

# **EVIL FORCES ©**

**(aka: "Wake Up, Mr. President, You're Dead"©)**

**by**

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FADE IN:

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Noontime in the nation's capital. A chilly winter day. The Washington Monument, White House, and Capitol dome visible.

EXT. TOWNSEND CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Downtown Washington storefront. A red, white, and blue banner reads: "Townsend For President." Two large posters with various slogans fill windows.

Campaign VOLUNTEERS gather outside. SPECTATORS and news MEDIA PEOPLE stand around.

Two limousines pull up to the curb.

CHARLES TOWNSEND, 48, gets out of one vehicle. He is handsome and vibrant. With the charisma of a Kennedy.

Behind him, PEGGY TOWNSEND, 40, his beautiful wife. Two burly secret service men, ROY and LARRY, 30s, flank them.

MUSIC from a campaign song blares from speakers.

CHRIS LOCKWOOD, late-30s, exits the second limousine with wife LINDA LOCKWOOD, 35, a pretty brunette.

WALTER BOYD, 50, with graying hair, accompanies them.

The crowd gives them an ovation. Boyd escorts Townsend and Peggy to a makeshift podium in front of the headquarters.

Boyd gestures for silence. Leans into the microphone.

BOYD

Can we have your attention? Hold it down, please. Senator Townsend wants to say something.

The crowd noise subsides. Townsend steps to the mike. He glances at the posters of himself. Turns to the crowd.

TOWNSEND

Whoever decorated this place has good taste.

Everyone laughs and cheers.

TOWNSEND

I'm not here to make a speech. You'll hear enough of those in the next few months. I just want to thank you, for setting up the first of our campaign headquarters.

More cheers.

TOWNSEND

I know most of you are volunteers. To me, that means you believe in what I want to do for this country. You people are the backbone of this campaign... Without your help, I'm nothing. Nothing!

People yell their support.

TOWNSEND

I'd like you to meet three people who mean a lot to me. First... The best campaign manager I could ask for. My friend, Walter Boyd.

Boyd goes to Townsend. Both smile and shake hands. The crowd applauds. Townsend turns back to his audience.

TOWNSEND

I wouldn't be here without you, Walter. He talked me into running.

The crowd laughs and cheers again. The noise dies down.

TOWNSEND

My press secretary, Chris Lockwood.

Lockwood goes to Townsend. Gives him a hug. More cheers.

TOWNSEND

Chris did such a great job in my last senate campaign, I couldn't afford to lose him. So, I got him into the family. He married my sister, Linda.

All laugh. Linda beams with affection.

TOWNSEND

There's one more person I want you to meet. The most important person in my life. My wife. And loyal supporter. Peggy.

Peggy kisses him. The crowd goes wild and gives her a tremendous ovation.

TOWNSEND

We're latecomers to this campaign. Some say, too late. Governor Foreman won New Hampshire last week. The experts say we haven't a chance in Massachusetts... But, I have news for them. We're going to win in Massachusetts. And, when the California primary is over, we'll be on our way to the party convention. With the nomination.

A great cheer. Townsend smiles and waves to the crowd. Comes down from the podium and shakes hands with supporters.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A. Campaign WORKERS hand out Townsend pamphlets.
- B. Townsend makes a speech before a college AUDIENCE.
- C. At campaign headquarters, workers go through mail.
- D. Massachusetts VOTERS go to the polls to cast ballots.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INSERT - NEWSPAPER HEADLINE

The front page reads: "Townsend Wins Massachusetts."

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Washington D.C. High rise. A limousine screeches to a halt.

The DRIVER gets out. Walks to a car across the street. Leans in through the open window. After a few seconds, he returns to the limousine and opens the rear door.

RALPH HAMILL, 50s, exits the vehicle. Well-built. Gray hair. Distinguished-looking. He looks up at the high rise.

HAMILL

He's still up there?

DRIVER

That's what they tell me.

HAMILL

Good.

Hamill peels off money from a roll of bills and gives it to the Driver. Gestures toward the other vehicle.

HAMILL

Pay that guy. Then, wait here.

INT. BOYD'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Boyd at his desk, on the phone. Papers strewn about.

BOYD

Yeah, Chuck... Sorry I couldn't make it for dinner... Putting the finishing touches on it. You can look it over tomorrow. We can make any changes on the way to Florida... Okay... Bye.

He hangs up. Returns to his work. The doorbell RINGS.  
Boyd opens the door. Hamill stands in the doorway.

HAMILL

Mr. Boyd?

BOYD

Who are you?

HAMILL

My name's Ralph Hamill. I'd like  
to talk with you.

BOYD

Do I know you?

Hamill lets himself in. Closes the door.

HAMILL

We have a mutual friend... A Mr.  
Davis.

BOYD

That asshole? Look. If the son of  
a bitch thinks I'll pay up sooner  
if you work me over --

HAMILL

Do I look like I earn my living  
with my fists? Mr. Boyd, I'm here  
to help you. Davis informs me you  
lost over a hundred- thousand  
dollars to him.

BOYD

Yeah! I'm one of his best  
customers: basketball, football,  
the ponies --

HAMILL

You're quite a compulsive gambler.

BOYD

So, what are you? Gamblers  
Anonymous?

HAMILL

I understand you paid Davis forty  
thousand last week.

BOYD

Yeah? What of it? I cashed in  
some insurance.

HAMILL

No.

Boyd's face sinks.

HAMILL

Mr. Boyd. You have a problem. Davis told me where you got the money.

BOYD

Hey! I --

HAMILL

Wouldn't Senator Townsend be upset, if he found out you... borrowed forty thousand dollars from his campaign funds? That would make quite a scandal.

BOYD

I had to get it somewhere. Davis threatened to tell the media if I didn't pay something.

HAMILL

Relax. I said I was here to help you. Suppose I take care of Davis? Replace the money you took?

Boyd raises a suspicious eyebrow.

BOYD

What the hell do you want, Hamill? Who the fuck are you?

HAMILL

Just a businessman.

BOYD

What's the deal?

HAMILL

Okay... Let's suppose Townsend gets the nomination. I'd like you to recommend a friend of mine for his running mate.

BOYD

What? Who's this friend?

HAMILL

James Fitch.

BOYD

Governor Fitch? Hey, Townsend's never even met him. What if he says no?

HAMILL

Don't insult me, Mr. Boyd. You think I came here on a whim? I had you checked out thoroughly...

(MORE)

HAMILL (cont'd)

You've got a lot of influence over Senator Townsend. He'll go with whatever you propose. He's your friend. He trusts you.

BOYD

Yeah. But, what if he just won't go along? Then what?

HAMILL

Then, I'm out the money.

BOYD

You're a gambler too, I see.

HAMILL

I only bet on sure things... I'm prepared to help the senator get elected. Financially. I have a lot of friends. Your campaign won't have any money problems.

BOYD

How can I refuse that? Deal.

They shake hands.

HAMILL

Boyd. If Fitch becomes Vice President, you'll be a rich man.

Hamill opens the door.

HAMILL

You'll get the forty thousand in the morning... I'll arrange to pay the rest off to Davis in about a week. One more thing. Lay off the gambling. At least till Townsend becomes president.

Hamill exits. Boyd sighs.

EXT. TOWNSEND HOUSE - NIGHT

Two-story brick building. Fir trees and shrubs line it. Three late model cars park in the driveway.

INT. TOWNSEND HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Seven chairs surround a linen-covered dining table. Complete with flowers, fine china, crystal, and silverware.

MARTHA, 60, comes in. The graying lady wears a lace apron. Sets two candles into holders on the table. Sniffs the flowers. Martha speaks with a slight Irish brogue.

MARTHA

Ah... Nothing like the scent of  
real flowers.

INT. TOWNSEND HOUSE/GAME ROOM - NIGHT

A long table dominates the center of the room.

Townsend, Peggy, Lockwood, Linda, and DAVID and SUSAN  
FURLOW, a couple in their mid-50s, sit at the table.

At one end of the table, in an armchair, GLORIA BATES, 25.  
Pale and thin. With dark, deep-set eyes.

A transparent dressing screen wraps around Gloria. Blue and  
red lights on pole stands focus onto the back of the screen.  
An eerie light casts on Gloria and the others.

Participants lay palms flat on the table. They look at  
Gloria with anticipation.

LOCKWOOD

Hey, David. Think the spirits  
could tell us how Chuck'll do in  
the Florida primary?

David frowns, not amused. The others look at Lockwood.

LOCKWOOD

Well, hey. We head down there  
tomorrow. I just thought --

TOWNSEND

David, Chris is only joking.

LOCKWOOD

Hell, no. I figured, if you really  
do drum up some spirits, we can  
take advantage.

Linda nudges Lockwood to keep quiet.

DAVID

Please. We need complete silence.

Lockwood holds back a laugh. Townsend turns his head and  
suppresses a grin.

DAVID

Everyone... concentrate.

A beat. There is a KNOCK at an inner door.

LOCKWOOD

I think the spirits want in.

MARTHA (O.S.)

Mrs. Townsend?



PEGGY

Yes, Martha. What is it?

Martha peeks inside. The setup in the room surprises her.

MARTHA

Glory be.

PEGGY

Martha?

MARTHA

Oh... I'm sorry to be bothering you. I just wanted to tell you. The dinner's about on the table.

PEGGY

Now? Already?

MARTHA

Well, no one told me about this here... entertainment. I put the roast in too soon.

PEGGY

That's alright. We'll be out in a few minutes.

MARTHA

If you don't come soon, the meat will be cold as a Republican's heart.

LOCKWOOD

That's okay, Martha. We can always send out for pizza.

MARTHA

Pizza? Over my roast beef? Then, the bicarbonate of soda's on me.

She leaves. The Townsends and Lockwoods smile. The interruption irritates the Furlows.

DAVID

Can we get on with this?

The others place their palms down on the table. Gloria's hands grip the arms of her chair.

Gloria's head lowers. Heavy breathing breaks the silence. Her head rises and face contorts. Eyes roll back.

The spectacle entrances Peggy and Linda. Lockwood holds back a laugh and glances at Townsend, who bites his lip.

Gloria's breathing quickens. The table quivers and shakes. She falls into a trance. A WIND passes through the room.

People at the table shudder. A small, cloud-like sliver of light appears on the front of the screen.

The light becomes a deep, yellow vapor. The upper portion appears to take the shape of a man's head. The face slips Gloria's face.

The participants gape. The face becomes more distinct and clearer. Peggy gasps, stunned.

PEGGY

Fred... It's Fred.

Townsend stares at the ghostly form on the screen. Lockwood's eye widen. The apparition speaks in a hollow, far-a-way voice.

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

Peg... I've been trying to find you... Help me.

Peggy cannot speak.

DAVID

Peggy. Talk to him. It's the dreams you had... he's been trying to reach you.

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

Peg... I hurt... My arms and legs... Can't move.

LOCKWOOD

How can he feel pain? He's dead. Right?

DAVID

He's not aware he has crossed over. He feels the memory of pain.

Peggy starts to sob. Townsend comforts her.

