

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

A Screenplay

By Joan Didion & John Gregory Dunne

Suggested by Golden Girl

24 April 1994: UP94.7

FADE IN -- FULLSCREEN -- TALLY ATWATER

25 or 26, demeanor impeccable, against a seamless backdrop.

TALLY ATWATER

What we in the news business can never...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE DIRECTOR AND CREW FILMING TALLY

DIRECTOR

You're picking up shadow on her face...

AN ASSISTANT ADJUSTS AN UMBRELLA REFLECTOR

DIRECTOR

...a little more fill...

WE SEE THE LIGHT HAPPEN ON TALLY'S FACE

DIRECTOR

...again, Tally...

TALLY ATWATER

What we in the news business can never forget...is that news is our product, never personality. When I go on camera...I forget myself entirely...

DIRECTOR

Kill the strobe, you still got shadow...

B&W VIDEOTAPE ON AN EDITING MACHINE -- LUANNE ATWATER

Tally's sister, early 30s and showing wear, outside her trailer, The camera pans over the park, life lived on the margins.

LUANNE

You see Sallyanne now...I still call her Sallyanne...you'd never guess what kind of scared little kid she was...

THE VIDEOTAPE FREEZES ON THE EDITING MACHINE

DIRECTOR V.O.

...lay the voice over the snapshots...

FULLSCREEN -- A SERIES OF SNAPSHOTS OF TALLY ATWATER AS A CHILD

with her father, mother and Luanne, then with her mother, Luanne and a succession of her mother's husbands and boyfriends,

then with Luanne and Luanne's boyfriend Wade: a series of dissolves in which children grow up, women age, and men vanish and get replaced, and in the b.g., always the trailer park.

LUANNE V.O.

...she was six years younger than me, so she doesn't remember our father. I mean even before he split he was working down in Vegas and we were stuck up at State-line. Sallyanne didn't get along with Lee ...Lee was our mom's third husband, he was a pit boss at Harrah's...so that's how Sallyanne came to move in with Wade and me. I wouldn't call that a big success, but don't put that in the interview...

DIRECTOR V.O.

The sister comes down to two bites max...

FULLSCREEN -- TALLY ATWATER

against the seamless backdrop, listens to the DIRECTOR.

DIRECTOR V.O.

If you could just talk about yourself, Tally, how you got started, a few bio bites we can play with...

TALLY ATWATER

I guess I always pretty much knew...exactly what I wanted to do...or at least I always knew ...exactly what I didn't want to do...

INT. TRAILER, -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER AT 15

as she slams down a carton of milk on a cramped Formica table.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- LUANNE AND HER BOYFRIEND WADE AT THE TABLE

LUANNE

Jee-zus, why not spill it.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY

sits down as WADE bites into a hamburger, then spits it out.

WADE

You know I don't eat rare, Luanne.

LUANNE

Then go smoke a joint, something interesting like that.

WADE gets up and walks out, slamming the trailer door.

TALLY ATWATER

I am never going to get married.

LUANNE

Dream on, honey.

FULLSCREEN -- A COMPUTER SCREEN ON WHICH THE WORDS APPEAR:

I AM NEVER GOING TO:

LIVE IN A TRAILER
WORK AT K-MART
MAKE LUANNE'S TACO DIP

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER AT 15

taps out the words on a computer in a word-processing class.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE INSTRUCTOR

INSTRUCTOR

OK, girls, who can tell the class what a good temp needs?

HANDS shoot up. Only TALLY remains intent on her screen.

VOICES

WordPerfect...MS Word...Lotus 123...

ANGLE ON TALLY'S SCREEN AS THE WORD

TEMP

is added to the list of things she will not do.

FULLSCREEN -- B&W INTERVIEW WITH LUANNE ATWATER

LUANNE

...didn't want to do? Live like the rest of us, is all I ever heard she didn't want to do. Just say that Sallyanne knew exactly what she wanted, and what she wanted was to be number one, in neon lights...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER AT 15

waits onstage in a local Miss Teenage Stateline contest. QUICK CUTS as contestants express career ambitions to the M.C.

FIRST CONTESTANT

I'm Lourdes Sanchez, I'm a freshman at Truckee, and I believe that homemaking can show us the way to world peace...

SECOND CONTESTANT

...my dream is to combine responsible parenting and working to help all the peoples of the world live in harmony...

ANGLE ON TALLY

who steps to the mike with crisp resolve, and a fatal lisp.

TALLY ATWATER

I'm Sally Atwater, I'm in ninth grade at Tahoe, I believe that personality and grooming are more important than beauty...

ANGLE ON LUANNE AND WADE IN THE AUDIENCE

Wade snickering.

CLOSE ON TALLY -- SHE SEES A WAY OUT

TALLY ATWATER

...and I'm going to be a TV anchorwoman...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM -- NIGHT -- MISS TEENAGE STATELINE

surrounded by friends and family with camcorders. She wears a crown and carries roses. She is not Tally.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER WATCHING

crestfallen, standing with LUANNE as WADE gets into his pickup.

WADE

That was a big nothing.

WADE starts the engine and guns it.

TALLY (to Luanne)

I don't mind. I mean I know...

LUANNE sees Tally's hurt and takes her hand as WADE honks.

TALLY ATWATER

...if I work hard and keep at it...they're
still going to have to know who I am.

FULLSCREEN -- A COMPUTER SCREEN AS THE WORDS APPEAR:

I AM GOING TO:

WORK HARD
KEEP AT IT
NOT CARE WHAT ANYBODY THINKS

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

alone in the computer room, pauses, then adds the words:

BE FAMOUS

FULLSCREEN -- B&W INTERVIEW WITH LUANNE ATWATER

LUANNE

...Wade thought she was stuck on herself,
but I never did. She was one of those
kids always wanting to move on, you know?
I just thought she saw her bus and got on
it. Got on the dog and rode it.

INT. TRAILER -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER AT 17

studies at the cramped Formica table as LUANNE folds laundry.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WADE OUTSIDE THE OPEN TRAILER DOOR

watching a football game on a portable TV.

WADE (yells in)

Grab me a beer, Sallyanne.

TALLY ATWATER

Grab it yourself.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- LUANNE GETS THE BEER AND HANDS IT OUT

WADE (yells in)

What the fuck is she so busy with?
(no one responds)

She thinks she's going to be some big deal
and go to college, doesn't she?

TALLY (quietly)
I don't intend to spend the rest of my
life restocking shelves at Toys 'R' Us
while some slug watches Monday Night Foot-
ball. If that's what he means.

~~She~~ at Tally. A sweet moment between the two sisters:

LUANNE
You want to go to college, don't let him
stop you...

TALLY ATWATER
He couldn't.

~~Scene~~ -- TALLY ATWATER

~~She~~ poised young woman making a promo video.

DIRECTOR
Okay. Something cute here about college.

TALLY ATWATER
College? Let's see...I remember one of my
professors saying...if I wanted a career
in television I better learn to type 90
words a minute...

DIRECTOR
Terrific. That does college. Now we cut
to your demo tape. Everyone loves demo
tapes, they're such bullshit...

TALLY ATWATER
Oh, God, my demo, I mean, do we have to?

~~END~~ VIDEOTAPE -- TALLY ATWATER IN CAP AND GOWN

~~She~~ delivering a valedictory address.

TALLY ATWATER
...as valedictorian, I speak for...

~~END~~ VIDEOTAPE -- TALLY ATWATER DOING A STANDUP

~~She~~ she "covers" her commencement and arrival on the job market.
~~This~~ is her demo tape, smoothly edited, with commencement mus-
ic, b&w long shots of festivities, b&w closeups of Tally's val-
edictory -- the whole package a job pitch.

TALLY ONSCREEN (THROUGH CUTS)
...already a practised newswoman at the
tender age of 19...she covered the crucial
California Youth Forum elections for the
award-winning National College Network...

FULLSCREEN -- TALLY ATWATER

the poised young newscaster talking to the camera.

TALLY ATWATER
How did I get to Houston? I sent my demo
to 37 stations. From Bangor, Maine, to
Bakersfield, California. Houston was the
only answer I got...

END CREDITS AND CUT TO:

INT. KHOU NEWSROOM OFFICE -- DAY -- TALLY'S DEMO TAPE
plays on a VCR.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN
...you might ask why...out of the thou-
sands of young women who send you tapes,
why hire Sally...Because...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

freezes the tape as he barks orders into a phone. Warren's
collar is loosened and he is draining a mug of coffee.

WARREN (into phone)
...cut the last graf, it saves ten seconds
...so we do a cold open...
(looks for a paper on his desk)
Trish...where's Trish...
(into the phone again)
If you can't get a signal, you got to
bounce it off a satellite, what am I
running here, J school?

WARREN'S POV -- THE NEWSROOM

all noise and bustle, wire machines clattering, a scanner tuned
to the police dispatcher. Warren hangs up and shouts:

WARREN JUSTICE
Vic...that accident at Barker Dam...

VIC NASH -- THE ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

moves from the assignment board to the office door.

WARREN JUSTICE

...there's got to be kid trapped in the wreckage before we do a break-in...

VIC NASH

No kid. Dad, Mom, Gramma in one car, the driver, his wife or his girl friend in the pickup, there's some discrepancy there...

WARREN JUSTICE

Run that discrepancy by me...

VIC NASH

Lady calls, says the woman in the pickup was her husband's whore, quote unquote...

WARREN'S INTERCOM BUZZES -- MELBA

KHOU's receptionist and telephone operator, is on the line.

MELBA

Warren...Trish on line two.

WARREN (into phone)

Listen, sweetheart...I told you...

(a beat)

You haven't been here in six days...no, four o'clock doesn't do it...then don't bother coming in at all...

WARREN holds the phone away from his ear. A beat:

WARREN JUSTICE

...Trish, Trish, that's exactly what I mean, you're fired...

A CLICK as Trish hangs up. To Vic:

WARREN JUSTICE

I warned her, she could do the job or do the nose candy, her choice. She made it. Okay. Who you got for Barker Dan?

VIC NASH

Nobody. You could unfire Trish. She always wanted to go on-camera.

WARREN ignores this and pours himself the last of the coffee.

WARREN JUSTICE
Melba...there's no coffee again...

MELBA
Trish makes the coffee...

VIC (leaving)
We need bodies, Warren. You got to hire,
not fire.

WARREN rewinds the tape, then pushes play.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN
...why hire Sally? Because I'm Sally
...and I'm going to be a star...

A POLAROID IMAGE OF TALLY ATWATER'S FACE EMERGING

holding a KHOU nameboard with the name SALLY ATWATER in plastic
letters. We hear the voice of the receptionist, MELBA.

MELBA (V.O.)
So you're Warren's new project. His last
one was named Trish something...

A PAPER CUTTER TRIMMING THE PHOTOGRAPH

MELBA (V.O.)
Cullinan...

THUMBPRINTS BEING TAKEN

TALLY ATWATER (V.O.)
Excuse me...

A FINISHED LAMINATED POLICE PASS

MELBA (V.O.)
Trish's last name.

INT. KHOU RECEPTION ROOM -- DAY -- MELBA

punches a hole through the pass, passes a neck chain through it
and hands the finished pass to an overly madeup Tally.

MELBA
Your predecessor. She didn't last long.
(picking up the telephone)

Warren...Ms. Atwater is here...
(sotto voce)
...you know...the star...

ANGLE ON TALLY

terrified, sensing she is already a joke. Not knowing what to do with her press pass, she puts it around her neck.

MELBA
Go in, introduce yourself around, Warren's
in the glassed in office...

INT. KHOU NEWSROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

enters tentatively. SHE IS ALICE ADMITTED TO WONDERLAND. Everything is rundown, strange, fast. Phones ring. She is the only one wearing credentials.

TALLY'S POV -- MONITOR SHOWING KHOU ANCHOR ROB SULLIVAN
immaculately coiffed, holding forth on "A.M. Houston".

TALLY'S POV -- VIC NASH AND HIS ASSISTANT SHEILA
both on the phone, monitor the radio and the police scanner.

SHEILA
...45 to Mobile One, 45 to Mobile One...

VIC NASH
...classic vacation tragedy, locators on
the crime site, interview family...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- A REPORTER, HARVEY HARRIS

all hairspray and fake Armani, watches as TALLY puts her oversized bag on a desk and smiles tentatively at him.

HARVEY HARRIS
That desk is taken.

TALLY'S POV -- WARREN JUSTICE

giving a piercing whistle and beckoning her to his office.

INT. WARREN JUSTICE'S OFFICE -- DAY -- TALLY

stands nervously at the door as WARREN JUSTICE studies her.

WARREN JUSTICE

We don't usually wear our credentials in the newsroom.

TALLY tries to remove the pass. It catches in her hair. She frees it, then opens her bag, but the contents spill out. Mortified, she tries to sweep everything back into the bag as

WARREN

amused, picks up a pair of pantyhose and hands them to her.

WARREN JUSTICE

What state's Middle America in?

TALLY ATWATER

Excuse me...

WARREN JUSTICE

The last desk assistant asked me that. Your predecessor.

HARVEY HARRIS appears at the door as Tally gets up.

TALLY ATWATER

I didn't come here to be on the desk...

HARVEY HARRIS

About this Anders sentencing today...I think the way we play it is by calling attention to a public servant violating the voters' trust...

WARREN JUSTICE

No, Harvey. We play it straight. The superintendant of the consolidated school district was found guilty of banging a 14-year old chick. No more, no less. "This is Harvey Harris reporting live from the steps of the county courthouse, where today in his defense School Superintendant Lee Anders denied having carnal knowledge of a goat." Got it?

WARREN turns to Tally as Harvey leaves.

WARREN JUSTICE

So. You didn't come here to be on the desk. At this station, sweetheart, everyone starts on the desk.

TALLY ATWATER
(almost involuntarily)
Sally...

WARREN JUSTICE
Excuse...

TALLY ATWATER
I said Sally. Not sweetheart...

WARREN snaps his fingers as VIC NASH appears at the door.

WARREN JUSTICE
Got it. Thally. Not thweetheart. Vic?

VIC NASH
Here's the rundown. Lou's doing crackdown
on Crack Street...Morty's doing the PBA
endorsing the mayor for a second term...

WARREN JUSTICE
Bury that before the first commercial...

VIC NASH
Harvey's doing Anders and there's the
housekeeper murder in River Oaks...

WARREN JUSTICE
We'll lead with that...

WARREN to Tally, a pop quiz she is expected to fail:

WARREN JUSTICE
...because...

TALLY ATWATER
If it bleeds it leads.
(Warren just looks at her)
You said it on "Nightline". I quoted you
in a paper I did in high school.
(still no response from Warren)
You were at IBS.
(still no response)
White House correspondent, I think...

WARREN looks at her as Vic turns to leave.

WARREN JUSTICE
Vic, this is your new desk assistant.
Sally. Don't call her sweetheart.

TALLY ATWATER
Mr. Justice...

WARREN JUSTICE
Call me Warren.

TALLY ATWATER
...I have to be on camera.

WARREN JUSTICE
You ever actually covered a story?

TALLY ATWATER
Of course. You saw my tape...

WARREN JUSTICE
Right. The crucial California Youth Forum
elections. You start on the desk. Pull
everything off the wires, state and local.
Give it to Vic or Sheila. Keep the tape
library up to date. And...see that Mr.
Coffee over there?
(holds out a mug)
I like it strong.

TALLY ATWATER
I didn't come here to make coffee.

WARREN JUSTICE
Then you have just had the shortest career
in the history of KHOU, channel ten, the
news heartbeat of the Lone Star State.

A SILENT CLASH OF WILLS, THEN TALLY TAKES THE MUG

WARREN (victorious, amused)
Sugar, no cream.

INT. NEWSROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

rips copy off the AP wire and drops it on Vic's desk. Several
fast cuts: Tally's hand ripping copy, dropping it on a desk.

INT. WARREN JUSTICE'S OFFICE -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE

watching Tally fly around the newsroom.

INT. NEWSROOM -- EARLY EVENING -- HARVEY HARRIS ON A MONITOR
does his story. All over the newsroom reporters and producers

watch, as does Warren Justice, having a drink with Vic Nash.

HARVEY HARRIS ONSCREEN

...after his sentence to one thousand hours of community service, former School Superintendant Lee Anders blamed an alcohol problem for leading him into a sexual impropriety with a 14-year old sophomore at John Connally High School. This is...

ANGLE ON TALLY

alone at a wire ticker, watching Harvey, her envy palpable.

INT. NEWSROOM -- EVENING -- WARREN JUSTICE

exits his office and walks through the almost empty office.

WARREN'S POV -- TALLY AT HER DESK

surrounded by wire copy. Warren searches for her name:

WARREN JUSTICE

So...Sally...you have somewhere to live?

TALLY (warily)

I do. Yes.

WARREN JUSTICE

Okay place? You live there alone?

TALLY ATWATER

I live there alone.

WARREN JUSTICE

Good. Good. So. You want a ride home?

TALLY (weighs this)

Otherwise I have just had the shortest career in the history of KHOU, Channel 10, the news heartbeat of the Lone Star State?

WARREN (a beat)

This is strictly...

(laughs)

...optional. But something you can do...

WARREN fishes out a laundry receipt and hands it to Tally.

WARREN JUSTICE

...is pick this up on your way in tomorrow. Shun Lee. It's around the corner.
(runs a finger down her cheek)
You always wear this much makeup?

INT. TALLY'S APARTMENT --- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

furiously, her face covered with cold cream, sits at a dressing table looking at the laundry slip. The apartment is a mess, unpacked boxes, milk crates of books, clothes not yet hung up.

ANGLE ON THE TV SET

where ROB SULLIVAN is doing the late news, and HARVEY HARRIS a reprise of his County Courthouse story.

TALLY

takes a tissue and vigorously wipes the cream from her face. Into the mirror, mimicking Warren:

TALLY ATWATER

You could...pick this up on your way in tomorrow...Shun Lee...around the corner...

ROB SULLIVAN ONSCREEN

Turning to the weather front...looks like scorched stacked up...

(Tally glances at the set)

...all over Texas tomorrow. 94 the predicted high in Galveston, 95 at the Manned Spacecraft Center...

TALLY (to the mirror)

...looks like scorched stacked up all over Texas tomorrow...

(other readings, other accents)

...looks like scorched stacked up all over Texas tomorrow...looks like...

INT. KHOU NEWSROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

enters carrying Warren's shirts on hangers. There are titters as she stalks through the newsroom into Warren's office.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE

on the telephone as Tally enters, holding the shirts.

WARREN (ignoring her)

...A human interest angle? You're covering the execution of one Angelo Russo. Angie Russo killed a Texas Ranger. That tends to limit human interest in this state.

WARREN hangs up. To Tally, still holding the shirts:

WARREN JUSTICE
I wanted them folded and boxed.

TALLY (more nerve than sense)
You got them this way.
(lays them on his desk)
You've got the anchor doing the weather.
Which reduces his credibility as anchor.

WARREN JUSTICE
Let me guess. You...

TALLY ATWATER
I want to do the weather.

WARREN JUSTICE
My instincts are still operational. I told you. You're on the desk.

