention Team.

One of the folio documents is titled "Reset Authorization."

INT. BANANA REPUBLIC STORE -- DAY

A dressing room door opens. David and Elise, both soaking, exit past a startled attendant. They walk through the store and out onto--

EXT. COLUMBUS AVENUE -- DAY

They look for another door.

ELISE
Every door?

David nods...as they walk into another...

EXT. SHEEP MEADOW -- DAY

Thompson and a dozen other men with hats step out into the rain, scan the horizon for any sign of their quarry.

INT. CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE -- DAY

The Chairman holds a silver pen as he flips through the case file.

EXT. COLUMBUS AVENUE -- DAY

David and Elise head towards a door across the street from the Banana Republic.

EXT. HARLEM -- DAY

They emerge through a door on the 125th Street Metro-North platform. Run down the stairs to street level.

INT. BANANA REPUBLIC -- DAY

Thompson and a half-dozen minions emerge from the same dressing room David and Elise did. The seventeen year-old attendant presses back against the wall, totally freaked now.

EXT. HARLEM -- DAY

David and Elise head toward a storefront church.

EXT. COLUMBUS AVENUE -- DAY

Thompson and his men pour out onto the street flashing NYPD badges and asking questions.

EXT. HARLEM -- DAY

David and Elise enter the church and--

EXT. STONE FACADE -- DAY

-- exit from a metal door in a stone facade. PULL BACK to REVEAL that they are standing at the base of the Statue of Liberty...

Elise looks out at the harbor and the city. Rain pelts her face. And she smiles. Exhilarated. Like a prisoner who has just broken her chains...

EXT. COLUMBUS AVENUE -- DAY

Rain bounces off the dozen long black raincoats worn by Thompson and his men. A black Suburban with under-grill police lights pulls up fast.

DRIVER OF SUBURBAN
The Intervention Team has
pinpointed an interception point.

Thompson circles his finger in the air to tell his men to
saddle up, they're moving out--

EXT. STATUE OF LIBERTY -- DAY

Elise is still smiling.

DAVID
Let's go.

ELISE
We can't keep running forever,
David.

DAVID
If they find us...they'll take you
from me.

ELISE
I won't let them.

DAVID
They'll take you from here.

David touches his head.

ELISE
No, I won't let them.

She leans over and kisses his forehead.

INT. PRE-WAR APARTMENT BUILDING -- DAY

David and Elise exit into a hallway with eight doors on it.

DAVID
Perfect.

David picks a door. It's locked. He tries another. It's
locked too. He tries a third. Locked. Elise tries one --
shakes her head.

DAVID
They're not supposed to be locked!

David hears sounds coming from the building's central
staircase. He looks down it to see four men in silver suits
climbing up the stairs.

DING. The elevator door down the hall opens. More men in silver suits.

ELISE
This one's open!

Elise is standing at the door to the roof. David runs to her and they go up the stairs together to--

EXT. ROOF -- DAY

David pushes the roof door shut, barricades it with some concrete blocks sitting on the roof. Rain pours down on them.

They rush to the edge of the roof. Three Con Edison vans are parked haphazardly on the street below. And a dozen civilians on the sidewalk are frozen....

David grabs Elise and they go to the side of the roof, the roof of the building next door is ten feet below them. They hang their legs over the edge and jump.

They sprint across the roof of the building next door -- except somehow they find themselves running across the same roof they were just on.

David sees the concrete blocks he placed against the door a moment ago. The door bangs against them, being shoved open from inside.

David and Elise run back in the opposite direction. At the building's edge they climb over again and...run...

Only to find that they are still on the first roof they were on. It's like they're in an Escher painting.

They stop, and look at each other. David takes her hand as Adjustment Team troopers appear all around them from adjacent roofs. They're completely surrounded.

ELISE
Kiss me.

Tears well in her eyes. And his.

ELISE
Close your eyes and kiss me.

He does. And they kiss in the rain...

ELISE
I love you, David Norris.

They hold each other for a long beat....and then, finally, open their eyes...ready to accept their fate--

They see an empty roof. The Silver Suits are gone. And the rain has stopped. A strange silence envelopes them....

They spin the other direction to see The Chairman, standing there, alone.

THE CHAIRMAN

Hello, David.... Good morning, Elise.

His voice is gentle, paternal.

DAVID

Who are you?

THE CHAIRMAN

I think you know.

David and Elise stand in awe as they realize.

DAVID

You can't outrun Fate....

THE CHAIRMAN

It's more complicated than that. Fate and Free Will coexist. They're in tension with each other. And pure chance.

A beat. David looks back at him....

DAVID

Why?

THE CHAIRMAN

I could control everything. You'd be happy but you'd be puppets. I try to keep things from getting too out of control. But that has a cost. Most people go through life like pinballs, reacting predictably to the stimuli I apply. They accept the path they find themselves on. And perform accordingly. But every once in a while someone comes along who refuses to be bound by his fate, someone who understands that Free Will is a gift most people are too afraid to use.

(beat)

Which, you see, is partly the point of all this.

THE CHAIRMAN (cont'd)
Or maybe you don't see it. Maybe
you just feel it. And that's even
better. Because that's the other
part.

David and Elise take it in...

DAVID
And all the misery, all the pain...

THE CHAIRMAN
I sit up there and I watch it and
it hurts me....but if you could see
the incredible courage people show,
the random acts of kindness, the
love... If you could see human
beings choosing every moment of
every day to be better than I made
them, you would know it's all
worthwhile.

(beat)
Good luck, David. And good luck to
you, Elise. You're a beautiful
dancer. And so much more....

The Chairman turns to his aide, who we didn't know was there.

THE CHAIRMAN
Their case is closed.

AIDE TO THE CHAIRMAN
But, Sir, isn't this a major
deviation from The Plan?

The Chairman turns to another aide who is holding a folio
open and signs a document on very heavy paper.

THE CHAIRMAN
Not anymore.

David and Elise watch The Chairman walk away, still awed by
what they've just experienced. As He disappears around a
corner, the sun comes out from behind the clouds.....

After a long beat, Elise turns back to David, as if to say
"what do we do now?"

DAVID
Maybe we should go dancing.

A smile slowly spreads across her face.....

THE END