

# THE DEATH OF STALIN

Written by

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**PRODUCTION DRAFT**

(VERSION 10)

1 INT. CONCERT HALL - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT 1  
A chamber orchestra is performing Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23 (2nd movement), featuring soloist, MARIA YUDINA.

2 INT. CONCERT HALL - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT 2  
A small room looking into the hall. The programme director, ANDREYEV (45) leans back in his chair. Eyes closed, he "conducts" the music with a cheap fountain pen.

A technician, SERGEI, keeps an eye on dials and buttons. There's a clock and a portrait of Stalin on the wall.

The phone rings. Grudgingly, Andreyev answers.

ANDREYEV  
(snappy)  
Radio Moscow. Director Andreyev.  
What is it?

He suddenly tenses, gesturing at the technician to turn down the music. Sergei watches him, munching on an apple.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)  
17 minutes?.....

He gropes manically for a piece of paper.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)  
5...1.....

The pen doesn't work. He shakes it - no good.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)  
(he's not)  
..Yes, I'm writing it down..

He smacks the apple out of Sergei's hand and gets him to hand over a pencil.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)  
.. 9?.. Was it a 9, like 'fine' or  
a 5 like....  
(gestures to Sergei)

SERGEI  
..hive?

ANDREYEV  
Hello?... Hello?

They've gone. He hangs up. He's in a state.

SERGEI  
Who was it?

ANDREYEV

The Secretariat of the... General  
Secretariat. The General  
Secretariat's.. the General  
Secretary's Secretaria...

SERGEI

(interrupting)  
...Stalin?!

Sergei turns away. He's not getting involved.

ANDREYEV

I'm to ring back in exactly 17  
minutes. 17 minutes from the start  
or the end? How long did I talk  
for? HOW LONG?

3 INT. CONCERT HALL - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

3

Some of the audience are lost in the music. A NERVOUS MAN  
glances at an NKVD GUARD looking at him.

Trying to hide his panic, the nervous man looks away then  
back to the guard... who waves coyly. A woman sat next to him  
waves back. The nervous man heaves a sigh of relief.

4 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

4

We're on a large portrait of Stalin: handsome, strong, sleek  
dark hair. We pan down to see the real STALIN - frail, old,  
grey hair - at his desk. His frail fingers search through  
lists of names as the Mozart concerto plays on his radio.

Humble decor: a few chairs, a desk, a small bed.

A short, stocky man with cold eyes behind a set of pince-nez  
stands on the other side of the desk. This is BERIA.

BERIA

I put Shteyman on the list. The  
writer. I know you like his stuff,  
but...

Stalin thinks for a moment, then shakes his head.

STALIN

No. Keep him on.

BERIA

(points at the next name)  
Shteyman 2, his wife.

Stalin gives a tiny shrug meaning 'yes.'

BERIA (CONT'D)  
And Shteyman 3. His brother.

STALIN  
On. Better to be sure.

Beyond Beria, through a doorway, a bulky, balding middle-aged man - KHRUSHCHEV, 59 - is entertaining two other bulky men: MALENKOV - 57, - and MOLOTOV - 70.

Khrushchev is miming an amusing war incident; people in a panic not knowing what to do with a live grenade.

KHRUSHCHEV  
..they were all jumping around like  
drunken whores..

5 INT. CONCERT HALL - AUDITORIUM/DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT 5

From the auditorium, we see the window of the director's office with the figure of Andreyev pacing in frustration.

6 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT 6

Khrushchev is miming a man with a grenade in his mouth.

KHRUSHCHEV  
He had this look like:  
(muffled)  
'There's a grenade in my mouth'.

Stalin signs the lists and hands them to Beria.

BERIA  
I'll have these dispatched.

7 INT. CONCERT HALL - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT 7

Andreyev stares at the clock. Time has passed; the music has moved on to a new movement.

ANDREYEV  
"It is the greatest honour...'  
(he bows)  
He can't see me bow, idiot.

SERGEI  
Er, Comrade Director?

It's 10.27. Andreyev rushes for the phone, banging his hip painfully on the table. He grabs the phone and dials. The music finishes and we hear applause. He gestures frantically to the technician to turn the loudspeaker off.

Someone answers the phone.

ANDREYEV  
Hello?... YES.

8 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - NIGHT 8

Stalin is on the phone, with the applause playing on the radio and the others laughing drunkenly in the other room.

STALIN  
This is Stalin.

In the background, Khrushchev is continuing his story.

KHRUSHCHEV  
So I said "You'll have to enunciate". Then-

He mimes the grenade going off, to uproarious laughter.

9 INT. CONCERT HALL - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT 9

The applause is loud. Andreyev rushes to a cupboard.

ANDREYEV  
(stammering)  
Comrade... General... How are things? Sorry... Hold on...

He gets in the cupboard. The phone cord only just reaches.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)  
Sorry again...

10 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - NIGHT 10

STALIN  
(interrupting)  
I want a recording of tonight's performance. I'll send someone to pick it up.

Stalin hangs up. He notices that one sheet of the list of names has been left behind. Beria comes back in.

BERIA  
(picking up sheet)  
Ah. Don't want them to miss the party, do we?

He heads back out.

11 EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - FRONT OF BUILDING - NIGHT 11

Beria divides the lists between some SENIOR NKVD OFFICERS, including DELOV.

BERIA  
(pointing to the list)  
Shoot her before him but make sure  
he sees it. And this one. Kill him,  
take him to his church, dump him in  
the pulpit.

He's pleased with the idea. He heads back to the dacha.

12 INT. CONCERT HALL - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE/CORRIDOR - NIGHT 12

Some MUSICIANS sweep into the Director's office, others are at the entrance out into the corridor.

MUSICIAN 1  
...she said "I only wear them at  
the weekend"!

Laughter. Surprise as Andreyev steps out of the cupboard.

ANDREYEV  
Was the concerto recorded?  
Was it recorded?! Say "yes" to me.

SERGEI  
Um... No.

Andreyev can barely breathe.

ANDREYEV  
Stop them leaving!

13 INT. CONCERT HALL - HALLWAY - NIGHT 13

Andreyev storms along corridor and down some stairs.

ANDREYEV  
Break their legs. Not that, but  
anything else.

14 INT. CONCERT HALL - FOYER - NIGHT 14

Andreyev reaches the foyer and fights against the flowing crowd and in to the hall were some musicians are packing up.

ANDREYEV  
Encore! Encore the whole bloody  
thing! Don't test me, you fucking  
idiots. Sorry. You're very  
talented. But please go back on.

15 INT. CONCERT HALL - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT 15

The audience are leaving, among them the NERVOUS MAN. He's keeping his eye on the NKVD man by the exit.

Andreyev rushes to the stage, and bangs a cymbal with a flute, knocking aside music stands to get to the front.

ANDREYEV

(to Security)

Lock the doors! Lock the doors!

(to everyone else)

Don't worry, no-one is going to get killed. But I do need you to stay!

Everyone - musicians, audience - look at him. The nervous man is sweating, terrified. Security guards block the doors. The NKVD man remains inside.

16 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - DINING ROOM - NIGHT 16

A sparsely furnished dining room after a long night of drinking and eating. Stalin is just sitting down at one end, filling his pipe with crumbled cigarette tobacco. Malenkov tops up everyone's glass.

KHRUSHCHEV

You know, you put someone's little finger in a glass of water when they're asleep? They wet themselves.

STALIN

What next? Place a bar of chocolate in their pocket, they'll shit their pants?

KHRUSHCHEV

It's biology, chief. We did it to Polnikov in Stalingrad.

Beria joins them, picking up a tomato from the table.

BERIA

Potato doing his war stories again?  
(looking at his watch,  
then to Molotov)

WELL before midnight. Pay up.

Molotov gets out some cash. They've clearly had a bet.

MOLOTOV

You're bankrupting me, Nikita. This is a capitalist conspiracy.

MALENKOV

What became of that old dog  
Polnikov?

STALIN

You want to know where fucking  
Polnikov is? You want to GO there?

Malenkov knows he shouldn't have asked.

Beria puts his arm round Khrushchev.

BERIA

I love that grenade story. Oh, is  
there one in your pocket?

Khrushchev pulls a squashed tomato from his pocket. Beria and  
the others laugh. Stalin too.

KHRUSHCHEV

(laughs, camping it up)  
I die for the Motherland!

MUSIC: dramatic orchestral.

Under the music, everything slows down.

In slow motion, we see Khrushchev and Beria laughing at each  
other, like two braying animals. Khrushchev tries to wipe his  
hand on Beria's jacket, generating more laughter. We can just  
hear, at a quarter of the speed, Beria and Khrushchev calling  
each other 'Potato' and 'Tomato' but it sounds like grunts.

We see under Beria, the caption "Lavrenti BERIA. Head of  
Security Forces". And under Khrushchev, his caption: "Nikita  
KHRUSHCHEV, in charge of Agricultural Reform".

MUSIC OUT - Back to normal speed.

Malenkov takes another tomato from the table, desperate to be  
in on the joke.

MALENKOV

Take THIS, you bastards!

He mimes pulling a grenade pin from it with his teeth. Now  
doesn't know where to take the joke. Puts the tomato down.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)

Anyway...better get back to...

STALIN

Time for a cowboy movie. Who's in  
my posse?

Everyone tries to look excited.

KHRUSHCHEV

Oh good, it's Stagecoach again.

MOLOTOV

Yee-hah!

17 INT. CONCERT HALL - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

17

The orchestra are on stage. Half the audience remain. Security guards are at each door. Andreyev at the front of the stage. Maria is nearby at the piano.

SERGEI

Half the audience have gone. The acoustic will be very dry.

ANDREYEV

Pull people in off the streets! Fat ones, so we won't need so many!

MUSICIAN 1, the orchestra's joker, asserts himself.

MUSICIAN 1

I could call my wife? She'd...  
(indicates "fat")  
..."dampen the acoustic".

Laughter. Andreyev turns to the audience, trying to smile.

ANDREYEV

Comrades!

A TRUMPETER plays a quick fanfare, prompting laughter.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)

Comrades, shut up! I have great news! Wonderful news.

MUSICIAN 1

(to Andreyev)  
Are you pregnant?

The trumpeter parps. More laughter.

ANDREYEV

Comrade Stalin...  
(shoots a look)  
...loved tonight's concerto and would like a recording of it right away which we don't have for some reason and trust me we will look into why that happened, but meanwhile... the concerto we just played will be played by us again... Now. Please. We will record it and applaud it.

No smiling now. Some of the musicians start clapping, then the audience, security guards, a very relieved nervous man, everyone. It's a huge standing ovation, though you can just make out someone dry-heaving. When it dies we hear Maria...

MARIA

I'm not going to do it.

MUSICIAN 1

You cow hole bitch.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. MOSCOW STREETS/INT. CAR - NIGHT 18

The cars from Stalin's dacha fanning out from the main car and off on different routes across the city.

We see the list from the dacha in the hand of Delov.

We stay with one car as it passes several black military-style trucks and vans. NKVD men in the truck.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. MOSCOW STREETS - NIGHT 19

Black marias pull up. NKVD men and Delov get out and start fanning out towards the apartment blocks.

20 EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT 20

Pan across windows. Despite terrible noises from below, not one light goes on. We think we see a slight stir in the dark at one window.

21 INT. CONCERT HALL - AUDITORIUM/DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT 21

Andreyev hurries Maria up the concert hall and into his office. The conductor follows them in. Through the office window, we can see the orchestra and audience watching.

ANDREYEV

You, Joan of Arc, you want to get killed?

MARIA

Oh, like my father "got killed"? My brother? Like THAT?

He sits her down in a chair.

ANDREYEV

You want a family reunion in the  
mortuary?!

The Conductor is in the background looking unwell.

MARIA

I won't do it. You can't force me.

ANDREYEV

(to the conductor)  
Should we get another pianist?

CONDUCTOR

No, that's ridiculous. The sound  
would be entirely different. Even  
Stalin could...

MARIA

"Even".

CONDUCTOR

(frozen in fear)  
No... I meant...

MARIA

Even STALIN? Is this office bugged?

ANDREYEV

(trying to help out)  
Of course Comrade Stalin will be  
able to tell the difference. He's a  
great man, with a great ear for  
music.

CONDUCTOR

Two great ears.

ANDREYEV

The two greatest ears in the Soviet  
Union.

Andreyev comes close to Maria, takes her hands, pleading.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)

Maria Viniaminovna...

MARIA

(of her fingers)  
Don't crush the little workers.

He lets go.

ANDREYEV

You have to play.

CONDUCTOR  
(to the unseen bug)  
I didn't mean what I said...

MARIA  
(to Conductor)  
So you said it then.  
(to Andreyev)  
As God is my witness, I won't do  
it. The Lord will see me through.

ANDREYEV  
10000 roubles.

MARIA  
20000.

ANDREYEV  
Done.

Andreyev hurries Maria out into the corridor, followed by the conductor - who faints, banging his head on a sand bucket.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)  
Who put that there? What brainless  
fucking fire safety FUCKER put that  
there?

22 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - DINING ROOM/OFFICE - NIGHT 22

It's dark. Khrushchev, Beria, Malenkov and Molotov are watching a John Wayne western.

Beyond them, Stalin stands by his desk, looking at papers.

Molotov has fallen asleep, with Malenkov next to him.

BERIA  
He gets shot off his horse.  
(guy gets shot off horse)  
Yup. Adios.

KHRUSHCHEV  
(loudly, so Stalin hears)  
Horses are shit, son! You should  
have commandeered a tank.

MALENKOV  
You know we produced 5000 T-64  
tanks last year?

KHRUSHCHEV  
If I have to watch this fucking  
movie again, drive one over my  
head.

BERIA

I can have that arranged. Ach,  
little sleep tonight. My men are  
bringing in lots of lost sheep...

KHRUSHCHEV

Anyone we know on the list?

MALENKOV

(admonishing)

Hey, we're supposed to be watching  
Shitcoach.

They look up to see if Stalin is listening.

KHRUSHCHEV

(quieter)

Any good ones?

BERIA

One of his guards. Says his wife  
gave him some slippers to wear so  
he wouldn't make any noise. The old  
man's convinced it's so he can  
creep up on him in his sleep and  
kill him.

KHRUSHCHEV

Where will it end? Are we arresting  
anyone with feet?

Malenkov laughs.

BERIA

Nikita. I'm having a man shot for  
"acquiring slippers". Never joke  
about something so serious.

Stalin comes towards them.

MALENKOV

(loudly, to alert Molotov)

Ah, you're just in time for the Red  
Indian attack.

He does a loud, clumsy hand-over-mouth war cry.

Molotov wakes and panics.

MOLOTOV

He.. the horse.. I was.. thinking..  
important.

MALENKOV

You were asleep.

MOLOTOV

No. Focussed... on the soundtrack.

He yawns, and we go into slow motion again.

Dramatic MUSIC Again.

Under Molotov, the caption: "Vyacheslav MOLOTOV. Foreign Secretary".

Under Malenkov, laughing, is "Georgy MALENKOV. Deputy General Secretary".

Back to normal speed.

BERIA  
(to Molotov)  
You'll soon have plenty of time to  
sleep, comrade.

He turns to the others. A look of enigmatic menace.

23 INT. MOSCOW APARTMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT 23

Men in nightshirts are marched out of doorways by NKVD.

CUT TO:

24 EXT. MOSCOW APARTMENTS - NIGHT 24

Men and women in their nightclothes led into vans by NKVD.

CUT TO:

25 INT. MOSCOW APARTMENT - ROOM - NIGHT 25

BORIS BRESNAVICH and MRS BRESNAVICH are asleep. There's a loud banging at the door. They switch on the light, terrified.

MRS BRESNAVICH  
Don't open. Don't open it!...

BRESNAVICH  
They'll kick it down...

Mrs Bresnavich goes to the window and sees A MAN being led away by NKVD OFFICERS. She starts to cry.

Bresnavich has pulled on a dressing gown and slippers over his pyjamas. The couple hug and kiss like people who know they may never see each other again.

BRESNAVICH (CONT'D)  
I love you...

MRS BRESNAVICH  
(distraught)  
Oh my God, your things....

He clasps her hands.

BRESNAVICH  
Say whatever you have to say to  
them. Say it. It doesn't matter.

Bresnavich heads to the hallway. Through adjoining windows,  
he sees another MAN being led away. Still the knocking.

26 INT. MOSCOW APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

26

Bresnavich opens the door to a friendly-looking CONCERT  
DIRECTOR in a dinner suit. In the hallway, two people are  
being led away.

CONCERT DIRECTOR  
Comrade. Deepest...  
(he bows)  
Radio Moscow requests your presence  
immediately. Please. You're  
Moscow's finest and... nearest  
conductor.  
(a little desperate)  
We must hurry.

27 EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - FRONT OF BUILDING - NIGHT

27

Beria, Khrushchev, Molotov and Malenkov are walking together  
to their limos, drunk, tired.

BERIA  
(to Malenkov)  
Nice work mentioning Polnikov.  
(Malenkov impression)  
"Whatever happened to Polnikov? And  
Trotsky, I liked him."

MOLOTOV  
"I miss the tsar"...

MALENKOV  
What is this, the Malenkov Pogrom?  
I'm drunk. I can't remember.

KHRUSHCHEV  
A tip, Melanie. When you go home,  
get your wife to write down  
everything you think you said. Then  
in the morning you know what you're  
dealing with. Khrushchev's Law!

MOLOTOV

Good night, comrades! Long live the  
Communist Party of Lenin-Stalin!  
Long live John Wayne and John Ford!

Molotov drives off in his limo. He waves. They wave back.

BERIA

(does throat cutting  
gesture)

Goodbye, old friend. Goodbye  
forever.

They all register the shock.

MALENKOV

Really?

BERIA

Yep. On the list. It would be  
simpler and cheaper if they just  
drove straight into a river.  
Sweet dreams!

CUT TO:

28

INT. CONCERT HALL - MAIN AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

28

It's fuller now: some in overalls, one with a dirty brush,  
beside more smartly dressed concert-goers. A BIG WOMAN eats  
pickled onions. Some are filing up to the balcony.

ANDREYEV

(shouting at people on  
balcony)

You... no, YOU! Yes, keep going  
along! Fill it up!

The orchestra warm up. Andreyev starts clapping. The  
audience, ushers, Concert Director and security guards join  
in. Andreyev wants it louder. The audience oblige.

Maria enters, bows and takes her seat at the piano.

Andreyev keeps the applause going as Bresnavitch enters with  
a conductor's baton, still in his dressing gown and slippers.

MUSICIAN 2

Shit. Was Chaplin busy?

MUSICIAN 3

Bresnavich can't do Mozart! He has  
no feel for nuance.

MUSICIAN 2

He's in his dressing gown. I'd say  
"nuance" is fucked.

Bresnavich turns to face the orchestra and loses a slipper. He gropes for it with his foot as he taps his baton to begin. The orchestra starts playing, from the very beginning.

CUT TO:

29 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BEDROOM - NIGHT 29

A MAN desperately "over-dressing" - putting layers of clothes on top of each other. He grabs a roll of money and stuffs it in his underwear. The door is kicked open to reveal NKVD men.

INTERWOVEN WITH:

30 INT. KHRUSHCHEV'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 30

Khrushchev slowly, drunkenly, taking off his clothes. His wife, NINA, sits on the bed taking notes.

KHRUSHCHEV

I joked about the farmers. Stalin laughed. I joked about the navy. He didn't laugh.

31 INT. LUBYANKA - CORRIDOR - NIGHT 31

Beria, yawning, strolls along, cleaning his pince-nez. Behind him an NKVD guard, ILYIN walks with a crying WOMAN in her 20s.

BERIA

I'll see you again in twenty minutes.

Beria gestures to a cell door and the guard pushes her in. Further back, another door opens and an unconscious prisoner is dragged out by 2 NKVD men. They lift the prisoner's hand up and wave it at the other occupant in the cell - goodbye.

32 INT. KHRUSHCHEV'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 32

Back with Khrushchev and Nina.

KHRUSHCHEV

I mentioned Polnikov.

NINA

You fool!

KHRUSHCHEV

No, I got away with it. Then Malenkov mentioned him again, Stalin hated that.