TALLY ATWATER
I can do the desk and the weather. And get your shirts. Folded and boxed.

HARVEY HARRIS appears at the office door.

HARVEY HARRIS
Stop the rating slide with peroxide.

WARREN studies Tally, then looks at Harvey. Making a point:

WARREN JUSTICE
Harvey, meet our new...weather...person.

INT. DRESSING ROOM -- NIGHT -- WARREN JUSTICE

enters as ROB SULLIVAN, Kleenex tucked around his neck, is being photographed and interviewed before the newscast.

ROB SULLIVAN
...I feel good about life. I go through life with a smile and try to spread a little goodness. Some people in this

business get jaded, because it's always the same awful stories. And it is the same stories. But they're happening to different people...

(points Warren toward the bathroom)
...our new weather gal has a bad case of stage fright...

WARREN JUSTICE

Go spread some goodness on the set, Rob.

ROB rises. Expansively to the interviewer, not missing a beat:

ROB SULLIVAN

I think of the set as my office...

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT -- WARREN JUSTICE

strides toward the sound of vomiting and throws open a stall.

ANGLE ON TALLY ATWATER

ashen and hyperventilating. The words tumble out:

TALLY ATWATER

I can't do it...I can't...

WARREN (tries to calm her)

Hey...now...

TALLY ATWATER

...I've never done anything like this...

WARREN

...sure...it's okay...

TALLY ATWATER

...I lied on my resume...I wasn't valedictorian...I didn't even graduate...

(a wail)

...I faked the tape...

WARREN takes her face and holds it between his two hands.

WARREN JUSTICE

I already know that. I checked it out.

TALLY ATWATER

...but if you checked it out...

WARREN JUSTICE

Look at me.

TALLY ATWATER

...I can't...

WARREN JUSTICE

Say your name.

TALLY (lispig again)

Thally...

WARREN JUSTICE

Try Allie. No. Mallie. No, no. Tally.
This is Tally Atwater. Say it. This is
Tally Atwater...

(demanding, nose to nose)

Say it...

TALLY ATWATER

This is...Tally Atwater...

WARREN JUSTICE

Again...

TALLY ATWATER

This is...Tally Atwater...

WARREN JUSTICE

Look straight into the camera, pretend
it's some guy you're going to fucking die
if you don't get it on with him.

TALLY just looks at him, both shocked and spellbound.

WARREN JUSTICE

You know how that feels, don't you?

TALLY says nothing, now calm. WARREN leads her into the makeup
room. On a monitor: Rob doing the newscast. To a makeup man:

WARREN JUSTICE

Don't lose the hardscrabble.

INT. NEWS SET -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

stands at the weather maps. The makeup woman brushes her face.

FLOOR MANAGER

Ten seconds to weather. Nine...eight...

TALLY'S POV -- THE SET

as the floor manager counts down. Pure terror as she sees the cameras, people off camera staring, her face on the monitors, the floor manager raising his finger, then pointing at Rob.

ROB SULLIVAN

...and now with the weather, here's Sal...
(consults teleprompter)
...Tally...Atwater.

ANGLE ON TALLY ATWATER

as the red light goes on. A moment of peace as surreal as the earlier terror, the camera the lover Warren had promised.

TALLY ATWATER

Thanks, Rob, and it looks like more of the same. Heat, heat, and more heat...

INT. CONTROL ROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER ON ALL SCREENS

finishing her debut as WARREN JUSTICE and VIC NASH watch.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

...and so the five-day forecast is for more, more, more hot, hot, hot, thtay...

TALLY is stricken, then recovers and turns it into a private joke with the viewer.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

...stay inside, cuddle up...

VIC NASH

She eats the lens.

INT. NEWS SET -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

TALLY ATWATER

...and enjoy the air conditioning. Rob...

INT. NEWSROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

enters from the set, still high on her camera moment. No one pays any attention to her.

TALLY'S POV -- MELBA DISTRIBUTING MAIL TO THE VARIOUS SLOTS.

MELBA (to Harvey)

Harvey. Fourteen fans this week.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- HARVEY HARRIS AND SHEILA

with NED BRESLIN, a young cameraman. Harvey grabs the letters and ostentatiously ignores Tally as he talks to Sheila.

HARVEY HARRIS

...the lesson is, you want to anchor, you have to move downmarket...you're in a 12 market like this, you move to a 20...

ANGLE ON NED BRESLIN

quite smitten with Tally, nudges Sheila, embarrassed.

SHEILA

Sally...I mean Tally. Ned Breslin...

NED (to Tally)

I thought you were really good tonight...

HARVEY HARRIS

The one before her. Trish. Warren changed her name, too...

INT. KHOU NEWS SET -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

alone on the dark set, stands by the blue screen weather maps, trying gestures, working on her lisp, needing to be perfect.

TALLY ATWATER

...stay inside, cuddle up...stay inside...stay inside...

TALLY'S POV -- WARREN JUSTICE ON THE EDGE OF THE SET

TALLY (a beat)

I kind of lost it before I went on.

WARREN JUSTICE

I noticed.

TALLY (a deep breath)

If you knew I faked my demo tape...

WARREN JUSTICE

...why did I hire you?

(Tally nods)

I figured if you were hungry enough to do

it, you might be hungry enough to do it.
(a beat)

Look. When I was starting out, I wanted to string for the *Miami Herald*. So I showed them some stories I claimed I'd written for a paper in Colorado. I didn't write the stories, but this paper didn't use bylines, that's why I picked it.

TALLY ATWATER

They didn't check?

WARREN JUSTICE

Sure. But by that time I was their guy on the Nicaraguan border. I was pretty good.

(a beat)

You could be good.

TALLY (a beat)

Thank you.

WARREN (drily)

I was wondering if I could get you to say that.

INT. NEWS SET -- NIGHT -- TALLY

wearing a too-fitted jacket, sprays her hair, as the floor manager counts her down to go back on air after a commercial.

FLOOR MANAGER

...three, two, one...

TALLY gives her hair one last spray, then tosses the can to a stagehand just before the red light goes on.

TALLY ATWATER

To repeat, the high today was a sticky 96, watch that cumulonimbus moving in off the Gulf, bringing a wet Wednesday...Rob...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE AS TALLY COMES OFF THE SET

WARREN JUSTICE

You have that jacket in high school?

TALLY tugs covertly at the jacket as Warren moves on.

INT. KHOU RECEPTION AREA -- DAY -- TALLY

TALLY enters, eating a donut and opening a container of coffee.

TALLY ATWATER
Morning, Melba.

ANGLE ON MELBA

sorting mail. Melba shoves the largest stack of mail at Tally.

MELBA
Thirty-one so far this week, Tally. Up
from nineteen last week.

(reading a card)
"I used to get a beer when the weather re-
port started, but now I wouldn't miss Tal-
ly Atwater. She's better than beer."

(examines a postmark)
And every single one mailed from the
Church Street Post Office. That's out
where you live, isn't it?

TALLY picks up the mail, refusing to acknowledge the innuendo.

TALLY (moving on)
Maybe people are just hanging around out
there. Hoping to catch a glimpse of their
favorite weather reporter...

MELBA
Up close and personal.

INT. NEWSROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

humiliated, aware she is a newsroom joke, glances around co-
vertly, then drops the mail in a wastebasket en route her desk.

TALLY (meets no eyes)
Morning, Sheila...Harvey...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE AT THE ASSIGNMENT BOARD

watches Tally as VIC NASH updates the board.

VIC NASH
...day like today, all you can hope is
somebody blows up the Astrodome...

WARREN JUSTICE
Hold that thought, Vic...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY AT HER DESK

pretending rapt concentration on the morning paper.

WARREN (sits on her desk)
Try spreading the postmarks out. Monday,
the Galleria. Tuesday, Pennzoil Plaza.

TALLY (miserable)
Does everybody know?

WARREN JUSTICE
I would say...everybody who's not on an
extended leave of absence. But...
(a beat)
On the sunny side...you've got three sponsors
fighting for the weather spot. Which means...

INT. HAIRDRESSER'S SALON -- DAY -- A CLOUD OF CUT HAIR
falling on Tally's shoulders.

TALLY'S POV -- WARREN'S REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR
as she shakes out her sleek new haircut.

WARREN JUSTICE
Now you forget about it.

INT. -- NEIMAN MARCUS -- TALLY AT A RACK OF JACKETS
studies an overshaped pink jacket she has taken off the rack.

WARREN
Not unless you want to go on as a powder
puff...the camera likes strong color...
think basic...
(reaches for a red jacket)
Try this one...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- ANOTHER CUSTOMER

reaches for the same jacket from the other side of the rack.

CUSTOMER (looks through the rack)
Sorry...
(a double-take)
Wait...you're the weather girl...

TALLY is startled, then, as the woman retreats, sotto voce:

TALLY (delighted)
She recognized me.

ANGLE ON WARREN JUSTICE

charmed by her delight and responsiveness.

WARREN JUSTICE
Ask her to write you a fan letter.

INT. KHOU VAN -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

expounding on her career as NED drives a levee road.

TALLY ATWATER
...I figure a year here, then I jump to an
O & O...a year there, then I go to the
network...White House correspondent would
be good...

NED
Stop talking like Harvey and run it past
me again what we're doing out here.

TALLY ATWATER
I told you. I called this hydraulics guy
at the Army Engineers...

NED
The hydraulics guy was where you lost me.

TALLY (patient)
...and he said if it rains this week, you
can't rule out a levee break. So. Rain's
a weather story. That makes this levee
break a weather story. Weather's my beat,
so I cover it.

NED
"This levee break" hasn't happened. It's
not even raining.

TALLY impatiently adjusts the van's radio earphones.

TALLY ATWATER
So we shoot some background, then if it
does rain, we've got half the package...
(listening, abruptly)
Wait. Good. Harvey's van is down.
(listening)

He's supposed to be on his way to the
Houston Ship Channel...

(takes off earphones)

How far are we from there...

NED

I thought we were doing this bullshit
backgrounder on the levee.

TALLY ATWATER

Now we have a real story. How far?

NED

Forty miles.

TALLY picks up the radio mike. Speaking into it:

TALLY ATWATER

Vic? Tally. Ned and I are less than four
minutes from this Ship Channel story...

(as Ned looks on in disbelief)

...sorry...we're there...copy?

TALLY circles her finger 180 degrees and pretends not to hear.

TALLY ATWATER

...can't read you, you're breaking up...
sorry, can't read...

EXT. LEVEE ROAD -- DAY -- THE KHOU VAN

makes a U-turn and gains speed as TALLY ATWATER reaches out the
window and slaps a flashing red light on the roof.

EXT. HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL -- DAY -- TWO BODIES

lying under a tarpaulin on the bank of the channel.

ANGLE ON TALLY AND NED

exiting the KHOU van, Ned lugging his equipment.

ANGLE ON WARREN JUSTICE

detaching himself from the crowd of reporters.

WARREN JUSTICE

What the hell are you doing here?

TALLY ATWATER

Harvey's truck is down.

WARREN JUSTICE
And I'm covering until he gets here.

TALLY ATWATER
But if he doesn't get here...you'll need
an on-camera reporter.

WARREN JUSTICE
You don't even know what the story is.

TALLY (glances around)
Uh...somebody drowned?

WARREN JUSTICE
You don't give up, do you.
(a beat)
Big thing to remember is, stay upwind.

TALLY ATWATER
...uh...which way is upwind...

WARREN JUSTICE
Away from the stink. Floaters stink be-
cause gas forms in the stomach...

NED
That's what brings them to the surface,
sometimes they pop...

ANGLE ON THE CHANNEL BANK

where police, reporters and deputy coroners wait. Some have
handkerchiefs over their faces against the smell, others smoke
cigars. Ned starts shooting the police spokesman.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

takes a microphone from Ned and hands it to Tally.

WARREN JUSTICE
Okay. It's your show.

SPOKESMAN
...to the best of our knowledge...the
victims...there's two of them now...

WARREN (sotto voce)
Jam the goddamn mike in his goddamn face.

TALLY tries to elbow her way closer. She is pushed aside.

TALLY ATWATER
Wait just a minute...

REPORTER
Up yours, sister...

WARREN brings his foot down hard into the mud, splattering the reporter, who loses his place to Tally.

REPORTER
What the fuck...

SPOKESMAN
...appear to be illegals, but we'll have to wait until we make a positive ID...

TALLY ATWATER
...and how do you do that, officer?

SPOKESMAN
Sheriff, missy. You sure you belong here?

TALLY ATWATER
I said, how do you make a positive ID?

SPOKESMAN
Normally out of dental records, but I don't think dentistry is a big thing with this kind of victim. We can call this one Juan Doe...

TALLY ATWATER
His name is Juan Doe?

LAUGHTER BREAKS OUT

among the reporters and officials.

ANGLE ON TALLY

mortified that in her anxiety she has rushed into this trap.

TALLY (recovering)
...or is that your way of suggesting that this particular John Doe, or unidentified person, is or was Spanish speaking?

ANGLE ON WARREN JUSTICE

pleased to see Tally go for the jugular.

EXT. SHIP CHANNEL -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE

in the open door of the KHOU van, talking on the car phone.

ANGLE ON NED

lugging his equipment to a spot on the bank.

NED

We can shoot from up here.

TALLY ATWATER

But they're down there. The...the...

WARREN JUSTICE

The stiff. Raul Sota and Domingo Katz.
From Sinaloa. Deckhands on the S.S. Xal-
apa out of Veracruz. They jumped ship.

TALLY ATWATER

How do you know that?

WARREN JUSTICE

I called the harbormaster. Which is what
you do if I ever give you another chance.

TALLY determinedly scrambles down the bank with her makeup bag.

TALLY (as she goes)

Raul Sota and Domingo Katz, Raul Sota and
Domingo Katz, Raul...

NED (follows)

Shit, I'll be up to my ass in mud...

TALLY (practicing)

"The storm that slammed into the gulf yes-
terday..."

WARREN JUSTICE

...forget yesterday. Yesterday is histo-
ry. News happens today...

TALLY (to herself)

...forget yesterday....

WARREN lights a cigar. NED puts a handkerchief over his nose.

WARREN JUSTICE

...shoulder facing the camera. That way Ned can pick up the body bags in the background, plus the ships in the channel...

TALLY ATWATER

Raul Sota, Domingo Katz. Oh, God, I think I'm going to faint. Where's upwind?

WARREN JUSTICE

Not where you're at. Why are they here. Why did they jump ship.

NED

Come on, we'll lose the light.

TALLY moves to spray her hair. WARREN grabs the can from her.

WARREN

This isn't about your hair. This is about them. Two guys jump ship to come to the land of plenty, the big enchilada, and they drown 25 feet from getting there. People like Raul Sota and Domingo Katz don't even get taught how to swim. That's what this story's about.

(throws the can away)

Not hair spray.

TALLY licks her lips, desperate to remember everything.

TALLY ATWATER

Cut one, three-two-one. Oh, shit, I forgot what I was going to say...

WARREN (to Ned)

Keep it wide, then a slow zoom in.

(to Tally)

Raul Sota. Domingo Katz. What did they want. What did they die for...

TALLY ATWATER

Cut two, three-two-one. In the Houston Boat Channel today...

WARREN JUSTICE

Cut. The Houston Ship Channel...

TALLY ATWATER

In the Houston Ship Channel today, divers

were still...

WARREN (yelling)
Present tense. "Are" still...

TALLY ATWATER
In the Houston Ship Channel today, divers
are still braving debris-laden waters...

WARREN JUSTICE
Hold the divers. You lead with Raul Sota.
Domingo Katz. 25 feet from the big enchi-
lada. You have any idea what it's like to
want something that bad?
(Tally, near tears, freezes)
Answer me. Do you?

TALLY (cold fury)
Yes.

WARREN looks at her, satisfied that he has broken through.

WARREN JUSTICE
Then show me.

INT. TALLY ATWATER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

barefoot, in an oversized T-shirt, a towel around her wet hair,
eating Chinese takeout as she talks on the telephone and views
her frozen image on a VCR. Into the telephone:

TALLY ATWATER
...I swear, Luanne, I was the reporter on
the scene. Listen...

TALLY unfreezes the VCR and holds the receiver to it.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN
...This is Tally Atwater, at the Houston
Ship Channel...

TALLY freezes frame and resumes the call, examining her image
as if to improve it, touching hair and makeup with a chopstick.

TALLY ATWATER
I could send you a tape...
(listens, spirits dampened)
So what happened to the VCR.
(listens)
Wade did what?

(listens)
You don't have to put up with that, Luanne. You can just...walk out.
(she has heard this before)
Right. I don't understand. I definitely do not understand what it's like to live with somebody. You're absolutely right...

~~THE~~ BELL RINGS.

TALLY (losing it)
...and you know what, Luanne? I don't want to understand. I don't intend ever to understand...
(a beat, a second ring)
Look. Luanne. I'm sorry. I have to go...the doorbell...
(hangs up, a third ring)
Just a minute.

~~THE~~ POV AS SHE OPENS THE DOOR -- WARREN JUSTICE

~~HE~~ walks in, takes a look around, takes the remote from ~~Tally's~~ hand and switches off the VCR.

WARREN JUSTICE
How many times you seen that now?

TALLY ATWATER
Just happened to be in the neighborhood?

~~WARREN~~ is roaming the room, checking out her books, picking up a magazine and glancing at the cover lines.

WARREN JUSTICE
"TV's Million Dollar Baby -- How She Got There".
(drops the magazine)
You read the New York Times today?
(Tally nods yes)
Washington Post?
(Tally nods no)
Wall Street Journal, LA Times, Miami Herald?

TALLY says nothing, defensive. Warren picks up a takeout carton and begins eating a rib.

WARREN JUSTICE
You know how big our news hole is? Eleven

and a half minutes. We've got fourteen reporters. Each one fighting for a piece of those eleven and a half minutes. You intend to go up against that, you better get smart fast.

(about the rib)

I'll show you a better place for Chinese.

TALLY ATWATER

Are you saying I'm a reporter now?

WARREN JUSTICE

(sits down, assesses her)

What is it you want?

(when Tally does not answer)

Come on. Five, ten years down the line. You want to be at the network, don't you.

TALLY ATWATER

I have to be.

WARREN JUSTICE

Why.

TALLY ATWATER

You must have wanted to be at IBS.

WARREN JUSTICE

Let's just say I don't have to be there now. You do.

(shrewdly)

You running from a bad scene? Trying to prove something?

(Tally is silent)

I see. Not that way at all. Comfortable childhood, intact nuclear family?

TALLY (uncomfortable)

Something like that.

WARREN JUSTICE

Nice. Cozy. And unusual. Not too many comfortable little girls have to go to the network.

(a beat)

I can help you get there. You won't necessarily thank me for it.

TALLY (resistant)

I'm not going to be Trish.

WARREN JUSTICE

Didn't anybody in your life ever help you
get something you wanted?

TALLY looks away. This is too close to home.

WARREN JUSTICE

You think I came by here to fuck you,
don't you.

(gets up to go)

I like you. Take it or leave it.

(at the door)

Next time, it's your move.

FULL SCREEN -- PHOTO FLOOD -- TALLY ATWATER

again the poised young woman against the seamless backdrop.