DAVID

Frederick Hart... Listen to me. We are here to help you.

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

But... Where... am I?

DAVID

Tell us your last memories.

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

Afghanistan... Early morning bombing raid, Logar province... hit by fire... Radio out... Flying too low for base to track... Crashed. Sand all around... No air.

DAVID

What was your position? Tell us!

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

Thirty-four, point-oh-one-forty-seven North. Sixty-nine, point-one-nine-twenty East.

David jots down the information on a notepad.

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

I'm... dead... Am I?... Peg?

PEGGY

Yes, Fred... I'm afraid so.

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

But... what happens to me?... I'm afraid... So alone.

PEGGY

David, help him.

Townsend furrows his brow, upset.

DAVID

Look around you, Fred. Do you see lights?

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

Yes... Yes, through a mist.

DAVID

Those lights will help you. Go to them.

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

I can't. I told you. I can't move.

DAVID

Yes, you can. Forget your earthly body. Let your thoughts flow toward the lights.

FRED'S VOICE (V.O.)

Alright... Yes... Yes, they're brighter now... clearer... They're people... people like me... They're taking me with them... I'm not afraid now. ... Thank you... Goodbye, Peg.

PEGGY

Fred.

She sobs, hysteric. Townsend's face reddens. He stands up.

TOWNSEND

That's it! Chris, get the lights.

The apparition dissolves. Lockwood turns on the lights. A WIND gusts. Gloria collapses.

The Furlows pull away the screen and tend to Gloria. Townsend comforts the weeping Peggy.

TOWNSEND

David, I'm surprised at you and Susan. Putting Peg through this.

Gloria revives. David hands Susan a glass of whiskey. She makes Gloria take a few sips.

DAVID

I'm sorry, Chuck. When she told us about those dreams of her brother, I said we could help.

TOWNSEND

With this farce?

SUSAN

It's no farce. David and I belong to a spiritualist church. Gloria is one of the mediums.

TOWNSEND

What?

PEGGY

It's not their fault. I should have told you.

TOWNSEND

I figured this was going to be some sort of a show.

PEGGY

But, you saw him. It was Fred.

TOWNSEND

Peg, this is ridiculous. You didn't really believe that? David, tell her. It's a trick, isn't it?

DAVID

No trick, Chuck. What she saw her was her brother.

TOWNSEND

We'll see about that.

Townsend examines the room. Checks everywhere. Behind the drapes. Under the table. The walls. The lights on the pole stands. The screen. Nothing.

He approaches Gloria, still weak.

TOWNSEND

Alright, Miss -- Gloria. Where's the projector?

GLORIA

No projector, Senator.

TOWNSEND

Then, it was hypnotism. Some kind of mass hypnotism.

GLORIA

No. Whatever you saw was real.

Martha enters the room and stands in the doorway. Everyone stops and stares at her.

MARTHA

It sounded as though you'd finished. Dinner's on the table.

TOWNSEND

Thank you, Martha. I believe we are finished.

Lockwood and Linda go past Martha. Gloria and the Furlows follow. David stops. Hands Peggy the notepad.

Peggy's face droops. She glances at Townsend. Turns and steps out of the room.

After a beat, Townsend follows her. Martha inspects the room. Shakes her head.

MARTHA

Where the devil are the horns and tambourines? Hmmph!

INT. TOWNSEND HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Townsend and Peggy lie awake on their king-sized bed.

PEGGY

Sorry about tonight.

TOWNSEND

I just thought we were going to have some fun. Didn't know it'd be that serious.

PEGGY

I should have told you why we were having the seance. But, I thought you wouldn't mind.

TOWNSEND

What bothered me was seeing you cry, Peg. Years, still hoping for news about your brother. I know how close you were to Fred... You believed what you saw... and you were upset.

PEGGY

But, I'm happy now. We know where Fred is. We can bring him home.

TOWNSEND

You really bought that?

PEGGY

Yes. I'm sorry you don't believe. My brother deserves a military funeral. I don't want him lying thousands of miles away, buried in the sand.

TOWNSEND

What do I tell the damn State Department? That the spirit of the dear departed told us where to find him?

Peggy pleads with her face.

TOWNSEND

Okay... I'll get in touch with them tomorrow... They'll think I'm crazy. But, I'll make up one hell of a story.

PEGGY

If they find Fred, then would you believe?

TOWNSEND

It would be a gigantic coincidence.

PEGGY

There is so much in this world we can't explain... So much we have to learn.

Peggy wraps her arms around Townsend's neck. Plants a kiss on his lips. He kisses her. Peggy grinds her body into his. Townsend responds. They make love.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The hot sun beats down on the desert sand. A helicopter descends and lands. Four MEN in military fatigues get out. They carry digging tools, a stretcher, and a body bag.

SUPER: "Afghanistan - Logan Province"

Two men scan the area with range finders.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE DESERT - DAY

A tiny metallic object sparkles on a large sand hill. One man approaches the spot. Clears away some sand. Uncovers part of an airplane fuselage.

Others join him. Dig away the sand. A cockpit is exposed.

One of the team peers through the cockpit windshield. Sees the remains of an Air Force PILOT in his seat.

EXT. DULLES AIRPORT - DAY

An Air Force cargo plane taxis on a runway. A military hearse and two limousines wait.

Townsend, Peggy, Linda, Lockwood, and Boyd stand beside the vehicles. Secret service men Roy and Larry flank Townsend.

Military PALLBEARERS stand by. NEWS PEOPLE on the scene with cameras. ONLOOKERS behind a wire fence.

The plane stops. The cargo doors open. Pallbearers bring out a casket draped with the American flag.

Peggy gazes at Townsend.

PEGGY

Thank you for helping... and for understanding... I love you.

They embrace. Pallbearers carry the casket to the hearse.

EXT. CHURCH OF SPIRITUAL LIGHT - NIGHT

A sandstone church. A sign in front reads: "Church of Spiritual Light - Full Service 1 P.M. Sunday, Message Services 7 P.M. Tuesday - Reverend Thomas Ballard".

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT/MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Religious pictures decorate the walls. Chairs form three circles. Half-filled with PEOPLE.

A medium heads each circle. Gloria Bates is one. A YOUNG MAN is another. REVEREND THOMAS BALLARD, 50, sits at the head of the third circle.

Peggy and the Furlows occupy Ballard's circle.

Ballard stares at a frail black GIRL next to Peggy.

BALLARD

There is a presence... an older man, I believe.

The Girl glances from side to side. Other mediums whisper. Peggy listens with interest.

BALLARD

He's been watching over you, since he left this earth plane.

GIRL

Who? Who is it?

PEGGY

Your grandfather... with the cane.

Ballard stares open-mouthed at Peggy. Her face reveals embarrassment due to the interruption.

GIRL

Yes, yes. Grampa Robbie. I was a little kid when he died. Maybe four. He had a cane.

BALLARD

He's tried to reach you... You have a medical problem.

GIRL

Yes.

BALLARD

But, you're afraid to take the advice of your doctor --

GIRL

He says I need a operation. I'm afraid, Grampa Robbie.

BALLARD

Your grandfather says to listen to the doctor. You'll be okay.

Emotion overcomes the Girl.

GIRL

Thank you, Reverend Ballard.

She weeps. Rises and leaves. Ballard motions for Peggy to move to the vacated chair. Gazes into her eyes.

BALLARD

I come in contact with someone. Keep seeing the letter "F".

PEGGY

My brother, Fred. I feel him here, too.



BALLARD

He's grateful for your help. But,  
there is concern for the future...  
The road ahead is dark... An evil  
force is at work.

PEGGY

What is it? Tell me.

Ballard deepens his concentration. His body stiffens. He  
sweats. Gloria turns. Ballard struggles.

GLORIA

You alright, Tom?

BALLARD

I... can't seem to.

He almost faints, then catches himself.

BALLARD

I'm... unable to do more readings  
tonight... Please excuse me.

He stumbles through a doorway into another room.

The people voice their concerns. Peggy follows him.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT/READING ROOM - NIGHT

Bookshelves line the walls. A reading table, chairs, and a  
couch. Ballard takes a decanter of wine from a cabinet.  
Pours himself a drink. Peggy enters.

BALLARD

The Furlows told me you were  
curious about spiritualism. Have  
you had any other psychic  
experiences, like tonight?

PEGGY

I get feelings sometimes.

BALLARD

I'll lend you a couple of books.  
They explain what we do here.

He picks out two books. Staggers a bit.

PEGGY

Are you sick?

BALLARD

Just a bit dizzy still... I've  
never experienced such a pure  
feeling of evil. Forboding.

PEGGY

It's a warning from my brother. I think it has to do with my husband.

BALLARD

Maybe you should tell him.

PEGGY

I couldn't do that. He'd ask a lot of questions. I'd have to tell him I came here. Maybe if I learn enough, I can explain so he'll understand... Are there such things as evil spirits?

BALLARD

I don't know. But, there are evil men.

Peggy's forehead wrinkles.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A. Townsend and Peggy, with Roy and Larry and REPORTERS.

B. PEOPLE go to polls and vote in primaries.

C. A private jet parks at an airfield. Townsend gets out and greets SUPPORTERS.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. TOWNSEND HOUSE - DAY

Bright summer sun. Awnings over the windows.

INT. TOWNSEND HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Peggy and a pregnant Linda sit on a couch. Martha relaxes in an armchair. They watch television.

T.V. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

We return to "Face The Press."

INT. TV STUDIO SET - DAY

The HOST is a middle-age woman. At the panel are three MEN, identified by nameplates in front of them.

One, SAM HARRISON, 50s, tall and lean.

Opposite them, Townsend. He appears cool and confident.

HOST

We're speaking with Senator Charles Townsend, candidate for president. Just a few minutes left.

MARTHA (O.S.)

The senator's much more handsome in person, if you're askin' me.

PEGGY (O.S.)

Martha, shhh...

HOST

Senator Townsend... Weren't you surprised Governor Foreman took the Oregon Primary so easily?

TOWNSEND

I thought the vote was fairly close. Oregon's unpredictable. The voting record proves that.

HOST

Mr. Harrison?

HARRISON

Senator, primaries remain in Ohio and California. You're from the Midwest, and should take Ohio --

TOWNSEND

Polls say it's a close race.

HARRISON

California appears to be even closer. Do you feel a win in California clinches a first ballot nomination for you?

TOWNSEND

Look, Sam. You've known me long enough to know I don't make predictions like that. There's six weeks before the convention.

HARRISON

Nevertheless. The South looks to be your weakest area. Is it possible you'd choose a running mate to help you there?

TOWNSEND

Perhaps... That's not a hard and fast rule, though.

HOST

Gentlemen, time is up... Our guest today has been Senator Charles Townsend. Panel members were Sam Harrison, syndicated columnist of the Washington Daily --

INT. TOWNSEND HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Peggy switches off the TV.

PEGGY

Chuck sounded marvelous.

LINDA

I wish I could go to California with you. I miss Chris.