- 33 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRWELL - NIGHT 33  
A MATRONLY WOMAN desperately scrubs blood off stairs, crying.
- 34 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LANDING - NIGHT 34  
A YOUNG MAN points some NKVD to the front door of a building with a distinctive design.
- 35 EXT. MOSCOW STREET - NIGHT 35  
Several people are brought out of the distinctive building by NKVD and put in vans. One is a MIDDLE-AGED MAN, who clocks the young man hiding in the shadows. He knows he's to blame.
- 36 INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT 36  
A FRIGHTENED PRISONER sits on a chair in the middle of the room, hands cuffed behind his back. A door opens and Beria comes in. He stands right behind the prisoner and massages his shoulders, whispering in his ear.
- 37 INT. CONCERT HALL - MAIN AUDITORIUM - NIGHT 37  
A serene Maria and sweating Bresnavich bring the concerto to its conclusion. There's a brief silence - relief - then applause. The Big Woman is still eating pickled onions.
- 38 INT. CONCERT HALL - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT 38  
Andreyev jumps and grabs the recording.  
SERGEI  
Shouldn't we check it...?  
Andreyev is already running out with record.  
ANDREYEV  
No time! If it's screwed, so are you!
- 39 INT. KHRUSHCHEV'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 39  
Back with Khrushchev and Nina.  
KHRUSHCHEV  
Beria did the tomato-in-the-pocket thing. Arsehole. You'll have to clean the trousers. Then... slippers...

NINA  
 (looking for slippers)  
 I think they're...

KHRUSHCHEV  
 Shh!  
 (swaying as he tries to  
 get out of a trouser leg)  
 Oh God, what was the slippers  
 thing? Stalin's slippers?  
 Molotov's? Fuck. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

CUT TO:

40 INT. CONCERT HALL - ENTRANCE STAIRCASE - NIGHT 40

Andreyev manically pelts down the staircase towards the NKVD men, brandishing the new record, followed by his staff.

ANDREYEV  
 I HAVE IT! I HAVE IT!...

He sees Pervak ahead, waiting. Andreyev slows to a walk, he's done his duty. The staff follow suit.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)  
 (more low key now)  
 I have the recording. We needed to  
 find a new... sleeve.

He looks down at the sleeve. It's plain and white.

ANDREYEV (CONT'D)  
 A white one. Because the other one  
 was.. blue. It looked very... shit.

PERVAK  
 The delay has been logged.

ANDREYEV  
 I've done my duty. Any "delay" is  
 being incurred now By YOU.

A hand takes the record from him.

Maria places a folded piece of paper into the sleeve.

MARIA  
 I wish to convey a special message  
 from my heart.

Andreyev and Pervak both disapproving.

PERVAK  
 I wish to convey this record to  
 Comrade STALIN.

Pervak and Maria wrestling for the record.

MARIA

I want Comrade Stalin to know the full intensity of my feelings for him.

ANDREYEV

No. This is unauthorised narcissism!

He tries to retrieve the note. We can see the record bend. Pervak grabs it back.

PERVAK

(indicates clock)

So. The item is in my possession.

After a significant "delay".

(to NKVD Officer)

Log the time.

The officers turn to leave. Maria watches them go. Andreyev drops to the floor, destroyed.

41 EXT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT 41

MUSIC.

The crowd, including the nervous man, leave. Spotting the NKVD limousine, Pervak and the other NKVD man outside the main entrance, he grimaces, turns and walks away quickly.

Two NKVD MEN suddenly bundle him into a car. It's over.

42 INT. NKVD CAR - NIGHT 42

The record speeds through the city, on Pervak's lap.

The car passes some frightened people being bundled into a van. There are fewer buildings as we reach the countryside.

43 EXT. RUSSIAN COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT 43

The car drives down a forest road.

Two barriers are lifted in front of it by Army soldiers.

44 EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - NIGHT 44

The car speeds into the grounds of Stalin's dacha.

45 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - NIGHT 45

The record travels under Pervak's arm, past various soldiers. A SERGEANT and another SOLDIER stand and salute.

The door opens. A frail hand carefully takes the record.

STALIN

What took you so long?

The door closes. The officer breathes a sigh of relief.

MUSIC ends.

46 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - NIGHT 46

Stalin removes the record from its sleeve. Maria's note falls unseen onto the table. He puts the record on. The stylus scratches, plays. He sees the note. Opens it and reads.

Stalin laughs. Then chokes. Silently shaking, he collapses. His body convulses, he's suffocating.

SLOW-MOTION. Title: "JOSEF STALIN, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party". As he falls, urine streams out.

We see the note fall from his hand and flutter down. We hear Maria in V/O.

MARIA (V.O.)

Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin.  
Tyrant! Murderer! You have sinned  
against God and against His church.  
You have betrayed our nation and  
destroyed its people. Repent. And  
beg for His forgiveness, while you  
can.

Stalin's face hits the floor. A pool of urine spreads out.

47 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - NIGHT 47

The sergeant and soldier on guard outside hear the noise. The sergeant does a "he's drunk" gesture.

SOLDIER

Should we... investigate?

SERGEANT

Should you shut the fuck up before  
you get us both killed.

48 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - NIGHT 48

Stalin on the floor, twitching. The record on a loop. A bar of the concerto cuts hard into scratching, repeating again and again. They really should have checked the recording.

A puddle of urine on the rug.

49 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - DAY 49

More time has passed. The soldiers sit there, bored.

MATRYONA PETROVNA (77) arrives with tea. Knocks. The soldiers share a glance. A beat. She opens the door, enters...

50 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - DAY 50

The room's a mess. Matryona tuts.

MATRYONA

Comrade Stalin. How many times? You cannot drink like a young man...

She goes to scream. We cut before the sound comes out...

51 INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY 51

C/U POV of Beria's face. We're a prisoner being interrogated.

BERIA

I just need some names. Each name you give me is one less bit of you I'll cut off. Shake? Oh, you can't.

We cut wide as we hear a knock on the door. Beria, bloodstains on his shirt, stands over a beaten prisoner tied to a chair. Ilyin is in the room.

BERIA (CONT'D)

Enter!

SLIMONOV, an NKVD officer, enters. Someone in another cell shouts 'Long Live Stalin', before a gun shot.

SLIMONOV

(nervous, scared of Beria)  
Sorry to interrupt, Comrade Minister. It's Comrade Stalin...

Beria turns to Slimonov, who looks down at the prisoner.

BERIA

Don't worry about him. Those ears are full of blood anyway.

SLIMONOV  
Comrade Stalin is very ill...

Beria gives nothing away. In the background, we hear another voice shout 'Long Live Stalin' followed by a shot.

BERIA  
Tell them... Beria is on his way.  
They are NOT to touch a thing. NOT  
to call anyone else. Understand?

Slimonov gives a nervous nod.

BERIA (CONT'D)  
Tell me you understand my  
instructions?

SLIMONOV  
I understand. Your instructions.

Beria goes to leave.

BERIA  
What's your name, lieutenant?

SLIMONOV  
(very nervous)  
S...s...limonov, sir.

BERIA  
S...s..limonov. Be here when I  
g..g..get back.

Beria leaves.

52 INT./EXT. LUBYANKA - CORRIDOR/BACK YARD - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 52

Beria walks through the Lubyanka corridors with his second-in-command, KOBULOV.

In the background we see a man being carried by two NKVD, tied to a heavy wooden log.

KOBULOV  
Abramovsky is close. But weak.  
(off Beria's look)  
Tomorrow, maybe.

BERIA  
Have his wife moved into the next  
cell. Work on her until he talks.  
Make it...noisy.

In the background, the man and log are tossed down some stairs. We can only vaguely make it out, but enough to know.

KOBULOV

If he doesn't...

They go up some stairs. A GUARD brings something for Beria to sign. He signs.

BERIA

He talks, he doesn't talk. It ends the same way. Shame. Mrs Abramovsky has been MOST co-operative so far...

53 INT. LUBYANKA - FRONT RECEPTION - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 53

They walk to the front doors.

KOBULOV

(chuckling)

Very loyal. Some women will do ANYTHING to get their husbands released.

BERIA

(fondly)

Yes. And she did 'everything'. God bless the Union for bringing me so many devoted wives who go like sewing machines.

CUT TO:

54 EXT. LUBYANKA - FRONT OF BUILDING - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 54

They've reached Beria's car. Khrustalyov holds the door for him and he gets in.

BERIA

How's married life?

KOBULOV

Very good, Comrade Be...

BERIA

Watch that wife of yours. They can all go astray, you know.

(to driver)

To his dacha.

The limo drives off, as a van pulls up behind.

55 INT. KHRUSHCHEV'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY 55

A kitchen in a modern apartment. Khrushchev is in his pyjamas, hungover, reading Nina the notes she made.

KHRUSHCHEV

"Grenade funny Beria tomato pocket  
funny slippers question mark."  
Jesus, Nina, is this code?

NINA

You woke me up to slur this  
nonsense and it's MY fault?

KHRUSHCHEV

"Molotov C-H-H-H-H...". Holy Hell,  
was I actually fucking SNORING  
there?

She does the throat mime.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

(looking out of the  
window)

Oh God, yes. Beria. He...

Below in the courtyard Malenkov is seen hurriedly leaving.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Something's happened.

The phone starts ringing.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Hello.... When did it..?

(to Nina)

Trousers!

(on phone)

I'll be there faster than a  
speeding bullet!

Nina helps him haul his trousers (from the same suit as the  
previous day) over his pyjamas.

56 EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - PERIMETER GATE - DAY 56

The front gate is opened. Beria's car sweeps through.

57 EXT./INT. FRONT OF BUILDING/BERIA'S CAR - DAY 57

Beria's car drives up to the building. He gets out. Soldiers  
salute him as he enters the building, confident, determined.

58 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - DAY 58

The Sergeant and soldier snap to attention, suppressing fear.

BERIA

Were you on duty when he was found?

SERGEANT

Yes, sir.

BERIA

No-one is to come in, understood?

SERGEANT

Yes, sir.

BERIA

Remain at your stations.

The younger soldier is struggling to hold himself together. Beria goes inside and shuts the door.

59 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - DAY

59

Behind the door we hear a whimper as the soldier panics.

SOLDIER (O.S)

Oh God...

Stalin is still on the floor. Matryona is stroking his hair.

MATRYONA

They told me not to get a doctor.

BERIA

You did well, Matryona Petrovna. The Central Committee will handle things now.

MATRYONA

So you will get a doctor?

BERIA

I AM the doctor. I'll see to everything.

She gets up and goes. He watches her shut the door, turns back to Stalin.

BERIA (CONT'D)

It smells like a Baku pisshouse in here. Greetings, by the way.

He kneels down, tries to reach into Stalin's trouser pocket but it's soaked with urine. He hesitates then goes for it.

He pulls out a key and wipes his hand on a handkerchief. Beria sees Maria's note, reads it and pockets it.

60 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - SMALL ROOM - DAY

60

Beria heads into an adjoining smaller private room.

He unlocks a drawer with Stalin's key. He takes out a set of keys, heads to a bookcase, opening it to reveal a safe.

He opens the safe and removes a pile of folders. He closes the safe, locks it, and returns the keys to the desk drawer.

He pulls out a few files and then heads to the window with the rest. He can't open it. It's jammed shut.

He pulls up his trouser leg to reveal a knife in a sheath strapped to his calf. He tries cutting at the dried paint round the edge of the frame. The top half comes down a fraction, leaving a gap at the top.

Beria taps the window to attract Khrustalyov's attention and gestures for him to come over.

He drags over Stalin's rickety chair and clambers onto it.

61 EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - FRONT OF BUILDING - DAY 61

With Khrustalyov. Beria shout-whispers through the window.

BERIA  
Khrustalyov! Khrustalyov!

Khrustalyov hears him and rushes over.

62 INT./EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - SMALL ROOM/FRONT OF BUILDING - ~~DAY~~

Beria perched on the arms of the chair. He waves for Khrustalyov to get higher.

Khrustalyov clambers onto the ledge as Beria feeds the documents through the window.

Beria wobbles, falls back a little but averts disaster by pulling at the curtain. Khrustalyov can't suppress a smile.

BERIA  
Take the papers you blockhead. Or  
I'll cut your eyes out one at a  
time, so you can watch it  
happening.

63 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - DAY 63

Beria throws the remaining papers into the stove. Phew. Sits in Stalin's chair - nice. Luxuriates in it.

A KNOCK. Beria quickly kneels by Stalin, taking his hand.

BERIA  
Come in.

He realises the hand is covered in piss but has to keep hold.  
Malenkov walks in.

MALENKOV

Is that... I'm guessing that's....

He rushes over and kneels in the urine. He springs back up.

BERIA

Yes. He's feeling unwell. Clearly.

MALENKOV

Oh God, he's irreplaceable. How can  
we possibly... is he still...?

Malenkov indicates "alive?". Beria nods.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)

As Deputy General Secretary I must  
now take his place, and...

BERIA

"Take his place." But you just said  
he's irreplaceable.

MALENKOV

"Take his place" as in "assemble  
the Central Committee". Of course.

BERIA

Good. I was testing you. Get used  
to that sort of challenge.

(indicates Stalin)

What next, Boss?

MALENKOV

Well... This is a medical decision.  
We should get a doctor.

BERIA

If only we hadn't put away all  
those highly competent doctors. For  
treason. You remember.

MALENKOV

(uncomfortable)

I do. They were plotting to poison  
him...

BERIA

That's right. You collected the  
evidence...

MALENKOV

Yes I did.

(a beat)

Are you still testing me?

Khrushchev bursts in.

KHRUSHCHEV  
This is calamity! Calamity!

Khrushchev rushes over to the body. He kneels, just missing the piss, pressing his face into Stalin's chest. Then...

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
NOOOOOOOOOO!!!

MALENKOV  
Jesus, Nikita!

Sobbing, Khrushchev grabs Malenkov's arm and stands up.

KHRUSHCHEV  
My friends. Comrades-in-arms...

He hugs Malenkov who also starts to cry. Beria feels he should join in the hug. It doesn't come naturally.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
Which doctor have you called?

BERIA  
The subject is currently under discussion.

MALENKOV  
As Acting General Secretary, I say the Committee should decide.

KHRUSHCHEV  
But our actual General Secretary is lying there carpet-bombing the room with piss. I think he's saying, Get me a fucking doctor.

MALENKOV  
We wait until we're quorate.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Quorate take a running fuck. The room is only 75 per cent CONSCIOUS.

Beria notices pyjama bottoms beneath Khrushchev's trousers.

BERIA  
Why are you in your pyjamas?

KHRUSHCHEV  
Because, I act, Lavrenti. Decisively, and with great speed. I don't...  
(to Malenkov)  
(MORE)

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
...hang around looking like a  
fucking ghost, farting out  
committees.

MALENKOV  
The Central Committee is important.  
That's why we're on it.

BERIA  
(to Malenkov)  
I said you'd be tested. And just  
now you're being tested by a  
shouting man wearing pyjamas.  
(RE pyjamas)  
Got a nappy under those, too?  
(RE Stalin)  
Too late for him!

The door is flung open by MIKOYAN, 58, well-dressed gangster  
type with a lit cigarette between his lips, and BULGANIN, 58,  
a head-down timeserver. With them is KAGANOVICH, 60: big, a  
bruiser, drunk.

We go into slow motion as all three try to squeeze through  
the door. We hear their shocked reactions slowed down.

BULGANIN/MIKOYAN/KAGANOVICH  
(in slow-motion)  
Papa!/Comrade!/Shit!

Underneath them, the captions: "Nicolai BULGANIN. Minister  
for Defence"; Mikoyan: "Anastase MIKOYAN. Vice-Premier, the  
Council of Ministers"; "Lazar KAGANOVICH. Minister for  
Labour."

We go back into real time as they squeeze around the body.

KAGANOVICH  
No! I love him too much!...

Bulganin falls to his knees, sobbing. His arm finds  
Kaganovich. Khrushchev puts a hand on them both. Bulganin  
reaches up, tugging Mikoyan's jacket. Mikoyan hates that.

MIKOYAN  
(warning)  
Suit.

BERIA  
This is compelling drama, but we do  
need to get him into bed.  
(nods at Malenkov)  
Take the head.

MALENKOV  
Why?

BERIA  
You're Acting General Secretary.

MIKOYAN  
(round the other side)  
Can't be any heavier than my  
fucking heart.

Khrushchev grabs Stalin's feet. There's now too many on the non-urine side. Only Kaganovich is on the urine side.

KAGANOVICH  
Mikoyan!

He gestures for Mikoyan to go to the other side. Grudgingly, he does so.

BULGANIN  
Better. More balanced.

Malenkov doing some light stretches.

KHRUSHCHEV  
What the hell are you doing?

MALENKOV  
I have back trouble. The head's the heaviest part...

BULGANIN  
I think actually it's the stomach and the, you know...

MIKOYAN  
Tackle?

BULGANIN  
Arse.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Can we stop haggling like a market full of fishwives and do this!

Malenkov joins the others. Khrushchev pushes Mikoyan to the upper half of the body so he has to lift near the urine.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
Ready. 3...2...

Malenkov joins in loudly.

MALENKOV/KHRUSHCHEV  
...2..1...

Khrushchev allows Malenkov to finish it alone.

MALENKOV  
...Lift!

They lift Stalin and carry him to the door, feet first.

BULGANIN

He's a heavy man. I mean...

BERIA

You think Stalin is..."too heavy"?

BULGANIN

It's a compliment. Gold's heavy.

MIKOYAN

You'd know. You looted enough of it, you saucy little pirate.

(winks at Bulganin)

KHRUSHCHEV

Now we're all cosy and quorate, I hereby propose we get a doctor.

They go through into...

64 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - DAY

64

We're a way down the corridor as they manoeuvre Stalin from the office to a door opposite.

KAGANOVICH

The best doctors are in the gulag. Or dead. Because they tried to kill Stalin. So any doctor still in Moscow is NOT a good doctor.

The Soldier and Sergeant are further down the hall, trying hard to avoid seeing what's going on.

65 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - BEDROOM - DAY

65

They get him through the door. It's a struggle.

BULGANIN

What are people's thoughts on getting a "bad" doctor?

MALENKOV

What if he recovers and finds out?

Khrushchev stops so they all have to. He unconsciously gestures with Stalin's feet as he talks.

KHRUSHCHEV

If he recovers, then we used a good doctor. If he doesn't recover, then we didn't but he won't know. But if we don't get a doctor...

MALENKOV

People will say WE poisoned him.

MIKOYAN

They fucking will as well.

Murmured agreement. They start moving towards the bed again.

KHRUSHCHEV

(to Malenkov)

What was the name of that woman who denounced the doctors?

MALENKOV

Timashuk.

BERIA

Yes. Are you still in touch?

MALENKOV

Well, we don't go skating together.

KHRUSHCHEV

We could get her in.

BULGANIN

(really?)

She sounds a keen helper, but... a negative individual.

BERIA

She's got everything we need for this situation: a desire to survive and blowjob lips.

MIKOYAN

Well, she's got my vote.

BULGANIN

Yes. Let her find us some doctors.

MIKOYAN

If it ends badly, we pin it all on Lady Sucky Sucky.

BERIA

And we shoot her.

MALENKOV

That would work.

(to Khrushchev)

See, we're better as a committee.

They reach the bed. Stalin's feet are over the pillows.

KAGANOVICH

We cannot display the Father of the Nation upside down. Let's turn him.

They turn him. Stalin's head narrowly misses a bedpost.

KHRUSHCHEV

Watch his head!

BULGANIN

Let's be careful! He's not a sack  
of coal!

Malenkov winces: his back hurts. They move Stalin onto the bed, right across Mikoyan who's bent over backwards. The urine-stained trousers pass right across his face and brush his expensive clothes.

MIKOYAN

Mind the...! Achtung, achtung!

Mikoyan is freed and Stalin's down. Khrushchev stares at Stalin in disbelief.

KHRUSHCHEV

He looks ready now.

MALENKOV

I need a vodka.

BULGANIN

I need a wash.

MIKOYAN

(re suit)

Fine weave this is. Never get it  
out.

KHRUSHCHEV

My pocket is still full of tomato.

Everyone leaves. Beria hangs back.

Khrushchev stops and watches Beria. He's just standing, looking at Stalin, face blank. He brings his face right up close to Stalin's, staring at him, and pokes his stomach.

BERIA

You have a nice, long sleep, old  
man. I'll take it from here.

CUT TO:

66

INT. STALIN'S DACHA - BEDROOM/DINING ROOM - DAY

66

The committee members except Malenkov and Khrushchev stand round a drinks cabinet stuffed with bottles - too many of them. Bulganin struggles to pull out a bottle of vodka.

Khrushchev walks in, placing his folded pyjamas down on the table.

BULGANIN  
I feel like a midwife, ha ha!  
(pulls one out)

MIKOYAN  
It's a boy!

Bulganin is filling glasses.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Remember? He made us all guess the  
air temperature outside? Loser sat  
in the snow, bare ass. Molotov...

They all laugh.