TALLY ATWATER

...it was in Houston where I really
learned this business, learned my ABCs,
paid my dues, earned my wound stripes...

HER VOICE CONTINUES OVER NEXT THREE STANDUPS

EXT. ELLINGTON AIR FORCE BASE -- DAY -- TALLY

on the wing of a jet fighter, in a tight miniskirt, loses her
balance in the jet blast of a flyover and falls off the wing.

ANGLE ON NED SHOOTING TALLY AS SHE FALLS

still holding her mike, hair flying, underwear visible.

EXT. STREET DEMO -- DAY -- TALLY

gets in close as police flail at demonstrators, who break and
run, knocking Tally and Ned down.

EXT. BUNGEE JUMPING CONTEST -- DAY -- NED

whips his camera around to capture the fall of a bungee jumper
and as he does the camera whacks Tally, knocking her over.

TALLY ATWATER V.O.

...learned that when you get knocked down,
you get up again...

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM -- NIGHT -- A LOCAL BAND

plays oldies under balloons reading: "MIKE MORLEY FOR CONGRESS"

ANGLE ON ROB SULLIVAN ON A TV MONITOR

ROB SULLIVAN ONSCREEN

...what looks like Mike Morley's big win tonight should end speculation about his role in the First Federal S&L bailout...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER & NED

watch the monitor as they stake out a position for their feed.

TALLY (determined)

Not if I get him on camera...

TALLY takes two prawns from the buffet table, nibbles at one and feeds the other to Ned, who leaves the tail in her fingers.

TALLY ATWATER

...dinner...

TALLY drops the shrimp tails in a glass and takes her place for the shot as NED sees another REPORTER moving in with his crew.

NED

Tal, Channel 9, twelve o'clock high.

TALLY (to the reporter)

Excuse me...

REPORTER (to his crew)

Get the banner behind me...

TALLY ATWATER

If you could please wait...

REPORTER (to his crew)

Are we set? Three...two...one...

NED looks at Tally and shrugs, an it's up-to-you shrug. TALLY takes a breath and yanks the cord on the other crew's lights.

TALLY ATWATER

Get the fuck out of my shot.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY -- NIGHT -- A DIXIELAND BAND

playing as it marches through the lobby.

ANGLE ON WARREN JUSTICE

Momentarily obscured by "MIKE MORLEY FOR CONGRESS" balloons, he reemerges, greeting POLS and REPORTERS as he goes.

WARREN JUSTICE

Is there an acceptance yet...

REPORTER

It's out, but it's embargoed until ten...

INT. HOTEL MEZZANINE -- NIGHT -- TALLY & NED

exit the ballroom looking for their next shot.

TALLY'S POV -- CONGRESSMAN MIKE MORLEY ON A BACK STAIRWAY

flanked by aides, trying to reach the lobby without being waylaid by reporters.

TALLY ATWATER

It's Morley. Let's get him...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- MIKE MORLEY AND AIDES ON THE BACK STAIRWAY

race downstairs as Tally and Ned pursue. Close, jumpy film.

TALLY ATWATER

Congressman Morley, do you think your win tonight can defuse the investigation into your role in the First Federal bailout...

AIDE (overlapping)

...that is no longer an issue...

INT. HOTEL KITCHEN - NIGHT -- TALLY AND NED IN PURSUIT

as Morley and his aides race through the kitchen. COOKS and WAITERS scatter.

TALLY ATWATER

...your brother in law was chairman of First Fed...wasn't he?

AIDE (overlapping)

...Miss, do you have vaginal or clitoral orgasms...

TALLY ATWATER

...and on federal bailout funds has bought

a house in Palm Beach...

A HAND goes over Ned's lens as they race toward the lobby.

AIDE V.O.

...isn't it true you prefer fellatio...although you're a practicing lesbian...

INT. LOBBY -- WARREN JUSTICE

watching as Morley breaks through the door into the lobby. Warren is with a woman who is all network style, an IBS credential hung over her expensive suit.

WARREN'S POV -- TALLY

exiting the kitchen, bedraggled and outsmarted as Mike Morley and his aides move into the roar of the crowd.

TALLY (to Warren)

That asshole Morley...

TALLY stops as she recognizes the woman. She feels abruptly inadequate, a trailer park girl. Her hand goes to her face.

TALLY (involuntarily)

Joanna Kennelly...

WARREN JUSTICE

Joanna, this is Tally Atwater. Joanna's my ex-wife.

JOANNA KENNELLY

One of them.

WARREN JUSTICE

The one who left me in Washington. As opposed to the one who left me in Miami. We know this is a big story, because Joanna doesn't like to leave New York. Usually the story comes to her. In fourteen-minute segments.

JOANNA (to Warren)

Life in the flyover hasn't mellowed you.
(regarding Tally)

What did you expect to get from Morley?

WARREN (sees trouble)

Come on, Tal. I'll show you the beauty of

television news...

(to Ned, exiting the kitchen)

...make sure we got plenty of ambient noise on the kitchen...

TALLY stands her ground as WARREN tries to guide her away.

TALLY (to Joanna)

I expected to get him on camera. And I did. Okay?

INT. KHOU EDITING ROOM -- NIGHT -- WARREN JUSTICE

sits at the monitor editing Tally's film. His dialogue overlaps what he is doing to the film.

WARREN JUSTICE

Oliver North tried that crap on me once
...just keep talking, get enough on the track...you can rerecord your questions...

TALLY stands behind him. A sexual current here. WARREN moves the film back and forth, a series of dissolves as he cuts out the dialogue of the Morley aide, making the film seamless.

TALLY ATWATER

So you and...Joanna...

WARREN (not looking up)

Joanna thought I was a Capitol Insider. Which at the time I was. That's why she married me. For a while there we were a cute couple on the Sunday shows.

TALLY ATWATER

What happened.

WARREN JUSTICE

Joanna decided I was bad news. As did her predecessor. Most women do.

(a beat)

Being around in the morning isn't my long suit.

(reworking the tape)

...then you lay the re-recorded questions over the ambient noise in the kitchen...

(looks at her)

Maybe it's not your long suit either.

TALLY (meeting his gaze)

Maybe not.

WARREN JUSTICE

I have an idea we're not so different...

(Tally does not reply)

...keep it loose, keep it open...

(reworks the tape)

And if we get lucky...

THE HAND GOING OVER NED'S LENS

WARREN JUSTICE

...gold.

INT. KHOU NEWSROOM -- NIGHT -- MONITORS

showing CONGRESSMAN MIKE MORLEY in the hotel kitchen.

TALLY ATWATER V.O. ONSCREEN

...about to join jubilant supporters at a downtown hotel tonight, Congressman Morley refused to answer reporters' questions...

ANGLE ON WARREN

opening a can of beer and handing it to Tally. The newsroom is empty except for the two of them, watching the monitors.

NED'S CAMERA CLOSE ON MORLEY

with Tally's rerecorded question over. Warren has edited out the aides and retaped Tally's questions over ambient noise.

TALLY ATWATER V.O. ONSCREEN

Congressman Morley, do you think your win tonight can defuse the investigation into your role in the First Federal bailout...

ANGLE ON TALLY -- WATCHING THE MONITOR

TALLY ATWATER

Remember the night you came by my house?
You said next time, it was my move?

ANGLE ON WARREN

who has opened a second beer and is setting it down to turn to Tally as she reaches for him, spilling the beer on his shirt.

WARREN JUSTICE

Never mind...

TALLY grabs up copy paper and rubs at the beer. Real electricity as she touches his chest. She keeps rubbing, more slowly.

ANGLE ON THE MONITOR -- THE HAND GOING OVER THE LENS

TALLY ATWATER V.O. ONSCREEN
...as aides tried to shield him from disturbing allegations about...

ANGLE ON WARREN AND TALLY

WARREN (urgent)
Let's get out of here.

TALLY ATWATER
I have to call my sister...

WARREN JUSTICE
Call her tomorrow.

TALLY ATWATER
It's her birthday...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN IN HIS OFFICE

turning out the light.

WARREN'S POV -- TALLY ON THE TELEPHONE AT HER DESK

talking too intensely, standing, then sitting down again.

ANGLE ON TALLY ON THE TELEPHONE

beaten, the joy and excitement gone from her face.

TALLY (into the phone)
...but why didn't you call me...I can get a plane tonight...don't do anything, Lu-
anne, I'll be there...

TALLY replaces the receiver and looks up to see WARREN. A freighted moment: each sees the evening's promise vanishing.

TALLY ATWATER
My sister...needs me to come home for a day. Two days.
(a beat)
I don't know how many days.

WARREN JUSTICE
You want me to come with you?

TALLY ATWATER
No.

WARREN JUSTICE
I'll drive you to the airport.

TALLY ATWATER
I'd never get on the plane.

EXT. TRAILER PARK -- DAY -- ESTABLISHING

the trailer park we saw in the credits. Rain pours down.

INT. TRAILER -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

sits across from LUANNE, who is pregnant, and has a black eye.
Rain beats against the trailer.

LUANNE
After the baby comes I qualify for AFDC.
As long as they don't catch Wade around.

TALLY ATWATER
Why would you let him come around.

LUANNE
Easy for you to say.

TALLY ATWATER
You could come to Houston...take time to
think about what you want to do...

LUANNE (laughs)
I'd say my options were limited.

TALLY (a beat)
How much do you need.

LUANNE
You're out of here. You shouldn't have to
help me.

TALLY ATWATER
I'd still be here if you hadn't helped me.

LUANNE
I'm a month or two behind...

TALLY ATWATER
How many months?

LUANNE
Maybe six? Seven?

INT. TRAILER PARK OFFICE -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER
writes a check as she negotiates with the MANAGER.

TALLY ATWATER
I'm giving you what I can today...

MANAGER
I need it in full this week, I told her,
or I'll have to get the marshals in.

TALLY ATWATER
You'll have the rest by Friday...

TALLY hears a BELL TINKLE as the screen door to the office is
pushed open. The manager looks up. She turns.

TALLY'S POV -- WARREN JUSTICE

enters the office, rainsoaked, removing bills from a wallet.

WARREN JUSTICE
How much.

TALLY (stunned)
How...did you get here...

WARREN JUSTICE
On Delta. Via Reno. How much.

MANAGER
Still five-fifty short.

WARREN (lays down bills)
I'm giving you six. The extra fifty goes
on account.
(to Tally)
Let's go.

TALLY rises. As she and Warren turn to the door:

MANAGER
Must be doing real well in Texas, Sally-
anne. Get to interview any personalities?

TALLY looks at him, not giving an inch.

TALLY ATWATER

Yes.

EXT. TRAILER PARK -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER AND WARREN JUSTICE exit the office. She hurries through the mud to catch up.

TALLY (fiercely)

I'm not taking money from you.

WARREN JUSTICE

You're coming up for a raise, we'll call it retroactive.

TALLY fighting tears, her defenses threatened, tries to keep up with Warren as he strides through the rain toward a rental car.

TALLY ATWATER

I don't intend to owe anybody anything...

WARREN JUSTICE

Join the real world, we all owe somebody.

TALLY ATWATER

I don't need...

WARREN JUSTICE

You need, all right.

(stops at the car)

Look at me. You don't come out of here and not need. You're scared if you stop fighting long enough to let anybody close you'll fall on your ass and end up right back here. So you need to be better than anybody else. You need to show them. You need to get up there where everybody can see you and nobody can reach you.

TALLY looks away, beginning to break.

WARREN JUSTICE

You need like nobody I ever saw. Why the fuck you think I came here?

TALLY ATWATER

I don't know why you came here.

WARREN JUSTICE

To knock down a few of those walls you put up around yourself.

EXT. MOTEL -- DAY -- WARREN'S RENTAL CAR

parked in front of the motel.

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- DAY -- WARREN

enters and turns to TALLY, hesitating in the door.

WARREN JUSTICE

Close the door.

(as she does so)

Come here.

TALLY moves to Warren, who draws her down on the bed. A long exploratory embrace. Warren begins to unbutton her blouse. Tally puts her hands over his, a pause, her breath broken.

TALLY ATWATER

My mother is younger than you are.

WARREN unbuttons another button. Tally begins to help him.

TALLY ATWATER

She was fifteen when Luanne was born...

(starts to undo his shirt)

...half the girls I know dropped out of high school to move in with some guy...

(touches his skin)

...I'm not going to...live that way...

WARREN slides her blouse off one shoulder.

WARREN JUSTICE

I'm not proposing a way of life.

TALLY ATWATER

Keep it loose, keep it open?

TALLY lets the blouse drop as Warren pulls her into his arms.

WARREN JUSTICE

Deal.

INT. MOTEL -- NIGHT -- WARREN & TALLY

making love. Rain pelting against the windows. The blinking light of the motel sign reflecting off their bodies.

INT. MOTEL -- NIGHT -- WARREN & TALLY

passion temporarily sated. The rain has stopped, the motel sign still blinks. A moment of reflection.

WARREN JUSTICE

So I did some juvenile time...got out... hit an off-duty cop. Judge said anchors aweigh or the county farm. So. Joined the Navy, got discharged, met some people, ended up in Miami working as an investigator in the state attorney's office...

TALLY ATWATER

What kind of place did you come from...

WARREN JUSTICE

Not too different from you. Beatup RV off the Tamiami Highway. That's why I get it. You want to get to the network, look back here and say fuck you all, up yours.

TALLY brushes her lips over his chest.

WARREN JUSTICE

You won't.

(pulls her to him)

Once you're where you thought you wanted to be...

TALLY ATWATER

If IBS was where you wanted to be...

WARREN JUSTICE

Working for a network isn't like discovering penicillin...

TALLY ATWATER

Neither is working for KHOU Houston.

WARREN JUSTICE

Yeah. But there's less asskissing. Less posturing. Less spin. Less willingness to buy it...

WARREN traces a finger over Tally's body. As she responds:

WARREN JUSTICE

...and I'm not talking about politicians. I'm talking about what Joanna would call

my colleagues...oh...shit...

INT. EDITING ROOM -- DAY -- A TAPE ON AN EDITING SCREEN

fast forwards past the IBS Evening News logo & sets, with IBS anchor TOM ORR at the anchor desk, stopping finally on

WARREN JUSTICE

outside the White House, younger, more confident, on the cone.

WARREN JUSTICE ONSCREEN

This is Warren Justice...reporting from what is tonight a very beleaguered White House...where insiders are wondering...

ANGLE ON TALLY ATWATER

at an editing machine with a pile of tapes. THROUGHOUT THIS SEQUENCE, TALLY ZOOMS IN AND OUT ON WARREN'S FACE, MAKING IT LARGER AND SMALLER, AS IF TRYING TO FIND THE KEY TO A SECRET.

TALLY

rewinds, replaces one tape with another, then fast-forwards and stops. Again: WARREN, with the Kremlin in the b.g.

WARREN JUSTICE ONSCREEN

...what began as a ceremonial summit between two world leaders looked more today like a down-home bar brawl, as...

ANOTHER FREEZE FRAME ON WARREN

as Tally again comes in tight on him.

NEWSPAPER MICROFILM SEEN ON A VIEWING MACHINE

the pages blurring as TALLY searches. THE MICROFILM STOPS on a small story and photo of WARREN JUSTICE. The headline reads:

IBS SCRAMBLES TO REPLACE WARREN JUSTICE

No Reason Given for
News Star's Walkout

CLOSE ON WARREN'S FACE AS TALLY CHANGES FOCUS

coming in so close that we see only Ben-Day dots.

INT. WARREN JUSTICE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- A TANGLE OF SHEETS

on the bed, a crackle of voices from Warren's police scanner.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN AND TALLY

on the floor, post-coital, Tally leaning on an elbow. We have come in late on a line of questioning he wants to discourage.

TALLY ATWATER

...so there must have been a reason...

WARREN (mocking)

Let's try, subject Warren Justice has a defective capacity for going with the flow. Professionally. As well as in his...interpersonal...relationships.

TALLY ATWATER

...uh uh, try again...

WARREN JUSTICE

...all I want to try again is...

WARREN pulls Tally back down to him.

WARREN JUSTICE

...another shot at an interpersonal relationship. The kind you're not so bad at your ownself. This kind...and this...

VOICE ON SCANNER

...all units, possible 261...1147 Mari-
posa, alleged victim female Caucasian...

TALLY (breathing fast)

Why do you always have the scanner on?

WARREN (nuzzling)

Because I find the sound of human iniquity
soothing...

VOICE ON THE SCANNER

...possible 502, Jones and Halsey, vehicle
registered to Starlite Limo...

ANGLE ON TALLY

both getting it on with Warren and trying to hear the scanner.
Warren's voice is part desire, part putting Tally to the test.

WARREN JUSTICE

Do you know...what a...502...is?

TALLY ATWATER

...I don't care...

WARREN JUSTICE

A 502...is...DWI...and DWI...is...driving...while...intoxicated...

TALLY ATWATER

Oh...God...Starlite Limo...

WARREN JUSTICE

...that's the one...the rockers...use...

TALLY ATWATER

...sounds like a...drug...bust...

WARREN JUSTICE

... who's in town tonight...

TALLY ATWATER

...Grand Larceny...at the Astrodome...

WARREN JUSTICE

...controlled substances...this is Tally...Atwater...reporting live...

TALLY (bolt upright)

Warren, goddamn you. I'm not going.

WARREN grabs Tally's shirt off the floor.

WARREN JUSTICE

First on the scene?

(hands her the shirt)

One-on-one with the lead guitar?

TALLY hesitates, then takes the shirt. Warren, victorious:

WARREN JUSTICE

Ambitious little fucker, I knew you'd go.

EXT. PLAYING FIELD BLEACHERS -- DAY -- TALLY AND WARREN

alone in the empty bleachers of a park playing field, eating a takeout lunch, the sun in Tally's hair.

TALLY ATWATER

You want to know a secret? When I was in

high school...

WARREN JUSTICE
...about two weeks ago...

TALLY (laughing)
...five years ago except I have to start
cheating a year...to build in time...

WARREN JUSTICE
...so you can get to the network by the
time you're twenty-five, I copy, now tell
me the secret...

TALLY ATWATER
...I used to enter all these contests, you
know? Miss Stateline? Miss Truckee?
Miss Tahoe? Miss Sierra Logger?

WARREN JUSTICE
...I'd keep that one a secret too...

TALLY ATWATER
...no...the secret is...in not one of
those contests....did I ever finish in the
top five.

WARREN JUSTICE
What did you do for talent? Did you by
any chance sing "Feelings?"

TALLY ATWATER
No. For your information. I did not by
any chance sing "Feelings."

EXT. PLAYING FIELD -- DAY -- TALLY

alone on the playing field, belts out "The Impossible Dream".

ANOTHER ANGLE -- CLOSE ON WARREN WATCHING FROM THE BLEACHERS
and we realize that he is in love with her.

FULLSCREEN -- NIGHT -- WHOU ANTENNA AND LIGHTED CALL LETTERS
blink in the night sky. THE CAMERA pulls back to reveal:

EXT. ROOF KHOU BUILDING -- NIGHT -- TALLY AND WARREN
lying on the roof sharing a beer as they watch the sky.

WARREN JUSTICE

I never figured a partial eclipse would
get to be my idea of a good time.