PEGGY

I know how you feel. Since this started, Chuck and I haven't seen much of each other either. He campaigns somewhere. I'm somewhere else. Or catch up to him for a short while. I'm a campaign widow.

LINDA

Too bad I get airsick.

PEGGY

You have a good excuse, Linda... I've got some last minute shopping to do, before the flight. Be back in a couple of hours.

EXT. TOWNSEND HOUSE - DAY

A man observes from a blue sedan across the street. JASPER SHEETS, a stocky man of 40.

Sheets takes out a long, thin cigar and lights it. The Townsend garage door opens. The big man's eyes widen.

Peggy's car moves onto the street.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The blue sedan follows Peggy's vehicle.

EXT. CHURCH OF SPIRITUAL LIGHT - DAY

Peggy's car pulls into the parking lot. Sheets parks alongside the curb.

Peggy walks to the church. A scarf around her head hides her features. Sheets uses a smartphone to snap photos.

He opens his jacket, slides the phone into an inside pocket.

Sheets crosses the street and prepares to discard the cigar. Instead, he snuffs out the stogie on the church wall and stuffs it into his pocket.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT/HALLWAY - DAY

Sheets moves his eyes side-to-side and cases the place. He approaches the door to the meeting room. Looks through the glass panel.

SHEETS' POV - MEETING ROOM

Ballard at a podium. Peggy positions herself at the head of a circle of chairs, face still half-hidden by the scarf.

BACK TO SCENE

Sheets opens his jacket. Presses a spot on the smartphone. Buttons the jacket. And takes on a reverent attitude.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT/MEETING ROOM - DAY

BALLARD

And, it is in dying that we are  
born to eternal life... Amen.

Sheets appears at the doorway.

BALLARD

(to Sheets)

Please, come in. Find a seat at  
one of the circles.

Sheets issues a meek nod and finds a place at Peggy's circle. The chair squeaks under his weight.

BALLARD

Before we begin message service, we  
have a newcomer.

Sheets thinks this means him. He slouches in his chair.

BALLARD

Actually been with us several  
months. She has developed her  
psychic powers rapidly. And, is  
now ready to take on the new  
responsibility of mediumship. Of  
course, I'm speaking of...  
Margaret.

Peggy acknowledges the introduction. Sheets raises an eyebrow in surprise.

EXT. SHEETS' APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

A new, deluxe apartment building. Individual terraces. Sheets' blue sedan zooms down the street.

BALLARD'S VOICE (V.O.)

And, it is in dying that we are  
born to eternal life... Amen.

The sedan pulls into an underground garage.

INT. SHEETS' APARTMENT GARAGE - DAY

Sheets in his parked car. Fidgets with an app on his smartphone. Puts the recording back into play.

PEGGY'S VOICE (V.O.)

Your father's spirit is close by.

SHEETS' VOICE (V.O.)

My old man? He ran off when I was a kid. Oh, so he's dead?

PEGGY'S VOICE (V.O.)

Yes. He wants to warn you.

SHEETS' VOICE (V.O.)

No kiddin'?

PEGGY'S VOICE (V.O.)

Be careful. Someone may want to harm you. Be on your guard.

SHEETS' VOICE (V.O.)

Oh, I will. Thanks... Margaret.

Sheets shuts it off.

SHEETS

Margaret? You mean... Peggy.  
That's so much bullshit!... Hurt me? People tried it before.  
Especially pissed-off husbands...  
My old man? You're full of shit,  
Mrs. Townsend.

INT. SHEETS APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Neatly-furnished. A open sliding glass door, backed by a screen, leads to a terrace.

Sheets barges in and removes his jacket. He tosses it and his equipment on a sofa. A dog BARKS.

SNOW WHITE, a small, white French poodle toddles to the glass door, pink ribbons on its ears. It jumps on the screen with its front paws and barks.

Sheets opens the screen door. The dog scampers in and holds onto the big man's leg with affection.

SHEETS

Okay. Knock it off.

He shoves the dog away with his foot. The poodle stumbles back onto the terrace. Sheets follows.

EXT. SHEETS APARTMENT/TERRACE - DAY

The naked body of JOANNE SHEETS, a brunette of 30, lies face down on a blanket. Sun tan oil greases her trim, yet voluptuous figure. She doesn't look up.

JOANNE

You're back.

The dog tries to hide under her breasts. Joanne turns to Sheets. She pouts.

JOANNE

Jasper. Why do you treat my Snow White so bad?

SHEETS

You know I hate small dogs. Always underfoot. But, you wanted one. So, I got her for you. 'Cause I love you.

JOANNE

Well. If you really loved me, you'd love her too.

Sheets kneels and kisses Joanne. She glances at the dog. Then back at Sheets. He sighs, resigned.

Sheets picks up the dog. It licks his face. He sets the animal down and wipes his mouth. The dog dances.

SHEETS

That's enough... Joanne, how many times have I told you not to tan your naked ass on this here terrace?

JOANNE

We're ten stories up. Nobody can see me.

SHEETS

How about the copters that fly around here all day?

An overhead helicopter WHIRRING prompts Sheets to grab a large bath towel and throw it over Joanne.

JOANNE

Huh. I remember a few years back. You didn't mind people seeing my body then.

SHEETS

You was a nude dancer. And, we wasn't married then. I took you out of all that... Besides, I think you got enough sun.

He picks her up in his arms.

INT. SHEETS APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sheets carries Joanne into the apartment.

JOANNE

Ooo, Jasper. You're so strong.

She kisses him. He sets her down on a sofa.

SHEETS

You know that home beauty kit you want? The expensive one. With all the attachments. You can buy it tomorrow.

She hugs him.

SHEETS

I wish I could buy you all the things I promised. Since we got married, seems like I'm always in hock. Gonna change, though. I wrapped up a big case today. Gonna get me a big bonus.

JOANNE

I'm so happy! A big case? What kind?

SHEETS

Hey, a private investigator, he's sorta like a priest. Everything's confidential.

JOANNE

You ain't no priest.

SHEETS

Someday when I retire, maybe I'll take my cases and turn them into a TV series... "Jasper Sheets, Private Eye."

JOANNE

"Private... Dick!"

SHEETS

Go take your shower.

Joanne lets the towel around her drop to the floor. It reveals her well-proportioned body. She wiggles her body in a provocative dance. Giggles.

SHEETS

Mmmm... We'll have fun later. Gotta call the client now.



Joanne giggles again and prances off.

Sheets sits on the sofa. Takes out a notebook. And the old cigar stub. He lights it. Grabs the smartphone.

EXT. BEVERLY HILTON HOTEL - DAY

Hot California sun's rays bake the luxurious hotel.

INT. HILTON/FOREMAN'S SITTING ROOM - DAY

A hotel suite. Phones and laptops. A lunch table with half-eaten sandwiches and dirty dishes.

JOHN DALE and STAN TURNER, late-40s, relax at the large table and go over some papers.

Two secret service men, HAL and GEORGE, sprawl on the couch and watch a baseball game on TV. Wear shoulder holsters.

A phone RINGS. Turner answers.

TURNER

Hello?... For Mr. Dale? Yes, operator, just a moment... John, it's a Jasper Sheets. Collect.

Dale grabs the phone.

DALE

This is John Dale, I'll accept the call... Hello, Jasper? What's up there?... What?... Wait a sec.

He takes out a pencil and paper.

DALE

Okay, shoot.

Dale writes.

DALE

Very interesting... What church is that?... A recording?... You're a real pro, Jasper... Sure, you'll get your bonus... No, don't mail it. I want you to deliver everything in person... Take the night flight... Okay... Bye.

Dale hangs up. A huge smile on his face.

DALE

Stan. We've got Townsend by the balls.

TURNER

What's going on?

DALE

After Townsend won Michigan, I hired this detective. To see if Townsend is really Mr. Clean.

TURNER

What'd he find out?

DALE

His wife. She's some kind of medium. In a spiritualist church.

TURNER

Geez. If this gets out, Townsend might be in trouble.

DALE

That's the idea.

TURNER

Better talk to Foreman first.

Dale and Turner go to a door. He knocks.

VOICE OF FOREMAN (O.S.)

Yes?

DALE

Governor. We have to talk.

The two men enter the bedroom and close the door.

HAL

Shit. Forgot to call my wife.

GEORGE

Christ, Hal. You have to report to her at every city we go to. She's worse than the department.

HAL

If I don't call, she's pissed off.

GEORGE

She think you're screwin' around or somethin'? Boy, I'm glad I'm not married.

HAL

It's not so bad... You know what, George? I think after this detail's over, I'll pack it in.

GEORGE

Quit the service?

HAL

Yeah. Too much travel. I got offered a job near home, on the police force. Detective first class. More action... When I became an agent, I thought it would be exciting. Dullest damn seven years of my life. Only time I draw my revolver is on the firing range.

GEORGE

I don't mind the job. I'll stick around till they pension me off. Hey, before they come out, why don't you call your wife?

HAL

When I'm good and ready. Sometimes she's a real pain in the --

INT. HILTON/FOREMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

GOVERNOR NORRIS FOREMAN, early-70s, sits on the edge of a bed. Dale and Turner face him.

DALE

Norris. You're after the biggest prize in the country. You've got to eliminate the competition.

TURNER

This could stop Townsend. Throw the convention into a deadlock.

FOREMAN

It's a cheap shot.

DALE

We got two days before primary. Sheets will be in with the report tomorrow. We have to act now.

TURNER

I can leak the story to the press. No one will know it came from you.

FOREMAN

I will. They'll figure it out. It's not right.

DALE

Norris. You've been a politician a long time. You can do a lot for the country as president. But, you're seventy-four. This is your last shot... Think about it.

Dale gestures to Turner. The two leave the room.

Foreman sits motionless for a beat. Stares at the ceiling.

INT. SHEETS APARTMENT/DEN - DAY

Books fill a shelf. A desk with a desktop computer and printer. Dartboard on the wall.

Sheets connects his smartphone to the computer. Prints out several photos, along with typed pages.

He downloads files onto a flash drive.

Next to the computer, a manilla envelope. Handwritten words on the envelope: "Townsend Report."

Sheets puts the pages, photos, and flash drive into the envelope and seals it. Bangs on the computer keyboard.

SHEETS

And, when I get that bonus, I'll trade you in for one of those voice-activated computers.

JOANNE (O.S.)

Jasper, honey? I'm waiting.

SHEETS

I'm coming, Joanne.

Sheets puts the envelope in a desk drawer and locks it.

EXT. HAMILL MANSION - DAY

Massive two-story colonial. A wrought-iron gate with "Hamill" embossed on a gold plaque leads to the entrance.

Expensive cars in a parking lot next to the driveway.

Three ornate balconies run across the side of the building. French doors lead onto each balcony.

MUSIC and party NOISE come from the rear.

EXT. REAR OF HAMILL MANSION - DAY

Built-in speakers pipe in music. A large swimming pool with umbrella-covered tables around it.

One table with fancy-wrapped gift boxes. A table contains a lavish buffet with bottles of wine, beer, and champagne.