KAGANOVICH  
(little girl voice)  
"I'm the Foreign Secretary. Not an  
Emperor Penguin".

MIKOYAN  
(little girl voice)  
"My cock will snap!"

KHRUSHCHEV  
(re Beria)  
Careful. All these little girl  
voices...

BULGANIN  
Where is Molotov, by the way?

BERIA  
He's on a list. The latest list...

The laughter stops. It's a big name to be on a list.

KAGANOVICH  
What about Svetlana and Vasily?  
They'll want to see their father.

BERIA  
No. I don't want them contacted  
until we have a plan. We...

KHRUSHCHEV  
(interrupting)  
We stand strong. We burn bright.  
Because if....if our Great Beacon  
is extinguished, if the Great  
Helmsman dies...

BERIA  
(interrupting back)  
Stalin is not dying! Do you hear  
me? Stalin will never die!  
(MORE)

BERIA (CONT'D)

That remnant of a man there, that pathetic old lump of flesh in his piss-stained jodpers - that is not Stalin! Stalin is the Union! The Party! YOU are Stalin. I am Stalin. Understand? I am Stalin. The people are Stalin. And they will see this when we tell them. WHEN we tell them. So, don't any of you fucking say Stalin is dying! He lives!

Silence. The tension's broken by Malenkov coming in.

MALENKOV

Timashuk's organising the doctors.  
(innocently)  
What did I miss?

67

EXT. MOSCOW PARK - DAY

67

MONTAGE of Moscow park exteriors: fountains.

An old man, LUKOMSKY, with his small dog on a lead.

A black maria stops. Lukomsky realises it's for him. He starts to run as best he can. Heading past the fountains.

Some NKVD MEN, including Delov run to catch him. He abandons the dog.

LUKOMSKY

Please... I've done nothing wrong!

They catch him. An NKVD OFFICER is waiting with a doctor's white coat, a stethoscope and a doctor's bag.

DELOV

Put this on.

LUKOMSKY

I retired 6 years ago.

DELOV

Put it on!...

LUKOMSKY

I can give you names?

The NKVD men put the coat on him and open the van doors. Inside are other terrified DOCTORS, including a WEIRD-LOOKING TALL DOCTOR. LIDIYA TIMASHUK, an attractive woman of about 40 gets out the front and she and an NKVD officer chase the dog. We cut before we find out if they caught it or not.

68 EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - FRONT OF BUILDING/GROUNDS - DAY 68

RED ARMY SOLDIERS with dogs patrol. Others are around, and some NKVD visible in the background.

Khrushchev and Kaganovich walk along a path.

KAGANOVICH

Poor Molotov. He loves Stalin.  
Stalin kills his wife. He still  
loves Stalin. Stalin arrests him.

KHRUSHCHEV

Stalin told me it would be Bulganin  
next.

KAGANOVICH

Really? I heard Mikoyan. God he was  
good.

KHRUSHCHEV

(testing Kaganovich)  
No, he was paranoid. I think he was  
on the point of arresting his own  
reflection.

Kaganovich doesn't respond. They walk in silence. Khrushchev  
tries again.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

So. Who'll be on the next list?  
(indicates "me and you")

KAGANOVICH

Look, nobody wants the future of  
the Union to be Beria and Malenkov  
staring at each other across a  
fucking graveyard. But what...

KHRUSHCHEV

Reform. Change. We really want  
millions in camps? Look, we're not  
the only ones worried about Beria.  
We should sound out Mikoyan and...

KAGANOVICH

That's factionalist talk, Nikita.

They stop. In the distance, Malenkov is pissing against a  
tree, with Beria very close to him.

KHRUSHCHEV

You want factionalism?  
(points across)  
Beria's playing Melanie like a  
fucking musical saw...

CUT TO:

We join Malenkov and Beria by the tree. Malenkov's pissing.

MALENKOV

When I piss, I try to make eye contact with an officer. Ruins their day!

BERIA

We need more security in Moscow. Did you hear that pinhead Khrushchev undermining you about the doctors? Remember: Stalin chose YOU.

MALENKOV

Khrushchev. Talking goat. Don't worry, Lavrentiy. "Mother Russia" is safe in my hands...

BERIA

You call it "Mother Russia"?

Beria indicates his penis. Malenkov laughs.

We're back with Kaganovich and Khrushchev. They walk on.

KHRUSHCHEV

I'm pulling Stalin's children in. Now. Keep them close.

KAGANOVICH

Vasily will be lying face down in a ditch full of vodka. But Svetlana..

KHRUSHCHEV

The people LOVE her. I'm getting her...

KAGANOVICH

You heard Beria. We don't get them on board until there's a plan...

KHRUSHCHEV

I just TOLD you what my...

There's a shout from the courtyard outside the house.

PERVAK (OOV)

Comrade Ministers! Svetlana Alliluyeva is here!

They look up to the house. Stalin's daughter, SVETLANA ALLILUYEVA (30), is at the top of the slope next to PERVAK.

SVETLANA

(to NKVD Officer)

Where is he? Is he OK? Who got here first? Who's in charge here?

All four committee members start cutting across the woods. Malenkov and Beria spot Khrushchev and Kaganovich.

KHRUSHCHEV  
(shouting)  
Svetlana! Hello!

BERIA  
(running)  
Svetlana!  
(to Malenkov)  
They're trying to cut you off!

MALENKOV  
(running)  
What? Those bastards!

KHRUSHCHEV  
(running)  
Shit, the race has started.  
Fucker's halfway round the track  
before they've fired the pistol.  
(shouts)  
Hello!

Malenkov trips a little and has to stop running.

Beria's the first to reach Svetlana. She's been crying.

SVETLANA  
Has he said anything? Is he... is  
he able to speak?

Beria catching his breath, doubled over. Svetlana consoling.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)  
It's a shock for all of us. Is  
Vasily on his way?  
(to everyone)  
Has my brother been told?

Beria sees Khrushchev is close.

BERIA  
(panting)  
Svetulya... I'll take you to him..

Beria puts a proprietorial arm around her. They head to the house as Khrushchev and Kaganovich arrive, breathless.

KHRUSHCHEV  
I'm so sorry, Svetlana...

He tries to take her hand, but Beria shepherds her inside.

SVETLANA  
Someone contact Vasily! He must be  
here!

KHRUSHCHEV

(shouting after her)

I'll do it! I'll get him! Don't worry... darling!

(fuck no, not that)

Svetlana!

BERIA

(tetchy)

Yes, see to that could you, Comrade Khrushchev?

69

INT. ICE HOCKEY RINK - DAY

69

A training match. The players are clearly second-rate. One of them - BOBROV - is terrified. All up at one end, with three trainers lobbing at them.

Watching them, drunk and angry - VASILY DZHUGASHVILI (30), Stalin's son, in his Air Force uniform. A COACH is with him.

VASILY

When we play Hungary, are we allowed to use guns?

COACH

Comrade General, they're the best I could find since the plane crash.

VASILY

Stop saying plane crash! There was never a plane crash!

Vasily watches the players scuttle around on the ice, and takes a swig from a hip flask.

VASILY (CONT'D)

Soviet planes do not crash, and Stalin's son does not fuck up.

COACH

We still have Bobrov. He wasn't on the plane.

VASILY

What plane?

COACH

(shouts)

Bobrov!

Briefly focussed, Bobrov sweeps past the other players, then completely misses the goal. He looks to Vasily, terrified.

VASILY

Jesus, he's petrified. He's leaving a trail of yellow ice.

A sense of other players chipping the ice or miss-hitting.

VASILY (CONT'D)

You're the coach. Coach them so they're as good as the dead team was. Or I'll have you killed. OK?

COACH

Yes, yes.

Three NKVD OFFICERS, including TARASOV step in, watching Vasily from afar. Vasily spots them.

VASILY

Shit... Do they know??  
(shouting at the players)  
Play better now! PLAY BETTER!

A player crashes into the hoarding in front of Vasily.

TARASOV

General? You are to come to your father's dacha -

VASILY

That plane should never have taken off. You think because of who I am I can predict ice storms?

The officers share a look.

TARASOV

Has something happened to our national hockey team?

VASILY

No.  
(indicates rink)  
See? No. But ask yourself - might something happen to YOU?

The officers look over at the players, and watch one of them screw up a tackle and smash to the ground.

The NKVD men nod to each other, grab Vasily and pick him up.

VASILY (CONT'D)

What the fuck..? My father will have you saddled and ridden to Siberia! You have no manners, you rude fucking cunts.

The black maria from the park pulls into the courtyard.

Delov and the other NKVD get out and open the doors. The scared shabby doctors emerge. One is very young.

Lidiya gets out the front of the van.

71 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - DINING ROOM - DAY 71

Beria is by Svetlana who's crying. Khrushchev offers a chair.

SVETLANA

No, no.

Khrushchev goes to sit then thinks better of it.

KHRUSHCHEV

He's with good people, my dear.  
They're the best...

The shamble of doctors leave the bedroom with Malenkov, and line up in front of the politburo, Svetlana and Matryona.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Beria got the doctors.

BERIA

No, that was Malenkov.

MALENKOV

Svetlana, would you like to sit  
down?

SVETLANA

Really. No.

KHRUSHCHEV

(offering his chair)  
Have mine.

SVETLANA

(cross)  
The men always want me to sit down.  
NO.

Svetlana regrets her scratchy response, whispers to the men.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)

Thank you for your concern.

Lukomsky nervously reads from a paper. Lidiya is beside him.

LUKOMSKY

After examining Comrade Stalin  
we've come to the unanimous  
conclusion that...  
(struggling to continue)  
...he's...

BERIA  
(nods to Lidiya)  
Please. Put him out of his misery.

Lidiya takes the paper off him.

LIDIYA  
Comrade Stalin has had a cerebral  
hemorrhage. The right side of his  
body is paralyzed.

BERIA  
Does he have any chance of  
recovery?

LUKOMSKY  
It's, um... It's hard to say...

Beria goes right up to him, and speaks quietly, calmly.

BERIA  
Relax. I'm not going to kiss you.  
Will he recover? Yes. Or no.

Lukomsky manages to mouth the quietest "No" ever.

BERIA (CONT'D)  
(loud, to the others)  
It's over!

Shocked silence. Beria gets his hat and prepares to leave. Discretely, a few of Beria's people (NKVD) can be seen hovering at the edge of shot, and down corridors, waiting for his signal.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Now it begins. I cry for Stalin, I  
cry for all of us...

Beria's people just as suddenly disappear. Beria turns to Svetlana. She looks numb.

BERIA  
Courage, little bird. We're here  
for you.

Khrushchev realises he should maybe have said this first.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Yes. Most of all, we cry for you.  
All Russia feels your sorrow.  
(awkwardly)  
Little... bird.

Beria starts to leave again. His 'people' appear again discretely.

BERIA

I must get back. Prepare the nation  
for this...trauma.

SVETLANA

Stay with me, please. I feel alone.

Beria looks torn: he needs to go to Moscow to take control.

MALENKOV

I could go to Moscow. I'm... now  
General Secretary if "he" is not...  
compos mentis...

KHRUSHCHEV

(fuck you, Beria)  
I'll stay with you, Svetlana. The  
old man would've...

SVETLANA

Oh, THANK you Comrade Khrushchev.

BERIA

(fuck you, Khrushchev)  
No, I can do things here. Here is  
perfect.  
(to Lidiya)  
Timashuk. Come.

Beria's people disappear again.

He and Lidiya leave. Kaganovich is crying into Stalin's hand.

KHRUSHCHEV

(quietly, to Kaganovich)  
While Beria has his celebratory  
thirty-second fuck, I'm going to  
find out who our friends...are you  
even fucking listening?

Kaganovich nods, still sobbing.

72 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - DAY

72

Lidiya follows Beria down the corridor, past the Soldier and  
Sergeant.

BERIA

(to Lidiya)  
Stay here. Shut your ears.

He goes inside Stalin's office.

73 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

73

Beria shuts the door behind him and punches the air with joy,

trying hard not to scream and shout. He picks up the phone.

BERIA

(phone)

Moscow is to be sealed off. Send in more NKVD. All army stations replaced by NKVD. And initiate the new lists.

(ends call, sotto to self)

Reset your watches, ladies and gentlemen.

74 INT. LUBYANKA - OFFICE AND CORRIDOR - DAY 74

Kobulov hands a list to an NKVD OFFICER who salutes, takes it along a corridor to a SOLDIER who salutes and marches to a cell. The door's unlocked.

A PRISONER is being interrogated. The soldier shoots him dead and leaves. The NKVD INTERROGATOR is left stunned as we hear O.S a succession of unlocking doors, yells and gunshots.

75 EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - PERIMETER GATE - DAY 75

FIVE SOLDIERS on guard. Smoking, relaxed. An ARMY CAPTAIN watches as NKVD MEN get out of a truck. An NKVD OFFICER hands the Captain some orders. Captain doesn't like what he sees.

One NKVD man pulls out bottles of vodka. Soldiers look to Captain, who reluctantly nods, snatch the bottles, and amble into jeeps. The army leave. The NKVD are in charge.

76 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - DAY 76

Beria opens the door. Lidiya steps in and shuts the door. He looks at her for a moment.

LIDIYA

Over his desk? As usual?

She walks to the desk, bends over it. She's done this before.

BERIA

Stalin is dying. And all you do is present me with your cold vagina? How shockingly, shockingly inappropriate, Lidiya.

She's surprised, shaken, but tries not to show it.

BERIA (CONT'D)

Oh, don't worry. You'll be thoroughly "seen to" later...

A horrible, courteous smile. He indicates "go". She leaves.

77 INT/EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAYS/FRONT OF BUILDING/GROUNDS - DAY

Lidiya walks downstairs and out the building. Two NKVD Officers with documents look up at her. More trucks arriving.

All exits routes blocked. We see a GUARD recognise her name on a list. Lidiya runs in panic into the woods. We go with her. Beria watches from the front of the dacha.

An EXPLOSION. Guards cock their guns. Bulganin rushes out.

BULGANIN

A mine? Are we being attacked?

BERIA

(shrugs)

Perhaps an animal.

(to an NKVD Officer)

You have your orders.

He turns and goes back inside.

78 INT./EXT - VASILY'S LIMOUSINE - DAY 78

Vasily's limo drives through the countryside.

Vasily sits between the NKVD officers in the back, drinking. No-one says anything. Then...

VASILY

Do either of you play hockey?

79 INT. KREMLIN - STALIN'S OFFICE - DAY 79

The room is big and spartan. Simple furniture, wall maps. An outsized chess set. The lights are on.

The locked door CRACKS as an NKVD OFFICER forces entry. A SENIOR NKVD OFFICER enters, switches off the light.

80 EXT. RED SQUARE - DAY 80

From across the square, we see the light go out.

81 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - OFFICE - DAY 81

KHRUSHCHEV steps in. It's dark; the curtains are shut.

He checks the safe: it's locked. He looks on the desk, opens a couple of drawers.

SVETLANA (O.S.)

I have every right to be here!

Khrushchev jumps. He didn't see Svetlana sat in the darkness.

KHRUSHCHEV  
(Thinking of an excuse)  
Your father kept some excellent  
vodka here.

SVETLANA  
And Vasily probably drank it. Oh,  
Nikita. Who can I turn to now? Mama  
killed herself, Papa's dying,  
Vasily's...

KHRUSHCHEV  
(relieved)  
Yes! I was also looking for you to  
tell you that I've sent for Vasily!

He's not sure whether to put a comforting hand on her or not.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
I'm here. No matter what happens,  
I'll make sure no harm comes to you  
or your brother.

SVETLANA  
Who said anything about harm? Did  
someone tell you we're in danger?  
Tell me!

KHRUSHCHEV  
I didn't mean...

SVETLANA  
(panicky/angry)  
Who wishes harm on me?

KHRUSHCHEV  
Nobody. Nobody. Anyway, they'd have  
to get past ME.

SVETLANA  
People would harm the children of  
Stalin? Even though he's...

She loses it. A gush of tears. Khrushchev hesitates, settles  
for an awkward, comradely grip on her shoulders.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Your father can never die. Stalin  
is you, Stalin is me, Stalin is the  
Union.. so cannot die!

SVETLANA  
What are you saying? He's dying.

KHRUSHCHEV  
He is dying...

He casts his eyes down, spots a bottle, grabs it.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
Svetlana, just...be strong. And...  
(out of platitudes)  
Try not to be afraid.

SVETLANA  
I wish I knew what not to be afraid  
of.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Nothing. Trust me.

An awkward double-fisted "be strong" sign. He hurries out.

CUT TO:

82

INT. STALIN'S DACHA - DINING ROOM/BEDROOM - DAY

82

A vast buffet is added to by a CHEF covered in medals. There are empty vodka bottles everywhere. Smoke hangs in the air.

Beria is idly playing billiards, watching a YOUNG WAITRESS. He whistles her over, takes a large tomato from her plate. He bites into it, keeping eye contact. Juice runs down his chin.

Kaganovich is near the bed, drinking. Mikoyan's on the other side of the room with Malenkov, whose hair is over-groomed.

MIKOYAN  
You had your hair fucking embalmed  
or something?

MALENKOV  
Fuck you. There'll be a lot of  
photos. I can't let him or the  
Party down.

Khrushchev walks in with the vodka, annoyed with himself.

He goes to the bed and tries to take part of Stalin's hand. There are only fingers left; Kaganovich is holding the rest.

KAGANOVICH  
(quietly)  
Did you speak to Svetlana?

KHRUSHCHEV  
(indicates bottle)  
Went very well. She gave me this.  
(off Kaganovich's look)  
A good sign. Vodka's ALWAYS a good  
sign.

KAGANOVICH

You're right. Beria's taking over.  
Another 9 NKVD divisions in Moscow.  
More on the way. Army's out.

KHRUSHCHEV

He's moving fast.

Bulganin comes in.

BULGANIN

Got to unload to reload.

KHRUSHCHEV

You have the bladder of a sparrow.

BULGANIN

But the penis of a horse.

Nobody laughs. Mikoyan has joined Beria.

MIKOYAN

(to Bulganin)

You ARE the penis of a horse.

(to Beria)

Tough old bastard. Thought he'd  
just kick Death in the balls.

Beria puts a reassuring arm round Mikoyan's waist.

BERIA

My friend.

Mikoyan pulls a crushed tomato from his jacket pocket. He  
looks angry, volatile.

MIKOYAN

Piss and tomato AND Stalin dying.  
This is a nightmare.

Beria's about to apologise. Mikoyan waves it away, heads out.

Lukomsky enters with two other doctors, who wheel a hefty  
piece of equipment with a very squeaky wheel.

MALENKOV

Who ordered the Wurlitzer?

LUKOMSKY

It's... it's a respirator...  
American...

KAGANOVICH

(gobsmacked)

You brought a capitalist machine...  
in here?

DOCTOR

He brought it. It's from his hospital!...

LUKOMSKY

It was his idea...

Khrushchev joins Beria and Malenkov while Kaganovich berates the doctors.

KHRUSHCHEV

So, you had time at your hairdresser's to mobilise the NKVD?

MALENKOV

What?

BERIA

I did it. Look, people will need...  
(makes fist)  
...reassurance.

KHRUSHCHEV

So why switch the lights off in Stalin's office at the Kremlin?

BERIA

What?

MALENKOV

Ah... I know what happened. I asked for the place to be secured, and the dolts have turned the lights off.

KHRUSHCHEV

Why not tether an airship above Red Square with "HE'S DEAD" painted on it?

KAGANOVICH

Take this Uncle Sam shit away!  
(unplugs the machine)

SVETLANA

He can't breathe!..

Svetlana grabs the plug and puts it back in.

BERIA

(puts cigarette in his mouth)

It's a good thing he can breathe.  
We're all agreed on that.

Malenkov checks no-one is looking and quickly heads out.

83 EXT. RED SQUARE - SQUARE IN FRONT OF STALIN'S OFFICE - DAY 83  
The same long shot as before. This time the light turns on.

84 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - DAY 84  
Later. Beria is having a cigarette in the hallway. Suddenly there are cheers from inside the room.

85 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - BEDROOM - DAY 85  
Beria hurries in. The committee and Svetlana are around the bed, weeping, laughing, holding Stalin's hand.

KAGANOVICH  
A miracle! Stalin is invincible!

MALENKOV  
The Man Of Steel! He lives!

MIKOYAN  
The Boss is back!

BERIA  
What? What's happened?

Stalin's eyes are open. Beria moves the others out of the way and takes pride of place right by Stalin's head.

BERIA (CONT'D)  
That's impossible! And wonderful!  
Long live the Union!

Stalin meets Beria's eye. Then points at Khrushchev.