TALLY ATWATER

I still don't see anything.

(rolls over)

...you ever thought it might be time for
me to get an agent?

WARREN (a beat)

I was talking to the guys upstairs...you
want to try the promo spot this month?

TALLY ATWATER

I thought Rob did the promos.

WARREN JUSTICE

The consensus is...you're hotter than Rob.
(opens another beer, casual)
I'd hold off on the agent thing...

TALLY registers his resistance and studies the sky again.

TALLY ATWATER

I mean what's a partial eclipse supposed
to look like anyway...

INT. TALLY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT -- JOANNA KENNELLY ON VCR

JOANNA ONSCREEN

...Joanna Kennelly for IBS One on One...
(a wry smile)
...see you next week.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY WATCHING

and trying Joanna's wry smile as she mouths her own signoff.

INT. KHOU MAKEUP ROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

works on her promo as a MAKEUP MAN packs up his brushes.

TALLY ATWATER

...this is Tally Atwater for KHOU...
(tries the wry smile)
...Channel 10, the news heartbeat...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

WARREN JUSTICE
Wait. What's with the smile?

MAKEUP MAN (exiting)
Whenever you're ready...

TALLY (repeats)
This is Tally Atwater for KHOU...
(the wry smile again)
...the news heartbeat of the Lone Star
State. You give us thirty minutes...we'll
give you Houston...and the world...

WARREN JUSTICE
You been watching Joanna?

TALLY (defensive)
Joanna hasn't cornered smiles, has she?

WARREN JUSTICE
She's cornered that one. It's not you.
You want to smile, let's see a real smile.
After you say Houston.

TALLY (a smile)
...Houston...and the world...

WARREN JUSTICE
After Houston. Not before. After.

TALLY ATWATER
...we'll give you Houston...
(tries again)
...and the world...

WARREN JUSTICE
No. A real smile. A sad smile. A rueful
smile. A brave smile. A trademark smile.

TALLY ATWATER
...Houston...
(an unsuccessful smile)
...and the world...
(tries again)
...Houston...
(another unsuccessful smile)
...and the world...Houston...

WARREN abruptly slaps her face.

WARREN JUSTICE

Now smile.

TALLY is startled. Then she smiles -- a sad smile, a rueful smile, a brave smile, the smile that will become her trademark.

TALLY ATWATER

...and the world...

INT. ANCHOR DESK -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

as the crew programs lights and the MAKEUP MAN dusts her nose.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE IN THE CONTROL ROOM
standing behind the DIRECTOR.

WARREN JUSTICE

Give her a key light. She doesn't make
contact until the light hits her eyes.

DIRECTOR

Rob doesn't use a key light.

WARREN JUSTICE

Rob's not doing this promo.

DIRECTOR (edgy)

The newsroom wants a key light for Ms.
Atwater.

WARREN'S POV -- TALLY

as the light hits her eyes and she comes alive.

INT. FLAHERTY'S BAR -- NIGHT -- TALLY IN THE KHOU PROMO

onscreen on the bar TV. Christmas trees light the bar, over
which hang photos of Tally, Rob, Harvey, and other KHOU staff.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

...we'll give you Houston...

(the smile)

...and the world...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY AND WARREN

dancing to the music from a jukebox.

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WAITING ROOM -- NIGHT -- A TV SCREEN

showing the Times Square New Year's countdown.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- NED

watches the screen as he bangs a soft-drink vending machine.

NED

One minute, the ball drops in New York...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER

sprawled on the floor intent on Broadcast Week.

TALLY'S POV -- A BROADCAST WEEK PHOTO OF BUCKY TERRANOVA

identified as "Agent of the Anchors," with small cuts showing what anchors he has placed in what markets.

NED

So how come you get to sit in with Rob tomorrow night? Warren fix it?

TALLY ATWATER

I can't get anything on my own? Is that what you think?

(relents)

Nobody else wanted to work New Year's Day.

(still reading)

You ever met Bucky Terranova?

NED (gives her a Coke)

Agents are for the babes, Tal, not for the grunts.

TALLY ATWATER

He's coming to Houston for a panel next week...so is Joanna Kennelly...

NED looks at her, then begins checking his camera.

NED (too casual)

You know, this deal with you and Warren ...hasn't exactly escaped anyone's attention.

(when Tally does not respond)

I just thought you should know that. Before anybody gets in too deep.

TALLY ATWATER

Nobody's getting in too deep.

NED

Warren know that?

TALLY (looking at the TV)
...oops...ten, nine, eight, seven...

INT. MATERNITY WARD -- NIGHT -- AN INFANT

in the arms of its MOTHER, an overweight Hispanic woman.

ANGLE ON TALLY

in medical mask and greens, as NED films her and the new baby.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE NEW FATHER IN A MEDICAL MASK

and orange fatigues, the word PRISONER on legs and back. Manacled arms tattooed, he beams at the baby and the GUARDS.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT -- TALLY

interviews the father, FERNANDO BUTTANDA, as NED shoots.

FERNANDO BUTTANDA

...you're Tally, I see you on Channel Ten
...I am Fernando...

TALLY ATWATER

...Fernando...you were convicted in July
of armed robbery...your third felony conviction...

FERNANDO (overlapping)

...quatro, fourth...but I was never in
that bank, I only do gas stations...

TALLY ATWATER

...and you're currently incarcerated at
Eastham State Penitentiary...

(points to his tattooed arms)

Ned, get in close on "Eternally Rosario."

NED shoots Fernando's tattooed crosses and crucifixes.

FERNANDO BUTTANDA

...now I go to some joint back east...
Penn...syl...some place...

GUARD

Pennsylvania. Transferred for his own

safety. The Aryan Brotherhood's got a contract out on him.

FERNANDO BUTTANDA

I cut those motherfuckers before they cut me, Tally, bet on that...

TALLY (hurries past this)

Fernando, you're getting baby clothes, toys, diaper service for a year...all for...what are you calling the baby?

FERNANDO BUTTANDA

Fernandito. Always we were going to name him Fernando. After me.

TALLY ATWATER

Then you and your wife hoped for a boy?

FERNANDO BUTTANDA

Who?

TALLY ATWATER

Your wife. La madre de Fernandito.

FERNANDO BUTTANDA

Oh. She's not my wife. She's Rosario. My wife is Augustina...and Augustina...

FERNANDO lifts up his other sleeve to show Augustina's tattoo.

FERNANDO BUTTANDA

...would be very mad if I married Rosario.

INT. KHOU CONTROL ROOM -- NIGHT -- WARREN JUSTICE

stands behind the director watching the newscast and the monitors all playing the tape of Tally's first-born package.

FERNANDO BUTTANDA ONSCREEN

...very mad if I married Rosario...

A SHOT OF THE BABY, THEN OF FERNANDO BEING LED AWAY, THEN OF TALLY: STILL IN GREENS, IN THE NURSERY FILLED WITH NEWBORNS

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

...and so Fernando Buttanda heads east to the federal penitentiary in Honesburg, Pennsylvania, leaving behind wife Augustina and their five daughters, as well as

Rosario Mota, who last night gave birth to his son, Fernando, Jr., Houston's first baby of the New Year at 12:02 a.m. From Kaiser Hospital, this is Tally Atwater...

ANGLE ON THE ANCHOR DESK --- TALLY AND ROB SULLIVAN
watch a monitor. INTERCUT AMONG SET, MONITORS & CONTROL ROOM.

ROB SULLIVAN
Sad story, Tally.

TALLY ATWATER
Sadder than it should be, Rob. There are reports today that some local merchants including Wee Willie Winkle Galleria and Potamkin The Toy Man have pulled out of the Buttanda layette because of the circumstances, and will give their gifts instead to little Tiffany Policek, born at 12:59 a.m. at Presbyterian Hospital.

ROB SULLIVAN
I think I see their point, Tally.

TALLY ATWATER
I'm not surprised you do, Rob.

ROB SULLIVAN
After all, an habitual offender and a woman with two other children out of wedlock...

TALLY ATWATER
After all what, Rob?

ROB SULLIVAN
I don't think we need go into that, Tally.

TALLY ATWATER
I thought you'd say that, Rob.

ROB SULLIVAN
That's it for tonight. I'm Rob Sullivan, Tally will surely join me in saying be of good cheer and happy new year from all of us on the Channel Ten news team...

A SPECIAL NEW YEAR'S CREDIT CRAWL OF ALL THE STAFF NAMES

as Tally and Rob unhook their mikes and smile at the camera and at each other. Sotto voce through the endless crawl and theme music, as if having a normal unmiked end of show conversation:

ROB SULLIVAN

That tears it...this is the last time...

TALLY ATWATER

I didn't know you'd been appointed commissar of public morality...

ROB SULLIVAN

He's a criminal and she's a whore, if you can't understand that...

ROB SULLIVAN picks up the phone on the anchor desk as Tally folds her hands and smiles at the camera.

TALLY ATWATER

Only whores have babies out of wedlock?

ROB (into the phone)

Warren, your companion is out of line...

TALLY ATWATER

Companion? Does that mean whore too?

IN THE CONTROL ROOM

WARREN JUSTICE

Tally, shut up and smile...Rob, we're still on the air, keep smiling...

ROB (smiling into the phone)

She doesn't have the maturity, you're pushing her too fast...

TALLY ATWATER

His companion doesn't have the maturity? Is that what you mean? If you think that hairpiece gives you maturity...

WARREN JUSTICE

Goddamn it, Tally, do what I say. Rob, she took a nothing story and made it work. That's what we call television...

ANGLE ON THE FLOOR MANAGER SIGNALLING CUT

WARREN JUSTICE

...and that's a wrap.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

bumps into ROB SULLIVAN as he makes his way onto the set.

ROB SULLIVAN

They would have fired her when I was in St. Louis...

WARREN (not stopping)

Right, Rob...tough shop, St. Louis...

ROB SULLIVAN

I'm taking this upstairs...

ANGLE ON TALLY AT THE ANCHOR DESK

furious, hearing Rob as WARREN leans over to her.

TALLY (to Rob)

Good. And get them to explain why they keep you, you third-rate has-been...

WARREN (sotto voce)

You're not a star yet, don't act like one.

TALLY turns her rage on Warren.

TALLY ATWATER

Don't ever tell me...

WARREN JUSTICE

Let me lay down a few facts, Tal. You're not pushing the envelope out solo. You got a cameraman so crazy for you he does everything but backlight you. You got an assignment editor who'd set Houston on fire just to let you cover it. You got...

TALLY ATWATER

...a news director I fuck, is that it?
(storming off the set)
...used to fuck. Get it?

INT. NEWSROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER AT HER DESK

tears the story about Bucky Terranova from Broadcast Week.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

approaches the desk.

TALLY ATWATER
I didn't fight my whole life to be some-
body's companion.

WARREN (a beat)
Hey. You're right.

TALLY ATWATER
And my sister has a baby. Her live-in has
a record. That make her a whore?

WARREN JUSTICE
Right again.

TALLY looks at Warren a long beat.

WARREN JUSTICE
Cease fire?
(a beat)
Going to be a long night, you won't smile.

TALLY finally smiles and gets up, pocketing the clipping.

WARREN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY UNABLE TO SLEEP
listens to the police scanner. When WARREN stirs:

TALLY ATWATER
You awake?

WARREN JUSTICE
I am now.

TALLY ATWATER
What would you think if I got another job?

WARREN (careful)
Where.

TALLY ATWATER
Someplace where they wouldn't call me your
companion.
(a beat)
We could go there together...

WARREN JUSTICE
How about I post a memo. "Staff is hence-
forth advised to refer to Mr. Justice as

Ms. Atwater's companion. Not vice versa."
Get some sleep...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- LATER -- TALLY AND WARREN

both awake, each concealing it from the other.

INT. HOUSTON HOTEL LOBBY -- DAY -- AN EVENTS SCHEDULE

TEXAS BROADCASTERS ASSOCIATION -- MAIN BALLROOM
PANEL DISCUSSION -- 4 PM

"SHATTERING THE GLASS CEILING"

BUCKY TERRANOVA, MODERATOR

PANELISTS: JOANNA KENNELLY, WENDY CHAN, TESS TYLER

ANGLE ON PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE THREE PANELISTS

candid shots taken during their interviews with public figures.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER

checking the schedule and the photos, then maneuvering through
the crowd leaving the ballroom, where a session has just ended.

TALLY ATWATER

Excuse me...has Mr. Terranova...

TALLY'S POV -- BUCKY TERRANOVA

exiting the ballroom. Tally intercepts him.

TALLY ATWATER

Mr. Terranova...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- JOANNA KENNELLY

joins Bucky and immediately takes in the situation.

JOANNA (cutting in)

...Tally, isn't it? Joanna Kennelly.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- A PHOTOGRAPHER

jostles past Tally to get a shot of Bucky Terranova.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Bucky...if you could step over here...

BUCKY TERRANOVA moves a few steps away to accommodate the shot.

JOANNA (to Tally)
Have you known Bucky long?

TALLY ATWATER
I don't exactly...know him.

JOANNA KENNELLY
But you want to.
(assesses Tally)
That won't necessarily make Warren happy.
He tends to want what he wants where he
wants it. The toys belong in the box...

TALLY ATWATER
I guess he's changed.

JOANNA KENNELLY
I wouldn't count on it.

TALLY looks at Joanna, who has struck a chord, as BUCKY TERRA-
NOVA steps in and cocks a finger of recognition at her.

BUCKY TERRANOVA
...News Heartbeat of the Lone Star State.
You give us thirty minutes, we'll give you
Houston, and the world. You're younger
than you look on camera...

JOANNA (moving on)
...Miss Atwater, Bucky Terranova.

BUCKY, intense, shrewd, continues without a flicker.

BUCKY TERRANOVA
...want to know something? Your voice is
full of money...

INT. WARREN JUSTICE'S OFFICE -- NIGHT -- JOANNA KENNELLY

sits on a corner of Warren's desk talking on the phone and
performing a few keystrokes on his computer.

JOANNA (into the phone)
...tell Chip I'm filing the wraparound
now...we can go over it in the morning...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN ENTERS HIS OFFICE AND SITS AT THE DESK

JOANNA
...I'll check back from the airport...

WARREN (as she hangs up)
You still got a nice ass...

JOANNA swings her legs off the desk and puts on her jacket:

JOANNA (cheerfully)
...but not this year's ass. Not even last
year's. I'm seven years and three dozen
asses back.
(leans to kiss him)
And by the time I next see you it'll be
four dozen.
(looks at him)
Unless you're going to tell me this one's
different.

WARREN says nothing. JOANNA looks at him a beat, curious.

JOANNA KENNELLY
Somebody finally got to you?
(Warren says nothing)
What does it feel like?

WARREN (considers this)
It feels like...I'd closed up the place
for good and somebody walks in and opens
the windows and punches on the jukebox and
breaks glasses and the cops come and like
it or not I'm in business again.

JOANNA (shrewdly)
You going with her when she makes her
move?

HOLD ON WARREN

as he takes this in and slowly shakes his head.

INT. BAR -- NIGHT -- BUCKY TERRANOVA

in a booth talking to a visibly nervous TALLY ATWATER.

BUCKY TERRANOVA
...you know how you can tell somebody
isn't going to make it? You hear her say
it's not quite time for this move, I'm
fulfilled where I am, maybe next fall.
She doesn't even know it...
(signals for the check)
...but she's already on the bus back to

wherever she came from.

(shrewdly)

You have any...entangling alliances?

TALLY does not know what to say, and says nothing.

BUCKY (a beat)

Good. Travel light. What's your feeling about Philadelphia?

TALLY ATWATER

What?

BUCKY (takes the check)

A large city in Pennsylvania. I can put you there.

TALLY (a hard awareness)

It's a number four market.

BUCKY (signing)

Exactly. It's do-able.

INT. KHOU NEWSROOM -- NIGHT -- THE SOUND OF A BLUES TRACK drifts across the empty newsroom from a CD in Warren's office.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE -- NIGHT -- WARREN JUSTICE

freshens his drink and gazes out the window at the Houston skyline. The CD continues. At a SOUND he turns abruptly.

WARREN'S POV -- TALLY ATWATER

crossing the darkened newsroom to his office. For a beat after she reaches it, neither speaks.

WARREN JUSTICE

I bet he said your voice was full of money.

(a beat)

That's what he says to all the little girls. He's famous for it. He said it to Patti Arbaugh in San Francisco and he said it to Caresse Giordano in Detroit and he said it to some other little girls you never heard of in Dallas and Des Moines and Atlanta.

(a beat)

It's not even his line. It's from a

novel.

(quoting)

"Her voice was full of money--that was the unexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it..." Who wrote that?

(a beat)

Hemingway, right?

TALLY is silent, then nods uncertainly.

WARREN JUSTICE

F. Scott Fitzgerald.

(a beat)

Where did he say he'd move you? San Francisco? No, that's down market. Chicago? L.A.? Philly?

(when Tally says nothing)

Philadelphia. That's it? Get on the bird and don't look back? I knew a guy in Houston once, he taught me all I knew?

TALLY just looks at Warren, stunned by his harsh vehemence.

WARREN JUSTICE

You'll be up against Marcia Miller. You try to show her up like you did Rob...

TALLY ATWATER

Wait. You were the one who said you could help me get there...

WARREN JUSTICE

...she'll have you for lunch.

TALLY ATWATER

You want me to stay here...

WARREN JUSTICE

I do not want you to stay here.

TALLY ATWATER

You want me to stay because then you don't have to risk anything by leaving.

WARREN JUSTICE

I love this. Insights from Miss State-line. Sixth runnerup.

CLOSE ON TALLY

looking as if he has hit her. After a beat she turns away toward the window. The CD still plays. Tally presses stop.

TALLY ATWATER

I thought we were going to be different.

WARREN puts his arms around her. She does not turn.

TALLY ATWATER

You could come with me.

WARREN JUSTICE

I've already been where you want to go.

TALLY ATWATER

One of my mother's husbands dealt craps. You can't win if you don't stay at the table. He always said.

WARREN JUSTICE

I already cashed in my chips.

TALLY (turns to him)

Then I don't want to go.

WARREN JUSTICE

Sure you do.

EXT. KHOU PARKING LOT -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

her face streaked with tears, runs to her car, then, under her voice from the framing interview, looks up.

TALLY ATWATER V.O.

...you try never to look back in this business...moving on comes with the territory...but I cried when I left Houston...

TALLY'S POV -- THE LIGHTED KHOU CALL LETTERS AND ANTENNA

TALLY ATWATER

Goddamn you.

FULLSCREEN -- TALLY ATWATER

again the poised young woman against the seamless backdrop, Her voice from the interview continues over the next cuts.

TALLY ATWATER

...even though I'm supposed to be this

rough tough newsperson. The truth is...

INT. PHILADELPHIA AIRPORT -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

on a moving sidewalk, passes a poster showing WFIL anchors DOUG DUNNING and MARCIA MILLER and the slogan "PHILADELPHIA'S FINEST." TALLY does not take her eyes from Marcia Miller.

TALLY ATWATER V.O.

...a television station is like a family.
You have tensions, of course...you do in
any family...