A dozen GUESTS party in swim attire. BARBARA HAMILL, 35, a tall, lean blonde, circulates among them.

ROBIN HAMILL, 10, a blonde girl with braces on her teeth, climbs out of the pool and onto the diving board.

ROBIN

Mother! Watch this dive!

Barbara watches. Robin dives and lands on her belly.

BARBARA

Need a bit more practice, Robin.

Robin climbs out and dries herself with a towel.

ROBIN

I keep hurting my stomach. Mother,  
I'll never be an Olympic diver.

BARBARA

Robin, if that's what you want,  
your father will get you the best  
instructor in the country.

ROBIN

Oh, mother! I love you!

She hugs Barbara. "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" comes from the speakers.

The rear doors of the mansion open. A SERVANT wheels out a large birthday cake with thirty-five lit candles.

The Guests surround Barbara and sing "Happy Birthday" to her. The cake arrives.

SERVANT

Mr. Hamill told me to bring the  
cake out now. He's still busy and  
doesn't know how long he'll be.

BARBARA

Business... Even on my birthday.

GUEST

Barbara. Hurry and blow out the  
candles. They're melting the cake.

They all laugh.

BARBARA

Robin. Want to help mother blow  
them out?

Robin nods, and they blow out the candles. Guests applaud.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/STUDY - DAY

Hamill, behind a desk, wears a terrycloth robe over his swim trunks. Talks on a phone.

HAMILL

Don't be concerned about it, Boyd.  
The story will never get out...  
Meantime, keep Townsend's wife out  
of that church... Yes, Boyd... Any  
problems, call me.

He hangs up the phone.

EXT. SHEETS APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Lights from windows illuminate the early evening. Two BURLY MEN exit a car and stride into the building.

INT. SHEETS APARTMENT COMPLEX/HALLWAY - NIGHT

The door to an apartment opens. Joanne enters the hallway with the dog Snow White on a leash.

The men walk past Joanne and turn the corner. She peeks into the apartment.

JOANNE

There's clean socks and underwear  
in the laundry basket.

SHEETS (O.S.)

I'm only going overnight. I'll  
just take the briefcase.

Joanne shuts the apartment door. Walks the dog down the hallway. Presses for the elevator and waits.

JOANNE

Snow White... You better do it all  
at once. I'm not taking you out  
again. Is mother's little baby  
gonna be a good girl?

The elevator door opens. They enter. When the door closes, the men come around the corner.

INT. SHEETS APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sheets relaxes on the couch. Watches TV and eats popcorn.

The big man heads into the kitchen.

The apartment door opens. The two men enter, one with a gun drawn and a silencer attached.

Sheets comes in with a cola bottle. Stops in his tracks.

EXT. SHEETS APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Joanne returns to the building with her dog.

JOANNE

That's a good doggie. Three little  
poo-poo piles in a row. That'll  
hold you till morning.

A SCREAM above her. A body hurtles off the tenth floor terrace. SPLATS onto the sidewalk.

Joanne sees the body hit the concrete, and she cries out. Sheets' form lies twisted and motionless.

JOANNE

No!

Joanne faints. Collapses on the sidewalk beside her dead spouse. The poodle goes to Sheets' body. Sniffs it. Hops on its hind legs and BARKS.

EXT. L.A. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

The usual airport activity. A jumbo jet lands.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL/BAGGAGE AREA - DAY

A female VOICE announces arrivals and departures over the P.A. system. PEOPLE wait for PASSENGERS at baggage claim.

Boyd paces and perspires. A CHAUFFEUR stands beside him.

Passengers file into the baggage claim section. Peggy appears and spots Boyd.

PEGGY

Walter, this is a surprise. I was expecting to see Chris.

Boyd turns to the chauffeur.

BOYD

Go get her luggage.

Peggy hands her luggage stubs to the chauffeur, who leaves. Boyd and Peggy head toward the curbside pickup.

PEGGY

How's Chuck?

BOYD

When he left for the banquet, he was on his second wind. We'll join him if you're up to it.

PEGGY

I feel fine.

EXT. SAN DIEGO FREEWAY - NIGHT

The Townsend limousine heads down the freeway.

INT. TOWNSEND LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Peggy and Boyd in the back. Boyd presses a button. A glass partition separates the two from the chauffeur.

BOYD

Peggy. I know how badly you want Chuck to get the party nomination. Of course, you wouldn't do anything to hurt his chances.

PEGGY

Walter, what the hell kind of a question is that?

BOYD

Not anything consciously.

PEGGY

Spit it out, Walter. What?

BOYD

You've been at some sort of spiritualist church, right?

Peggy flinches backward.

PEGGY

Well, yes... How did you find out? Chuck didn't even know.

BOYD

He still doesn't. Someone saw you there.

PEGGY

Who?

BOYD

Not important. But, you've got to stop it... If it got out you're involved with that church, there could be trouble. With the party, I mean. Voters wouldn't accept that sort of thing from a First Lady. They'd be afraid you'd use a crystal ball to run the country.

PEGGY

That's not what spiritualism is.

BOYD

But, that's what they'd think. You know, black magic.

PEGGY

It's not that way at all.

BOYD

Or, the work of the devil.

PEGGY

That's enough. You don't know what you're talking about.



BOYD

Peggy... We have to avoid controversy. Voters react funny to stuff like this. Remember John Edward's affair? That might have cost him a nomination. And, Hillary's emails? Don't you see?

PEGGY

I'd hope the voters are a bit more broadminded now. But, I see your point... I wasn't thinking of Chuck. I didn't tell him, because I thought he wouldn't understand.

BOYD

Just give it up until the campaign's over. Then you can pick up where you left off. If Chuck's elected, it won't matter.

PEGGY

I promise, Walter.

BOYD

Good girl. Let's keep this between us two. Chuck's got enough on his mind. Okay?

Peggy nods yes. Boyd pats her hand.

EXT. BEVERLY HILTON/REAR EXIT - NIGHT

Foreman and his group wait by the curbside. Foreman turns to Dale.

FOREMAN

John, I've thought it over. I guess you're right. Go ahead. Release the story.

DALE

You've made the right decision. I'll make some calls when we get to the rally.

A black limousine stops in front of them. They pile inside.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD - NIGHT

The limousine turns onto the busy street. A late-model station wagon follows behind.

EXT. BEVERLY GLEN BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Foreman's limousine heads toward Mulholland Drive, the station wagon close behind. No other traffic on the road.

INT. FOREMAN'S LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Dale glances at his watch.

DALE  
This the shortest way?

TURNER  
Yeah. The freeway's too far from  
the hotel.

George looks at the road ahead. He turns. Points his gun  
at the men in the rear.

GEORGE  
Everybody take it easy. Your gun,  
Hal. Now.

HAL  
George! What the hell -- ?

FOREMAN  
What's going on?

GEORGE  
I mean it, Hal. The gun.

Hal hesitates, then hands his weapon to George.

DALE  
What do you want?

GEORGE  
Everyone just shut up.

EXT. MULHOLLAND - NIGHT

The limousine turns onto Mulholland Drive and parks on the  
shoulder. So does the station wagon.

Two GUNMEN exit the station wagon. Draw pistols. And go to  
the limousine.

The pair flanks the limo. Guns point at the men inside.

INT. FOREMAN'S LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

George lowers his power window. GUNMAN #1 peers inside.

GUNMAN #1  
Okay. We'll take it from here.

George prepares to get out.

HAL  
Why, George? Tell me?

GEORGE

The pay's better, Hal. Hey, you were set to quit anyway.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - NIGHT

George exits the vehicle. Holsters his gun and stands at the front of the limo.

Gunman #2 leans into the front seat. Knocks out the DRIVER with a blackjack. He opens the rear door.

Gunman #1 covers him, and Gunman #2 renders those in the back seat unconscious.

Then, Gunman #1 presses his gun onto George's back.

GEORGE

Hey, what gives?

GUNMAN #1

We were told everyone in the car goes.

GEORGE

Wait! No!

GUNMAN #1

Sorry. It's supposed to look like an accident. It wouldn't if you weren't in the car, would it?

He pushes George inside the car. Gunman #2 cracks him on the head with the blackjack. Searches him. Finds Hal's gun and replaces it in the man's shoulder holster.

Gunman #2 opens the driver's door. Shoves the collapsed driver aside and gets behind the wheel.

Gunman #1 returns to the station wagon.

Both cars start. The limousine pulls out, followed by the station wagon.

The limo reaches a curve in the road and stops.

Gunman #2 gets out. Pulls the unconscious driver back behind the wheel. Signals the station wagon.

The station wagon rests its bumper against the rear end of the limousine. Accelerates and pushes the limousine.

The station wagon JAMS on its brakes. The limo continues on. Rolls off the edge of the canyon road.

A CRASH. And an EXPLOSION.

Gunman #2 joins the other man in the station wagon. It speeds off.

Moments later, a police HELICOPTER scans the area with a powerful searchlight.

INT. CENTURY PLAZA/LOBBY - NIGHT

A sign on an easel states: "Sierra Club - Townsend Banquet and Rally - Century Room - 8 P.M."

Peggy and Boyd pass the sign and turn down a corridor.

INT. CENTURY PLAZA/CENTURY ROOM - NIGHT

Young and old DINERS fill banquet tables.

DIGNITARIES sit near a speaker's platform. Among them, Townsend, Lockwood, and a FEMALE AIDE, late-40s.

Security GUARDS cover each door. Roy and Larry patrol either side of the platform. The MEDIA covers the event.

An OFFICIAL stands at a podium.

OFFICIAL

And, you all know about his ecology  
bill that is now law... I give you  
the next president... Senator  
Charles Townsend!

Cheers and applause. A standing ovation for Townsend. He waves to the crowd and makes his way to the podium.

During the applause, a guard escorts Peggy and Boyd into the room through a side door.

Peggy watches with pride. Townsend shakes hands with dignitaries. Poses for cameras.

Townsend reaches the podium. Notices Peggy and Boyd. He smiles and waves to her.

TOWNSEND

Before I begin my unrehearsed  
speech...

The crowd laughs.

TOWNSEND

I want to introduce you to my best  
supporter. And, the woman I love.  
My wife, Peggy.

The audience applauds. Boyd takes Peggy to the platform. Townsend goes to her. They kiss and hug.

Boyd places Peggy next to Lockwood and takes an empty seat. Townsend returns to the podium.

A NEWSMAN hurries inside the room, runs to a FEMALE REPORTER and whispers to her. Her eyes widen.

TOWNSEND

It's an honor to speak before a group of people who have such respect for the earth and its living things.

Applause. The female reporter goes to Lockwood and talks in his ear.

Lockwood turns pale.

He gets up and goes to Townsend. The applause subsides.

BOYD

Chris... What's the matter?

Lockwood whispers to Townsend. The crowd buzzes. Townsend staggers back a step, stunned. He and Lockwood talk off-mike for a few seconds.

Townsend returns to the microphone.

TOWNSEND

Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen... But, I have just been informed that... Governor Foreman... and several of his staff... died in an auto accident this evening.