KAGANOVICH  
Maybe he's appointing a successor?

KHRUSHCHEV  
(a little bit pleased)  
Do you think?

STALIN'S POV: his finger passes across all the committee members. The finger stops, points to Matryona.

KAGANOVICH  
Maybe not.

He points past her, to the wall. They all turn to look at a painting of a young girl feeding a lamb through a bottle.

MALENKOV  
Maybe he's saying: "I am like this  
lamb and you, my children, have  
given me life."

KHRUSHCHEV

No. Stalin's the GIRL, nourishing  
the Lamb - the Union - with Marxism-  
Leninism.

SVETLANA

My father is not a girl!

MALENKOV

He's the milk!

MIKOYAN

YOU'RE the tit.

BULGANIN

Maybe he just wants a drink...

Everyone agrees. Matryona offers him some water.

Stalin lowers his hand. Beria goes to Lukomsky, cowering at  
the back. He shakes the doctor's hand but doesn't let it go.

BERIA

You are a hero, Comrade Lukomsky.

LUKOMSKY

(terrified)

I... Sometimes this happens...  
And... I'm incredibly pleased.

BERIA

I won't forget it.

Beria glares at him - it's a death sentence - then leaves.

86

INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - DAY

86

Beria paces. Agitated, defeated. For the first time, we see  
him troubled.

BERIA

(sotto, to self)

Live, or die. This is just...  
dithering.

The original soldier and sergeant are still there, exhausted.

SOLDIER

Sir, we have remained at our post  
as you ordered. Might we  
respectfully...

Beria turns round to look at them but..

MIKOYAN (O.S.)

He's dead!

Beria's brief smile. He notes the sergeant has spotted it. Beria darts back inside.

CUT TO:

87 ARCHIVE MATERIAL 1. 87

Scenes of RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET EMPIRE IN MOURNING

CUT TO:

88 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - DAY 88

We hear a loudspeaker voiceover as Beria walks.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviets of the USSR announce with deep grief that on March 5th at 6.50pm Josef Vissarionovich Stalin...

89 EXT. GULAG - PRISON YARD - TWILIGHT 89

A brutally cold, frozen, rugged environment. Low, stone buildings.

PRISONERS listen, shocked; many upset. One of them is the Nervous Man from the concert. NKVD GUARDS look to each other.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)

...Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party..

90 INT. KREMLIN - STALIN'S OFFICE - DAY 90

An NKVD man munching on a salami, burning papers in a bin.

91 EXT. RED SQUARE - SQUARE IN FRONT OF STALIN'S OFFICE - DAY 91

The same long shot as before. This time the light turns off.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Chairman of the Council of Ministers, has died after a serious illness....

92 INT./EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - OUTHOUSE/SIDE OF DACHA - DAY 92

We see Stalin's dead face, filling the screen.

A small medical saw is seen starting to cut into the skull.

Wide to see we're in an outhouse near the dacha. A doctor cutting into Stalin's head with an intense grinding noise.

Laboratory and medical equipment surrounded by spare tyres, car engine etc. Stalin's body is laid out. Lukomsky and the doctors, NKVD OFFICERS and committee members are there.

MIKOYAN/MALENKOV/KAGANOVICH/KHRUSHCHEV  
/BULGANIN

(wincing)

NOOO!/Fuck my boots!/Whoa!...

MIKOYAN

Sorry, boss! I wish I could take it for you!

BERIA

(to Malenkov)

We need to think about the Presidium!

MALENKOV

(reacting to the body)

Yes. God. Succession. The Committee should. Oh. Fuck. Notify. No. That's his... must we see this?

BERIA

Regrettable! But important this happens quickly! Transparency!

The double doors at the front of the outhouse are hauled open. It's Vasily, drunk.

VASILY

What are you doing to my father, you jackals!

The very young doctor is peeling back skin on Stalin's skull.

VASILY (CONT'D)

Murderers! You'll kill him!

Beria gestures to the others: he'll deal with this.

BERIA

Vasily, your father is dead and...

Vasily draws his pistol.

VASILY

Dividing the spoils? Leave his brain alone! How old are you?

Beria nods at the NKVD. An NKVD man tries to grab Vasily's gun but he fires it.

Everyone dives for cover. Malenkov runs out of the door and pulls it shut. Bulganin and Khrushchev try to follow but Malenkov's holding it shut from the other side. Khrushchev crouches against the door. Mikoyan stands fearless.

NKVD men try to subdue Vasily. He struggles, firing his gun.

VASILY (CONT'D)

Here is your fucking... harvest!

They drag him away from Stalin but he fires more shots. They hit Stalin. His head rocks forward as if the shots have jolted him into life for a moment.

The NKVD get his gun off him. We hear Svetlana's voice.

SVETLANA (O.S.)

Vasily! Vasily! Stop!...

She's come into the garage. Her voice stops him struggling.

VASILY

Tiny child doctors are cutting up  
Papasha! They're filling his brain  
with American lies!

She grabs his face, looks right into his eyes.

SVETLANA

(very quiet)

He's gone, Vasya. Just you and me  
now. Be careful. Remember what Papa  
said. Wade gently across the river  
because...

(rhythmically digging into  
his face)

It. Is. Full. Of. Snakes. And.  
Crocodiles.

Vasily nods. He's heard her. Svetlana looks at the NKVD men.

VASILY

(trying to act normal)

Someone could have told me what to  
expect. Next time, tell me.

Beria nods to the NKVD, who let him go.

Malenkov opens the door and comes back in.

BULGANIN

(to Malenkov)

I understand wanting to leave. But  
why hold the door shut? Who does  
that?

VASILY

Cover me, I'm getting Papa!

Suddenly, Vasily grabs for his gun. Malenkov immediately closes himself outside again.

MIKOYAN  
(to Malenkov)  
Off you go, kitten!

The NKVD men struggle with Vasily, force him to the ground and sit on him. It's not dignified. Svetlana looks ashamed.

SVETLANA  
(close to Vasily)  
Moron. I'm not part of your suicide pact. You want to die? Shoot yourself.

VASILY  
You will regret this! You are sitting on fire! Fire!

BERIA  
He's distressed. We all are.  
(to doctors)  
Is it done?

One of the petrified doctors nods.

BERIA (CONT'D)  
It is finished. Let's go. And someone do something about all of this -  
(waves vaguely at Stalin)  
- then take it to the Kremlin.

SVETLANA  
Where now for me? And my brother?

BERIA  
My men will bring you to Moscow.

KHRUSHCHEV  
I would be honoured to escort you.

Svetlana senses Beria's antipathy to Khrushchev.

SVETLANA  
Thank you. But no, I'll go with Beria's men.

Beria kisses her and marches out into the courtyard.

BERIA  
Our precious cargo.  
(shouting)  
Khrustalyov! My car!

The other committee members look at each other for a beat, then rush off after him. Suddenly everyone's in a hurry.

BULGANIN

We need equilibrium. Soon.

MIKOYAN

"Equilibrium", bollocks. Give me chaos every time. Got more meat on it.

93 EXT./INT. DACHA - FRONT OF BUILDING/BERIA'S CAR - DAY 93

Beria arrives at his limo. Khrustalyov opens the door and he gets in. An NKVD officer is in the driver seat, Khrustalyov stays outside. He nods to his boss and heads into the dacha.

Inside the car, the young waitress Beria saw earlier is cuffed to the car door. She's frightened. He smiles at her.

BERIA

I know. Sad times.

The car starts but the courtyard's a logjam of vehicles all trying to get out. Other committee members hurry to their vehicles, drivers holding open the doors for them. Svetlana heads with an NKVD man to her limo. Horns start to blare. Political manoeuvring. NKVD men trying futilely to direct.

Then, in the chaos, NKVD men emerge carrying a plain wooden coffin. They load it onto the back of a truck and climb in. Beria gets out of his car. Stands solemnly. The others are obliged to get out and show their respect. The NKVD clear a path for the truck and escorts. Beria's car following. He's won the scramble.

The others start their cars. Horns blaring, cars jostling...

94 EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - FRONT OF BUILDING/ROAD - DAY 94

The last of the limos drive away. An empty road. Silence.

Then - a rumbling, getting nearer. A CONVOY of NKVD trucks coming up the road, through the gates, into the courtyard. Armed NKVD MEN pour out, occupying the house and grounds. Kobulov barks into a loudhailer.

KOBULOV

Comrades! We share your grief! You will assemble in the courtyard for further instructions!

95 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY 95

Busts, portraits, furniture, files, are removed, and medical equipment from the outhouse. Stalin's turntable, the record still on it, is loaded into a box, nailed shut.

Some STAFF are already in a line in front of the house, others are brought out by the NKVD, including the chef and the doctors. Some have belongings, some nothing. A lot of orders are being shouted. People are frightened, confused.

A supposedly dead Stalin, in a dressing gown and slippers, is marched out. The chef turns to his confused neighbour.

CHEF

His lookalike. I think his contract just ran out.

The LOOKALIKE is taken round the corner to be shot. But the SOLDIER executioner can't do it. Looks like HIM. Someone quickly throws a cloth over the lookalike's head. Good. Bang.

A second lookalike is marched out. Another, third lookalike, clearly a younger, fitter man, makes a break for it. Close up of a young, fit Stalin running for his life away from the dacha. But we cut away before any mine explosion. In fact, the explosion doesn't come...

96 INT/EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - KITCHEN/FRONT - DAY 96

Delov and Two NKVD OFFICERS search the kitchen. They discover Matryona, crouched between two gas stoves, her eyes shut.

DELOV

Hey, you! On your feet!

Matryona is hauled up and dragged out the front door.

Now we hear and just about see a mine explode in the woods.

97 INT. STALIN'S DACHA - HALLWAY - DAY 97

The soldier and sergeant are asleep. Khrustalyov appears with Pervak.

PERVAK

Attention!

The soldiers dozily comes to attention.

KHRUSTALYOV

At ease. You can stand down now.  
There's food in the kitchen.

SERGEANT

Thank you, sir.

They head down a long corridor with a kitchen at the end. Then the sergeant comes back into view, collapsing to the floor, unconscious. NKVD arms reach into the doorway framing our view and drag him out.

The other soldier runs across the doorway followed by two NKVD MEN. It's messy. The soldier may have gotten away into the woods. We don't know.

98 EXT. STALIN'S DACHA - FRONT OF BUILDING/GROUNDS - DAY 98

Loaded trucks pull out of the courtyard.

We are with Matryona as the truck moves off. From her pov we see Khrustalyov join Kobulov in the courtyard. They get smaller and smaller in the distance. Kobulov shoots Khrustalyov in the head. Other landmines go off.

CUT TO:

99 INT. KHRUSHCHEV'S APARTMENT/MALENKOV'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING 99

Khrushchev is chopping vegetables. A tired Bulganin is sat at the kitchen table.

KHRUSHCHEV

So... Beria's introduced 'special measures' to 'reduce the panic'?  
Carrots.

He looks at Bulganin, meaningfully, as if sounding him out.

Bulganin passes him a couple of carrots.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

It's good to prepare, get everything ready.

He looks at Bulganin, meaningfully, as if sounding him out.

BULGANIN

Are we talking about Beria or the stroganoff?

Khrushchev goes over to his washing machine.

KHRUSHCHEV

I built a big factory making these.

Khrushchev turns it on. It makes a terrifyingly loud noise.

BULGANIN

(shouting over it)  
If Russia was a noise, then that would be it.

KHRUSHCHEV

Not so good for washing clothes.  
Very useful for "conversations"..about Beria.

A pause.

BULGANIN

Look, it's important someone takes control.

KHRUSHCHEV

Someone like Beria?

The conversation is suddenly significant. Bulganin comes up to Khrushchev so they can talk quietly.

BULGANIN

It should certainly be someone who has the support of all parts of the party.

KHRUSHCHEV

Like Beria?

BULGANIN

Well certainly one of us.

KHRUSHCHEV

So... maybe not Beria?

BULGANIN

You're very good with that knife.  
It's ...

KHRUSHCHEV

(interrupting)

I'm saying... maybe not be Beria...  
We should get rid of him.

BULGANIN

Yes. Yes! And soon! Punish him!  
Stick him in a room with twelve big  
hungry, horny Serbians!

Suddenly the washing machine comes to a juddery stop, interrupting Bulganin. The men stare at one another in panic.

Khrushchev tastes a spoonful of food, not yet ready to eat.

KHRUSHCHEV

Mmm. That is good. Delicious.

The machine starts again. Khrushchev spits out the food.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Feh! Raw!

BULGANIN

We should take acting classes. If  
Stalin hadn't killed all the  
actors.

(MORE)

BULGANIN (CONT'D)

Look, I want to come on board, but we don't have the numbers.

Suddenly the phone rings. Has someone been listening in? Tentatively Bulganin answers as Khrushchev adds some of the vegetables to a pot on the stove.

We see Malenkov, Mikoyan standing next to him, by the window of his apartment.

MALENKOV (ON PHONE)

Are you being factional?

BULGANIN

We're cooking some food.

Khrushchev grabs the phone.

MALENKOV

I can see you, you know.

We cut to reveal the two apartment windows look on to each other, very close in distance. We see Khrushchev in one window, Malenkov in the other.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)

Looks like factionalism to me.

Khrushchev grabs a spoonful of stew and stands at the window theatrically eating it.

KHRUSHCHEV

Tastes like lamb stroganoff to me.

Khrushchev hangs up.

MALENKOV

Listen, I'm acting secretary general and I'm - oh, he's gone.

MIKOYAN

Jesus, squeal any higher and you'll burst your hymen.

MALENKOV

They're being factional

MIKOYAN

So are we.

MALENKOV

I'm Acting General Secretary. How can I be plotting against myself?

Khrushchev closes the blinds.

KHRUSHCHEV

On the committee it's you, me,  
Kaganovich. Three against three.  
But there's also Molotov.

BULGANIN

But he's on the...  
(mimes "headshot")  
...list.

KHRUSHCHEV

We tell him - Beria put him there.  
Beria killed his wife. Molotov's  
revenge gets us FOUR.

Khrushchev goes through to another room, and peers outside through a window. His POV: in a different block to Malenkov's, Molotov stares out of his window, grief-stricken.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

(epiphany)  
He's at home. I'd better get over  
there before Beria and his sausage-  
faced clowns do....

The washing machine stops again.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

(furious, to the machine)  
You piece of metal shit!  
(to Bulganin)  
Look after the food...

He rushes off, full of urgency.

BULGANIN

What do I do? Add salt, right?  
That's what people who can cook do.

We hear Khrushchev shouting back as he goes.

KHRUSHCHEV (O.S.)

Recipe book's under the sink!

100 EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - COURTYARD - EARLY EVENING 100

Khrushchev hurries down the stairs, out across the courtyard to Molotov's stairwell opposite. The elevator's at the second floor and rising. He's out of breath but he's on a mission. He takes the stairs.

101 INT. LUBYANKA PRISON - CELL - EARLY EVENING 101

Prisoner POV of Beria's face. He's close again. Too close. He's quietly singing a traditional Russian folk song.

BERIA

"In a field a birch tree stood..."  
No? Come, your voice was once so  
beautiful, Paulina Molitova.

He clicks his fingers, "remembers".

BERIA (CONT'D)

Oh yes. Meant to say. Stalin's  
dead!

We open up to reveal a woman - POLINA - in her late 50s, sat  
in a tiny, barren cell. She looks haggard, wrecked.

POLINA

(shocked)  
No! Our Stalin?

BERIA

Yes, "your" Stalin. The one who put  
you here.

The waitress and an NKVD GUARD are also in the cell.

Beria hauls Polina up. She doesn't resist.

BERIA (CONT'D)

Come! Let's smarten you up.  
(to waitress)  
Sorry, darling. Work. I'll make it  
up to you.  
(to guard)  
Fetch the mattress and have her  
washed.

He walks Polina out while Ilyin and another NKVD Man bring in  
flowers, a rug and a jug.

102 INT. LUBYANKA PRISON - CORRIDOR - EARLY EVENING

102

Beria leads Polina down a corridor.

An NKVD GUARD comes the other way, with Slimonov, handcuffed.

BERIA

S...s...limonov, isn't it?

SLIMONOV

Yes, sir.

BERIA

F..f..f..farewell, Slimonov!

Slimonov is led away.

CUT TO:

103 INT. APARTMENT BLOCK - STAIRWELL - EARLY EVENING 103

Khrushchev wheezes up three flights, pausing for breath before disappearing onto Molotov's landing.

104 INT. APARTMENT BLOCK - LANDING - EARLY EVENING 104

Khrushchev, exhausted and sweaty, reaches Molotov's door and knocks. He tries to compose himself but looks quite ill.

Molotov opens the door. He's been crying. Khrushchev barrels through, pulling Molotov with him.

MOLOTOV

Christ, you look like you're about to be bulldozed into a lime pit.

105 INT. MOLOTOV'S APARTMENT - TOILET - EARLY EVENING 105

A few moments later. Khrushchev is over the toilet bowl. Molotov is stood behind him.

MOLOTOV

Do you want me to hold back your hair? Polina always used to do that for me.

KHRUSHCHEV

I... wanted to invite you to tomorrow's committee meeting...

MOLOTOV

(snaps back)

Why wouldn't I be at the meeting?

Khrushchev flushes.

KHRUSHCHEV

Beria and Stalin put you on a list.

MOLOTOV

(shocked, hurt)

Stalin? I must have wronged him so badly...

KHRUSHCHEV

Are you cracked? Beria wanted you out. But listen. We can honour his legacy by making sure Beria doesn't...

MOLOTOV

Oh! No, no, no. This sounds like factionalism, Nicky. Stalin didn't like...

KHRUSHCHEV

(loses it)

Stalin's dead. It's over. We have to act.

MOLOTOV

(crying)

I can't believe he's gone...

Khrushchev tries to flush the toilet again. The cistern hasn't filled up yet. He tries a couple more times.

MOLOTOV (CONT'D)

It takes a while to...

Khrushchev gives up, keeps his voice down instead.

KHRUSHCHEV

Come on. That fucking slug Beria had your wife killed. He can't be trusted...

106 INT. MOLOTOV'S APARTMENT - TOILET/CORRIDOR - EARLY EVENING 106

Molotov and Khrushchev walk back towards the living room.

MOLOTOV

She betrayed Stalin and she betrayed me.

BERIA (O.S.)

Housekeeping!

107 INT. MOLOTOV'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING 107

Molotov and Khrushchev come through into the living room to find Beria. Everyone's surprised.

BERIA/KHRUSHCHEV/MOLOTOV

(at the same time)

What are you doing here?

KHRUSHCHEV

We were just chatting about Polina.

BERIA

Well, would you believe it?..

MOLOTOV

The treacherous bitch.

BERIA

...or: a wronged woman who was framed.

KHRUSHCHEV

Come on, Stalin found her guilty!  
She collaborated with the zionists.

Polina's at the doorway. Only Beria can see her. This is not going to plan.

MOLOTOV

She was a criminal. I'm glad she's  
dead...

Molotov notices her in the doorway. They look at each other. The barriers drop - it's clear he still loves her.

KHRUSHCHEV

(hasn't seen her yet)  
She plotted to poison Stalin...

He sees Molotov heading towards Polina. He can't believe it.

MOLOTOV

Is it really you?

POLINA

(full of love)  
I'm back, Vyacheslav.

They hug, emotional. Beria enjoys it. Khrushchev tries to dig himself out of his hole.

KHRUSHCHEV

But the evidence was flimsy. No  
witnesses, no corroboration...  
No...

Khrushchev gives up. Beria puts his arm round Molotov and Polina. It becomes a group hug.

BERIA

(to Molotov)  
I kept her safe. For you,  
Vyacheslav.  
(to Polina)  
And I kept HIM safe. For you,  
Polina.

Beria throws a victorious glance at Khrushchev. Molotov breaks down, overwhelmed.

Khrushchev tentatively joins the group hug.

KHRUSHCHEV

Well done. Well done, everyone.