INT. WFIL RECEPTION ROOM -- DAY -- HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGES

of Doug Dunning and Marcia Miller dominate the wall behind the severely chic RECEPTIONIST at her pristine marble table.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER

uncomfortable on a Barcelona chair, shifts her head slightly.

TALLY'S POV -- MARCIA MILLER'S EYES FOLLOWING HER

TALLY ATWATER V.O.

...but also so much love. And when the
opportunity came to move on to WFIL-Philadelphia...I knew...

INT. WFIL NEWS SET -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

watches from the edge of the set, uncertainly moving out of the way as props are moved, lights changed, cables adjusted.

TALLY ATWATER V.O.

...I'd find another surrogate family...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- DOUG DUNNING AND MARCIA MILLER

at the anchor desk. Doug Dunning is paternal, while Marcia, near 40, is smooth, chic, hair in a French twist.

MARCIA MILLER

...this is a case that raises an old question of journalistic ethics...should a reporter, man or woman, carry on a sexual relationship with a source?

TALLY unconsciously twists her hair in the Marcia style.

DOUG DUNNING

My feeling, Marcia, is that a reporter can carry on with an elephant...as long as he's not covering the circus.

MARCIA MILLER

Colorfully put, Doug. We'll get into this after the break...

ANGLE ON THE DIRECTOR SIGNALLING AUDIO AND VIDEO OFF

MARCIA MILLER (imperious)

Where's John. John...

ANGLE ON JOHN MERINO

WFIL news editor, coming on the set. Marcia points to Tally.

MARCIA MILLER

She's in my eye line.

INT. TALLY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

on her knees, cradles a phone as she unwraps a police scanner. Popcorn filler from its carton sticks to her.

TALLY ATWATER

...I said I was fine, Warren...

(defensive)

...since when does my calling mean something's wrong...no, everybody's great here...so helpful and friendly...how's everybody there...Melba...and Ned...and Harvey...what do you mean, I always liked Harvey, Warren...

(plugs in the scanner)

...listen, you know what? I bought a scanner...Why?

As TALLY hears the familiar crackle of police calls, she sits on the floor and hugs her knees as if for warmth.

TALLY (an echo)

...because I find the sound of human iniquity soothing...

INT. NEWSROOM -- WARREN JUSTICE'S OFFICE -- DAY -- A TV MONITOR

on which ROB SULLIVAN is doing "A.M. Houston".

ROB SULLIVAN ONSCREEN
...time again for Ninety Years Young. To-
day we are blessed with twins, Roxy and
Ruby Temple out at the Clearview Home...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

watches "Ninety Years Young" with station manager DAN DILLON.

DAN DILLON
It's a cute segment, Warren, I don't know
why you don't like it.

ONSCREEN A PHOTO OF THE TEMPLE TWINS BLOWING OUT CANDLES

ROB SULLIVAN ONSCREEN
...ninety-eight years young today...so
let's wish these beautiful youngsters
ninety-eight more...

WARREN (angrily)
I don't like it, Dan, because it's conde-
scending horseshit.

DAN DILLON
It's a sponsored spot.

WARREN JUSTICE
It's also negative demographics. Which as
a suit, you should understand. If you
want to keep your rating in every nursing
home in Houston, then that's the way to
go. If, on the other hand, you want to
reach a few people young enough to hobble
over to the mall, which was the way it
used to be here...

ANGLE ON THE SILENT NEWSROOM

as Vic, Ned, Sheila and Melba listen to the loud argument.

VIC
Where did all the good times go?

MELBA
Philadelphia.

EXT. THE LIBERTY BELL -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

preparing to do a standup as a CAMERAMAN focuses on her. She

is fumbling with necklace and seems insecure, overdressed, less herself than a Marcia Miller clone.

TALLY ATWATER

...three, two...one...cut. Are you using a fog filter?

CAMERAMAN

Where's the fog?

TALLY ATWATER

I always used a number one fog in Houston.

CAMERAMAN

What did you shoot down there, music videos?

EXT. CRIME SITE -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

in the rain, frustrated, still trying to ape Marcia's style as POLICE mill behind the yellow tape and the CAMERAMAN packs up.

CAMERAMAN

Come on, shine it on, we got enough.

TALLY ATWATER

Get in early, stick close, wrap last. I learned that in Houston.

CAMERAMAN

Lady, I been a cop shop cameraman since before you were born. So one thing I don't need is somebody telling me how it's done in Houston. You want to hang in here, okay...

THE CAMERAMAN unslings his camera and unloads it on Tally.

CAMERAMAN

...but I hope you learned to use an Auricon in Houston.

EXT. HOTEL -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

exits taxi in an evening dress. The hotel marquee says, ANNUAL CELEBRITY AUCTION GREATER PHILADELPHIA FUND.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- A LIMOUSINE

with the licence plate PENN 1 pulls in front of Tally's taxi,

and reporters and photographers push toward it.

TALLY'S POV -- MARCIA MILLER

exits the limousine followed by GEORGE MC BRIDE, the governor of Pennsylvania. As flashbulbs pop

MARCIA

sights Tally at the edge of the throng.

MARCIA MILLER

Tally. Have you met our governor, George McBride. Governor, Tally's our newest addition at Channel 4, Tally Atwater...

TALLY ATWATER

Governor...

GOVERNOR MC BRIDE shakes Tally's hand perfunctorily, then waves to the crowd and presses some flesh.

MARCIA MILLER

The governor so appreciates a pretty face, Tally, where are you sitting? You must stop by our table...

ANGLE ON TALLY

as Marcia sweeps into the auction with McBride. After a beat, Tally starts for the hotel door, then turns and hails a cab.

INT. TALLY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

still in her evening dress tears off a piece of masking tape and tapes a snapshot to a mirror.

TALLY'S POV -- THE SNAPSHOT -- A PICTURE OF WARREN

that Tally after a beat touches with a finger.

INT. JOHN MERINO'S OFFICE -- DAY -- JOHN MERINO

uncomfortably looks up from his desk as TALLY enters. They stall uncomfortably for a few beats, avoiding the point.

JOHN MERINO

Tally. Glad you could come by. I thought I owed you a talk.

TALLY ATWATER

I wanted to talk to you, too, John.

JOHN MERINO

You want some coffee or something?

(she shakes her head)

No. I only drink decaf. Well.

(a beat)

We've got these marketing guys upstairs. They run...focus groups. You know, ask twenty citizens in for cold cuts and see what they like and...don't like.

TALLY sits absolutely still, her fear of failure confirmed.

JOHN MERINO (a beat)

What the marketing guys keep hearing is...

(seeing the look on her face)

...Tally, I hired you, I still think you have...real potential...

(helpless, wanting to end this)

Look. You're coming across...as if you haven't decided you like being here...

TALLY ATWATER

That's what I wanted to talk to you about. I just think I need more support.

JOHN MERINO

You're not here on an internship, Tally.

TALLY ATWATER

I thought if you could work with me...

JOHN MERINO

...and I'm not your mentor. This is an O&O with a signal that reaches New York. You get here, you have to know the network's watching...

INT. HOTEL BAR -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER & BUCKY TERRANOVA

have a drink. Tally is bright, brittle, edge of breaking.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

So how's it going.

TALLY ATWATER

Great.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

That's why you called 911 and said get me Bucky. Let's cut to where you are. You just had the stakes upped. You got the network watching, Marcia makes you feel like a babyfat wannabe from the wrong side of town, and you're scared shitless.

TALLY (too vehement)

I am not scared.

(a beat)

I was just wondering...if maybe I should go back to Houston...say for a year...

BUCKY TERRANOVA

That could definitely be arranged.

TALLY lights up, then gets the body blow:

BUCKY TERRANOVA

And the year after that you go to Tupelo, Mississippi. And the year after that you blow your brains out.

(off the look on Tally's face)

I told you in Houston. Not everybody ends up sitting down when the music stops.

EXT. HOUSING PROJECT IN POURING RAIN -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

struggles with a slicker and her hair, so nervous and insecure that she is lisping again, prepares for a live feed.

TALLY ATWATER

...on thith block...on this block...on this block in Thouth...in Southwest Philadelphia...

CAMERAMAN

...do it now or we lose the feed...

INT. NEWSROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER ON MONITORS

the rain wrecking her hair and makeup, her insecurity apparent. She does not look at the camera.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

...right here on this block, Marcia, two women in the last four days have been killed resisting rape...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- JOHN MERINO

watches offstage with BUCKY TERRANOVA as MARCIA MILLER asks Tally a question from the anchor desk.

MARCIA MILLER

Shocking. And Tally, how many rapes have been reported this year in Philadelphia?

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ONSCREEN

trying to control her mike cord in the rain and wind.

TALLY (lamely)

Lots more, I'm sure, Marcia, but...

MARCIA MILLER (cuts her off)

...just for background, the figure for the first six months of this year was 237...

JOHN MERINO looks at Bucky Terranova. Bucky shrugs.

INT. FLAHERTY'S BAR -- MID-MORNING -- WARREN JUSTICE

sits by himself in a booth, reading a newspaper.

ANGLE ON A PHOTO OF TALLY

over the bar mirror with all the other KHOU publicity photos.

ANGLE ON A TV SET

tuned to A.M. Houston, anchored by ROB SULLIVAN.

ROB SULLIVAN

...time again for our weekly feature, and Ninety Years Young...but it's...one hundred years young today...Amos Lynch...

FROM BEHIND WARREN A VOICE HE DOES NOT TURN TO IDENTIFY.

VOICE

I remember Rob when he had hair. New Orleans...

WARREN JUSTICE

St. Louis...

ANGLE ON BUCKY TERRANOVA

slipping into the booth across from Warren.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

No wonder you're sitting in here, putting that shit on the air.

(a beat)

So, Warren, how long's it been?

WARREN JUSTICE

Since the day I fired you. RPK Stadium. Owner's box. Redskins Giants. I said I wanted to leave IBS. You said you didn't handle people on the way down. The Redskins won.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

I left in the third quarter.

(snaps his fingers at the bartender)
Perrier. Wedge of lemon, not lime.

WARREN JUSTICE

What brings you to Houston.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

NASA?

WARREN JUSTICE

Try again.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

The fact is, Warren, I have a client in a certain amount of...distress...

INT. WFIL EDITING ROOM -- NIGHT -- VIDEOTAPE OF TALLY

doing a standup surrounded by thousands of shoes.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

Historians tell us that the first civilization to prize footwear...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY STUDYING THE TAPE

as JOHN MERINO, on his way out, looks over her shoulder.

JOHN MERINO

Historians? It's a shoe show, Tally.
25,000 pumps walk into Philadelphia.
Cute. Fred and Ginger. Inelda Marcos.

TALLY (measures each word)
I see. Very cute.
(turns off the editing machine)
You said I could do City Hall. I look at
the board and I'm doing this shoe show.

JOHN MERINO
The City Hall piece...on consideration...
fell naturally into Marcia's five parter.
(Tally says nothing)
Cronies & Payoffs. Crisis at City Hall.

TALLY (a beat)
I'll close up.

JOHN MERINO
Don't you ever take ten, Tally?

INT. EMPTY NEWSROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

in the newsroom, picks up her telephone and dials a number,
fiddling with a shoe as she listens to the ringing.

WARREN'S VOICE ON MACHINE
Justice here...you want me to call back,
leave a number...you got something that
won't wait, call the KHOU desk at...

TALLY

replaces the telephone, then hears steps and turns.

TALLY'S POV -- WARREN JUSTICE

walking toward her. They gaze at each other a beat.

TALLY ATWATER
I am so very very very glad to see you.

WARREN JUSTICE
I figured you might be.

TALLY AND WARREN

touch tentatively, hot, silent, putting off the moment.

WARREN JUSTICE
I finally made myself persona non grata in
Houston. I pulled the plug on Rob's edi-
torial minute.

TALLY starts to laugh, a hint of the old Tally.

TALLY ATWATER
What are you going to do?

WARREN reaches over and removes a false eyelash.

WARREN JUSTICE
Clean up your act.

INT. DARKENED ROOM -- NIGHT -- WARREN AND TALLY

making love, visible only in silhouette, clothes in disarray.
Suddenly A LIGHT goes on, revealing the room as John Merino's
office.

ANGLE ON JOHN MERINO

standing in the door, carrying his raincoat and briefcase.

JOHN MERINO
What the...oh, shit...

ANGLE ON TALLY AND WARREN

scrambling to untangle themselves on the office couch.

WARREN (cool)
John. Long time, no see.
(to Tally)
John and I used to cover the DEA in Miami.

JOHN MERINO
Warren. I left my Filofax...

TALLY ATWATER
...I didn't think you were coming back...

WARREN JUSTICE
I think he figured that out, Tal.

JOHN MERINO retrieves his Filofax from his desk.

JOHN MERINO
Well, I'm on my way, Warren...Tally...

TALLY (wanly)
I redid the shoe show, John...

WARREN (as John exits)

The shoe show?

INT. TALLY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT -- VIDEOTAPE OF TALLY
on the VCR, fast-forwarded, frozen, fast again.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

clicks through a succession of her standups.

TALLY ONSCREEN AT A SOUP KITCHEN

in another Marcia knockoff, uncomfortably handing out plates.

WARREN JUSTICE

They got you looking like Princess Di.

TALLY ONSCREEN AT A CRIME SITE

fastidiously stepping aside as the victim is carried out.

WARREN JUSTICE

The Ice Queen goes to a drive-by.

TALLY ONSCREEN AT A DRUG BUST

fiddles with large Marcia-like earrings as POLICE handcuff suspects.

WARREN JUSTICE

Had a problem with the earrings?

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER

as Warren clicks off the VCR and turns to her.

WARREN JUSTICE

Whatever happened to Thallyanne Atwater?

TALLY ATWATER

They wouldn't understand her here.

WARREN JUSTICE

Take a day off tomorrow, there's a place I
want to show you.

EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE PHILADELPHIA -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE

pulls onto the shoulder, stops, helps TALLY out, and leads her
uphill through the woods. As he guides her up an incline:

WARREN JUSTICE

...not much further...as I remember, it's
off here somewhere...

(reaches a ridge, stops)

There.

TALLY'S POV -- A HUGE TRAILER PARK

as far as the eye can see, trailers -- all bristling with tele-
vision antennae, cable connections, satellite dishes.

WARREN JUSTICE

See? It's not all Marcia Miller country
up here.

(a beat)

Think they'd understand Sallyanne Atwater?

Think they might even trust her?

(she looks at him)

Then give her to them.

(a beat)

You get up there every night and talk to
them as if you care about them...you could
get to be one of the few things the whole
country has in common.

(a beat)

Don't write that off. It's something
worth doing.

TALLY is radiant. She gets it, knows he came here for her.

TALLY (a beat)

We didn't keep it as loose as I thought we
did.

WARREN JUSTICE

That's not so bad, is it?

TALLY ATWATER

If we're not together...

WARREN slowly brings her close, and as they embrace and kiss:

WARREN JUSTICE

...everything shuts down a little.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA HOTEL -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

doing a live feed, her radiance back, amid fire engines, smoke,
and DEBUTANTES and ESCORTS being herded into a police van.

TALLY ATWATER

Whether the chandelier went down before or after 911 got called, nobody is saying... but this has to be one of the most incendiary affairs of what social-register types here call The Season...

INT. WFIL NEWS SET -- NIGHT -- MARCIA MILLER

disapproving the light tone Tally is taking.

MARCIA MILLER

Tally...

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

...and one that won't soon be forgotten by those proud mamas and papas who get calls tonight to make bail. Marcia...

MARCIA MILLER (stiffly)

...the Holly Ball is one of our prettiest and most traditional events, Tally, and I'm wondering how this could happen...

TALLY ONSCREEN (cheerful)

...just a bunch of rich kids, Marcia...spoiled rotten...

MARCIA MILLER

Tally...

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

...bored silly...

MARCIA MILLER

...Tally, that's...

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

...and dressed to kill.

INT. JOHN MERINO'S OFFICE -- NIGHT -- JOHN MERINO

on the phone, scribbling figures, as a SECRETARY clears space on his desk for a sandwich and a beer.

JOHN MERINO (into the phone)

...yeah...yeah...got it...

(hangs up, to the secretary)

The cold cuts are running 3-to-1 Tally.

INT. TAURANT -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE

at lunch with BUCKY TERRANOVA.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

You know the business. Spend five years looking at your navel in East Nowhere...

WARREN JUSTICE

East Texas. Six years.

BUCKY (dismissive)

...a twelve market...you lose the beat. However. There's a hot young guy at four in Baltimore, Cord Otavio...

WARREN (makes a note)

Thanks.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

I owe you one. For Tally. I brought her up here, I figured she was secure enough to handle it.

WARREN JUSTICE

Nobody who does what she does is secure. You know that, Bucky. This business is built on insecure people. It promises the applause they need. Then it tightens the screws.

(a beat)

She can go all the way. Can't she.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

Assuming she doesn't go wiggy again?

(Warren nods)

Does a first-rate job, makes a few breaks for herself?

(Warren nods)

IBS is the shot. Very fluid lineup.

(reaches for the check)

Unless Wendy Chan shows more than she's been showing.

WARREN JUSTICE

How long.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

A year? Two years? Eighteen months?

WARREN takes the check from Bucky.

WARREN JUSTICE

You've got some leverage now, tell John
Merino there's a cameraman in Houston...

INT. WFIL NEWSROOM -- DAY -- NED BRESLIN

unloads his cameras and bags.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY

sees him, jumps up from her desk and kisses him.

NED (looks around)

Pretty slick...

TALLY ATWATER

Try nobody yells in the newsroom. They
send each other memos. By E-Mail.

INT. BALTIMORE NEWSROOM OFFICE -- DAY -- CORD OTAVIO

a young 26, leans back in his chair and clasps his hands over
his head, looking at Warren Justice.

CORD OTAVIO

So tell me something about yourself...
(checks the resume on his desk)
...Warren...

WARREN JUSTICE (rising)

You first...

INT. BUILDING LOBBY -- DAY -- A ROW OF QUARTERS

laid out on the shelf of a pay phone.

WARREN JUSTICE V.O.

Justice. Warren Justice...

(a beat)

Look at it this way, if he doesn't know
me, he doesn't have to call me back...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

hangs up in disgust, inserts another quarter and dials.

INSERT -- FULLSCREEN -- HEADLINE -- BROADCAST NEWS

WFIL-PHILLY RATINGS CLIMB
New Life on Top Newscast

INSERT -- FULLSCREEN -- A BROADCAST NEWS PHOTO OF TALLY ATWATER
and over it the faint strains of a disk jockey moaning:

DEEJAY
I never been to heaven, but I've seen
Tally on Channel 7...believe it, baby...

INT. JOHN MERINO'S OFFICE -- DAY -- MARCIA MILLER

a thin triumphant smile, as a tape recorder on the desk plays:

DEEJAY'S VOICE ON TAPE
...All right. Another blue-heaven morning
here at Radio Rock It Sock It Phil...a...
del...phia.
(singing)
I've never been to heaven...but I've seen
Tally on Channel Seven...
(imitating orgasm)
Ohhh...Tally...better believe it, baby...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- JOHN MERINO AND TALLY ATWATER

impassive as MARCIA clicks off the recorder. A beat, then:

JOHN MERINO
Marcia, I'm not sure I understand your...