Gasps and moans are heard from the audience. Peggy heads for Townsend's side.

Boyd sits. A wide-eyed look of disbelief on his face.

INT. TOWNSEND'S HOTEL/SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

A deluxe suite. Doors lead to two bedrooms.

Phones and a computer on a desk. Newspapers spread out.

Townsend, Peggy, Boyd, Lockwood, and the Female Aide crowd around a TV. Roy and Larry stand close by. They watch election returns coverage.

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

With forty percent of the vote counted, Townsend continues to lead in California.

Cheers in the room.

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Townsend has forty-four percent, with Michaels at thirty-eight, and eighteen percent for Foreman. Those votes for Foreman either in sympathy, or by those unaware of his tragic death two nights ago...

Townsend's group sighs.

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

In Ohio, we are now able to declare a winner. Projecting a very narrow victory for Townsend.

Cheers. Peggy hugs Townsend. All are jubilant, but Boyd.

LOCKWOOD

Hey, Walter, cheer up. We won.

Boyd forces a smile.

BOYD

Yeah, sure. I'm just a little beat, that's all.

TOWNSEND

We're all tired. But, it's been worth it.

Lockwood pours everyone a glass of champagne.

LOCKWOOD

Hey. A toast.

All raise their glasses.

LOCKWOOD

To a first ballot nomination... For the next president of the United States... Chuck Townsend.

They clink glasses in a toast.

EXT. HAMILL MANSION - DAY

A taxi drops off a passenger. Boyd. He RINGS the front door bell. The Servant answers. Motions him inside.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/FOYER - DAY

A circular foyer. Doors lead to several rooms. A spiral staircase to the upstairs.

Boyd follows the Servant across the foyer, through a door.

EXT. REAR OF HAMILL MANSION - DAY

Boyd comes through the rear French doors. Hamill reclines in a lounge chair by the pool. Boyd sits.

HAMILL

Boyd. How are you?

BOYD

Fine.

HAMILL

You've done your job well. Looks like Townsend will make it... Now, what was so important you couldn't discuss over the phone?

BOYD

I wanted to tell you... Our deal is off. I'm out.

HAMILL

Out? Oh. Why is that?

BOYD

Look. I didn't think you'd have Foreman murdered.

HAMILL

Let's call it... a fortunate accident. Believe me, Boyd. It was the only way.

BOYD

And, the private investigator?

Hamill gives a wicked smile.

BOYD

Him too, huh?

HAMILL

Have to plug up both ends.

BOYD

All this. Just to get your man in as Vice-President.

Hamill guffaws.

HAMILL

Well... If something happens to the president... Right?

A look of realization from Boyd. He swallows hard.

BOYD

You bastard. You're crazy.

HAMILL

A month after Townsend takes office. Too bad.

BOYD

You'll assassinate him? Oh, no. You can't get away with a thing like this. I'll stop you.

HAMILL

Boyd... How are your mother and  
sister in Minneapolis?

Boyd's jaw drops.

HAMILL

And your brother? Colonel in the  
Air Force, isn't he? Stationed in  
Germany, correct?

BOYD

You wouldn't -- ?

HAMILL

I'm sure you care for them very  
much... Life is so fragile. What a  
tragedy, if something should happen  
to them.

Boyd sinks deeper into the chair. Beaten.

BOYD

Don't hurt them, please.

HAMILL

Just behave yourself. Do what I  
say, and they'll be fine.

Boyd wipes a bead of perspiration from his brow

BOYD

Okay. I'll do whatever you want.

Hamill reaches into a robe pocket. Takes out an envelope.

HAMILL

Meanwhile... There's enough money  
in here to clear your conscience.

He stuffs the envelope in Boyd's jacket pocket.

HAMILL

See, Boyd? Now you have even more  
reasons why Fitch should be the  
running mate.

Boyd glowers at Hamill with contempt. He rises. Is about  
to leave. He turns and faces Hamill.

BOYD

Who the hell's behind this? It's  
too big for just one man. Who?  
The Mafia? A foreign power?

Hamill issues a loud laugh.



HAMILL

No, no, no. It's bigger than any of those things. It's what keeps them in business.

Boyd raises an eyebrow, puzzled.

HAMILL

The money people... The ones who control the wealth in the world. You know, it's funny... The more you have, the more you want... And now, they want to own the president... and the country.

Boyd stares at Hamill and lowers his head.

INT. CONVENTION HALL - NIGHT

TV booths with network COMMENTATORS overlook the entire scene. Cameras shoot from every angle. Posters and banners flood the arena. Townsend's picture dominates.

DELEGATES gather under four-sided signs for each state.

Peggy, Linda, and Lockwood sit in the V-I-P section. WELL WISHERS greet Peggy.

INT. TOWNSEND HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

More intimate than Townsend's California suite. Boyd and Townsend relax on a couch and watch the convention on TV. Roy and Larry at opposite ends.

DELEGATE (V.O.)

Madame Secretary... It gives Pennsylvania the honor to cast one-hundred-thirty votes for the next president: Charles Townsend!

INT. CONVENTION HALL - NIGHT

The entire hall erupts. Peggy and the others stand and celebrate. A BAND plays a rousing song.

INT. TOWNSEND HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Townsend gives Boyd a "high five."

TOWNSEND

We did it, Walter. Without making any deals.

BOYD

Yeah...

He turns down the volume of the TV.

BOYD

Let's talk some more about your  
running mate --

TOWNSEND

Not if it's more about Governor  
Fitch.

BOYD

What you got against him?

TOWNSEND

First of all, I've never met him.  
I need someone I know and trust.

BOYD

You trust me, don't you?

TOWNSEND

Of course, Walter.

BOYD

Believe me. Fitch is a good man.  
Governor ten years. Real popular  
in the South. Family man.

TOWNSEND

You've done your research... But, I  
still prefer Senator Blake.

BOYD

Blake's good, too. But, he's from  
the Northeast. You've got that  
part of the country, no sweat. You  
need a guy to help carry the South.

TOWNSEND

At least I know Blake. I'd know  
what I was getting.

BOYD

You could lose with Blake. Fitch  
is the man.

TOWNSEND

Wow. You're really sold on him.

BOYD

Sold?... Well... I, ah... not sold.  
You need him, that's all.

TOWNSEND

Alright, alright... Walter, you've  
been right up to now. Fitch it is.  
Get him on the phone. Let me talk  
it over with him.

BOYD

Good.

TOWNSEND

But, on one condition... If I win,  
I want you for my cabinet. For  
Attorney General.

Boyd forces a smile. He picks up the phone.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER - THE WASHINGTON POST

The banner headline reads: "Townsend Picks Fitch."

BACK TO SCENE

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A. Townsend, Peggy, FITCH, 55, and his WIFE at the convention podium. Hands raised in a victory salute.
- B. Townsend at a podium in a large auditorium.
- C. Townsend and Fitch pose for pictures.
- D. Peggy speaks to a ladies luncheon.
- E. Townsend, Boyd, and Lockwood inside a charter jet.
- F. SUPPORTERS greet Townsend and Peggy.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

Townsend speaks in a packed arena. Peggy behind him, with Roy and Larry on either side.

TOWNSEND

In five days, you're going to the  
polls. I ask you... Do you want a  
government that is unresponsive?  
Or receptive? Progressive. New  
solutions for complex problems.  
Isn't it time we built up this  
great country of ours, and made it  
even greater?

Wild cheers and applause. Townsend and Peggy acknowledge the CROWD. Walk toward the wings with Roy and Larry.

A group of young GIRLS bursts through the aisles and tries to climb on stage. Security POLICE restrain them.

Townsend and Peggy enter the wings. Boyd greets them. The crowd chants "We Want Chuck!"

TOWNSEND

Great crowd tonight.

PEGGY

Those campaign groupies. Good thing the police stopped them. They'd have ripped your clothes off. God knows what else.

The trio laughs.

BOYD

At least we know you've got the young female vote.

PEGGY

I don't really blame them. You're kind of cute.

TOWNSEND

I'm just a father image to them.

PEGGY

Ha! I'll bet.

She kisses him. The group walks down a short flight of steps and down a long, narrow hallway.

BOYD

Chuck... A businessman in Philadelphia wants to throw a fund-raiser for you Monday night.

TOWNSEND

I'm due to give a speech in Philly that day, aren't I?

BOYD

Right. I worked the party into your schedule.

PEGGY

Damn. I'll be in Miami. With a bunch of senior citizens.

TOWNSEND

We'll have plenty of time for parties after election day... So, who's this businessman?

BOYD

Ralph Hamill, Hamill Electronics.

TOWNSEND

I think I've heard the name.

BOYD

Lots of labor people there.

TOWNSEND

Good. Our labor support could use a boost. Good work, Walter.

EXT. THE SILVER KITTEN - NIGHT

A neon sign identifies "The Silver Kitten." Photos of semi-nude women on both sides of the entrance.

INT. THE SILVER KITTEN - NIGHT

A darkened room. Scantly-dressed WAITRESSES serve PATRONS at crowded tables. Bright lights from a small stage.

Four topless DANCERS keep rhythm to rock MUSIC from a sound booth with a DJ. Two BARTENDERS pour drinks at a bar.

The music ends. Dancers run off-stage. The crowd applauds and whistles. Stage lights dim.

D-J

Now... Our special attraction...  
The Silver Kitten presents, the  
lovely... Joanne.

A spotlight reveals Joanne Sheets. She dresses in a sexy Uncle Sam costume and points to the audience like a recruiting poster.

Customers applaud. "Yankee Doodle Dandy" comes on. Joanne bumps, grinds, and strips to the music.

EXT. THE SILVER KITTEN - NIGHT

A taxi pulls to the curb. Newsman Sam Harrison gets out.

INT. THE SILVER KITTEN - NIGHT

Harrison observes Joanne, who now dances in a satin stars-and-stripes bikini. The MAITRE D' goes to Harrison.

MAITRE D'

Table?

HARRISON

No... I have an appointment with  
Mrs. Sheets.

MAITRE D'

Oh, Joanne. That's her up on the  
stage... You must be Mr. Harrison.  
I read your column all the time.  
This way, Mr. Harrison.

Joanne removes her bikini top. The crowd responds with howls, shouts, and wolf whistles.

Harrison follows the Maitre d' through a small door.

INT. THE SILVER KITTEN/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Dressing rooms doors. Semi-nude GIRLS pass Harrison and the maitre d'. The MUSIC and crowd NOISE continues.

The Maitre d' opens a dressing room door and motions Harrison to enter.

A dog BARKS, and the music ends. The crowd applauds.

INT. THE SILVER KITTEN/JOANNE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Typical dressing room for this type club. The dog Snow White stands on a chair and pants at Harrison.

HARRISON

Say, you're quite a watchdog.

He pets the poodle. The door opens, and Joanne steps in. She wears a robe and carries her costume.

JOANNE

Mr. Harrison?

HARRISON

How do you do, Mrs. Sheets.

JOANNE

Please, sit.

She puts her costume aside. She and Harrison sit. The dog jumps into Joanne's lap.