CUT TO:

- 108 INT. LUBYANKA - CELL - NIGHT 108
- MUSIC: RACHMANINOFF 'HAIL, O VIRGIN MOTHER' FROM 'VESPERS' OP.37
- The young waitress from the dacha hunches on the bed of the spruced up cell. The door opens. Beria is there with flowers.
- BERIA  
Hello, my sweet.
- He moves to the table, where a bottle of wine has been uncorked. He sniffs it lasciviously, eyeing her legs.
- BERIA (CONT'D)  
Mm. Everything at room temperature.  
Oh, lighten up. It could be worse.  
Be warned.
- 109 INT. APARTMENT BLOCK - KHRUSHCHEV'S FLAT - NIGHT 109
- A miserable Khrushchev eats the stroganoff, occasionally looking out across the courtyard at the Molotovs, arm in arm.
- Nina has a mouthful. Grim. Khrushchev sees her disgust, silently picks up both plates, scrapes them into a bin.
- 110 EXT./INT. LUBYANKA ENTRANCE ONTO STREET - NIGHT 110
- The waitress' frightened PARENTS wait. She appears - distraught, stoical. An NKVD GUARD hands the parents Beria's bouquet. They hurry off.
- 111 ARCHIVE MATERIAL 2. 111
- RUSSIA IN MOURNING. A red flag with black border flies above the walls of the Kremlin. Beyond it: Moscow, with more red-and-black flags.
- 112 EXT. KREMLIN/MOSCOW STREET - DAY 112
- Our footage: NKVD ARRIVING IN VEHICLES, TAKING UP POSTS/MAKING ROADBLOCKS ON MOSCOW STREETS.
- MUSIC ENDS.
- 113 EXT. KREMLIN - STREET - DAY 113
- A Zis limousine arrives at the Kremlin.

114 INT. KREMLIN - ROW OF 3 INTERCONNECTING ROOMS - DAY 114  
Beria walks jauntily through connecting doorways from the far end.

115 INT. KREMLIN - NEAR END OF INTERCONNECTING ROOMS - DAY 115  
Malenkov being made up to look like a leader. He's uncomfortable under studio lights as the PHOTOGRAPHER snaps away and STAFFERS bustle in and out with business. Two MAKE-UP ARTISTS blotting and repairing his make-up.

PERVAK  
Comrade, I've scheduled telephone calls later with...

MALENKOV  
Then tell me LATER.

Beria arrives, looks at Malenkov and laughs.

BERIA  
Almost perfect. Perhaps... an apple just here, in the mouth?

Chuckling, Malenkov wipes his face with a towel.

MALENKOV  
I have something to tell you.  
(over shoulder)  
I'll be back shortly!

A smiling Malenkov grabs Beria and walks stiffly with him into the middle room. He drops the smile to show his fury.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)  
Don't you ever, EVER, do that again. Humiliate me in front of...I'm the General Secretary!

BERIA  
(deferential)  
I'm mortified. Genuinely.

MALENKOV  
Looking my best for the People is a duty.

Malenkov walks through the middle room and into the third room. His walks still seems a little stiff.

BERIA  
Of course. Shall we...

MALENKOV  
(spotting Pervak)  
What now?

PERVAK

Apologies. The seating plan for...

MALENKOV

Give it to Blavatsky. He's an expert at sitting on his ass.

BERIA

Shall we get onto..

MALENKOV

Yes, the committee meeting. Item One. The lists. These arrests and "interrogations". Do we just take them down a gear, or....

BERIA

Hold off altogether?

MALENKOV

What, "freeze" them?

BERIA

"Freeze"? Excellent thought. Yes, we could freeze arrests, maybe even release some low-level prisoners?

MALENKOV

Oh, fuck me. Really? Is this what the old man would have wanted?

BERIA

Stalin was radical and popular.

MALENKOV

Liberalisation WOULD be radical.

Now Delov has edged a little way into the room.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)

I WILL ADDRESS WHATEVER HORSESHIT YOU HAVE, PRESENTLY!

BERIA

No, this is something I wanted to show you.

Beria walks stiffly to the third room. Malenkov follows, as if he was going to do anyway.

Delov produces on a stand an iconic photograph of Stalin hugging a young girl on a balcony.

BERIA (CONT'D)

I thought, a photo of you and the girl. Continuity?

MALENKOV  
(delighted)  
Good idea. We show how we're taking  
Stalin's humanity forward...

BERIA  
(to Delov)  
Find this girl.

They leave the room.

116 INT. WEIRD-LOOKING KREMLIN ROOM OR CORRIDOR - DAY 116

Moments later. Malenkov and Beria walking to the meeting.

MALENKOV  
My chief concern is admitting we  
were wrong. All those arrests. And  
deaths...

BERIA  
We were being loyal. I promoted  
Stalin's truth without question. I  
can promote a new truth without  
blinking.

An unblinking beat.

BERIA (CONT'D)  
So, I'll push on with the releases?

MALENKOV  
Alright, but proceed carefully.

BERIA  
Of course.

MALENKOV  
Fuck this up and I'll have you  
shot.

Beria says nothing.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)  
Just joking. I was testing you.

BERIA  
Is that a corset?

ANGLE on Malenkov's body. A GIRDLE is apparent.

MALENKOV  
It's a girdle. Different thing  
altogether.

BERIA  
You wear it well.

MALENKOV

But not worth raising with the  
Committee.

117 EXT. KREMLIN - STREET - DAY 117

Several more Zis limousines arrive at the Kremlin.

118 INT. KREMLIN - MEETING ROOM N° 1 - DAY 118

The committee sit at a table in an impressive, high-ceilinged room. Malenkov is at the head of the table with his new hairdo and a smart new outfit. The room is dominated by a giant portrait of Stalin.

BERIA

So, in accordance with...

(re portrait)

...his will, I propose Comrade Malenkov be named Chairman of the Council of Ministers. And General Secretary of the Party.

MALENKOV

(pompous nod)

And I propose Comrade Beria for First Vice-Chairman, Council of Ministers. Those in favour.

Beria, Malenkov and Mikoyan instantly put their hands up.

KHRUSHCHEV

Wait. Those are two separate proposals. Comrade Beria is incredibly busy combining his roles as Minister for both the Interior and Security. It would perhaps be kinder for someone else to carry the happy burden of Vice-Chairman.

BERIA

I thank Comrade Khrushchev for his concern but I can assure you that I'm capable of doing two things at once.

KHRUSHCHEV

Well, it would actually be three things.

MALENKOV

Let's move to a vote.

(to Beria)

On both proposals?

Beria gesticulates as if to say 'Up to you'.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)  
Yes, on both. Me as General  
Secretary and Comrade Beria as Vice-  
Chairman. All those in favour?

Malenkov, Beria and Mikoyan raise their hands. Molotov joins  
them, then Bulganin and Kaganovich.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)  
Carried...

Grudgingly, Khrushchev raises his hand.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)  
...unanimously. Next...

BERIA  
(interrupting)  
We need someone to take charge of  
the funeral.

MOLOTOV  
What about Comrade Khrushchev?

KHRUSHCHEV  
(looking at Beria)  
Where's this come from?

MALENKOV  
Yes, good thought.

BERIA  
I formally propose that Comrade  
Khrushchev be given the honour of  
organising the funeral.

KHRUSHCHEV  
(to Beria)  
But that will tie up all of my  
time, won't it?

BERIA  
If *I* can do three jobs at once, you  
can at least do two.

KHRUSHCHEV  
But I need to be...

MOLOTOV  
(interrupting)  
You wanted to honour his legacy.  
You told me last night, in the  
bathroom.

Molotov winks at Khrushchev: he's doing him a great favour.

MALENKOV/BERIA  
All those in favour..

Again, Molotov, Beria, Malenkov and Mikoyan raise their hands. Kaganovich decides to raise his hand.

KAGANOVICH  
(justifying himself)  
You'd be good at it.

Bulganin raises his hand.

MALENKOV  
Carried... U... una...

Then, grudgingly again, Khrushchev.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)  
..carried unanimously.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Thank you. I shall remember this.

Beria looks to Malenkov.

MALENKOV  
(trying to be formal)  
Comrade Beria.

Beria clears his throat, looks extravagantly at ease.

BERIA  
I propose a halt to deportations.  
The release of some existing  
detainees. And the suspension of  
arrests officially sanctioned three  
days ago...

Molotov, Khrushchev, Kaganovich and Bulganin are shocked.

MIKOYAN  
You dare wipe your shitting arse on  
Stalin's lists!?

BULGANIN  
Let's all stay calm... although  
what you just said is utterly  
ridiculous.

BERIA  
(angry)  
One of you look me in the eye and  
tell me you're not heartsick at the  
relentless, pointless arrests.  
Death after death after DEATH.

A charged beat as he looks around the room, defiant.

MALENKOV  
Gentlemen, I believe we must  
embrace a new reality.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)  
("wanker" mime)  
Yeah. "Embrace" it...

KAGANOVICH  
How are we going to explain all the people you very comprehensively arrested in the first place?

BERIA  
If there were errors, if people misguided us then we punish those who did the misguiding...

MIKOYAN  
Arrest anyone who carried out a wrongful arrest? Lavrentiy, come on. We ALL signed off on that shit...

MALENKOV  
(thinks he can be commanding)  
Stalin destroyed the status quo and built a new one. He was radical.

KHRUSHCHEV  
This is deliberately being rushed through. We don't have time to..

BERIA  
I thought you were in favour of a more liberal approach, Comrade Reformer.

Khrushchev remains silent, roiling with conflicting emotions.

MALENKOV  
We must step back...

BERIA  
All those in favour...

MALENKOV  
(interrupting)  
...of pausing the arrests and executions and so on?

Malenkov and Beria raise their arms. Mikoyan, reluctantly, joins them. Bulganin, Khrushchev and Kaganovich look at Molotov.

MOLOTOV  
I have always been loyal to Stalin. Always. And these arrests were authorised by Stalin.

The rest of the committee follow Molotov's lengthy logic with increasing frustration.

MOLOTOV (CONT'D)

But Stalin was always loyal to the collective leadership. That is true loyalty. But he had an iron principle, undeviating, strong. Shouldn't we do the same, and stick to what we believed in? No. It's stronger still to forge one's own beliefs into the beliefs of collective leadership.

(a beat)

Which I have now done.

Molotov raises his hand. Kaganovich and Bulganin raise theirs. Finally, Khrushchev raises his hand.

MALENKOV

Carried...

BERIA

Good, I'll oversee...

MALENKOV

(interrupting)

Unanimously.

BERIA

I'll oversee the releases. We have unloosened the Union's great corset. Nikita, you've some swatches and bouquets to look at. A funeral doesn't organise itself.

We stay on Khrushchev as Molotov leans over. Malenkov prattles on in the background.

MOLOTOV

(To Khrushchev)

You've won! Do him proud.

MALENKOV

(in background)

Beria, I want you to put together a communique for the press. I'll supervise the transfer of the body. Comrade Bulganin, tell the army; Comrade Mikoyan, the factories and the unions...

CUT TO:

Twenty prisoners, including the Nervous Man, lined up to be shot by 5 GUARDS and CHASOV.

PRISONER  
Long live Stalin!

CHASOV  
Comrade Stalin's dead. Comrade  
Malenkov's in charge now.

PRISONER  
Long live Mal...

Chasov shoots him just as an NKVD officer, SHULGA runs up.

SHULGA  
Stop shooting!

Chasov turns, but fires off one more shot. It kills the  
Nervous Man, who slumps dead in the background.

SHULGA (CONT'D)  
(indicating list)  
Amnesties effective immediately.  
Orders of Comrade Beria. We're  
pulling out.

They hurry off to join their colleagues. The NKVD's  
mobilising, heading off. The prisoners are left, confused.

CUT TO:

120 INT. HOUSE OF THE TRADE UNIONS - HALL OF COLUMNS - DAY 120

Close-up of Stalin's face in his coffin. Pull out and high to  
reveal enormous hall with people bustling, making last-minute  
preparations.

The UNDERTAKERS' finishing touches: doing make-up, hair,  
moustache, polishing buttons. Huge flags hang from the  
ceiling. More are being rigged. Swathes of red, and flowers,  
everywhere.

Beria and Malenkov stroll along the other side of the hall.

BERIA  
Interrogations are on hold. First  
time we've had a chance to bleach  
the cells. Also, I've signed off a  
few amnesties. Petty thieves,  
harmless idiots...

MEZHNIKOV (mid 50s, fussy), the designer responsible for the  
funeral, stands beside a frustrated Khrushchev (in a red  
armband with black borders) at the head of Stalin's coffin.

MEZHNIKOV  
Now, curtains. Ruched or not  
ruched?

KHRUSHCHEV

Ruched? What the fuck is ruched?

Mezhnikov demonstrates with the material under the coffin.

MEZHNIKOV

Ruched. Not ruched. Ruched. Not ruched.

KHRUSHCHEV

Why should I care? While you were hiding in your mama's linen closet I was at Stalingrad! I ate rats. Raw rats. Didn't even cook them!

Behind him, a nervous group of STEELWORKERS. Awkward, overawed. Khrushchev in his element with the Steelworkers.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Ah, the Steelworkers. Some REAL men! Lads, come, come!

Malenkov moves over to assert his authority. Beria spots a line of girls and moves over to them.

MALENKOV

Iron and steel are the very foundation of...

KHRUSHCHEV

(to Steelworkers)

Iron? IRON?

Derisory laughter.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Capitalism was built on iron. STEEL - is the 20th Century. The Soviet Union is made of steel! And these! Men! Made it!

Huge wave of suppressed applause, caught between joyous approval of Khrushchev and the solemnity of the place.

Delov arrives with a group of sweet, very Russian-looking girls, aged 7-9.

MALENKOV

You found my girl?

DELOV

We can't find her, Comrade Minis... Comrade General Secretary. These are suggested alternatives.

MALENKOV

(to Khrushchev)

Find her!

KHRUSHCHEV

I thought you bastards knew where  
EVERYONE was! Find her, camel-cock!

Pervak is stood awkwardly behind him with Maria Yudina, the pianist. Khrushchev turns and switches into chivalrous mode.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Maria Veniaminovna. Please. Forgive  
my language, but he IS... one of  
those. This...

He gestures towards Malenkov who holds out his hand but she's seen Stalin in his coffin. It hits her.

MARIA

Stalin!

KHRUSHCHEV

Yes. Stalin.

Malenkov is left hanging. He joins in the solemn moment.

MALENKOV

Sad times. Thank you for coming.

MARIA

Oh, I can't TELL you... the  
intensity of emotion when I heard.

General ZHUKHOV - 57, imposing, covered in medals - strides to the coffin, booming greetings to officers in the hall. He's followed by some of his ENTOURAGE.

ZHUKHOV

If it wasn't for this man, I  
wouldn't be here today. - He lent  
me his driver! Hah!

(to Pervak)

Pervak! Handsome as ever! Put you  
in a frock, I'd marry you myself!

BERIA

(returning)

Ah, the generalissimo.

ZHUKHOV

So, what does a war hero have to do  
to get some lubrication round here?

(grabs one out of Delov's  
hand)

Christ! Where's this from, a Polish  
flamethrower? Tastes like PISS...

Slow-mo on Zhukhov as he draws out 'Piss' with the caption:

"FIELD MARSHAL ZHUKHOV, HEAD OF THE SOVIET ARMY".

BACK TO NORMAL  
SPEED:

As the others talk, Mezhnikov shows Malenkov a choice of two portraits of him on boards to pick from.

Zhukhov reaches the others.

ZHUKHOV (CONT'D)

Nikita! Sorry to hear about your wife's affair!

(off his reaction)

She hasn't had one yet but God, I like the look of her. Hah!

KHRUSHCHEV

Yes, she is... pretty.

BERIA

Zhukhov. So rare to see you away from a mirror.

ZHUKHOV

Beria. Must be such a...

(re coffin)

...difficult time for you, hiding your happiness at a promotion.

(to Khrushchev)

Who stood down the army? Why have my men been sent back to their barracks? I'm smiling but I'm very fucking furious.

BERIA

(notices Maria)

Perhaps Comrade Yudina should prepare those precious hands.

KHRUSHCHEV

Maria, I am mortified I cannot escort you, but...

He kisses her hand.

BERIA

How very friendly. You never kiss my hand anymore.

MARIA

So lovely to see you again, Comrade Khrushchev.

BERIA

Again?

MARIA

I taught his wife's niece to play.

KHRUSHCHEV

Katya! Yes, we were both at the salon recital...

BERIA

Oh, I LOVE the idea of you at a "salon". You have a party trick? Burping the alphabet?

She sets off, passing Beria who whispers at her.

BERIA (CONT'D)

So many...

(mimes piano-playing)

...notes. Like your one to Stalin. Which I have.

She looks back as she walks away, rattled.

ZHUKHOV

So who confined the army to barracks?

KHRUSHCHEV

That nonsense was NOT signed off by the whole committee.

ZHUKHOV

Ah, so it was only one idiot, not the full set.

Malenkov has chosen the portrait he likes. He joins them.

MALENKOV

What's going on?

ZHUKHOV

Talk of the devil.

BERIA

(to Zhukhov)

The decision was mine supported by Comrade Malenkov...

MALENKOV

(not sure what they're discussing)

We took a view. And made a decision...

BERIA

We're discussing the city security.

MALENKOV

I know.

ZHUKHOV

(about Malenkov's hair)  
Christ, did Coco Chanel shit on  
your head?

(to Beria)

Moscow will be boiling with people.  
Your pansy torturers won't cope,  
you know. That's a job for MEN.

BERIA

Oh, I have PLENTY. NKVD AND the...

MALENKOV

Interior troops. Merged now, into  
this "KGB"...

ZHUKHOV

(kissy lips)

"KGB". Even SOUNDS like a bunch of  
nancies.

BERIA

We're controlling the crowd at  
source. All trains inbound to  
Moscow have been cancelled...

KHRUSHCHEV

(interrupts)

But... I'm the trains! I'm the  
fucking funeral, I... I should have  
been asked.

GIRL

(to Khrushchev)

Please, Sir. I need to go...

MALENKOV

I think she needs the toilet.

ZHUKHOV

(to Malenkov)

You need the army here. Not Beria's  
Keystone Cops.

BERIA

Maybe we should see who can  
mobilise first. Oh. It seems to be  
me...

He heads off before Zhukhov can answer.

MALENKOV

(to Zhukhov)

We've got this under control.

(to Khrushchev)

You: find me the right girl.

(to little girl)

(MORE)

MALENKOV (CONT'D)

And you: go to that lady over there  
and she'll take you to the toilet.

He sets off after Beria. Delov heads off with the girls.

ZHUKHOV

I need to punch someone.

KHRUSHCHEV

May I suggest...

Khrushchev nods at a stack of boards with a portrait of a very airbrushed Malenkov being carried past.

ZHUKHOV

He looks like my auntie after two  
peach brandies.

MEZHNIKOV

(calls from by the doors)  
We're opening the doors!

A line of MEN IN COLOURFUL AIR FORCE/NAVY UNIFORMS take position at intervals from the door to the coffin and beyond.

We hear a large CROWD coming up the stairs. They pour in through the doors, a tidal wave of grieving humanity.

CUT TO:

121 EXT. HALL OF COLUMNS - DAY 121

Our footage of queues outside the Hall of Columns.

MIXED INTO:

122 ARCHIVE MATERIAL 3. 122

Footage of crowds gathering all over Russia.

123 EXT. DINGY COURTYARD OUTSIDE MOSCOW - DAY 123

Our Kiev footage of people leaving their houses, traipsing down Moscow streets. We focus on a FAMILY; a mother, father and their two young children.

124 EXT. RAILWAY TRACKS - DAY 124

Poor people, many in tears, walk along tracks, towards a barrier. NKVD MEN with machine guns stand by. Their senior officer is FEDIN.

FEDIN

No trains to Moscow! No... go... go  
back to your homes...

The crowd of people turn around and trudge purposefully along  
the railway track. Among them is the family we saw in sc123.

125 EXT. HOUSE OF THE TRADE UNIONS - DAY 125

Our shots of crowds growing outside.

MIXED WITH:

126 ARCHIVE MATERIAL 4. 126

FOOTAGE OF HUGE CROWDS SNAKING UP THE STAIRS.

MIXED WITH:

127 INT. HOUSE OF THE TRADE UNIONS - DAY 127

Our footage of the queue filing past Stalin.

128 INT. HALL OF COLUMNS - BALCONY - DAY 128

Svetlana chatting to Bulganin and Mikoyan, who clearly have  
to be somewhere else but feel obliged to talk to her.

SVETLANA

...Papa always spoke with great  
fondness of you two. "My hammer and  
sickle" he always used to say,  
although I was never sure which...

BULGANIN

Never heard that before.  
How...gratifying.

MIKOYAN

I'd be the sickle. Sharp. Poor  
Comrade Bulganin here...well, see  
he even has a head like the blunt  
end of a ball hammer...

SVETLANA

(off polite laughter)  
My father always used to say go to  
you two when I need advice.

BULGANIN

Oh.

SVETLANA

..or help...

MIKOYAN

Ah.

SVETLANA

(a hand on each)

"They are true and loyal men."

MIKOYAN

Any time. Any time at all. Sorry,  
we have to take our places.