MARCIA MILLER
She takes my broadcast...a broadcast with
which I am identified and for which I am
responsible...

TALLY ATWATER
Some deejay I never laid eyes on...

MARCIA MILLER
And she makes my broadcast...and by exten-
sion me...the object of vulgar innuendo...

TALLY rips the tape out from the recorder, drops it in a
wastebasket, and walks out. In sheer rage, to Marcia:

TALLY ATWATER
It's not about you. It's about me.

INT. WFIL NEWS SET -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

alone off the darkened set, tries to regain her composure.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- JOHN MERINO ENTERS

TALLY ATWATER

If you want to talk about the deejay...

JOHN MERINO

Forget the deejay. We got this election coming up, and I hate to waste Marcia, she knows more about state politics than the pols do. So I offered her senior political correspondent...director of campaign coverage...whatever...and I want you to take over some of her duties.

TALLY ATWATER

Is that what this was about?

(John Merino nods)

Is she staying?

JOHN MERINO (a beat)

She has an offer in Cincinnati.

TALLY walks to the unlit anchor desk as John Merino exits. She does not sit down but traces a finger across its surface.

EXT. STREET -- DAY -- A BILLBOARD

showing WFIL anchors DOUG DUNNING and MARCIA MILLER.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- A SIGN PAINTER

plastering on a new sign that replaces Marcia's face with Tally's. A banner on the new sign reads:

LIVE THIS WEEK FROM CONVENTION CENTER

INT. 21 CLUB BAR -- DAY -- IBS VICE PRESIDENT BUFORD SELLS

moves along the bar, a good old boy greeting one and all.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE IN A BOOTH

stirring a drink as Buford Sells slides in across from him.

BUFORD SELLS

Imagine them calling me a suit, Warren?

WARREN JUSTICE

You still look like a pig in shit, Buford.

WAITER

The regular, Mr. Sells?

BUFORD SELLS

Tanqueray gin martini, straight up, forget the olive.

(to Warren)

Long time, Warren...

(to the waiter)

Forget the vermouth too.

(back to Warren)

...goddamn, remember Miami...you managed to piss off the entire cast...Cubans...Anglos...Colombians...DEA...Metro Dade Police...even the vice president of the United States...

WARREN JUSTICE

Our nation's drug czar, Buford...

BUFORD SELLS

And that time in Washington we're waiting for the spin on the State of the Union and you get bored and go to Arlington and do a live feed on the Death of the Republic...

(the waiter brings his martini)

...and chartered a helicopter to take you there, you crazy son of a bitch...

(lifts his martini)

...good times...

WARREN'S POV -- GABE LAWRENCE, ANOTHER IBS VICE PRESIDENT

speaking impatiently to the maitre d', then going to the bar.

BUFORD SELLS (watching)

Old Gabe Lawrence there, won't chow down unless he gets what he calls the A table.

(a beat)

You're looking for a job, aren't you?

(a beat)

Shit, Warren, you and I did this once. Didn't do ourselves any credit, either.

WARREN JUSTICE

That's over. Clean track.

BUFORD SELLS

You still got a nasty habit of calling a horse's ass a horse's ass. Some folks at our shop still don't appreciate that...

WARREN JUSTICE inclines his head toward Gabe Lawrence.

BUFORD SELLS

You got it. Wasn't Gabe on the pool with you for the Grenada invasion?

WARREN JUSTICE

Until he had to bow out because of an unbreakable periodontal appointment.

BUFORD SELLS

The flossers are in charge now, Warren. I'm just the noble fucking savage they trot out at affiliates meetings...

(breaks off)

Your sources at the Pentagon still good?

(Warren nods)

Might ask them what's up with the Southern Command. I hear something's cooking again in Central America.

WARREN JUSTICE

You got anybody down there?

BUFORD SELLS

The flossers declared democracy the winner and pulled everybody out.

(a beat)

You went down on your own, you'd have the whole shooting match to yourself...

WARREN JUSTICE

I kind of want to stick around here for now.

BUFORD (shrewdly)

She worth it?

WARREN (rising)

Deep down, Buford, she wants to shoot up the town.

BUFORD SELLS

Hell, I'm at least good for lunch...

WARREN JUSTICE
You already heard all my stories, Bu.

ANGLE ON WARREN

on his way out, detained by Gabe Lawrence.

GABE LAWRENCE
Warren. Small world...

WARREN JUSTICE
Hello, Gabe.

GABE LAWRENCE
I'm seeing film from the affiliates, this
protegee of yours seems to be shaping up
nicely...what's her name...

WARREN'S POV -- JOANNA KENNELLY APPROACHING

WARREN (ignores the question)
Excuse me...

WARREN kisses Joanna and moves on.

JOANNA KENNELLY
Warren...wait...have a drink with us...

WARREN JUSTICE
...next time, Joanna...

INT. PENNSYLVANIA STATION BAR -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE
folds a newspaper to a small story and reads it.

WARREN'S POV -- THE HEADLINE:

PENTAGON DENIES CENTRAL AMERICA BUILDUP
REPORTED MOVEMENTS DESCRIBED AS ROUTINE

WARREN drains a drink and glances at his watch.

WARREN (to BARTENDER)
The same...

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER -- DAY -- WFIL BILLBOARD SHOWING TALLY
and the new slash line: LIVE TONIGHT FROM CONVENTION CENTER

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER -- DAY -- WFIL BILLBOARD SHOWING TALLY

and the new slash line: LIVE TONIGHT FROM CONVENTION CENTER

INT. ARENA DRESSING ROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

nervous, uncomfortable, is made up by a makeup man, CHARLIE.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- MARCIA MILLER

taking her cosmetics from a makeup cart and dropping them into a zippered bag. As she does so:

MARCIA MILLER

This is my base...you don't need hypo-allergenic, do you?

(Tally shakes her head no)

My Number 28 Red...

(a critical look at Tally)

You'd do better with 29 anyway...

TALLY ATWATER

Take whatever you want...I mean I have my own...

MARCIA (a beat)

I don't want you to think this is somehow your fault.

TALLY ATWATER

Charlie, could you get us some coffee, black no sugar for me?

MARCIA MILLER

Charlie already knows our secrets.

TALLY ATWATER

Then Charlie, scratch the coffee.

MARCIA MILLER

It's not anybody's fault. It's a fact of life. You're what, twenty-five?

TALLY ATWATER

Twenty-four.

MARCIA MILLER

You're twenty-four and I'm thirty-nine. Actually I'm forty-one. Not even Bucky knows that. He's my agent too, you know.
(reflective)

When I was twenty-four I was at WAGA At-

lanta. I thought I was on my way to New York, the rest of my life was on hold until I got there. No man, no family, nothing to hold me down. I never did get to New York...

TALLY hears in Marcia's words a personal warning.

TALLY ATWATER

What about the rest of your life.

MARCIA MILLER

Still on hold.

(about to leave)

You'll be forty-one someday...

INT. TRAIN -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE

stares out the window as the train clears the WHAT TRENTON MAKES THE WORLD TAKES sign, en route Philadelphia.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE EMPTY SEAT NEXT TO WARREN

where the newspaper Warren was reading in Penn Station is still folded to the same story.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER -- DAY -- WFIL BILLBOARD OF TALLY

as WARREN JUSTICE passes it, drains a can of beer, arches it toward a trash barrel, misses, and heads for the entrance, oblivious to the can clattering down the steps.

INT. CONVENTION ARENA FLOOR -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

sits at the anchor desk as TECHS make last-minute adjustments.

TALLY ATWATER

Could somebody ask John if he's seen Warren...this chair's too high...

LIGHTING TECH

Marcia liked it high...

TALLY ATWATER

Marcia's not sitting here, is she?

(riffing through script)

I'm missing pages two, five and seven...

ANGLE ON THE HUGE EMPTY ARENA

SOUND TECH
Give me another level, Tally...

DIRECTOR
Forty-five seconds to air...

A WRITER runs up and places a page on the anchor desk.

TALLY (to the writer)
That's two, do we try for five and seven?

TALLY'S POV -- JOHN MERINO AT THE EDGE OF THE SET

TALLY ATWATER
John...Warren said he'd be here...

DIRECTOR
Thirty seconds to air...

TALLY ATWATER
I'm still missing five and seven...

A WRITER brings more pages as a TECH adjusts Tally's mike wire.

TALLY (to John Merino)
...see if Warren...

DIRECTOR
Five seconds...

TALLY
...I'm not getting any help here...

DIRECTOR
Air.

TALLY looks up, smiles, and is suddenly calm.

TALLY ATWATER
Good evening. This is the WFIL six
o'clock report...and I'm Tally Atwater...
live tonight from the convention center
...where in exactly two hours...

INT. CONVENTION CENTER STANDS -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE
enters the still-empty arena at the top of the stands.

WARREN'S POV -- TALLY

in a pool of light as she anchors from the desk on the floor.

WARREN

starts down but is stopped by a security GUARD.

GUARD

Nobody gets down without credentials.

WARREN reaches into his jacket and fishes out old press cards. He is elaborately polite, a clue to the guard that he is drunk.

WARREN JUSTICE

Yeah, well, one of these still works...

GUARD

Uh uh. Negative. No go.

WARREN JUSTICE

Come on...it's worked at the White House, it's worked at the Pentagon, it's even worked backstage at the Grateful Dead...

GUARD

You're drunk, buddy...

WARREN (patiently)

Not true. I may have had one or two drinks, but I am not...

GUARD

I'm warning you, out of my face...

WARREN JUSTICE

Believe me. Yours is the last face I want to be in. Let me say this very clearly. I am merely trying...to get down to...

GUARD

....her.

WARREN JUSTICE

...as a matter of fact, yes.

GUARD

And I'm saying you don't get near her.

THE GUARD moves to block Warren off, and as he does, WARREN suddenly rears back and hits him. Other GUARDS materialize.

INT. CONVENTION AREA FLOOR -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER
winding up her broadcast.

TALLY ATWATER
We'll be back here with full convention
coverage tonight at eight...

TALLY'S POV -- THE COMMOTION IN THE STANDS

There are now a half dozen people, including POLICE.

TALLY ATWATER
...until then...for Doug Dunning on as-
signment...and for all of us at WFIL...

TALLY can now make out WARREN, being led out by police.

TALLY ATWATER
...this is Tally Atwater...

TALLY smiles and removes her mike as she waits for the off sig-
nal, then bolts from the desk.

INT. PRECINCT STATION -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

sits waiting, half-rising as she hears an inner gate open.

TALLY'S POV -- A POLICE OFFICER

whistling as he exits the gates.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE DESK SERGEANT

studying Tally. After a beat:

DESK SERGEANT
Uh...Tally Atwater, right?

TALLY nods. The desk sergeant also nods, then, as she is about
to speak, busies himself at his desk. Tally leans back, and
then again hears a gate open.

TALLY'S POV -- WARREN JUSTICE BETWEEN THE INNER & OUTER GATES

waiting for the outer gate to open. A buzzer. The gate opens.
Warren, a bruise on his face, walks through the gate to Tally.

WARREN JUSTICE
Hey.

EXT. PRECINCT STATION -- NIGHT -- A BLAZE OF FLASHBULBS

follow TALLY and WARREN as they exit, walking as if determined not to acknowledge the flashes that illuminate their faces.

INT. TALLY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

cleans the bruise on WARREN's face with a washcloth. There is a bowl of ice and a bottle of bourbon on the bed table.

WARREN JUSTICE

Just give me some of that ice, will you...

TALLY ATWATER

I'll put it in a compress...

WARREN JUSTICE

Forget the compress, put it in a glass...

TALLY puts ice in a glass. As he adds bourbon and drinks:

TALLY ATWATER

What happened today...

WARREN JUSTICE

Nothing happened. Went up to New York, met a guy I used to know for lunch...

TALLY (involuntary)

About a job?

WARREN sees Tally's distress, and draws her down on the bed.

WARREN JUSTICE

Just kicking around old times, Tal...when I'm ready to work again, the deal I want is going to fall right off the tree...

(unbuttons her shirt)

...same way you did...

TALLY ATWATER

Anyone I know?

WARREN JUSTICE

You ask a lot of questions.

TALLY ATWATER

I don't get a lot of answers.

EXT. IBS BUILDING, NEW YORK -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

on a sidewalk pay phone, eyes on the IBS logo emblazoned on the tower, waits for an answer, gets it. Into the phone:

TALLY ATWATER

Joanna Kennelly, please....tell her it's
Tally Atwater...we met in Houston...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- DOUG DUNNING

taps his watch impatiently as he waits for Tally.

INT. IBS CONTROL ROOM -- DAY -- A DIRECTOR

shouts instructions to the floor, where TOM ORR, the IBS anchor is filming promos with local anchors along the IBS network.

DIRECTOR

...okay, Tom, take it from the top...
hey, wait a minute, Lacey...

ANGLE ON THE FLOOR -- TOM ORR

at an anchor desk behind which is the IBS logo, flanked by the Denver anchor team, TRACY DOUBLEDAY and MARK HARRIS.

TRACY DOUBLEDAY

...Tracy...

DIRECTOR

Tracy, cut the smile in half, you look
like you just won the lottery. OK...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER

watching Tom Orr as she is led past the set to a dressing room.

TOM ORR

Hi, I'm Tom Orr. Join me each weekday
night on Channel 5, right after Denver's
award winning news team, Tracy Doubleday
and Mark Harris...

INT. DRESSING ROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

getting her makeup touched up. Noise, jostling.

TALLY'S POV -- ALL THE OTHER FACES IN THE MIRROR

all young women anchors, her competitors, sizing each other up.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH -- DAY -- THE DIRECTOR

watches a playback. Through the window we see TALLY and DOUG DUNNING come onstage.

DIRECTOR

Okay. Ft. Worth's a wrap. Philadelphia's up, Doug and Tally, WFIL Channel 7...

INT. NEWS SET -- TOM ORR -- DAY

reading his promo copy, then introduces himself.

TOM ORR

Doug, good to see you...Tally, Tom Orr...

DIRECTOR'S VOICE

Okay, people, trim the hellos, 36 promos to go...let's try for one take...

TALLY and Doug Dunning take their places flanking Tom Orr.

DIRECTOR'S VOICE

...all right...do it...

TOM ORR

Hello, I'm Tom Orr. Join me every week-night on Philadelphia's Channel 7, right after the top rated News at Six, with Doug Dunning and Tally Atwater...

INT. JOANNA KENNELLY'S OFFICE -- TALLY ATWATER

stands at the window, looking out at the skyline, as if not daring to look at Joanna Kennelly directly.

TALLY ATWATER

...I tell him a funny story, he laughs. The laugh is only...

JOANNA KENNELLY

...a half beat behind...

TALLY ATWATER

...he says everything is fine...

JOANNA KENNELLY

...and you pretend you don't notice he's pretending...

(a beat)

Did he ever tell you what happened when he was covering the White House?

TALLY turns, too distraught to see the point of this.

TALLY ATWATER

I shouldn't keep you. You tape today.

JOANNA (ignoring her)

He kept asking questions they didn't want asked. One morning the briefer was giving some bullshit line and Warren called him a liar. Quote unquote. And the briefer said, Justice, you are out of business.

(a beat)

Meaning nobody takes your calls.

(a beat)

After that he covered it from outside. Broke stories nobody else had. The White House got to the network and made it clear, no more access for anybody...

TALLY ATWATER

They couldn't carry through on that.

JOANNA KENNELLY

Sure they could. There's a flight to a summit and I don't sit next to the chief of staff. There's a one-on-one in the Oval Office and Tom Orr doesn't get it.

(a beat)

The network left it to Buford Sells to tell him. Play it their way or the highway. Warren chose the highway.

TALLY stares at the skyline, unable to look at Joanna.

JOANNA KENNELLY

Buford Sells was his best friend. He even came on our honeymoon. To Lebanon, for the Israeli invasion. After Buford laid down the terms, they stopped speaking. You remember I told you in Houston Warren wouldn't change?

(Tally nods)

I was wrong.

(a beat)

It took a lot for him to ask Bu Sells for a job.

(a beat)

He didn't tell you that, did he?

INT. BUCKY TERRANOVA'S OFFICE -- DAY -- BUCKY & TALLY

talk. On the wall, photos of clients, including Tom Orr, Joanna Kennelly and Marcia Miller.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

From the point of view of the guys who do the hiring, something about Warren doesn't read team player.

(shrugs)

They're right.

TALLY ATWATER

You have some markers out. Call one in.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

For you?

TALLY looks at him a beat, then nods.

INT. JOHN MERINO'S OFFICE -- DAY -- JOHN MERINO ON THE PHONE

JOHN MERINO

Bucky, I know he's good, I worked with him, I also know he's trouble...he stakes out the high moral ground, everybody else gets altitude sickness...

JOHN MERINO'S POV -- A TALLY ATWATER POSTER

propped on a chair, its legend reading "WFIL -- #1 FOR NEWS".

JOHN MERINO (a sigh)

...okay, okay, okay, as long as she knows she's part of the package...

INT. TALLY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY

sits on the unmade bed with her arms around her knees.

TALLY ATWATER

There's nobody else with the background to do it. I wouldn't feel confident unless I knew you were backing me up...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN

sits by the window drinking a beer and looking out.

WARREN JUSTICE

If you don't feel confident, don't do it.

TALLY ATWATER

John wants this show.

(Warren says nothing)

I need you to do this for me.

FULLSCREEN -- HEADSHOTS OF WARREN JUSTICE & TALLY ATWATER

as they appear with this headline inside Broadcast News:

"Atwater to Anchor Hour News
Specials -- Justice to WFIL as
Special Projects Director"

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

sings and claps the beat as A PICKUP BAND plays "Wanted Man."

TALLY ATWATER

"Wanted man in California...Wanted man in
Buffalo..." Come on, Warren...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

gets up from a big raucous table crowded with JOHN MERINO,
BUCKY TERRANOVA, NED, DOUG DUNNING, and others from WFIL.

WARREN (joining Tally)

"...went to sleep in Shreveport..."

TALLY ATWATER

"...woke up in Abilene..."

(Warren & Tally together)

"...wondering why the hell I was wanted
...some town half way between..."

ANOTHER ANGLE -- LATER -- TALLY AT THE TABLE, MUSIC IN B.G.

happy, spontaneous, glass raised in a toast.

TALLY ATWATER

...I have an advantage here. I've worked
for him. Those of you who are about to
get your first exposure to Warren...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- LATER -- TALLY AND WARREN

dance slowly, late in the evening.

TALLY ATWATER

There's something I want you to do before
you start work.

(he nods)

Marry me.

WARREN JUSTICE

I've been married. Bad idea...

TALLY ATWATER

Marry me.

WARREN JUSTICE

You were the one who never wanted to get
married.

TALLY ATWATER

...I want you around in the morning...

WARREN AND TALLY

slow to a stop, locked in each other's arms. Tally is obli-
vious, overwhelmed by love. Warren is conflicted, wanting her
but aware that their lease on each other could be cut short.