JOANNE

Sorry we had to meet here.

HARRISON

That's okay.

JOANNE

I just didn't want no one to see me go into your office.

HARRISON

Oh? You think you're watched?

JOANNE

I don't know.

HARRISON

Mrs. Sheets. When you called me this morning, you said you had information. That it might connect your husband's death with Senator Townsend?

JOANNE

Yes, I do.

HARRISON

According to police records, your husband either fell off that terrace or committed suicide.

JOANNE

It ain't true.

HARRISON

I also found out you've been trying to convince the police he was murdered.

JOANNE

He was.

HARRISON

But, there's no evidence to indicate foul play.

JOANNE

I got evidence. Plenty. I wanted to give it to the cops. They said the case was closed and quit bothering them. That's why I called you, Mr. Harrison. A friend told me you was the only one in D.C. who could help.

HARRISON

If the police can't help you, how can I? I'm a writer, not the Lone Ranger.

JOANNE

But, you expose all those crooked politicians and stuff.

HARRISON

That's correct... Okay, what's your evidence?

JOANNE

Well... See, after Jasper's funeral, there was lots of bills. He didn't have no insurance. I had to move, 'cause I couldn't pay the rent. I sold some of his stuff. But, I kept the desk.

Joanne sets down the poodle. Goes to her dressing table mirror. Takes a large manilla envelope from behind it.

JOANNE

I got a locksmith to open a drawer the other day. I found this.

She hands Harrison the envelope.

JOANNE

He was working on this case when he was killed. That's his report.

Harrison opens the envelope. Looks through it.

JOANNE

He was gonna meet his client in L.A. late that night. But, he got killed... He was so happy. Said he finished a case. Was gonna get a big bonus. That sound like a guy ready to kill himself?

HARRISON

I guess not.

Harrison looks at the pictures of Peggy.

JOANNE

He was gonna buy me a home beauty kit. An expensive one... He said stuff was gonna be better. He hardly ever went on the terrace. And, never at night.

HARRISON

Did your husband ever mention the name Foreman?

JOANNE

Uh... No, not to me. Jasper didn't talk about none of his cases.

Harrison pulls out the flash drive.

HARRISON

What's on this?

JOANNE

Search me. I don't know nothing about computers and that stuff.

Harrison stuffs everything back in the envelope.

HARRISON

Okay, Mrs. Sheets. I'll take this with me, alright?

JOANNE

You'll help?

HARRISON

I'll make a few calls. If I come up with anything, I'll be in touch.

Joanne goes to Harrison and kisses him on the cheek.

JOANNE

Oh, thank you, thank you.

HARRISON

I'll find out what I can.

He opens the door and is about to go out.



JOANNE

You know, Mr. Harrison. Even after he died, I went out and bought that home beauty kit... I figured Jasper wanted me to have it.

She laughs with irony.

JOANNE

I only used it a few times. The damn hairdryer broke. Right after the warranty run out.

Harrison offers a faint smile and leaves.

Joanne starts to take off her makeup. Gazes into the mirror. She sobs. Mascara runs down her cheeks. The dog Snow White tries to comfort her.

EXT. HOTEL MARRIOTT - DAY

A chilly morning in the city of brotherly love.

SUPER: "Philadelphia"

Morning activity of PEOPLE who hustle to work. OTHERS enter the hotel.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S SUITE - DAY

Equipped with the usual array of tables, desks, and phones. Lockwood works with a laptop computer. The Female Aide cuts out newspaper clippings. Boyd on a phone.

BOYD

Yes, mother... everything okay with you?... Diane too?... No, just thinking of you both... Of course, after the election... Fine.

Another phone RINGS. Lockwood answers it.

LOCKWOOD

Yes, hello?... No, the senator's not here... Who?... Oh, Sam!... Well, he's in the hotel gym... Just a sec, I'll transfer.

INT. MARRIOTT GYM - DAY

A gym with exercise equipment. Townsend pedals the stationary bicycle.

Roy and Larry station themselves at opposite ends of the gym. A cell phone on a lounge RINGS. Townsend stops pedaling reaches for the phone and answers.

TOWNSEND

Yes?...Sam, how are you?

INT. HARRISON'S OFFICE - DAY

Book shelves line the office. Various plaques, awards, photographs, and other memorabilia hang on the walls. Harrison sits behind a cluttered desk.

INTERCUT GYM/HARRISON'S OFFICE

HARRISON

Chuck. I got to see you. Today.

TOWNSEND

Can't it wait till --

HARRISON

No, it can't.

TOWNSEND

You sound mysterious, Sam.

HARRISON

Look. I can't discuss it on the phone.

TOWNSEND

My schedule's pretty busy, Sam. Got a speech in a couple of hours... Chamber of Commerce luncheon... Helicopter tour with the mayor... Then, a fund-raising party tonight.

HARRISON

Senator, I have to see you.

TOWNSEND

It's that important?

HARRISON

Trust me, it is.

TOWNSEND

Then, let's meet tonight at the party. I'll have Chris call you right back, with the address... See you tonight, Sam.

Harrison hangs up. A newspaper on his desk features the headline: "Townsend Favored In Latest Poll".

EXT. HAMILL MANSION - NIGHT

Ablaze with lights. MUSIC and CONVERSATIONS inside.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The massive living room transforms into a ballroom. A huge buffet table with food and desserts. A four-tiered cake, with a White House replica on top.

A wall banner reads: "Welcome Senator Townsend." A five-piece BAND on a platform in one corner plays soft rock music. In the opposite corner, a bar.

GUESTS consist of men and women in formal attire.

Two young, beautiful hostesses in their mid-20s, CINDY and LORETTA, circulate. They have Townsend banners across their chests and pin Townsend buttons on guests.

WAITERS and SERVANTS serve guests.

Several couples dance. Lockwood seems a bit tipsy and dances with a FEMALE GUEST.

Hamill introduces Townsend to friends. The secret service men, Roy and Larry, stand close by Townsend.

Boyd isolates himself, a drink in his hand. A sullen expression as he surveys the scene.

Barbara Hamill wears a stunning gown. She goes to Boyd.

BARBARA

Mr. Boyd?

BOYD

Oh! Mrs. Hamill.

BARBARA

Barbara... You don't seem to be enjoying yourself.

BOYD

Oh, but I am, Barbara.

BARBARA

Will you have some food?

BOYD

Later. Right now, I just want to stand here with my drink. Take in everything. And be left alone.

BARBARA

Oh... Well, if you happen to see anything interesting, let me know.

Barbara moves off. Boyd downs his drink. Moves to the bar. Nods to the BARTENDER, who pours him a drink.

Boyd watches Hamill and Townsend approach an older COUPLE. They all smile and shake hands.

Barbara motions to Hamill. He excuses himself from Townsend, pats him on the shoulder.

Guests surround Townsend. Roy and Larry move closer.

Boyd spots Hamill on his way to Barbara. He blocks his way. Hamill tries to go around, but Boyd continues to block him.

HAMILL

Got a problem, Boyd?

BOYD

You fucking evil bastard. How can you put your arm around a man you're going to kill?

HAMILL

Lower your voice. And, remember. You're the one who set him up.

A glum, guilty expression from Boyd. Hamill pushes him out of the way and meets Barbara.

HAMILL

What is it?

BARBARA

Robin refuses to go to sleep until you say goodnight to her.

HAMILL

That's right, I forgot. I'll take care of it in just a minute. Sorry, darling.

He gives Barbara a peck on the cheek and moves off.

The two hostesses, Cindy and Loretta, pin buttons on guests next to Townsend. Cindy pins a button on Townsend's lapel.

CINDY

I think you're wonderful.

She kisses him on the neck. Goes off with Loretta.

GUEST

Guess you can count on her vote.

People around him laugh.

Cindy and Loretta weave through the crowd. Cindy grabs two glasses of champagne and hands one to Loretta.

LORETTA

Cindy. They told us we should only drink soda.

CINDY

This is a party, ain't it?

The two sneak into a corner of the room and sip champagne.

Loretta gazes around. Cindy's eyes focus on Townsend.

CINDY

What a hunk.

LORETTA

Who?

CINDY

Senator Townsend. Nice bod. He smells good, too.

LORETTA

You're bad. Why is it every time we meet somebody important, you have to sleep with them? Like that rock star.

CINDY

It wasn't easy, Loretta. I had to work my way up from the bass player, just to get to him.

LORETTA

Like to see you get to Townsend.

CINDY

So would I.

LORETTA

You're wasting your time. He's married.

CINDY

That's never been a problem. Once he's alone with me, he'll forget about his wife. They all do.

LORETTA

You're terrible.

Cindy continues to gaze at Townsend.

CINDY

Yeah. I can make it with him.

LORETTA

What, here?

CINDY

No, stupid. His hotel room.

LORETTA

Right. How're you gonna get in?

CINDY

Cindy has her ways.

LORETTA

Townsend'll throw you out the minute he sees you.

CINDY

Bet me?

LORETTA

So, how you gonna prove it?

CINDY

I'll have to bring back a trophy.

LORETTA

Trophy?

CINDY

Yeah. His underpants.

LORETTA

How will I know they're his?

CINDY

I'll have him sign 'em, okay?  
Right across the damn fly.

Loretta laughs. Raises her glass. They toast the bet.

EXT. HAMILL MANSION - NIGHT

A taxi stops at the front entrance. Harrison gets out and carries a briefcase.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A Servant enters the room and goes to Townsend, still surrounded by guests.

SERVANT

Senator Townsend. Mr. Harrison  
here to see you.

TOWNSEND

Thank you.  
(to the guests)  
Please excuse me.

Townsend follows the Servant. Roy and Larry tag behind.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/FOYER - NIGHT

Harrison looks over the wall paintings. Townsend comes in.

TOWNSEND

Good to see you, Sam. We can talk  
upstairs, in Hamill's study.

Townsend leads Harrison up the spiral stairway. Roy and Larry trail them.

Halfway up the stairs, Hamill meets them.

TOWNSEND

Sam Harrison, this is our host,  
Ralph Hamill. Thanks for the use  
of your study.

HAMILL

No problem. Always glad to help  
out the press. See you later.

Hamill continues downward. Townsend and the others go on.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Townsend and Harrison go through an open door into Hamill's  
study. Roy and Larry take positions outside the room.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/STUDY - NIGHT

Townsend at Hamill's desk, reads Sheets' report. He shakes  
his head. Harrison rests in an armchair.

TOWNSEND

I don't believe it. Someone was  
following Peg?

Harrison pulls the photographs and flash drive from his  
briefcase. Sets them on the desk.

Townsend examines the photos. Looks at the flash drive and  
glances at Harrison.

TOWNSEND

And, what's on this?

HARRISON

An audio recording. Peggy at one  
of those spiritual readings.

TOWNSEND

Why didn't she tell me about this  
church?

HARRISON

So, you didn't know?

TOWNSEND

Well, we talked about this,  
spiritualism, but that was all. I  
never thought she'd get so deeply  
involved.