Svetlana alone. She leans over a balustrade, watching the  
grieving crowd. Beria joins her.

SVETLANA

This is... real. Nobody's making  
them do this.

In the crowd below: grandmothers sob; a sailor removes his  
hat out of respect but drops it. The crowd keep moving and he  
scrabbles his way back to try and get his hat.

BERIA

I don't suppose you want a chair?

Beria signals to an NKVD man who approaches with a chair.

SVETLANA

I haven't sat down since he died.  
He was too big. You have to stand.

BERIA

(what?)

Yes.

Beria signals "no". The NKVD man leaves with the chair.

SVETLANA

Do you remember Yuri?

BERIA

(no)

I remember everyone. It's a gift.

SVETLANA

I loved him.

BERIA

(suddenly remembers)

Yuri Zhednov! Yes, special to you,  
I know. Some unsuitable associates.  
Tragic, really. I'm so sorry.

SVETLANA

I want you to bring him back.

BERIA  
 (are you mad?)  
 But, my chick, how?

SVETLANA  
 You brought Molotov's wife back.

BERIA  
 She was... I'd kept her.....

SVETLANA  
 You're returning so many people to  
 their homes. I want ONE person. Is  
 that really too much?

A beat.

BERIA  
 For you, I will attempt the  
 impossible.

He opens his arms to her. She awkwardly steps into them.

SVETLANA  
 Thank you.

BERIA  
 I hate seeing you sad.

SVETLANA  
 (awkward)  
 I hate that you hate seeing me sad.

They hug awkwardly.

129 INT. HALL OF COLUMNS - DAY 129

The crowd files past the coffin: ordinary citizens mingle with representatives from nations and regions carrying demarcated floral tributes. Andreyev and Sergei supervise the music from a balcony.

130 ARCHIVE MATERIAL 5. 130

FOOTAGE OF DELEGATIONS, FLORAL TRIBUTES, CEREMONIES ALL OVER SOVIET UNION, QUEUES, PEOPLE COMING UP STAIRS.

131 INT. HALL OF COLUMNS - DAY 131

OUR FOOTAGE of the committee: Molotov, Kaganovich, Bulganin, Khrushchev, Malenkov, Beria and, closest to the public, Mikoyan, who's crying. A large wreath nearly brushes his face. He sneezes. A film crew is recording.

MIKOYAN

(sotto)

Fucking pollen. They should make  
gas bombs with this stuff.

Molotov, sobbing heavily, looks across, sees him.

MOLOTOV

I know. I know...

The wreaths and bouquets are getting absurdly big. One - with  
the message "From the grieving people of Uzbekistan" on it -  
only just fits through the large double doorway.

BERIA

(to Malenkov)

I think that's actually larger than  
the region itself.

Malenkov's little involuntary laugh. Molotov sees,  
disapproves.

MALENKOV

(chiding Beria)

Inappropriate.

The Uzbek bouquet makes its way past. On the staircase, some  
mitres bobbing up and down, some very worn. A group of  
ORTHODOX BISHOPS approaching in full regalia.

Shocked whispers from committee members. Not Beria.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)

No!

KAGANOVICH

Jesus Christ! It's the bishops!

KHRUSHCHEV

What are these bastards doing at MY  
FUCKING FUNERAL?

BULGANIN

Did I dream the last 36 years? Are  
we doing the revolution again from  
the START?

MIKOYAN

The Church belongs where we left  
it. In a ditch.

MOLOTOV

Tell Mikoyan to sneeze on the  
bastards as they go past.

KHRUSHCHEV

(to Malenkov)

Did you invite them?

MALENKOV

No!

KHRUSHCHEV

Ask Beria if it was him.

MALENKOV

Don't order me around.

(to Bulganin)

Ask Beria if he invited the fucking bishops.

BULGANIN

(to Beria)

Did you invite the fucking bishops?

BERIA

Yes.

Bulganin turns back, chewing over Beria's answer.

KHRUSHCHEV

Well?

Bulganin nods to Malenkov.

MALENKOV

Yes. He did.

KHRUSHCHEV

I'm going to give everyone in Red Square a voucher permitting one kick each to his stupid face.

BERIA

(to Bulganin)

Is he asking for more delicious hay?

BULGANIN

No. He said something quite complicated about a voucher system.

KHRUSHCHEV

This is rehabili... Listen to me! This is rehabilitation of the most counter revolutionary elements! He can't do that without the committee.

MALENKOV

(taking over from  
Bulganin)

He says you can't do it without the committee. Which is true...

BERIA  
(interrupting)  
I can cancel house arrests under  
article 31.

Malenkov realises he is right.

MALENKOV  
(to Khrushchev)  
He can in fact cancel house arrests  
under article 31.

The camera crew is on them again. They all look as solemn as they can. The bishops pass the coffin, making the sign of the cross.

KHRUSHCHEV  
(to Malenkov)  
Tell him that I... Actually,  
swap... swap...

MALENKOV  
No!

KHRUSHCHEV  
Swap!

MALENKOV  
No!

KHRUSHCHEV  
We can make it look like it's part  
of the ceremony.

A dignified Khrushchev steps forward. Malenkov motionless, staring at NAVY OFFICERS struggling to get a too-high wreath through the door.

The officers back up, then advance solemnly in a squatting position. The wreath low enough to go through but still too wide. Khrushchev eases back into line.

BERIA  
(whispers to Khrushchev)  
If only someone had checked...

The navy officers back up again with the wreath, then walk in with it sideways and squatting.

Suddenly, an angry voice, away from the crowd. Vasily, in full uniform, drunk, trying to get to the coffin. Arguing with SENIOR NKVD OFFICERS, one of whom has a loudhailer.

VASILY  
They're murderers! Murderers! Give  
me your loudhailer!...

From their balcony, Andreyev and Sergei see Vasily. Sergei turns up a dial and the music grows louder.

BERIA

(whispers to Khrushchev)

Did you forget to give him his sedatives?

VASILY

...If you don't hand it over I'll shove it so far up your arse your farts will deafen Moscow!

(to Committee)

...I KNOW YOU KILLED MY FATHER!

KHRUSHCHEV

(whispers to Bulganin)

Tell them to get the steel workers.

(to Malenkov)

We have to go!...

The whisper goes from Bulganin to Kaganovich to Molotov to Tarasov, who hurries off.

Vasily, now restrained, getting louder.

VASILY

I WILL AVENGE MY FATHER, YOU  
BUTTONED-UP SACKS OF SHIT!

Some of the crowd are starting to notice. Sergei raises the volume a bit more.

ANDREYEV

Don't record this!

132 INT. HALL OF COLUMNS - WAITING ROOM - DAY

132

A group of STEEL WORKERS chat and smoke, putting on new overalls and caps bearing the hammer and sickle. Some have medals.

Tarasov runs in.

TARASOV

Quick! We need you now! NOW!

The steel workers are confused - they're not ready.

TARASOV (CONT'D)

Are you actually *made* of steel?  
Now! Move!

The NKVD bundle them outside as, frenzied, they put out cigarettes, haul on jackets and, in one case, trousers.

133 INT. HALL OF COLUMNS - DAY 133

The steel workers emerge in a rush, trying to look dignified. Some are still hopping along, getting dressed.

Vasily struggling with officers. One has his hand over Vasily's mouth. A bite - ouch - he lets go.

Beria, over his shoulder, sees the steel workers approach.

KHRUSHCHEV

Move, you hairy-assed sluggards!

They all turn to go. The manoeuvre turns into hesitant chaos. Molotov's in front.

VASILY

Liars and revisionists! You killed Stalin!

Molotov sets off and the others follow him. He's not setting a fast enough pace - those at the back bunch up.

MOLOTOV

Decorum, please..

BERIA

Faster, you SNAIL.

MOLOTOV

(to Vasily, trying to be both quiet and loud)

SHHHHHH! SHHHHHHUSHH!

Pursued by the NKVD, Vasily rushes up some stairs.

Beria breaks from the line, speed-walks until he's pretty much out of public view then breaks into a run and heads up the staircase. Khrushchev follows.

134 INT. HALL OF COLUMNS - SMALL DIGNITARIES ROOM - DAY 134

A quiet holding area. Some Communist LEADERS including ZHOU ENLAI, with their TRANSLATORS.

Vasily rushes in.

VASILY

Friends! There has been a terrible crime!

Zhou EnLai's translator translates for the Chinese leader.

VASILY (CONT'D)

My father - they killed him. They got a child to cut out his brain and send it to Washington!

Zhou Enlai's TRANSLATOR stops, then carries on.

VASILY (CONT'D)  
They're ruthless monsters and  
sodomites!

The translator is trying to get every nuance.

An NKVD officer grabs Vasily and pull him away.

VASILY (CONT'D)  
...sucking the cocks and balls of  
New York Zionist queers in  
petticoats...

The translator makes sure he does the insult justice.

135 INT. HALL OF COLUMNS - LANDING OR ADJOINING ROOM - DAY 135

The NKVD wrestle Vasily to the ground. Beria and Khrushchev arrive.

VASILY  
I'll make sure you all stand trial  
and get garotted by your own  
lookalikes in Red Square...

BERIA  
Vasily. It's me.

Beria kneels beside Vasily who tries to spit at him, but he's lying down, so the spit just drops back onto his face.

VASILY  
Syphilitic cannibals! Zoo animals..

BERIA  
I know about the dead hockey team.  
The pretence. The denial.

Vasily stops struggling. He's accepted defeat.

VASILY  
Freak weather.  
(calmly)  
I want to make a speech at the  
funeral.

BERIA  
(To Khrushchev)  
He wants to make a speech at the  
funeral.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Oh, MORE good news.

The Dignitaries from inside the room quietly file out, and past Vasily and Co.

VASILY.

I'm his son.  
(flaring up again,  
struggling)  
Let me speak, you howling chimps...

Zhukhov appears, pushes Vasily into the now-vacated dignitaries room and punches Vasily hard across the face, knocking out a tooth. Vasily falls to the floor, unconscious.

Zhukhov pockets the tooth.

ZHUKHOV

I'll stick it under my pillow  
tonight. May even make a ruble.

He smiles at Beria - that's how you sort things round here.

Beria notices that Svetlana's watching a few yards away, distressed.

BERIA

Lana! He's my godson. I won't let  
anything happen to him.

She turns and hurries off.

SVETLANA

Something has already happened to  
him!

BERIA

Lana!  
(to an NKVD man)  
Tell her I'll be with her in a  
moment.

The NKVD man sets off after Svetlana.

KHRUSHCHEV

(grabs Beria, and makes  
sure no-one else is  
around in the room)  
Not yet!  
(close, angry)  
You're bringing the Church back?  
What next? Are the Romanovs coming?

BERIA

Don't be hysterical. We are in a  
new reality.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Well don't you sound fancy? You locked half the nation up. Beat them. Raped them. Killed them.

BERIA

Yes, and now I'm releasing them. I put so many in jail, there are so many to let go. You won't believe how many will be free. Millions! The revolutions continues...

KHRUSHCHEV

Not true. You're just doing it to gain power. You bend and crack the truth, like it was a human body.

BERIA

Oh, you want the "truth"? Let's start with you calling the blameless Polina Molotova a Zionist spy. In her own apartment. I heard you. And so did my men.

He taps his ear to indicate they were listening.

KHRUSHCHEV

But she was found guilty. You FOUND her guilty.

BERIA

Past tense. In those "old days" you pine for, Nicky, that dissonance would get you shot.

Khrushchev starts to speak, Beria cuts him off.

BERIA (CONT'D)

More truth: you called that slut doctor Timashuk to Stalin's bedside...

KHRUSHCHEV

That was your idea!

BERIA

You initiated it. Again, there are recordings. A woman who denounced thousands of innocent doctors.

Khrushchev is thrown.

KHRUSHCHEV

We ALL signed off on those arrests.

BERIA

You're old regime, Khrushchev. Counter-revolutionary.

(MORE)

BERIA (CONT'D)

The man who fucked up the flowers  
and invited his bit-on-the-side  
whore to play at the funeral. Even  
though she swore to kill Stalin.  
Who's now dead.

KHRUSHCHEV

What are you talking about?

Beria hands him Maria's note.

BERIA

She wanted Stalin dead and she  
knows your family. It's lucky we  
now live in the new Soviet Union or  
you and your wife and children  
would now be a pile of dust on the  
floor of a crematorium toilet.

Khrushchev reads the note. The colour drains from his face.

136 INT. HALL OF COLUMNS - STAIRS - DAY.

136

Khrushchev comes back down the stairs and into the Hall of  
Columns.

He sees some bishops in the distance, calls to an NKVD guard.

KHRUSHCHEV

Get those boyfriends of Christ out  
of my sight!

We see the Bishops being moved away. There is some applause  
coming from a section of the queue.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

I see they agree with me.

NKVD GUARD

No, Comrade Khrushchev, it's  
because they've spotted him.

He gestures over to the applauding section of the crowd. We  
can just make out Beria walking past, enjoying the applause.

KHRUSHCHEV

Start the trains. The people can  
come to Moscow!

Meanwhile Beria is enjoying his moment. He's with Kubulov.

BERIA

The revolution continues!  
(to Kubulov)  
Now start the other one.

CUT TO:

137 EXT. MOSCOW STREETS - DAY. 137

A black maria pulls up. Several confused PRISONERS, some beaten, some of whom we saw arrested earlier, get out. The van drives off.

CUT TO:

138 EXT. RAILWAY TRACKS - NIGHT 138

The provincial train TRACKS we saw earlier. Crowds are camped in front of the NKVD and Fedin with pictures of Stalin, candles, flowers etc.

A whistle blows.

TRAIN GUARD

For Moscow! Train to Moscow!

People rush forward.

CUT TO:

139 INT. MOSCOW APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 139

The distinctive design we saw earlier. The woman turns away from the window. She's heard something. The middle-aged man who was arrested has returned. He's been beaten.

She rushes over and hugs him. His son sits awkwardly in a chair: it's the young man who betrayed him to the NKVD.

CUT TO:

140 INT./EXT. TRAIN ON PLATFORM - DAY 140

CROWDS clamber onto the train, including the FAMILY WITH TWO CHILDREN we saw earlier. Excitement, people clambering on board. Train packed full.

141 INT. LUBYANKA - PRISON CELL - DAY 141

A PRISONER and the NKVD Interrogator from sc 73. The cell door opens and a SOLDIER points a gun. The Interrogator moves to allow a clearer shot at the Prisoner. But the Soldier shoots the Interrogator. The Prisoner's relieved moan. The Soldier shoots him too, and leaves. We hear O.S a succession of unlocking doors, yells and double-gunshots

142 INT. KREMLIN - LARGE STAIRCASE - LATE AFTERNOON 142

KHRUSHCHEV alone, slowly making his way up the stairs. He can hear piano music. Someone practicing. He is trying to find the source.

CUT TO:

143 INT. KREMLIN - SMALL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON 143

A small room full of images of Stalin, and some of Malenkov.

KHRUSHCHEV  
(holding out note)  
This your work, is it?

Cut to Maria sitting as if in an interrogation, but with piano nearby.

MARIA  
Why? Are there spelling mistakes?

KHRUSHCHEV  
(suddenly furious)  
Don't ever speak to me like that again or I'll break your fingers!  
(waving note)  
The ammunition you've given Beria. Linking us. Me, my family. Do you know what sort of man he is?

MARIA  
He's releasing people from prison...

KHRUSHCHEV  
Releasing people was my idea! He rapes children! Did you know that? He's murdered millions.

MARIA  
Have you?

KHRUSHCHEV  
Have I what?

MARIA  
Raped children, murdered millions?

KHRUSHCHEV  
I do not rape children!  
(pauses, agitated)  
I am not Beria! I have... stood up against our enemies. I have been relentless in my defence of the nation and the party. And I have hated doing what I had to do.

(MORE)

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Hated it. But Beria loves every minute. I'm the reformer, not him!  
(trying to calm down)  
Why did you write that note?

MARIA

Stalin killed my parents, my friends, Zinaida Reich, Kuperchinski.

KHRUSHCHEV

You were friends with Kuperchinski? Christ! Anyone else?!

He's furious. Maria tries to hide her fear.

MARIA

I don't know. Rovik perhaps? We were friends.

KHRUSHCHEV

Rovik?! How the fuck are you even still alive?

MARIA

Comrade. Nikita Sergeevich, you know me, I...

KHRUSHCHEV

No I don't know you. Don't say I know you. But now Beria ties me to you, and you know how this works. They kill your parents, then your sister. And brother. And friends....

MARIA

Yes. I know how you all work.

For a beat it feels like Khrushchev might slap her.

144

INT. BERIA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT/EARLY EVENING

144

Sparsely furnished. Vasily in vest and military trousers, practising his speech. Svetlana sits on the bed.

VASILY

My father was a warm and mighty bear...

SVETLANA

He was. He WAS...

VASILY

That bear now lies cold. We, 170 million cubs, his weeping orphans.  
(MORE)

VASILY (CONT'D)  
Russian cubs, Georgian cubs,  
Armenian cubs. Lithuanian cubs...

SVETLANA  
Do you list every nation?

VASILY  
Should I not?

There's a knock on the door. Beria comes in.

BERIA  
How's my precious guest?

Vasily looks at him flatly, clearly still mistrustful.

SVETLANA  
Thank you for looking after him.

BERIA  
Of course.  
(offers him a hip flask)  
I brought you something to calm  
your nerves.

Vasily hesitates. Beria takes a swig.

BERIA (CONT'D)  
Vasily, I'm your godfather. I would  
never poison you. I'd arrange a  
plane crash or something.  
(he laughs, they don't)

VASILY  
Your jokes are always so..  
clenched.

Svetlana takes the flask from Vasily, gives it back to Beria.  
Vasily's about to protest but Svetlana's firm.

SVETLANA  
(to Vasily, at Beria)  
We agreed we would be presentable  
at the reception.

Vasily sulkily agrees.

VASILY  
I hate being sober. It's a  
terrible, terrible mood to be in.

She kisses him and leaves with Beria, who's impressed.

145 INT. BERIA'S HOUSE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT/EARLY EVENING 145  
(CONTINUOUS)

Beria and Svetlana come out of the room and shut the door.  
They walk away, leaving an NKVD MAN on guard.

BERIA  
(indicates speech)  
Going to "reaffirm" your father's  
contract with the people. New  
rights. New liberties...

SVETLANA  
Why does everything have to be  
"new"?

They go through into...

146 INT. BERIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT/EARLY EVENING 146  
(CONTINUOUS)

A comfortable living room - the nicest we've seen. Fireplace,  
rug, souvenirs and gifts all over. On a table, a massive file  
is open.

SVETLANA  
..."new" potatoes..."new" Spring  
Fashions..."new"...

Beria hands Svetlana a long, long list from the file,  
indicates an entry.

BERIA  
Yuri's dead. March 15th, 1949.  
Attempted escape from Kolyma with  
twelve others. Executed. I'm  
Sorry...

Svetlana bursts into tears, crumples.

SVETLANA  
But... you said you'd bring him  
back. You...

BERIA  
It wasn't possible...

SVETLANA  
You lied to me!...

BERIA  
It was outside my jurisdiction.

He indicates the list.

Vasily suddenly enters the room, looking for the flask.

VASILY

My mind's going everywhere, like a  
million clarinets! I need...

He's spotted the flask. Svetlana, furious, grabs it as Beria  
silently signals to the NKVD Man to escort Vasily back into  
the room and lock the door. Vasily miserably complies.

SVETLANA

(ignoring Vasily, and  
reading the letter)

Signed by the entire Committee.

BERIA

(tenderly)

Sit down, Svetlana.

SVETLANA

I'd prefer to...

BERIA

(kind, forceful)

Sit down.

Svetlana refuses. She's angry, scared, defiant, pacing.

BERIA (CONT'D)

We had to do some terrible things  
for the Union. Your father said:  
Always look in the distance, never  
at the mud and blood at your feet.  
But, Svetlana, if Yuri were alive  
today I'd be releasing him.

SVETLANA

So you're saying, all that...  
(indicates list)  
...killing was wrong.

BERIA

(impatient)

Many lies were told. Evidence was  
fabricated. Those responsible will  
be found and...

SVETLANA

Shot? This killing machine is never  
going to stop, is it?

BERIA

Grow up, Svetlana! The world out  
there is full of dangerous men in  
uniforms and dinner suits. I'm  
offering you and that...gabbling  
bowl of moonshine my protection.

SVETLANA

We are not children!  
(rethinks)  
I am not a child!

BERIA

Oh you are. And I warn you,  
Svetlana. Stay by my side. Or  
you'll both be beaten inside out  
and strung up for the crows. By the  
others.