WARREN JUSTICE

...you already got me around in the morn-
ing, I don't know how but you do...

TALLY ATWATER

...I want to know you're legally required
to be there...

EXT. BUCKS COUNTY FARMHOUSE -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE

pins a spray of apple blossoms in TALLY's hair.

TALLY ATWATER

I'm scared.

WARREN JUSTICE

Any time either one of us wants out...we
just walk out and close the door.

TALLY ATWATER

That's what I'm scared of.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY FARMHOUSE -- DAY -- NED

playing an upright piano with one finger, segues from the

Wedding Recessional into "Heart and Soul."

ANGLE ON WARREN AND TALLY

embracing before a JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, just closing his book.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE JUSTICE'S WIFE

tries to focus an Instamatic Flash. NED continues playing the piano with one hand as he takes the camera and shoots.

CLOSE ON TALLY AND WARREN IN THE CAMERA FLASH

MUSIC CARRIES OVER CUT TO:

EXT. MOVING VAN -- NIGHT -- A MOVING MAN

closes the sliding door to the empty van and hops into the cab.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE VAN PULLS OUT TO REVEAL A HOUSE

its bare windows lit. The camera moves to an upstairs window.

INT. TALLY'S & WARREN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT -- TALLY

surrounded by unpacked boxes, begins to make the bed.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN

takes Tally in his arms and draws her onto the unmade bed.

MUSIC CARRIES OVER CUT TO:

INT. WARREN'S WFIL OFFICE -- DAY -- A JANITOR

tries to fit a corkboard on a wall hung with hunting prints.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN ON THE TELEPHONE

makes notes as he talks and watches the placement of the board.

WARREN (into phone)
I'm trying to get a little background...
(to the handyman)
Lose the ducks.
(into the phone)
...on this prison reform initiative...

ANGLE ON THE HANDYMAN

taking down the hunting prints and repositioning the board.

WARREN (into phone)
...I'm still not clear on the evolution of
the Governor's thinking on this...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER

enters the office with a vase of flowers, places the vase on a
bookcase, then leans to kiss his ear.

WARREN (into phone)
I see...right...
(signals success to Tally)
...we'll want to talk to Governor McBride,
so if you could book some time now...

MUSIC CARRIES OVER CUT TO:

INSERT -- CHALKBOARD PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

as a HAND fills in the following information:

Show: Untitled Prison Reform Project
Producer: Justice
Anchor: Atwater

INSERT -- THE CORKBOARD IN WARREN'S OFFICE

as it is filled with clippings and calendars and schedules and
reminders and, finally, a lipsticked heart from Tally.

INSERT -- PRODUCTION CLAPBOARD

marked Prison Project / JUSTICE

MUSIC CARRIES OVER CUT TO:

INT. TALLY & WARREN'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT -- MUSIC OVER -- WARREN
chops onions, eyes tearing, then sweeps the peels to the floor.

WARREN JUSTICE
When you interview McBride get him to talk
about his polling, okay?
(drains his drink)
Get with the scallions, Tal...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY

studies the perfect bowl of pasta on a tacked-up food page torn from a magazine as she chops scallions.

TALLY ATWATER

I can't even see where the scallions fit in...damn.

(examines her finger)

I cut myself...where's the garlic...

WARREN JUSTICE

Get a glass of wine and sit down...

(back to chopping)

Showboat talks about reform, it's code for throw away the key...you listening or not?

TALLY ATWATER

(a tissue around her finger)

I have to do the garlic...

(clumsy peeling)

Isn't there supposed to be some trick to peeling garlic?

TALLY'S POV -- TOMATO PUREE BOILING OVER ON THE STOVE

TALLY ATWATER

Shit.

WARREN'S POV -- THE PHOTO OF THE PASTA

WARREN (takes down photo)

The trick is...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- LATER -- THE PERFECT BOWL OF PASTA

is placed on the table. The camera moves back to reveal:

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT -- TALLY & WARREN

absolutely delighted to be together and out for dinner.

INT. JOHN MERINO'S OFFICE -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE

lays out the format for the prison reform special.

WARREN JUSTICE

Fullscreen headline. Governor Signs Prison Reform Act. Cut to McBride, smash into his campaign bites, "this is a prison, not a resort" blah blah blah...over each bite we show the effect on his ratings...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY

watches JOHN MERINO to get his reaction.

TALLY ATWATER

His approval jumps five points every time he mentions three-strikes-you're-out...

MERINO (doubtful)

What's the centrepiece.

WARREN JUSTICE

The night we air, his reelection campaign is staging a victims' vigil outside the capitol. He's going to call for ten new super-max prisons. Tally does it. Live.

JOHN MERINO

You're coming down heavy on McBride...

WARREN JUSTICE

These prisons, John, are maximum security warehouses. You don't need so many guards inside, because nobody leaves his cell. You don't even need so many guards outside, because you'll have what they call "death fences". Touch the fence and you die. That's what McBride calls reform. Reform is a code word. For lock 'em up and throw away the key.

JOHN MERINO looks at Tally, then at Warren. He shrugs.

INT. WFIL CORRIDOR -- DAY -- TALLY

sensing his hesitation, catches up with JOHN MERINO.

TALLY ATWATER

It's a strong piece, isn't it.

JOHN MERINO

Strong. Right.

(a beat)

I just don't want Warren to put you too far ahead of the curve on this one.

TALLY ATWATER

Ahead of what curve?

MERINO

Do I think the crime issue is manipulated for political ends? Absolutely. Do I think there's a contradiction between what McBride says and what he means? Absolutely. Do I think large numbers of citizens want to hear that? Not necessarily.

TALLY

I thought it was our job to tell people things they didn't want to hear.

MERINO (carefully)

I don't think you want Warren too far out on a limb here. Not if you want him to get another one of these on the air.

INT. TALLY'S & WARREN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT -- TV SCREEN
tuned to the IBS Evening News with Tom Orr.

TOM ORR ONSCREEN

...in other news tonight, Pennsylvania Governor Mike McBride says that he will not give in to demands made by inmates at Honesburg Penitentiary, calling the demands extortion...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER

studying a script as she dresses, glances at the screen.

TOM ORR ONSCREEN V.O.

...McBride, who last week launched his campaign for reelection, said a prison is a prison, not a resort...in Chicago...

TALLY mutes the sound, looks at the script again, then, determinedly, sits down and begins pencilling in changes.

EXT. STATE CAPITOL -- NIGHT -- SCALE MODEL OF PRISON

as TALLY ATWATER points out its features and NED shoots her.

TALLY ATWATER

Governor McBride's office provided reporters today with this model of what he calls the prison of the future...sources say the governor will call at tonight's vigil for the construction of ten such facilities ...each meant to house some ten thousand

habitual or three-time offenders...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE WATCHING

TALLY ATWATER

Plans specify a private room for each member of the population...

WARREN (to Ned)

Cut.

(to Tally)

Is "private room" how the governor's office puts it?

(no response)

Is "private room" a pretty way of saying isolation cell? The intention being no interaction among inmates?

ANGLE ON DEMONSTRATORS

gathered for the the governor's photo op vigil.

TALLY ATWATER

I suppose so.

WARREN JUSTICE

Then say so. Did you rewrite this?

TALLY ATWATER

I did....a little editing.

WARREN JUSTICE

You edited out the point. McBride's peddling an ugly and very volatile package to get himself reelected. Meanwhile letting the voters feel good about themselves by calling it "reform". Say so.

ANGLE ON JOHN MERINO WATCHING

TALLY ATWATER

I just wanted to balance...

WARREN (overrides her)

You're fudging. You're trimming. You're shaping your coverage to what you think people want to hear...

MERINO (steps forward)

Warren...I happen to think...

WARREN JUSTICE
This is between Tally and me.

JOHN MERINO
...I happen to think she's right...

WARREN JUSTICE
I don't care what you think. I care about keeping this honest. Honesburg's locked down again. Goddamn place could blow tonight. While we stand here pretending the way to go is another ten Honesburgs.

JOHN MERINO
One, Honesburg's not going to blow. Two, this show isn't entirely up to you...

WARREN JUSTICE
My name's on it, it better be up to me...

MERINO (loses it)
You think I didn't know I'd get this kind of shit from you? You think I wanted it?

TALLY (helpless)
John...

JOHN MERINO
You think I even wanted this show? She wanted it. You talk about your precious honesty, she's the one out there on the line. And the only reason she's out there is to give you something to do...

TALLY AND WARREN look at each other, a long terrible beat as John Merino, realizing what he has said, breaks off.

WARREN (to Tally)
You do what you want. I'm signing off.

WARREN tosses the script to John Merino, then turns and walks back through the gathering crowd toward the street.

INT. TALLY & WARREN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER
just home from the capitol, runs upstairs.

TALLY'S POV -- WARREN JUSTICE
throwing a few shirts into a bag in the bedroom.

TALLY ATWATER

You walked out on me. The whole show could have fallen apart. You let John get between us and you left me up there alone.

WARREN JUSTICE

I was there because you dreamed up a job for me. You dreamed it up and then you bought it for me.

(looks at her)

You have any idea how that feels?

TALLY ATWATER

Anything I did was for us.

WARREN JUSTICE

"Us" has been the problem ever since I came up here.

TALLY ATWATER

Us isn't the problem. You are the problem. You wanted to stay in Houston and protect yourself and not ever get your hands dirty. You didn't want to play.

WARREN JUSTICE

I told you that.

TALLY ATWATER

You were afraid you wouldn't win.

WARREN JUSTICE

You're not a fast study but you finally got it.

TALLY ATWATER

I am so sick of trying to make this work all by myself.

WARREN (picks up bag)

You don't have to try any more.

TALLY ATWATER

I am so sick...

(registers the bag)

...where are you going...I don't want you to go...I can't...

WARREN pauses on his way out to touch Tally's face.

WARREN JUSTICE
You'll be all right, Tal.

TALLY ATWATER
I love you.
(as he exits)
Why do you have to punish me for it.

EXT. TALLY & WARREN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT -- THE LIGHTS
are seen slowly being turned off from room to room.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY
on the bed, unable to sleep. The scanner is on, low volume.

ANGLE ON TALLY
shuts her eyes, then buries her face in the pillow.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- LATER -- THE SCANNER
still on, low volume, as TALLY dozes.

DISPATCHER ON SCANNER
...all units, the situation at the Hones-
burg federal penitentiary has been upgrad-
ed...any of you out there in...
(Tally begins to wake)
...the National Guard, be advised you're
on alert...here's an update... prisoners
have taken control of two cellblocks...

TALLY hears a doorbell ringing and banging on the door.

DISPATCHER ON SCANNER
...and unverified are holding 10 to 12
hostages...mainly guards and medical...

TALLY races to throw the door open, hoping to see Warren.

TALLY'S POV -- NED PUSHING PAST HER, LUGGING A CAMERA

NED
Honesburg. Out of control. Infirmary's
on fire. Two guards offed...

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY THROWING ON CLOTHES

DISPATCHER ON SCANNER

...now confirmed that two guards are dead
...pending notification of next of kin...

TALLY ATWATER
Warren said this could happen tonight.

NED (a flash of anger)
So where is the prophet?

TALLY ATWATER
My husband?

NED (a beat)
I'm sorry, Tal.

EXT. HOMESBURG FEDERAL PENITENTIARY -- NIGHT -- TALLY & NED
haul their equipment past A CHAOTIC SEA OF VANS, FLOODLIGHTS
AND REPORTERS as they try to get closer to the guard station
serving as an emergency control center. On a loudspeaker:

LOUDSPEAKER
...Let me repeat. The demands you make
are unacceptable in present form...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- NETWORK HELICOPTERS
landing. Deafening noise. TECHS roll equipment out.

NED
Shit, the networks are already here...

TALLY (to a reporter)
How many hostages...

REPORTER
Going estimate is eight guards and a
prison doctor...

TALLY ATWATER
Anybody gone inside yet?

REPORTER (sarcastically)
Oh sure, it's a pooled event...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE GUARD STATION

where POLICE & PRISON OFFICIALS & REPORTERS watch a closed-circuit TV showing an empty corridor with a wall telephone.

ANGLE ON TALLY

pushes her way through, then whispers to another reporter:

TALLY ATWATER

What are we watching?

SECOND REPORTER

The cell block where the leadership meets.
B Block, I think...

ANGLE ON GARY LOGAN

an IBS reporter identified by his press tags, trailing sound men, cameramen, and the entitlement accruing to a network team. To Ned, who has a an IBS affiliate's logo on his camera.

GARY LOGAN (peremptory)

Gary Logan. The Governor's going to be briefing me. Pick me up some locators.

TALLY (to Gary Logan)

Get your own locators.

(to an official)

Excuse me, sir, is that B Block or...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE CLOSED CIRCUIT SCREEN

where an inmate can be seen holding a guard at gunpoint. Behind him, a second inmate, barechested and richly tattooed, enters the frame and picks up the telephone.

SECOND INMATE (into the phone)

...we have a statement to make to the press and to the people of...

GOVERNOR MCBRIDE

...cut the sound...no statements...

ANGLE ON THE CLOSED CIRCUIT SCREEN

as the first inmate sticks his weapon into the guard's ear.

SECOND INMATE (into the phone)

...you hear our statement now, okay...

ANGLE ON GOVERNOR MIKE MCBRIDE

in frantic talks with his aides, the press trying to listen in.

GOVERNOR MCBRIDE
...all right, make your statement...

ANGLE ON TALLY

leans in see the screen, then whispers excitedly to Ned:

TALLY ATWATER
The guy talking. Remember him?

NED'S POV -- THE CLOSED CIRCUIT SCREEN

where the second inmate, tattoos now clearly visible -- Jesus Christ with crown of thorns, crosses, "Eternally Rosario" -- puts on glasses and prepares to read. He is FERNANDO BUTTANDA.

FERNANDO ONSCREEN
We speak here of dignity. What you call
a criminal is only a man of extremes...

NED
Tal...the daddy of the New Year's kid.
Federico...no...

FERNANDO ONSCREEN
...a man who robs a 7-11 rather than the
dignity of a fellow human being...

TALLY (to Ned)
...Fernando...keep close, ready to move.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- GOVERNOR MIKE MCBRIDE

trying to interrupt Fernando on the telephone.

GOVERNOR MCBRIDE
...I'm sure your grievances are legitimate, Mr. Buttanda, and I plan to appoint
a commission to study this situation...

TALLY (pulls at his sleeve)
Governor...excuse me, sir...If you could
just tell him Tally Atwater is here...

GOVERNOR MC BRIDE tries to shake Tally off as a COP moves in.

MCBRIDE (to the cop)
Get her out of here...

TALLY flails at the cop as she shouts at the exposed receiver.

TALLY ATWATER

Fernando...it's Tally...Tally Atwater...
from Houston...el niño del año nuevo...
Fernandito...como esta Fernandito...Si?
Que bueno...Ned the wife's name...quick...

NED

...Aug...Aug...Augustina...

TALLY ATWATER

...y Augustina...esta buena?

GARY LOGAN

Who is this local girl...

MCBRIDE (into the phone)

...a blue-ribbon panel...under my personal
supervision...

(listening)

That would be...inappropriate...

GOVERNOR MCBRIDE listens a beat, then holds the phone out.

MCBRIDE (to Tally)

He wants to talk...to you.

TALLY (takes the phone)

Fernando...como esta usted...si, si, Tally
...Houston...todo el mundo...si... Fer-
nando, yo quiero a hablar con ustedes...

(to anyone)

What's the word for inside...

NED

Adentro...

TALLY (into the phone)

Adentro. Si. Solo. Con mi...cameraman

...si, si, si...Ned...

(covers the receiver)

Governor...Mr. Buttanda wants to see us.

AIDE

We can't let an unarmed woman inside...

TALLY ATWATER

Governor McBride, I buy you time.

ANGLE ON GARY LOGAN

moving close to Tally as they watch the governor huddle with his aides. Finally, reluctantly, the governor nods at Tally.

ANGLE ON THE OTHER REPORTERS & CAMERAMEN

picking up their gear, ready to move.

TALLY ATWATER

Uh uh. This deal is just me and Ned.

GARY LOGAN (combatively)

The girl goes in, I go in with her...

TALLY ATWATER holds out the telephone to Gary Logan.

TALLY ATWATER

Ask him. Does he want to see you or me. His name is Fernando Buttanda. His girl friend's name is Rosario. His wife's name is Augustina. They have five daughters...

LOGAN backs off and Tally hands the phone back to the governor.

VIDEOTAPE -- TALLY ATWATER IN THE PRISON EXERCISE YARD

dramatically floodlit, with Fernando and other inmates.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN

...The story of what's happening tonight at Honesburg Prison began here in the exercise yard, just after sunset, when..

EXT. PRISON YARD -- PRISONERS TALKING TO TALLY -- DAY

These interviews are intercut throughout the sequence. Some prisoners wear ski masks. Others preen for the camera.

FERNANDO BUTTANDA

...you no have to worry, Tally, you're under my protection, nobody will fuck you...

PRISONER #1

How do you expect me to respect your system of justice when you put a rapist back on the bricks before you let a junkie out?

PRISONER #2

If I could leave today, man, I know three people I'd kill, just bigger than shit...

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOTEL LOBBY -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE
drops a plastic bag of laundry at the bell desk.

WARREN (to the bellman)
If you could send this down...

WARREN'S POV -- A SMALL MUTED TV SET BEHIND THE BELL DESK
on which TALLY & FERNANDO are seen in the floodlit prison yard.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN
I have here a new list of demands...

ANGLE ON WARREN

who grabs the remote from the bell desk, and flicks up the
volume, totally absorbed by what he sees.

BELLMAN
You already missed the back-by-seven...

WARREN'S POV -- TALLY & FERNANDO ONSCREEN

FERNANDO ONSCREEN
...we got four people in a two man cell
...you got to watch your ass, Tally...

WARREN JUSTICE
...the New Year's layette...

INT. KHOU NEWSROOM -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER'S FACE
appears on all the monitors. JOHN MERINO AND AN ASSISTANT
watch and juggle ringing telephones. Dialogue overlaps.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN
The mood this morning here at Honesburg is
a mixture of despair and determination...

ASSISTANT (into phone)
...hold, please...
(on another extension)
WFIL News...that's right...she's ours...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

strides in, watching the screens as he takes off his jacket.

ASSISTANT (another call)

...WFIL News...who is this? BBC...

WARREN (to the assistant)
Tell them we can arrange an uplink...
(to John Merino)
Tally talked to the superintendant at
Homesburg last week, the film is on file.

MERINO (stiff)
Okay, you saw this coming, I didn't...

WARREN JUSTICE
You haven't been sleeping, eating and
breathing prisons. I have. Which is why
I want you to let me handle this.

MERINO (resists)
I thought you wanted out.

WARREN JUSTICE
I was wrong.

JOHN MERINO
It's always been your problem. Something
doesn't go your way, you fold.

WARREN (evenly)
You name it, I'll cop to it.

The freight is palpable. Finally John Merino shrugs.

WARREN
You never could hold a grudge, John...
(answers a phone)
Shit yes, it's ongoing...