HARRISON

You're lucky Foreman was killed  
before he had a chance to use this  
against you.

TOWNSEND

Where did you get this?

HARRISON

From the investigator's wife. He was going to L.A. to deliver it. He never got there. He was killed the same night Foreman was.

Townsend stands and paces about the room.

HARRISON

Quite a coincidence, huh? A detective killed in Washington. Foreman in California. Hours apart. Both accidents.

Townsend stops. Faces Harrison.

TOWNSEND

What the hell are you saying, Sam?

HARRISON

I don't think they were accidents.

TOWNSEND

You think I had something to do with it?

HARRISON

I didn't say that, Chuck.

Townsend opens the French doors to the balcony. Inhales a deep breath of the night air.

HARRISON

My instincts tell me it's murder.

TOWNSEND

Look, Sam. Nothing in this world is worth killing for. Nothing.

HARRISON

I believe you. That's why I haven't told the police yet. I wanted you to know first... Tell me something, Chuck? Would any group have a lot to gain from you becoming president?

TOWNSEND

You mean, did I make any deals in a smoke-filled room? The answer is no... Sam, maybe you make too much of this. Maybe they were just accidents. A big coincidence?

Harrison shakes his head, "no". Townsend goes to the desk. Looks at the photos of Peggy. Takes out his cell phone.

HARRISON

Who you calling?



TOWNSEND

Peg. I can't believe she wouldn't tell me what she was doing. We're so close... never hold back a thing from each other.

INT. MIAMI HILTON/PEGGY'S SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Florida palm trees visible through the window.

The phone RINGS, and the Female Aide answers.

INT. HAMILL STUDY - NIGHT

Townsend waits, impatient. A beat.

TOWNSEND

(into phone)

This is Chuck. Let me speak to Peg, if she's there.

INTERCUT SITTING ROOM/HAMILL STUDY

Peggy enters the room and adjusts an earring.

TOWNSEND

(to Harrison)

We'll get to the bottom of all this.

The Female Aide hands the phone to Peggy and exits.

PEGGY

Hi, sweetheart. Is this a last-minute pep talk?

TOWNSEND

No. I have to ask you something. Something very important.

PEGGY

Anything wrong?

TOWNSEND

Why didn't you tell me you were going to a spiritualist church?

Peggy's eyes widen.

PEGGY

Well... I wanted to, really. But, I knew how you felt. I thought if I could learn more... make you understand better... I'm sorry.

TOWNSEND

That's alright, honey.

PEGGY

I suppose Walter told you.

Townsend arches an eyebrow. He glances at Harrison.

TOWNSEND

Walter?... Oh, yes, sure...

PEGGY

He said someone saw me there... I promised to stop going. I haven't gone since then.

TOWNSEND

Since when? What day was that?

PEGGY

That night in L.A., before the primary.

TOWNSEND

Oh, right... I understand, Peg. I love you.

PEGGY

Love you too. See you in Grant City tomorrow.

She throws him a kiss over the phone and hangs up.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/STUDY - NIGHT

Townsend leans back.

HARRISON

What?

TOWNSEND

Walter Boyd. He knew... He and Peggy talked... The night Foreman was killed.

HARRISON

Another coincidence. Explain that.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The party guests enjoy themselves.

Cindy removes the Townsend banner.

CINDY

I'm outta here.

LORETTA

Cindy, you can't leave now.

CINDY

I'm heading for Townsend's hotel.  
Tell 'em I'm sick. Wish me luck.

She leaves. Loretta shakes her head with disapproval.

Boyd stands near the bar and drinks. Lockwood goes to him.

LOCKWOOD

This guy Hamill sure knows how to  
throw a party... What's the matter,  
Walter?

BOYD

Just pooped, I guess.

LOCKWOOD

Well, our job's about over. Now,  
we wait for election returns. If  
the polls are right, we're on our  
way to the White House.

Roy comes into the room. Spots Boyd and goes to him.

ROY

Mr. Boyd? The senator wants you.

Boyd follows Roy. A young woman WRITER goes to Lockwood.

WRITER

Mr. Lockwood. I've been trying to  
get to you all evening.

LOCKWOOD

Watch it, I'm happily married.

WRITER

Look, I write for Freedom Magazine.  
I know the press wasn't invited. I  
snuck in. I hoped you might help  
me with an article I'm doing on  
Senator Townsend.

LOCKWOOD

Okay. What do you want to know?

WRITER

Is it true Townsend sleeps in the  
nude?

LOCKWOOD

I'm not sure. But, I know he takes  
a shower that way.

The Writer scowls at Lockwood.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Larry waits outside the study door. Roy and Boyd approach. Boyd opens the door and enters. Roy resumes his post.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/STUDY - NIGHT

Townsend sits on the edge of the desk. Boyd enters, and Harrison gets up from his chair.

BOYD

Oh. Sam.

HARRISON

Hello, Walter.

They shake hands. Boyd turns to Townsend.

BOYD

What's up?

TOWNSEND

Sit down, Walter.

Boyd obeys.

TOWNSEND

How come you didn't tell me about Peg going to that church?

BOYD

Uh... well... We were busy with the campaign. I guess I just forgot to tell you.

TOWNSEND

I see... How did you find out?

BOYD

I... ah... Somebody spotted her. They promised to keep quiet.

Townsend hops off the desk. Goes to Boyd.

TOWNSEND

Who was it, Walter?

BOYD

Uh... a friend... friend of mine.

TOWNSEND

What's his name?

BOYD

Does it really matter? I don't want to get him involved.

TOWNSEND

This friend named Jasper Sheets?

BOYD

Who?

Townsend picks up Sheets' report. Hands it to Boyd.

TOWNSEND

Read it.

Boyd glances at the report. Hesitates.

TOWNSEND

I said, read it!

Boyd thumbs through the pages. Glances up at Townsend. He fidgets and sweats, nervous.

TOWNSEND

You knew about this report, didn't you, Walter?

BOYD

No. I swear, I --

Townsend snatches the report from Boyd. Waves it at him.

TOWNSEND

Because of this, people were murdered!

BOYD

Chuck, I --

TOWNSEND

What's going on, Walter? Tell me.

BOYD

I can't... I can't.

TOWNSEND

What the hell you mean, you can't?

Boyd heads for the door. Townsend cuts him off. And locks the door.

TOWNSEND

You're not leaving till I get an answer.

BOYD

You don't understand. I can't tell you.

Townsend slaps Boyd. Grabs him and shakes him.

TOWNSEND

What do you know?

HARRISON

Take it easy, Chuck.

TOWNSEND

This bastard knows something. He's going to tell us.

He pushes Boyd against the desk.

TOWNSEND

Tell me, Walter.

BOYD

I can't.

Boyd breaks away from Townsend.

He tries to get away. Goes to the French doors and the balcony. Townsend drags him back into the study.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Party conversations mask some of the SHOUTS from the study. Roy cocks his ear. Puts it against the door.

TOWNSEND (O.S.)

Talk. Talk, you son of a bitch!

LARRY

What the hell's goin' on, Roy?

ROY

Senator? You okay in there?

HARRISON (O.S.)

Chuck, stop it! You're hurting him!

Roy tries the door. Locked. He gestures to Larry.

The two men put their shoulders against the door. After a few attempts, the door gives way.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/STUDY - NIGHT

Roy and Larry burst into the study.

Townsend grapples with Boyd, and Harrison tries to separate them. The three men propel onto the balcony.

HARRISON

For God's sake, stop!

Roy and Larry dash for the balcony.

EXT. HAMILL MANSION/STUDY BALCONY - NIGHT

The light from the study spills out onto the balcony.

The figures of Townsend, Boyd, and Harrison struggle against the railing.

Roy and Larry enter. Boyd shoves Townsend away from him.  
Townsend loses his balance. Falls over the balcony railing.  
He hits the ground with a loud gasp.

This stuns the other men. Harrison, Roy, and Larry peer over the railing.

MEN'S POV - HAMILL LAWN

The crumpled figure of Townsend's body lies on the ground and is motionless.

BACK TO SCENE

Boyd slumps over the railing and sobs. Roy and Larry exchange worried glances.

HARRISON

Oh, no.

INT. MIAMI HILTON/BALLROOM - NIGHT

SENIOR CITIZENS fill rows of chairs. A podium stands in the front of the room.

Peggy approaches the podium, and people applaud.

She shakes hands with DIGNITARIES. Steps to the microphone.

PEGGY

Ladies. Gentlemen... I...

She freezes. A blank, far-away look in her eyes.

SLOW MOTION SEQUENCE

Townsend falls off the balcony and hits the ground.

BACK TO SCENE

Peggy flashes a look of horror. After a beat, she snaps out of her stunned state.

Concerned murmurs, as Peggy composes herself.

PEGGY

I... excuse me, I'm sorry... My husband... Senator Townsend... will make a great... president.

EXT. HAMILL MANSION/STUDY BALCONY - NIGHT

HARRISON

Christ Almighty...

ROY

Larry. Go down.

Larry turns and rushes back into the study. Harrison gestures to Roy and points out Boyd.

HARRISON  
Take care of him. I'll call the police.

Harrison returns to the study.

INT. HAMILL MANSION/STUDY - NIGHT

Harrison takes out his cell phone.

Roy comes in with the stunned Boyd, then he snatches the phone from Harrison.

HARRISON  
Hey, what the hell do you think you're doing?!

INT. HAMILL MANSION/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Guests dance, including Lockwood and the woman Writer.

Larry comes in. Looks around. Sees Hamill dance with Barbara and motions to him.

Hamill excuses himself and goes to Larry. The two move into the hallway.

After a beat, Hamill returns with a wrinkled brow.

He glances around. Spots DOCTOR LEE EVANS, 45, who mingles with some guests.

EVANS  
Well, I suggest you see your family doctor about your problem. My field is research.

WOMAN GUEST  
But, Doctor Evans, I have. And, he says it's nothing.

EVANS  
Then, you should listen to him.

Hamill joins Evans. Changes his dour expression to one of feigned joviality.

HAMILL  
Lee, I'd like to talk with you. Excuse me, ladies?

Hamill whispers to Evans. They hurry off.



EXT. SIDE OF HAMILL MANSION - NIGHT

Party NOISES from inside. Larry stands over Townsend's still form. Hamill and Evans come in.

Evans examines Townsend. Gazes at Hamill.

EVANS

His neck's broken. He's dead.

HAMILL

Oh, shit!

He paces back and forth.

HAMILL

The night before the damn election,  
and this happens.

(to Larry)

You and Roy were supposed to watch  
him like a baby. Why the hell you  
think I paid you off for?

LARRY

Sorry, Mr. Hamill. It happened so  
fast. We just couldn't get to him  
in time.

HAMILL

Why couldn't it happen a few hours  
later?... So close. I blew it.

Evans looks at Hamill, then at Townsend's body. He snaps his fingers. Gazes up and concentrates in thought.

HAMILL

Larry. Here's what you do. Get  
rid of Harrison first. I can  
handle Boyd.

Hamill jots something on the back of a business card and hands it to Larry.