SVETLANA

Why should I trust you?

BERIA

Because I'm the only one who's  
telling you - trust no-one else.

SVETLANA

Can I keep this?

BERIA

Of course. Svetlana, I am so very  
sorry.

SVETLANA

You're just like my father.

She kisses him tenderly on the cheek and leaves.

He goes to a hidden DOOR and unlocks it. Goes up some dark  
and dusty stairs, to a small room. We see a mattress, a vase  
with flowers, and an awkward teenage girl, crying.

He smiles at her.

BERIA

Oh no. I'm here to cheer you up...

147

INT. KREMLIN RECEPTION - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

147

A wall of noise. And bodies. It's the end of a dinner. The  
dignitaries have broken into groups to smoke, drink and chat.  
Maria's playing Chopin. We're with Khrushchev as he weaves  
his way round.

Zhukhov is regaling DIGNITARIES with a war story.

ZHUKHOV

The greatest enemy any soldier has  
to face? It's not guns, or fear, or  
hunger. It's chafing...

Svetlana is with Vasily who's smartened up and sobered up.  
She scans the room.

VASILY

I've made enemies of everyone here.  
Oh Christ, sober's HARD.

SVETLANA

(encouraging)

You're doing well. I almost believe  
that smile.

VASILY

It's easy. All I have to do is say  
hello, shake their hands, and not  
call them cunts.

The HUNGARIAN PRESIDENT comes up to them, shakes hands.  
Vasily's about to say something...

We're now with Beria as he enters the room, creating a  
gravitational pull.

Back with Vasily and Svetlana.

HUNGARIAN PRESIDENT

All of Hungary sends you our  
deepest condolences. Anything you  
want from us, just ask.

SVETLANA

Vasily, anything you want from  
Hungary?

VASILY

A horse, I would like. Big horse.

Khrushchev comes into the room and looks around. DELOV comes  
up to him with a spotty, awkward TEENAGE GIRL.

DELOV

Comrade Minister. I've found her.

Khrushchev looks at her, full of contempt.

KHRUSHCHEV

She's too big! She looks like a  
baby giraffe fell down some stairs.

Delov takes her away. Kaganovich and Bulganin join  
Khrushchev.

KAGANOVICH

Heard you were "canoodling" with  
the pianist?

BULGANIN

Yeah, she give it plenty of left  
hand, Nicky?

KAGANOVICH

Did she sit on your Presidium?

KHRUSHCHEV

(ignoring them)

This is classic Beria. Nail the woman as a spy, link her to the man, nail the man. I need someone with an army. Now!

Svetlana spots Mikoyan. He tries to avoid her gaze, but she's insistent.

SVETLANA

Comrade Sickle! You look very dashing tonight!

MIKOYAN

(disdaining Vasily)

Thank you. I hope your brother isn't armed this evening...

SVETLANA

He's not even loaded!

VASILY

Fuck me!

Mikoyan pretends he's being called away. He's off.

VASILY (CONT'D)

"He's not even loaded"?

KHRUSHCHEV

(joining Zhukhov)

Comrade Field Marshall. A word?

ZHUKHOV

I'm in the middle of a...

Khrushchev steering Zhukhov to a door.

KHRUSHCHEV

(to Zhukhov's companions)

He either planted the flag on Hitler's bunker, or knocked the bear out with one punch.

(to Zhukhov)

There's an urgent military matter.

He guides him away.

ZHUKHOV

Bloody rude, actually, Nicky. It wasn't Hitler's bunker, it was Goebbels'. And it genuinely happened.

They pass Bulganin, who's a little agitated.

BULGANIN

What's going on, Nicky? They say  
the streets are heaving with  
people...

Zhukhov and Khrushchev exchange a glance.

Back with Svetlana and Vasily.

Molotov approaches, his arms reaching out.

VASILY

Here's Molotov. A hundred rubles  
says he calls us 'comrades' then  
hugs us.

MOLOTOV

(to Svetlana and Vasily)  
Comrades!

VASILY

(sotto)  
I'm not kissing him.

Khrushchev steering Zhukhov to out the doorway of the main  
reception and across the large stairway.

KHRUSHCHEV

(conspiratorial)  
Could I count on you if someone we  
both know was out of control,  
dangerous...

ZHUKHOV

(sotto)  
Yes! Wanted to deal with him for  
bloody ages. I'm in.

Khrushchev shows them into...

148

INT. KREMLIN - EMPTY ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

148

Khrushchev and Zhukhov are alone.

KHRUSHCHEV

(that was easy)  
Really? Good. Because he's planning  
a coup.

ZHUKHOV

What? Come on, Nicky. He's so  
pissed all the time he can't tell  
his arse from his windpipe.

Khrushchev pauses.

KHRUSHCHEV

We ARE talking about the same person. Yes?

Vasily?

ZHUKHOV

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
Beria.

ZHUKHOV

Beria? Well, someone's grown balls the size of Kremlin domes. Yes, bravo. Bloody Beria. How DARE that hookworm try to out-manoeuvre the army!

KHRUSHCHEV

He wants to hijack my reforms, make the people love him...

ZHUKHOV

The people are a pendulum of idiots. They can be made to hate him...

(clicks fingers)

Like that. But listen, Nicky...

(closer)

I've got the soldiers. What have you got..?

KHRUSHCHEV

All I've got is the funeral, and flowers and fucking trains.

A beat.

Khrushchev picks up a phone.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

(down the phone)

Get me the Transport Minister...

Zhukhov slamming doors, opening cupboards.

ZHUKHOV

You'd think there'd be vodka. Even beancounters drink vodka...

KHRUSHCHEV

(shushing him)

Double the train services into Moscow.

He hangs up.

They head back the stairway to the reception.

ZHUKHOV

Moscow's full already. It'll be total bloody chaos. Well played, Comrade.

KHRUSHCHEV

I'm the peacemaker round here and I'll fuck up anyone who gets in my way!

ZHUKHOV

Cock the size of an atomic bomb.

149

INT. KREMLIN RECEPTION - MAIN ROOM (CONTINUOUS)

149

Maria at the piano, playing. Beria leans in and whispers, cleaning his glasses.

BERIA

So what does Nikita taste like? I assume it's shitty traitor, like you. What do YOU taste of, I wonder?

She stops playing. Dramatic silence.

MARIA

I will carry on if you step away from the piano.

BERIA

(innocent, to the room)  
I always thought that piece ended in an odd place!

Beria steps back from Maria and she carries on playing.

Malenkov is with Delov and a LITTLE GIRL who looks very like the one from the picture.

MALENKOV

Smile, sweetheart.

The girl reveals terrible teeth.

MALENKOV (CONT'D)

With your mouth shut?  
(off her closed mouth)  
Lovely.

MOLOTOV

Now I must take my dog out. For an evacuation! Perhaps two!

Molotov leaves.

SVETLANA  
(you're the biggest)  
When this is over, go home and  
drink vodka until you pass out. I  
never want to see you sober again.

150 EXT. NARROW MOSCOW STREETS - NIGHT

150

We cut from street to street, and see them fill with people. Wider shots reveal them coming in all directions. Hordes of people on narrow streets, getting very crowded.

An NKVD colonel, ENTIN is having a quiet cigarette. He looks up. At the end of the street, the crowd are heading towards him.

He's on a barricade made of trucks and armoured cars with gun turrets, manned by about 20 NKVD SOLDIERS.

Entin motions for the loudhailer.

It's passed to him. He addresses the crowd.

ENTIN  
Halt! This is a secure area! Return  
to your homes, comrades! Now!

The crowd hesitate but don't stop. Some hold images of Stalin.

WOMAN  
(shouts)  
We've come to see Comrade Stalin.

Others in the crowd roar approval.

ENTIN  
Please, stop! Or we will have to  
open fire!

They're still coming. The streets are jammed, heaving. People straining, crying, children being passed over heads.

ENTIN (CONT'D)  
(to his soldiers)  
On my order, fire over their heads.

The soldiers take aim. One of them shoots in panic.

Panic in the crowds.

ENTIN (CONT'D)  
I have not given the command!

Shrieking. Bodies being lifted. Some pick up rocks and stones from the street.

ENTIN (CONT'D)  
Disperse! Go back!...

The crowd begin to advance. Entin draws his revolver.

People start throwing rocks. One hits Entin. He staggers back, bleeding. The crowd is almost upon them.

ENTIN (CONT'D)  
FIRE!

The soldiers and machine guns fire. The soldiers reload and keep firing, panicking.

The screams of the crowd mix with the terrifying gunshots.

ENTIN (CONT'D)  
CEASE FIRE! CEASE FIRE!

It stops. Entin stares out, horrified. His POV: piles of bodies, mostly dead, some wounded: men, women, children.

CUT TO:

151 INT. KREMLIN RECEPTION/STAIRCASE - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT 151

NOTE: THROUGH THIS SCENE, AS NEWS OF THE STREET DISTURBANCES SPREAD, THE ROOM GRADUALLY EMPTIES AS OFFICIALS ARE SEEN BEING INSTRUCTED TO HANDLE THE SITUATION.

Beria approaches Malenkov, followed closely by Khrushchev. Malenkov is practicing for the photo, holding the girl up.

MALENKOV  
What's going on?

BERIA  
(through smile)  
That moron put the trains back on.  
Rioting crowds. Fifteen hundred  
dead.

MALENKOV  
(putting the girl down)  
No, you're too heavy.

She's put down and taken away.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Beria's men fired on the crowds.  
He's out of control, Georgy, I...

BERIA  
(to Khrushchev)  
What's between your ears? Sausage?

MALENKOV

Oh, I think I know who the people will blame.

(indicates self)

The poor old shitsack in charge...

KHRUSHCHEV

Georgy, look...

MALENKOV

Delov, bring the girl back. I need to make an appearance.

BULGANIN

Perhaps the army should be in charge of the railway stations.

Delov brings the girl back as Zhukhov arrives.

ZHUKHOV

Bit late now, eh Beria?

BERIA

They were outside Moscow, on his orders!

MALENKOV

My orders? They were...

(points with girl's hand)

...your orders!

And starting the trains...

(pointing at Khrushchev)

...were his orders!

KAGANOVICH

So, what are YOU going to do?

MIKOYAN

(to girl)

What do you think, darling? You're the only one making any sense.

They all gradually edge out the room to a quieter spot by the staircase.

MALENKOV

Someone is going to have to be the face of this fucking travesty.

BERIA

That's easy: Khrushchev.

KHRUSHCHEV

No!

BERIA

You ordered the trains!

KHRUSHCHEV

And your men shot the people  
getting off them.

MALENKOV

He does have a point.

BERIA

No he doesn't. There is no point to  
Nikita Khrushchev.

Malenkov signals - The girl is taken away again.

MALENKOV

We should blame the security  
forces. Hothead officers on the  
ground...

BERIA

(to Malenkov)

God Almighty, can you THINK? Or can  
you only pose for portraits? I. Am.  
Security. You...

(mimicking Malenkov's open-  
mouthed surprise)

...baked cod in a haircut.

MIKOYAN

Oh, says the fucking jellied eel...

BULGANIN

Let's all calm down.

(to Malenkov)

Even if you DO get blamed. We close  
ranks. We rehabilitate you, we...

KHRUSHCHEV

Yes, it's the new Soviet Union  
now...

MALENKOV

For the good of the party I ask...

BERIA

You spineless rat! Fuck you! You're  
just a bloated corpse we propped up  
and stuck in a fancy uniform.

(to the room)

You want to blame me? It's time all  
of you realised who kept the  
daggers out of your fucking backs!  
Show some fucking respect! I have  
documents on all of you. ALL OF  
YOU!

(to Khrushchev)

13th March, 1937. Zolotov trials.  
42 dead, 173 exiled. Your  
signature. 5th October 1946.

(MORE)

BERIA (CONT'D)  
Katzenelson. 63 executed, 219  
exiled. Your signature...

KAGANOVICH  
Beria. Enough.

BERIA  
(to Kaganovich)  
Radek, Skrypny, your own brother.  
Your signature...

He gestures at Khrushchev, Kaganovich, Bulganin and Mikoyan.  
Malenkov is stood behind him.

BERIA (CONT'D)  
All of you! I've seen what you've  
done. It's a very! Fucking! Long!  
List!

He scatters some papers on the floor. Silence. The committee  
stare at the papers.

BULGANIN  
(heading off)  
I think I saw some brandy out  
here...

KHRUSHCHEV  
Lavrentiy. We can put this right.

BERIA  
(calming down)  
We'll meet straight after the  
funeral tomorrow. We will find out  
who's properly to blame for this.  
Arraign the officers who fired.  
Yes?

KHRUSHCHEV  
Of course.

Beria heads down the stairs.

The others stand there, still stunned from Beria's outburst.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
We can just demote him. Make him  
Minister Responsible for Fisheries  
or something.

MALENKOV  
Do you know what you're saying?

KHRUSHCHEV  
He's using you, Georgy. He'll use  
you and then he'll kill you. You  
saw those papers.

MALENKOV

He pointed at you, not me.

KHRUSHCHEV

He said "all of you".

MALENKOV

I was behind him. He went  
(gestures)  
"all of you".

KHRUSHCHEV

"All of you".

MALENKOV

No. "All of you".

KAGANOVICH

(demonstrates)  
He said: "All of you".

MALENKOV

All of YOU can kiss MY arse! Get  
nme the girl, I'm going onto the  
balcony.

152 EXT. KREMLIN - BALCONY - NIGHT

152

Malenkov steps onto a balcony with the girl. Because he  
doesn't lift her up, we can hardly see her.

CUT TO:

153 EXT./INT. OPEN SPACE SURROUNDED BY WOODLAND/CAR - EARLY  
MORNING

153

Two cars parked, with their drivers some distance away.

Kaganovich and Khrushchev lean against one of the cars.

KHRUSHCHEV

Who will the people blame? Me or  
Beria? Who looks like he's got  
blood on his boots?

KAGANOVICH

(you?)  
Oh, Beria. People will definitely  
blame Beria.

MOLOTOV

MURDERER!

Molotov approaches on foot, with a small dog.

MOLOTOV (CONT'D)  
You've killed hundreds, Nicky! You  
certainly got your big funeral!

KHRUSHCHEV  
I regret this already..

MOLOTOV  
(interrupts)  
Get in the car.

KHRUSHCHEV  
What?

MOLOTOV  
Can't talk. Get in the car.

Khrushchev and Kaganovich share a look - then get in.

Molotov pulls his dog in too.

KAGANOVICH  
(RE dog)  
I see she moults.

Molotov takes out a cuddly toy. The dog starts barking -  
loud, irritating - and jumping up, trying to grab it.

MOLOTOV  
This-  
(waves the cuddly toy  
again, to more barks)  
-is for any hungry ears...

KHRUSHCHEV  
The car isn't bugged. We'd see  
wires stretching to Moscow.

MOLOTOV  
(looks out)  
The drivers. So...  
(close, menacing)  
Let's do him in.

KHRUSHCHEV  
What?

MOLOTOV  
(vigorously shakes the  
toy)  
Beria. The treacherous snake  
brought back the Bishops. And he  
brought back Polina. He expressly  
ignored Stalin's orders. The man  
has no soul. He ordered his men to  
open fire. Genius, Nicky.

KHRUSHCHEV  
(just about keeping up  
with Molotov's logic)  
Yes, Beria's the murderer here...

KAGANOVICH  
Those who were killed must not die  
in vain...

MOLOTOV  
This is how the Soviet Union was  
built. Not with Bishops. Today,  
Beria gets an eight-foot crucifix  
up his arse!

The dog's still yapping.

KAGANOVICH  
I've had nightmares that make more  
sense than this.

MOLOTOV  
The people who died are martyrs.  
You have to do it in...

The dog has stopped barking. Molotov waves the toy again and  
it jumps and barks.

KAGANOVICH  
Please. Can this fucking DOG be a  
martyr?

MOLOTOV  
You have to do it in one go. Bang!  
Like in '36. Won't be easy though.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Zhukhov's already got the army  
sharpening their bayonets...

KAGANOVICH  
And it's got to be today. Only time  
the army's in the capital.

MOLOTOV  
Excellent. I'm in!

KHRUSHCHEV  
Good, good. We have a majority!

MOLOTOV  
Yes!

KAGANOVICH  
You two, me, Bulganin...

MOLOTOV  
(cuts in)  
You need Malenkov and Mikoyan too.

KHRUSHCHEV  
But... why?

MOLOTOV  
It's what Stalin would have wanted.  
The Committee, as one! Act fast  
Comrade. Act fast or be dead.  
(to dog)  
YES. Uncle Nicky's going to be dead  
if he doesn't get a move on, isn't  
he? Oh yes he is. Yes he is...

CUT TO:

154 INT. MAUSOLEUM - DAY

154

The committee, dignitaries, generals, Svetlana, Mezhnikov and Kobulov wait in formal dress. The guarded coffin is nearby.

Khrushchev watches uneasily as Malenkov jokes with Beria. Svetlana comes close.

SVETLANA  
You promised to protect me and my family...

KHRUSHCHEV  
Of course. Always, my dearest most precious...

SVETLANA  
Well you didn't.

She slips him the piece of paper Beria gave her, leaves.

Beria and Zhukhov appear, surprising Khrushchev.

BERIA  
So. Comrade Zhukhov and I have been conferring...

Khrushchev looks appalled. Has he been betrayed?

ZHUKHOV  
All chums again now, eh? Onward!

BERIA  
He's come up with a plan for Vasily's speech.

ZHUKHOV  
It will go ahead but it "may" coincide with the fly-past.

KHRUSHCHEV  
(flooded with relief)  
Hah! Excellent! That's an excellent  
idea! Zhukhov! The genius!

ZHUKHOV  
Let's give the old maniac the send-  
off he deserves.

A general sense of bonhomie. Beria puts his hand on  
Khrushchev - it's a reconciliation. He then pats Khrushchev's  
trousers... Bang, it's the tomato game again.

Zhukhov finds it funny.

ZHUKHOV (CONT'D)  
It's what he would have wanted.

Kobulov gestures to Beria who goes over to him, leaving  
Malenkov with Khrushchev.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Georgy...

A 21-gun salute begins outside - the signal for the funeral.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
We have to act today.

MALENKOV  
Let's bury the old man first.

Khrushchev is about to reply but is interrupted by Mezhdnikov.

MEZHNIKOV  
Comrades! Please take your places  
for the cortege.

Khrushchev and his allies take their places around the  
coffin. Beria and Malenkov are at the front, next to  
Khrushchev. Zhukhov is directly behind him.

ZHUKHOV  
3..2..

Malenkov joins in, as before, expecting Zhukhov to allow him  
to command the moment.

ZHUKHOV/MALENKOV  
..1...

ZHUKHOV  
Lift!

MALENKOV  
Yes, lift, everyone.

Everyone lifts and tries to get comfortable. Some have a shoulder under it, others just a hand. They start walking the coffin forward towards the open door as a cannon fires every few seconds.

KHRUSHCHEV  
(to Malenkov)  
Georgy! Georgy!

155 EXT. RED SQUARE - EMERGING FROM THE MAUSOLEUM - DAY 155  
(CONTINUOUS)

They shuffle out into a solemn Red Square, packed with mourners. Zhukhov still pressing Khrushchev.

ZHUKHOV  
Is Malenkov on board?

KHRUSHCHEV  
Georgy's in. One hundred per cent.

ZHUKHOV  
All or nothing now, Nicky, eh?

They are now in full view of the crowd. The pall-bearers shift the coffin on into the mausoleum, helped by some SOLDIERS. Zhukhov takes a step back and salutes.

We see an extreme long shot of Zhukhov saluting. His eyes flick upwards. He knows he's being watched.

A colonel with bushy eyebrows - BREZHNEV, on a Red Square rooftop, puts down his binoculars.

Khrushchev nods at Bulganin and Kaganovich: it's happening.

CUT TO:

156 EXT. MAUSOLEUM - BALCONY - DAY 156

The balcony on top of Lenin's mausoleum. The committee members and dignitaries are stood in a line.

MOLOTOV  
(struggling, in tears)  
Stalin's love of ...love of the  
nation... The people's pain... The  
pain of the people... Oh...

We pan along legs. Chalk marks - initials of who's to stand where. A technician crouches out of view. Khrushchev's foot scratches an itch on his calf.

157 INT. CORRIDOR FROM MAUSOLEUM TO KREMLIN - DAY 157

Brezhnev and MOSKALENKO walk with briefcases towards some NKVD MEN by a set of double doors. An NKVD lieutenant, Pervak salutes them. They show papers, hand over pistols, go inside.