ANGLE ON WARREN -- LATER -- ON ANOTHER CALL

WARREN (into phone)
...negative. You can send down anybody
you want, but we can't get him in...
(to the assistant)
...call KHOU Houston, Melba Cooke, tell
her I need Tally's New Year's baby feed...

ANGLE ON WARREN -- LATER -- YET ANOTHER CALL

WARREN (into phone)
...you want coverage, she's inside, you're
not, that's bottom line...

(to John Merino)
Get somebody to find the wife. Augustina
Buttanda, probably still in Houston...

WARREN'S POV -- TALLY ON THE MONITORS, SIGNING OFF

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN
...Tally Atwater, inside Honesburg Prison... wait...we may have a further development here...

WARREN hands a container of coffee to John Merino.

WARREN (into the phone)
You want specialized coverage, you still
use our reporter...take it or leave it.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN
(displays an M-16)
I have here an M-16 automatic rifle...from
the prison armory...which is now under
inmate control...after a skirmish that
left two more guards dead...

MERINO (watching)
It would make sense to pull her out.

WARREN JUSTICE
Definitely it would, if we were in the
personal protection business. But as it
stands we're in the news business.

EXT. HONESBURG PRISON YARD -- NIGHT -- FERNANDO BUTTANDA
shows TALLY ATWATER worn snapshots of his family.

FERNANDO BUTTANDA
...and this is m'hija Carmela...

TALLY (sorting it out)
...one of Augustina's little girls...

FERNANDO BUTTANDA
...here...remember Fernandito? Big boy
now, goes to day care...Fernandito with
Rosario...Fernandito with Augustina...

TALLY ATWATER
But Augustina's your wife...

FERNANDO BUTTANDA

Sure, that's why she helps Rosario with Fernandito...Rosario and Fernandito, Augustina and the girls, I'm not there, they help out, they make an OK little family...

TALLY abruptly lonely as she gives the pictures a last look.

INT. PRISON CELL -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER

sits on the floor against a bunk, legs outstretched.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- NED ON THE BUNK, IDLY MASSAGES TALLY'S NECK

NED

How come we never made it?

TALLY ATWATER

Didn't we?

NED (a beat)

So what do you want when...if...we get out of here?

CLOSE ON TALLY -- no makeup, her face vulnerable and hurting.

TALLY ATWATER

An OK little family.

VIDEOTAPE -- IBS EVENING NEWS -- ANGLE ON TOM ORR

TOM ORR

...What's the outlook, Tally, for getting through tonight without further violence?

ANGLE ON TALLY, AT THE PRISON

TALLY ATWATER

...inside Honesburg, Tom, the outlook...

VIDEOTAPE -- NIGHT SPECIAL -- TOM ORR WITH PRISON EXPERTS

listening to a live feed from inside the prison.

ANGLE ON TALLY -- WITH INMATES SETTING FIRES IN THE B.G.

TALLY ATWATER

...the scene inside Honesburg, Tom, remains ominous. Water and electricity have been cut off, and there are reports that

National Guard units are preparing...

INT. WFIL NEWSROOM -- NIGHT -- WARREN & BUCKY TERRANOVA
watch Tally on the monitors in the nearly empty newsroom.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

She's tough.

WARREN JUSTICE

Not as tough as she thinks she is. Pretty
fragile. Actually.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

I got the call. IBS wants to see her.
(a beat, shrewdly)
You going to make it hard for her?

WARREN picks up his jacket and knots his tie.

WARREN JUSTICE

No, Bucky, I am not going to make it hard
for her.

BUCKY (presses it)

You know how close she is...

ANGLE ON WARREN

knowing that he is losing her. Almost to himself, remembering:

WARREN JUSTICE

Twenty-five feet from the big enchilada.

VIDEOTAPE -- IBS EVENING NEWS -- THEME MUSIC, THEN LOGO, THEN
FILM OF NATIONAL GUARD STORMING PRISON

ANGLE ON TOM ORR -- SOUND OF GUNFIRE IN THE B.G. ONSCREEN

TOM ORR

Finally. Today at dawn, National Guard
troops stormed Homesburg, bringing to an
end the bloodiest prison riot since...

EXT. HOMESBURG PRISON -- DAY -- NATIONAL GUARDSMEN

flood the main gate to the prison, now in charge.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- NATIONAL GUARDSMEN

loading ambulances with the wounded and dead.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE GUARD TOWERS

where more Guardsmen are now in control.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE ARM OF A DEAD PRISONER

protruding from an unzipped body bag, and on the arm a tattoo that says "ETERNALLY ROSARIO."

ANOTHER ANGLE -- NED SHOOTING TALLY ATWATER

by Fernando's body as it is loaded onto an ambulance.

TALLY (to the camera)

Fernando Buttanda died this morning just before four, after one of the firefights that launched the National Guard's drive to retake Homesburg from its inmates.

(Tally touches the body)

Fernando...wasn't a good man by society's standards.

INT. WFIL NEWSROOM -- DAY -- WARREN JUSTICE AND JOHN MERINO

stare, mesmerized, at TALLY ATWATER's feed on a monitor.

TALLY ONSCREEN

...he wasn't even a good man by his own standards. He was repeatedly convicted of armed robbery...

EXT. HOMESBURG PRISON -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

TALLY ATWATER

...and repeatedly incarcerated. Recently, however, in an experimental job-training program here at Homesburg, Fernando Buttanda began to see another way to support his wife, their five daughters, and Rosario Neta, the mother of his son Fernandito. He was learning nursing skills. He volunteered to work in the prison hospital, at some risk to himself, with violent patients. He was good at it. He liked doing it...

TALLY PAUSES, AND FOR A MOMENT SHE SEEMS ABOUT TO BREAK, BUT SHE RECOVERS.

TALLY ATWATER

...a month ago, Governor George McBride, who is campaigning for reelection on the pledge to "reform" Pennsylvania prisons, cancelled this job-training program, signing an act confining inmates to their cells. This act was the beginning of the trouble here at Homesburg. I recently asked Governor McBride how he could describe the permanent warehousing of prisoners as a reform. Repeated offenders, he said, forfeit the right to rehabilitation. "A prison is about punishment," he added, "it's not about another chance." Fernando and his children know that now. This is Tally Atwater...

EXT. HOMESBURG PRISON -- DAY -- TALLY AND NED

exit the prison by a side gate.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- CAMERAMEN, PHOTOGRAPHERS AND REPORTERS

surround Tally, taking her picture, throwing questions.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- WARREN JUSTICE

apart from the group, watching Tally.

CLOSE ON TALLY AS SHE SEES WARREN

and runs into his arms: their first meeting since he left. In command throughout the siege, she now weeps uncontrollably.

TALLY ATWATER

I was afraid to come out because I thought you might not be here.

INT. HOLLAND TUNNEL -- DAY -- A LIMOUSINE

moves into the bright light of a sunny Manhattan day.

INT. LIMOUSINE -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER

sitting next to BUCKY TERRANOVA seems preoccupied, withdrawn.

BUCKY TERRANOVA

Hello...you with us? Tal?

(another tack)

It's a done deal. Meet and greet...

TALLY looks up at the towers reflecting off the sun roof.

TALLY ATWATER

Sure.

INT. 30 ROCKEFELLER CENTER -- DAY -- BUCKY TERRANOVA
guides TALLY to the security desk for the network.

BUCKY (to the page)
Tally Atwater for Mark Lindner...
(kisses Tally)
This is as far as I go...

INT. RECEPTION AREA EXECUTIVE FLOOR -- DAY -- TALLY ATWATER
exits elevator and walks down the corridor to the receptionist.

ANGLE ON PHOTO BLOWUPS LINING THE RECEPTION AREA WALLS

showing IBS stars under the network logo. TALLY pauses a half
beat as she passes the photo of JOANNA KENNELLY.

INT. MARK LINDNER'S OFFICE -- DAY -- A SECRETARY

opens the door. Tally stands in the doorway for a moment.

TALLY'S POV -- THE VERY LARGE OFFICE

with three TV sets set in the wall, each showing Tally in a
freeze frame: Tally at Honesburg, Tally at the WFIL anchor
desk, and Tally -- a surprise -- at the Houston Ship Channel.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- MARK LINDNER

the head of the news division moves to greet her. There are
two other men in the room, BUFORD SELLS and GABE LAWRENCE.

MARK LINDNER
Ms. Atwater, I'm Mark Lindner, it's good
of you to come see us. Would you like
some coffee? Soft drink, mineral water...
(to the secretary)
You know what calls to put through, Karen.

THE SECRETARY exits as Mark Lindner introduces Tally.

MARK LINDNER
This is Gabe Lawrence...

GABE LAWRENCE nods but does not offer his hand.

MARK LINDNER
...and Buford Sells...

BUFORD SELLS offers his hand. After a beat Tally takes it.

MARK LINDNER
For better or worse we're the three musketeers who run the news division...that was quite a job you did for us at Homesburg...

GABE LAWRENCE
Of course we had Gary Logan there.

TALLY (looks at him)
Outside.

ANGLE ON BUFORD SELLS LAUGHING

MARK LINDNER
Let's get down to the business at hand.
(sits down, studies a paper)
I never fail to be impressed the bulldog tenacity of some agents when it comes to their clients. This is a proposal from an agent who demands everything for his client but the moon.
(a smile)
No wonder Gabe is peckish.
(a beat)
However. On balance I recognize that talent is our only asset. Which is why I have decided to tell this bulldog agent...that we are prepared to give you...exactly what he wants.

TALLY says nothing. After a beat:

BUFORD SELLS
You know, I worked with your husband.
When Warren Justice...

CLOSE ON TALLY

BUFORD SELLS
...teaches you the news business, you stay taught. Ain't nothing Warren can't do, including getting the ducks to walk backward into the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, he ever tell you that story, Miz Atwater?

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT -- NIGHT -- WARREN

alone in a booth set for two, hears the door and looks up.

WARREN'S POV -- TALLY ENTERING THE RESTAURANT

kisses him and slides into the booth across from him.

TALLY ATWATER

Warren...

WARREN motions wait, pours the wine and touches her glass.

WARREN JUSTICE

Now tell me.

TALLY ATWATER

I...love...you.

WARREN JUSTICE

Tell me what they said.

TALLY (reluctant)

They said...Washington bureau, weekend
anchor evening news.

(a beat)

I said no.

WARREN picks up a menu and studies it, then puts it down.

WARREN JUSTICE

It's no good if you don't say yes, Tal.

(a beat)

I mean we're no good.

(takes her hand)

Try it. Fast forward. Every morning for
the rest of our life. Sitting at the ta-
ble. Both of us knowing you could have
played the big ring and didn't because I
wasn't part of the package. More toast,
dear. Let me freshen up that coffee.

TALLY (low, fierce)

It wouldn't be that way.

WARREN JUSTICE

Two cop-outs? Happily ever after? Not in
the cards.

(a beat)

While you were busting your ass at Homes-

burg...I made some calls. It's about to hot up again in Central America. Nobody's on it, because the nets pulled out...

(a beat)

All right, it won't be a day at the beach. That's what makes the payoff so big.

(a beat)

I go down and get this, Tal, I've got a narrow...but definite...window of opportunity myself. And if that happens...and we get lucky...remember what I said going in?

(prompts her)

And if we get lucky...

TALLY (faintly)

...gold.

INT. AIRPORT BOARDING GATE -- NIGHT -- TALLY AND WARREN

TALLY ATWATER

Listen. Remember what you used to tell me in Houston...

WARREN JUSTICE

I used to tell you a lot of things.

TALLY (recites)

Don't go in unless you know how to get out...

WARREN JUSTICE (smiles)

...and where you can feed.

WARREN picks up his bag. As if trying to delay his leaving:

TALLY ATWATER

We haven't had enough time...

WARREN JUSTICE

Babe, every day we've had is one day more than we deserved...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- THE AGENT AT THE BOARDING DESK

AGENT (into mike)

...Flight 45 for Miami and Tegucigalpa is now in its final boarding process...all passengers should be aboard...

ANGLE ON WARREN JUSTICE

kissing Tally, then turning and walking into the jetway.
Just before disappearing he pauses, and turns.

WARREN (to Tally)
Hey. Stay upwind.

INT. WPIL NEWSROOM -- DAY -- NED

snaps Polaroids as JOHN MERINO fills paper cups with champagne
at Tally's farewell party.

TALLY ATWATER

excited, happy, and a little sentimental, raises her paper cup.

TALLY ATWATER
This is for Warren...who called last night
...from someplace I couldn't pronounce ...
and he said just call it hog heaven...

INT. TALLY'S AND WARREN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY ATWATER
surrounded by packed cartons, the scanner on, chatters to NED.

TALLY ATWATER
...so I'm in Washington Monday through
Thursday...then I come up to New York to
do the weekend news...I get a Sunday night
shuttle back down unless I have a Washing-
ton honcho on the Sunday morning show...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- A MOVING MAN ENTERS WITH A HALF-FILLED BOX

NED (eyes the scanner)
I guess your scanner days are over...

TALLY (unplugs it)
...it's yours...

THE TELEPHONE RINGS AND TALLY REACHES FOR IT

TALLY (answering)
Hello...
(tensing a little)
This is Mrs. Justice...

TALLY listens, then, still holding the phone, sits on the bed.
We know that her world has fallen apart but are not sure why.
After a beat, wordless, she holds out the phone to Ned.

NED (into the phone)
Yes...where...when....I see...how...

HOLD ON TALLY'S FACE

as NED, still on the phone, puts his hand on her shoulder.

FULLSCREEN -- ASSOCIATED PRESS TICKER

as it clicks off the words: HUEHUETENANGO, GUATEMALA: AN AMERICAN NEWSMAN, WARREN JUSTICE, WAS REPORTED KILLED TODAY IN SKIRMISHES NORTH OF HERE...

INT. TALLY & WARREN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- TALLY

sits on the floor in the empty room, hugging her knees.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- NED

holds out his hand to Tally, whose face is wet with tears.

NED

Come on, Tal.

TALLY

We woke up every morning in this room.

FULLSCREEN -- A SECOND TICKER

as it clicks off: TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS: INFORMATION REMAINS SKETCHY IN THE DEATH OF U.S. NEWSMAN...

FULLSCREEN -- A THIRD TICKER

as it clicks off: WASHINGTON, D.C.: THE DEATH YESTERDAY OF U.S. NEWSMAN WARREN JUSTICE IN A REMOTE GUATEMALAN VILLAGE HAS TRIGGERED INQUIRY INTO WHAT APPEARS TO BE...

FULLSCREEN -- BANNER HEADLINE READING:

INQUIRY SPREADS INTO COVERT ACTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

EXT. GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT -- DAY -- A CORPORATE JET

bearing the IBS logo touches down and begins to slow.

ANGLE ON JOANNA KENNELLY

waiting on the tarmac.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- LATER -- TALLY ATWATER

exits the jet with an IBS film pouch. She gives the film to Joanna. Joanna checks the labels as Tally watches the plane.

JOANNA KENNELLY

We blocked an hour tonight for a special report. It's already a firestorm.

TALLY ATWATER

Does that make it worth it?

ANGLE ON A FORKLIFT LIFTING A COFFIN OFF THE PLANE

JOANNA KENNELLY

He would say so.

HOLD ON TALLY AS THE COFFIN IS LOWERED INTO A WAITING VAN

TALLY ATWATER

You still love him. Don't you.

JOANNA KENNELLY

We had a good time together. For a while.

(a beat)

He wanted to spend the rest of his life with you.

TALLY ATWATER

He could have.

JOANNA KENNELLY

He wanted to earn it first.

TALLY says nothing, her eyes filling with tears.

JOANNA KENNELLY

That's what you gave him. You made him want something again. Want it bad enough to go after it...

INT. IBS NEWS SET -- NIGHT -- THEME MUSIC

as IBS anchor TOM ORR looks up from the desk.

TOM ORR

This is the IBS evening news...I'm Tom Orr ...the picture emerging in the wake of the death of former IBS newsman Warren Justice in Guatemala is beginning to seem uncon-

fortably close to home to some...

INT. IBS NEWS CONTROL ROOM -- NIGHT -- A BANK OF MONITORS
some showing TOM ORR, the rest a photograph of WARREN JUSTICE.

TOM ORR ONSCREEN
...people in Washington...IBS has just now
processing film obtained by Justice in the
days before his death...

FULLSCREEN -- ONE OF THE MONITORS SHOWING WARREN JUSTICE
now with the graphic: WARREN JUSTICE -- 1949-1994

TOM ORR ONSCREEN
...and which will be shown during a one
hour network special at ten this evening,
nine central time...Information in this
film appears to change the face of...

INT. IBS CONTROL ROOM -- BUFORD SELLS AND TALLY
watch the screens showing TOM ORR and WARREN and the graphic.

BUFORD SELLS (softly)
Sure did get those damn ducks to walk
backward again, didn't you, Warren.
(looks at Tally)
Told you, he always could. He just didn't
always want to.

HOLD ON TALLY

DISSOLVE TO:

FULLSCREEN -- A HUGE ONSTAGE MONITOR SHOWING TALLY ATWATER
as we have repeatedly seen her: against the seamless backdrop.

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN
...it was in Houston where I really
learned this business...

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM -- DAY -- ANGLES ON OTHER MONITORS
and on banners reading "IBS Affiliates Meeting".

TALLY ATWATER ONSCREEN
...learned my ABCs, paid my dues, earned

my wound stripes...learned that when you
get knocked down, you get up again...

ANGLE ON A MONITOR

where a cleaned up version of Luanne's interview plays over the
snappily edited snaps of Tally as a child.

LUANNE V.O.

Sallyanne was one of those kids always
wanting to move on. She knew exactly what
she wanted...

ANGLE ON LUANNE

proud in the audience.

ANGLE ON A MONITOR -- TALLY ONSCREEN

TALLY ONSCREEN

How did I get to Houston? I did a demo...

TALLY'S DEMO TAPE APPEARS ONSCREEN

TALLY ONSCREEN

...Why hire Sally? Because...I'm Sally...
and I'm going to be a star.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- TALLY ATWATER OFFSTAGE

composed and expressionless as her demo is frozen on all the
monitors. Behind her are BUFORD SELLS and MARK LINDNER.

QUICK ANGLES ON THE AUDIENCE

where John Merino, Doug Dunning, Ned Breslin, Joanna Kennelly,
and Tom Orr are clapping.

ANGLE ON MARK LINDNER -- STRIDING CENTERSTAGE

MARK LINDNER

Ladies and gentlemen, it's time to begin a
new generation at IBS...Tally Atwater...

ANGLES ON ALL THE MONITORS -- TALLY'S DEMO FROZEN ONSCREEN

the image of the girl who needed everything and had nothing.

ANGLE ON TALLY -- AS SHE TAKES CENTERSTAGE

TALLY (quietly)

When I was in high school I used to imagine standing up at something like this. I thought it would be about glory. Showing people.

(a beat)

It's different. Somebody told me it would be, and I didn't believe him, but now that I'm standing here I know it. It's about doing the job right. Doing right by the job. Earning the right to be somebody other people trust. That's worth something.

(a beat)

My husband told me that. A long time ago.

MUSIC UP & HOLD ON TALLY

and the audience applauding as laser lights sweep the room.

FADE OUT