158 EXT. MAUSOLEUM - BALCONY - DAY 158

Malenkov's delivery is incredibly dull.

MALENKOV

Yet we will draw strength from the continuity of the revolution as it goes on and on, generation after generation... yet today we pause in grief, and sorrow. But is not a pause in itself part of the revolution...?

Beria looks bored. Others sway to keep warm.

159 INT. KREMLIN - TOILETS - DAY 159

Pictures of Stalin and Lenin. Brezhnev closes the door. Both men open up their briefcases to reveal wires, a small red light bulb, electrical equipment.

160 EXT. MAUSOLEUM - BALCONY 160

Vasily is now at the microphone. He shouts into it.

VASILY

My father was a great social scientist! But we, the people of the Soviet Union, are not laboratory animals! No! We are laboratory technicians!

The very noisy fly-over begins. He tries to shout over it.

VASILY (CONT'D)

My father! Your father! Our father!

161 INT. KREMLIN - TOILETS - DAY 161

Moskalenko fixes the lightbulb to a window frame. Brezhnev trails a wire along the edge of the skirting board towards a set of double-doors into a larger meeting room, with chairs around a long oak table.

162 EXT. MAUSOLEUM - BALCONY - DAY 162

Beria speaking, Malenkov and Khrushchev on either side.

BERIA

We must embrace our terrible loss  
with the strength and love for our  
nation that Stalin himself..

163 INT./EXT. KREMLIN - MEETING ROOM/COURTYARD - DAY 163

Moskalenko hammers a wedge into the window frame, checks it's jammed shut, as NKVD GUARDS listen to Beria's speech in a courtyard outside, their backs to the window.

Brezhnev fastens a button underneath the table, checks a wire leading down the table leg and under the carpet. He puts a place card - "Comrade General Secretary Malenkov" at the head of the table, where the button is.

164 EXT. MAUSOLEUM - BALCONY - DAY 164

Beria continues his speech.

BERIA

We now carry forward the torch of  
revolution. I applaud the Central  
Committee, who have declared Georgy  
Maximilianovich Malenkov President  
and General Secretary...

165 INT. KREMLIN - TOILETS/MEETING ROOM - DAY 165

Brezhnev presses the button under the table. Moskalenko is by the red bulb. It lights up.

166 EXT. MAUSOLEUM - BALCONY - DAY 166

The committee members are feeling the cold.

BERIA

..We promise you rights and  
liberties, bread and peace.

Everyone in the crowd applauds. A bit too much for Malenkov.

167 EXT. RED SQUARE - DAY 167

The view from the balcony of Red Square - the applauding crowd, the flags, the banners and portraits.

168 INT. KREMLIN CORRIDOR/MEETING ROOM - DAY 168

Beria walks cheerfully with Molotov, followed by the PRESIDIUM MEMBERS, Zhukhov - in army greatcoat - then Khrushchev and Malenkov.

BERIA

"Bread and peace". I knew it would work. It was between "peace" and "sausages".

The generals and ZHUKHOV reach the NKVD guards at the door.

PERVAK

Forgive me, comrades. Your weapons.

KHRUSHCHEV

I think we can rely on the liberators of Berlin to use their weapons appropriately.

Khrushchev peels off.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Just going to freshen my trousers.

169 INT. KREMLIN - TOILETS - DAY 169

Khrushchev heads into the toilet. Brezhnev and his men are all there, waiting quietly. Nobody says anything.

Khrushchev pulls out Svetlana's Yuri note, soiled with tomato.

CUT TO:

170 INT. KREMLIN CORRIDOR/MEETING ROOM - DAY 170

Khrushchev catches up with Malenkov in the corridor ahead of the meeting room.

Khrushchev discreetly hands Malenkov Svetlana's note.

KHRUSHCHEV

Beria gave this to Svetlana. Let her know what you did to Zhednov. See? He'd shit on all of us.

Malenkov grows pale. He quickly puts the paper in his pocket.

MALENKOV

The snake. Alright.

KHRUSHCHEV

I'll bring up the emergency motion.  
There's a button under the desk at  
your end. You hit it. Yes?

Malenkov nods, nervously.

MALENKOV

Yes. But just a demotion.

171 INT. KREMLIN - TOILETS - DAY

171

Zhukhov enters the toilet. Opens his coat to reveal  
Kalashnikovs. Brezhnev smiles. A presidium member walks in to  
go to the toilet.

PRESIDIUM MEMBER

I didn't do any...

A hand is clamped over the Presidium member's mouth.

172 INT./EXT. KREMLIN - MEETING ROOM/COURTYARD - DAY

172

Malenkov is at the head of the table, Beria near the window.  
Outside, some NKVD GUARDS patrol the courtyard.

BERIA

Malenkov.

Malenkov looks at him, unable to say anything.

BERIA (CONT'D)

Let's start.

(still nothing. He takes  
over)

SHALL WE? Item One. The unfortunate  
events of yesterday evening...

Khrushchev raises his hand. Malenkov doesn't acknowledge him.

BERIA (CONT'D)

It is clear that the regrettable  
deaths of many citizens hastening  
to the capital...

Khrushchev thrusts his hand even higher, glares at Malenkov.

BERIA (CONT'D)

...had several local causes...

MALENKOV

Er, Comrade Khrushchev has the  
floor...

Beria, perplexed, looks at Malenkov, who avoids his gaze.

KHRUSHCHEV

Comrades, I propose a new Agenda Item One. "The conduct of Comrade Beria".

BERIA

Can anyone else hear that barking dog? I've lost my thread now...

Malenkov just stares at the table in front of him.

KHRUSHCHEV

I accuse Comrade Beria of centralising power within his Ministry at the expense of the Party and the Central Committee. Of betraying the Soviet Union to capitalist interests...

BERIA

(to everyone)

I warn you, Nicky. This petulant Wild West stuff will end very badly.

KHRUSHCHEV

(indicating button)

Georgy! Georgy!

Malenkov just stares forward, unable to move.

BERIA

Comrades, Perhaps there is concern at the speed of our reforms. But really, THIS nonsense?

Khrushchev leaps up, rushes round to the button and hits it hard, knocking Malenkov out of the way.

BERIA (CONT'D)

Arrest this madman! He's out of control!

173 INT. KREMLIN - TOILETS - DAY

173

The red light bulb lights up.

ZHUKHOV

Good luck, ladies!

174 INT./EXT. KREMLIN - MEETING ROOM/COURTYARD - DAY

174

Soldiers burst into the room, led by Zhukhov.

ZHUKHOV

Hands in the air!

Beria puts the palm of his hand on the window. The NKVD guards are too far away to see it.

175 EXT. KREMLIN - COURTYARD - DAY 175

On Beria's palm, he's written: "ALERT".

176 INT./EXT. KREMLIN - MEETING ROOM/COURTYARD - DAY 176

Zhukhov points his weapon at Beria.

ZHUKHOV

Hands in the air or bullet in the  
fucking face!

Malenkov's hands go up. Khrushchev slaps them down in disbelief.

BERIA

(banging on window)  
GUARDS!!...

Zhukhov hits him in the face with his rifle butt. Beria drops to the ground, his pince-nez fly off. Zhukhov gets in close.

ZHUKHOV

See? You want a job done properly,  
send for the army.

He frisks Beria. The other soldiers keep their guns on him.

MALENKOV

He's got a knife by his ankle.

Beria stares at Malenkov, who starts to cry.

177 INT. KREMLIN - MEETING ROOM - DAY 177

Beria is handcuffed on a chair, his face a bloodied mess.

BERIA

Georgy...

Malenkov, sat across the room, looks ashamed.

KHRUSHCHEV

(to Malenkov)  
Say nothing.

ZHUKHOV

Remove his belt. It's hard for a  
man to escape when his trousers are  
falling down.

MIKOYAN

Leave the man some dignity, please.  
That suit without a belt would be a  
disaster!

BERIA

Gentlemen, rest assured I sense the  
strength of feeling in the room.

ZHUKHOV

Shut up, you fucking tumour.

MOLOTOV

That man is responsible for the  
deaths of hundreds of thousands of  
innocents...

MALENKOV

We all are...

BERIA

Exactly. Collective guilt.

KHRUSHCHEV

Comrades, please...

MALENKOV

What happens now?

Zhukhov mimes shooting Beria.

KHRUSHCHEV

Zhukhov!

(to Malenkov)

We wait for Red Square to empty of  
NKVD...

ZHUKHOV

Then I give the signal and we roll  
this barrel of shit out.

The doors burst open. It's Kobulov and 2 NKVD lieutenants and Pervak, armed and carrying trays of sandwiches and cold meats.

They freeze. Everyone turns and looks at them. Zhukhov clamps his hand over Beria's mouth.

KOBULOV

Sorry, comrades. Wrong room.

They turn to go. Beria tries to call after them.

ZHUKHOV

Those sandwiches were curling up  
anyway.

(to Beria)

Your lot can't even do CATERING.

(MORE)

ZHUKHOV (CONT'D)  
(to room)  
Let's go.

178 EXT. KREMLIN - SIDE ENTRANCE - DAY 178

Several trucks and armoured cars drive up. Soldiers leap out and surround the NKVD, who raise their weapons. An army COLONEL walks over to an NKVD OFFICER. The NKVD officer gestures for the NKVD to lower their guns.

The colonel hurries inside, followed by his men, guns cocked.

179 INT. MOSCOW APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 179

The middle-aged man arrested earlier is playing chess with his son. All is forgiven. The NKVD burst in.

WIFE  
No! NO! He didn't mean anything!

The NKVD march over to the son, grab him and head out.

180 INT. KREMLIN - CORRIDORS/STORE CUPBOARD - DAY 180

The colonel and his men walk through. Kobulov spots them. Dives into a store-cupboard. The men head in after him. We hear shots.

181 INT. BERIA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY 181

Vasily lies on the bed in his ceremonial uniform, drinking.

The door is opened by an NKVD OFFICER, who steps to one side. An army GENERAL, a CAPTAIN and two SOLDIERS enter.

The soldiers aim their rifles at Vasily.

VASILY  
No! NO! You can't!...

The general fires his pistol into the wall by Vasily's head.

VASILY (CONT'D)  
You nearly fucking killed me and  
now I'm DEAF! You hear me, I'm  
DEAF!

The captain hauls Vasily up, tears off his epaulets, his medals, buttons. He's been disgraced. They drag him out.

VASILY (CONT'D)  
Do you know who I am? Do you know  
who YOU are? Who the fuck are you?

182 INT. BERIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 182

Some NKVD OFFICERS and Beria's terrified STAFF are being marched out at gunpoint by a group of soldiers.

Vasily's dragged into the living room.

The frightened teenage girl is hauled out of the hidden room.

MARIA is also taken out of another locked room.

183 INT./EXT. KREMLIN - MEETING ROOM/COURTYARD - DAY 183

Zhukhov peeks through the curtains. The NKVD have been replaced by Red Army SOLDIERS. Zhukhov moves across to Beria and stands him up. Takes off his belt.

ZHUKHOV

OK, Judy Garland. Let's go.

He hauls him forward. Beria's trousers start to fall. Brezhnev pulls them up for him and Beria grabs them.

BERIA

If we could discuss this rationally...

ZHUKHOV

(that's a good idea)

You're right. We should...

(gags Beria)

"Ooh, what's happening? My trousers are round my ankles but my cock's not inside an orphan..."

One of the newly-arrived soldiers hands Zhukhov a sack. He puts it over Beria's head.

MALENKOV

Hey! Nicky! We agreed. A demotion.

KHRUSHCHEV

Oh, it's definitely THAT, wouldn't you say?

MOLOTOV

Remember when you took Polina away? How you must have enjoyed it. I'm certainly enjoying this, you cockroach.

Beria struggles. Zhukhov punches him in the gut. He folds but is held up by Moskalenko and Brezhnev. His trousers fall.

Brezhnev pulls up Beria's trousers, puts them in his hands.

BREZHNEV

Hold them!...

KHRUSHCHEV

(taunting Beria)

How's the meeting going, would you say, COMRADE SACK? You're on a list now, fucker!

MALENKOV

Stop this!...

KHRUSHCHEV

I'M THE REFORMER!

Beria is led out the room, battling with his trousers.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Roudenko is in the basement, along with Konev...

MIKOYAN

You're putting him on trial? Now? I'm disgusted! And slightly impressed at your efficiency, Nikki.

MALENKOV

This is all totally, totally, beyond any agenda...

MIKOYAN

Listen to yourself. What do you think is happening here, Georgy? Should someone be taking minutes?

KHRUSHCHEV

We have to act instantly...

Molotov bangs the table.

MOLOTOV

Bang! Over! Marxism-Leninism was born in flames! Let the fire of our vengeance consume all traitors and bastards!

MALENKOV

No! I forbid it!...

MIKOYAN

You want the NKVD to spring him from jail? Things'd get a bit lively then...

BULGANIN

Nobody wants civil war.

KAGANOVICH  
He will kill us all...

Khrushchev tries to hand Malenkov a document.

KHRUSHCHEV  
Come on Georgy. Sign this or we're  
all dead.

MALENKOV  
He deserves a trial! The man  
deserves a trial!...

KHRUSHCHEV  
(furious)  
What about Tukhachevsky and  
Piatakov and Meyerhold and  
Mikhoels? Didn't they deserve a  
trial? And poor Sokolnikov. Who  
begged him to look after his  
elderly mother. That monster  
strangled her in front of him. I've  
killed a lot of people. I did it  
because it was my duty. That human  
turd killed for pleasure.

Khrushchev puts a brotherly hand on Malenkov's shoulder.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)  
Georgy, we've gone too far now. The  
only choice we have is between his  
death or his revenge.

Malenkov looks at him, pale and dazed.

MALENKOV  
I'm General Secretary of the  
Communist Party of the Soviet  
Union.

KHRUSHCHEV  
That's right. You are.

He hands him the document and a pen. Malenkov signs it.

184 EXT. KREMLIN - BACK AREA - DAY 184

From a distance we see the generals and Brezhnev dragging  
Beria. His trousers fall and he trips.

185 INT. KREMLIN - WINDOWLESS ROOM - DAY 185

A bleak space. An improvised courtroom.

On a raised stage: ROUDENKO, mid-40s in a judge's gown. Next  
to him, Marshall KONEV.

The Presidium and Committee members are there with senior PARTY AND MILITARY OFFICIALS. Armed SOLDIERS everywhere.

Zhukhov, Moskalenko and Brezhnev walk Beria to the improvised dock. Zhukhov removes the sack and gag.

BERIA

You are all witnesses to a criminal travesty! Think what you like! You are STILL witnesses!

Konev keeps banging.

BERIA (CONT'D)

I demand my rights under, under... article 43 of the... Stop banging, I demand to be heard! We are not savages!

KHRUSHCHEV

YOU are! YOU are!

BERIA

(weakening, to Malenkov)  
Georgy... Our wives... what will you tell your wife? And mine? The children?

KONEV

Comrade General Secretary...

Trembling, Malenkov looks to Khrushchev who nods. Malenkov tries to read out a statement.

MALENKOV

"Lavrenti Pavolovich Beria..."

BERIA

You fucking traitor...

MALENKOV

"Lavrenti Pavlovich Beria. You are accused..."

Malenkov stops. He looks like he's going to faint.

KHRUSHCHEV

Fucks sake!  
(taking the document)  
"You are accused of using your position as Minister of the Interior to plot against the Soviet Union with the goal of forwarding the interests of foreign powers..."

BERIA

(at same time)  
I am a Marshall of the Soviet Union, a member of...

BERIA

Foreign powers! Which ones? The  
fucking MOON?

KHRUSHCHEV

(over Beria)

"You are also accused of 347 counts  
of rape, of sexual deviancy and  
bourgeois immorality, of acts of  
perversion with children as young  
as 7 years old...

BERIA

Ah. Everyone in this ROOM is  
responsible for someone's death. So  
let's find something exotic for old  
Beria.

Beria stops protesting, completely knocked. He spots  
Svetlana, her eyes full of hate.

BERIA (CONT'D)

Svetushka...

KHRUSHCHEV

(reading as quickly as he  
can)

...including the rapes of Luba  
Dolomaya, aged 12, Petra Nikova, 13  
...

BERIA

YOU ARE THE RAPISTS! ERROR! ERROR!  
ERROR!

Khrushchev skips ahead, trying to shout over Beria.

KHRUSHCHEV

Anna Laranskaya, Nadia Ranova...etc  
etc... Magya Holovic...treason...  
anti-Soviet behaviour...er, the  
court finds you guilty and  
sentences you to be taken to  
Lubyanka prison and shot...

BERIA

NO! NIKITA! I'M YOUR FRIEND!!

ZHUKHOV

(whispers to Beria)

Shut it. Look, here's "Exhibit A".

Beria looks down. Zhukhov is holding a knife to his ribs.  
Beria suddenly loses it, starts screaming like a little girl.

Khrushchev calmly waves goodbye.

Zhukhov, Brezhnev and some soldiers drag him outside. Chairs are knocked over, there are screams and shouts. It's chaos.

They've got Beria as far as the doorway. A shot rings out. Then another. More screams. A burst of sub-machine-gun fire. A shout of "CEASE-FIRE!"

186 INT. KREMLIN - WINDOWLESS ROOM DOORWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 186

Beria's body is in the doorway of the courtroom. He's riddled with bullets, bleeding heavily.

Svetlana spits on the body.

SVETLANA

For Yuri. For my mother.

Zhukhov reaches into Beria's mouth and pulls out a tooth.

ZHUKHOV

(off their looks)

Nearly a full set now.

187 EXT. KREMLIN - BACK AREA - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 187

Beria's body is hauled out by SOLDIERS. They dump it unceremoniously, douse it with petrol and set fire to it.

Everyone emerges from the building, registering the burning corpse with varying levels of coolness. They've seen some brutal things.

But Svetlana is shocked, and moves away from the group. She looks like she may throw up.

Khrushchev is now the centre of gravity. Everyone wants to be in orbit around him. Grim wordless exchanges. Kaganovich is close

KHRUSHCHEV

Now we can turn the corner. Put the bloodshed behind us.

ANGLE on Malenkov. He looks bereaved.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

I worry about Malenkov though. Can we trust him?

KAGANOVICH

Can you ever trust a weak man?

Khrushchev agrees. They can't. He spots Svetlana, walks over to her. Kaganovich acting as informal bouncer, keeping everyone else away.

SVETLANA

I'm scared.

KHRUSHCHEV

There's no need.

SVETLANA

I don't know where...

KHRUSHCHEV

Vasily's safe. I give you my word,  
Svetlana, I will look after him.

He hands her an envelope.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Here is your passage to safety,  
too...

SVETLANA

(re envelope contents)  
Vienna?

KHRUSHCHEV

Vasily must stay. For his own  
safety. We can't have a drunken  
madman spreading conspiracy  
theories all over the world...

SVETLANA

I could...

KHRUSHCHEV

No. He stays. You must go, for YOUR  
sake. There will be a reckoning  
here. Your...story may not fit. One  
of these men might have to kill  
you...

She's shocked. Khrushchev needs her to look at him. She does.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

I might have to kill you.

A stunned beat. Her bitter smile. She looks at Malenkov,  
Mikoyan, Bulganin...

SVETLANA

I never thought it would be you.

KHRUSHCHEV

Safe travels, Svetlana.

A bow, he rejoins the group. Someone has produced vodka. The  
corpse burns on.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

Now we can turn the corner. Put the bloodshed behind us.

They place a large electric fan next to the bin.

KHRUSHCHEV (CONT'D)

I worry about Malenkov though. Can we trust him?

KAGANOVICH

Can you ever trust a weak man?

KHRUSHCHEV

(nods agreement)

No...

He turns the fan on and tips the ashes out. We watch the ashes dispel in the wind.

CUT TO:

188

INT. RADIO MOSCOW - MAIN AUDITORIUM

188

Maria is playing a Mozart piano concerto.

CLOSING CARDS:

1) AFTER BERIA'S EXECUTION IN 1953, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TOOK CONTROL OF THE SOVIET UNION

2) IN 1956 KHRUSHCHEV MOVED TO DEMOTE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, INCLUDING MOLOTOV AND MALENKOV

We pan up to a box, where we see Khrushchev smiling, in his element. Nina and some sycophants sit around him.

We see Andreyev and Sergei in the control room. Something to suggest Andreyev's living in a new reality too - more anxious, surrounded by new equipment? Or more confident, bullying?

3) AT LONG LAST, HE BECAME HEAD OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF.

We stay on Khrushchev smiling. A young Brezhnev is behind him.

4) UNTIL HIS REMOVAL IN 1964 BY LEONID BREZHNEV

CUT TO:

END CREDITS