HAMILL

Take him there. I'll call and tell  
them you're coming. They'll know  
what to do.

LARRY

What about the cops?

HAMILL

We'll say it was an accident.  
Townsend got a little drunk. Fell  
over the railing. You and Roy can  
testify to that.

Larry nods to Hamill. He's about to leave.

EVANS

Wait a minute.

Larry stops. Evans takes Hamill aside.

EVANS

Ralph. When you told me about your objective last year, I said I might have an alternate plan for you. In case something went wrong.

HAMILL

What are you talking about, Lee?

EVANS

I've been working on something. This isn't the time or place to explain it. But, if it works, you might be able to stick with your original plan. With some modifications.

HAMILL

You've got to give me more information than that.

Evans grabs Hamill's arm and delivers an intense stare.

EVANS

Trust me for now. It may sound like a long shot. But, it's worth a try.

HAMILL

Yeah? And, if it doesn't work?

EVANS

Then, you can blow him up in his limo. Make it look like terrorists did it. Destroy the evidence.

Hamill hesitates.

EVANS

If we're going to do this, we need to get him to the plant. Now.

Hamill thinks for a moment. Forces a smile and gives Evans a firm pat on his shoulder.

HAMILL

Come on. Larry, help get him in my car.

Evans and Larry carry Townsend toward the garage, off to one side of the pool. Hamill goes with them.

HAMILL

Anybody sees us, we'll just tell them we're sobering up a drunk.

They reach the garage.

Hamill swings open the door. Inside are a station wagon, a van, and a Bentley.

Hamill opens the wagon's tailgate.

Evans and Larry slide Townsend inside. Cover with a blanket and shut the tailgate. Hamill hands Larry a car key.

HAMILL

Take the van. When you finish with Harrison, meet us at the plant.

LARRY

What about Townsend's people? And the guests?

HAMILL

Have Roy bring Lockwood to me. I'll have a talk with him. Make sure the others go back to the hotel. Tell the guests something important came up, and Townsend had to leave.

EVANS

I'll call my team and have them meet us there.

Larry and Evans dash off.

INT. HAMILL STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Roy drives, Hamill beside him.

Boyd and Lockwood are in the back seat. Both of them are sober. Boyd bows his head in remorse. Lockwood has a stunned look.

Lockwood turns and stares at the blanket-covered body of Townsend behind him. He looks at Boyd.

LOCKWOOD

Hamill said he'd have Linda and the baby killed, if I don't cooperate. Walter, what do we do?

BOYD

We do what Hamill says.

Hamill glances into the rear-view mirror. Looks at the two beaten men. He leans back and exhales a deep breath.

INT. HOTEL MARRIOTT - NIGHT

Cindy comes around the corridor with a pock-faced YOUNG MAN, who wears a hotel uniform.

They stop at a door. He takes out a set of keys.

YOUNG MAN

I could get in lots of trouble.

CINDY

Don't worry so much. Nobody'll find out.

She rubs up against him.

CINDY

Come on... I'll be so good to you.  
You won't be sorry.

She kisses him. He locks her in an embrace. Cindy pulls away from the Young Man. He unlocks the door.

YOUNG MAN

They'll be here in a couple of hours. Be careful.

Cindy struts into the room. The Young Man gazes at her for a moment, then runs down the corridor.

EXT. HAMILL ELECTRONICS PLANT - NIGHT

Hamill's station wagon stops at a security gate. The GUARD inside waves him through.

The wagon drives past. Passes several buildings.

It comes to a structure and slows. A sign on the front of the building reads "Research".

The vehicle moves to the rear of the building.

INT. HAMILL RESEARCH BUILDING/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A wide double-door opens to another room. A dense fog of water vapor rushes into the corridor.

A male TECHNICIAN, 30s, in a white lab coat, maneuvers a gurney out of the room and into the corridor.

A white plastic cadaver pouch lies on the gurney, with a body inside. Wisps of water vapor emanate from the bag.

The Technician closes the heavy door of the room and wheels the gurney down the hallway.

A sign on the room reads: "Cryonic Storage - Authorized Personnel Only." A numeric keypad provides access.

EXT. REAR OF RESEARCH BUILDING - NIGHT

The wagon backs to a loading dock.

A large door slides open. Evans waits inside the loading area, alongside a female SCIENTIST, 40, in a lab coat.

They wheel out a stretcher. Place Townsend's body on it and transport it into the building.

Hamill, Boyd, Lockwood, and Roy follow.

INT. HAMILL RESEARCH BUILDING/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The group heads down a corridor to a large elevator. Hamill enters numbers on a keypad. The elevator doors slide open.

INT. HAMILL RESEARCH BUILDING/BASEMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The doors open.

Evans and the Scientist come out and wheel the stretcher down the hallway. The others follow.

EVANS

(to Scientist)

Prep him. I'll be there in ten minutes.

The Scientist nods and pushes the stretcher into a room. Evans leads the others to an adjoining room.

HAMILL

I've got calls to make.

EXT. PINWOOD CEMETERY - NIGHT

A small private cemetery. Moonlight casts eerie shadows on tombstones. Hamill's van parks outside.

INT. PINWOOD CHAPEL - NIGHT

Recorded organ MUSIC from a speaker. Several rows of pews. A small podium in front.

Larry slumps in the front row. A male FUNERAL DIRECTOR at the podium.

The two watch a coffin on a conveyor belt move into the cremation room.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Let us bow in prayer.

He motions for Larry to bow. Larry obeys. A beat.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Amen... I will have the remains for you in a moment.

LARRY

What? I thought you took care of that?

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

I'm very sorry. That is not part of our service.

Before Larry continues his protest, the Funeral Director turns his back on him and moves through a door to the side of the cremation room.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Larry climbs into the van with an urn under one arm.

He sets the urn on the passenger seat, starts the vehicle, and drives away.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

The van crosses a bridge. Stops. Backs up and parks in the middle of the bridge.

Larry gets out with the urn.

He reaches the bridge railing and empties the contents of the urn into the waters below. Tosses the empty urn in after it.

LARRY

Bye-bye, Mr. Harrison.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

A futuristic, bizarre laboratory. Computers line one wall. The opposite side features digital meters and readouts from video display terminals.

In front of it rests a raised platform with two tiers of theatre-type seats that overlook a large, glass panel.

Visible through the glass, an operating room.

Boyd, Lockwood, Evans, and Roy sit and observe.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

Townsend's body lies on a table. Next to it, an instrument table, with scalpels and other paraphernalia.

The gurney with the white body bag rests against one side of the instrument table.

Plastic-insulated computer cords plug into the wall. The other cord ends resemble insulation stripped from electrical wires with red, hairlike optic fibers that protrude.

Two pairs of intravenous bottles feed Townsend and the form inside the body bag.

Blood surges into the body bag figure. A brown fluid circulates through Townsend.

The Technician and Scientist wear surgical gowns. They work on both bodies and inspect equipment and instruments.

INTERCUT LABORATORY/OPERATING ROOM

Boyd and Lockwood watch the process with amazed and curious looks. Roy shakes his head. Evans checks the computers.

BOYD

What the hell are you doing to him?

EVANS

Giving him life.

The Technician unzips the top of the body bag and reveals its contents.

The observers stare through the glass panel.

Everyone except Evans gasps in awe.

The exposed body in the plastic bag is an exact duplicate of Charles Townsend.

For a moment, none of the shocked spectators can speak.

LOCKWOOD

What?... What the hell is that?

EVANS

Don't you recognize your own brother-in-law?

ROY

Jesus... is it a robot?

EVANS

It's a genetic duplicate.

BOYD

A clone...?

EVANS

We got a blood sample six months ago, after Townsend had a physical.

LOCKWOOD

I don't believe it. It can't happen. How could a human being grow that fast?

EVANS

The bio-research division of Hamill Electronics has experimented with super-growth hormones for years. We just pushed everything to the limit. Didn't need a birth mother. We quite simply... grew it, like a culture... Seems to have turned out very well.

LOCKWOOD

You're a monster.

EVANS

People probably said the same thing about the first surgeon.

BOYD

So, you're going to replace him with a clone? But, his brain isn't the same, his thoughts.

ROY

Yeah. What if the clone doesn't like the idea, then what?

Evans smiles.

EVANS

You've seen too many sci-fi movies... We've kept the body at extremely low temperatures. It's never been fully conscious. That brain is an empty vessel, or more accurately, a blank sheet of paper. Without memories or conscious thoughts. Until today.

Evans motions to the Technician in the operating room, who flips an intercom switch.

TECHNICIAN

(over intercom)

Yes, Doctor Evans. We're ready.

EVANS

Excuse me. Please, watch the procedure. I think you'll all find it rather fascinating.

INT. MIAMI HILTON/PEGGY'S SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Peggy and the Female Aide enter the room from the hallway.

AIDE

You sure you're okay?



PEGGY

Fine. I just saw... I felt so strange. All of a sudden.

AIDE

It's the damn humidity. Sucks the life right out of you. Want a snack?

PEGGY

No, I'm going to bed. Got that early flight to Grant City.

AIDE

The airport'll be mobbed. You know, local boy makes good... Goodnight, Peggy.

Peggy goes into her bedroom.

INT. MIAMI HILTON/PEGGY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peggy seems deep in thought. She picks up a phone and punches in a number.

SERVANT (V.O.)

(over phone)

Hamill residence.

PEGGY

May I speak to Senator Townsend?  
It's his wife.

SERVANT (V.O.)

(over phone)

The senator and his people have left. They had a meeting.

PEGGY

A meeting? This late? Well, if he returns, please have him call me.

She hangs up. Broods.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The Scientist and Technician assist Evans. They monitor Townsend's body and the clone.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Boyd, Townsend, Roy, and now Larry watch through the glass panel. Hamill stands behind them.

INTERCUT LABORATORY/OPERATING ROOM

SCIENTIST

Body temperature normal.

Evans nods.

The Scientist turns the head of the clone and exposes the back of its neck, where there is an open incision.

Several red, hairlike optic fibers stick out, similar to the exposed fibers at the ends of the computer cords. A silver sensor the size of a quarter attaches below the fibers.

The observers gape at the sight.

BOYD

What the hell is that?

Evans cuts a small slit at the base of Townsend's skull, in the same location as the clone's incision.

The Technician picks up a gun-shaped laser device from the instrument table. He welds the hairlike fibers of the clone to the exposed optic lines of one computer cords.

The Scientist leaves the room.

Evans attaches the exposed fibers of other computer cords to Townsend's brain stem. The same gun-shaped laser tool connects them.

The Scientist comes into the lab. She goes to the computer console and adjusts the equipment. Computers start to HUM.

Evans nods to the Technician and exits.

The technician checks the computer cords that lead from the necks of the bodies.

Evans enters the lab and goes to the Scientist.

EVANS

Everything in order?

The Scientist nods yes. Evans turns to the others.

EVANS

We're in the final phase.

HAMILL

Lee. What if he goes haywire or something, while he's in public?

EVANS

Don't worry, Mr. Hamill. We've rigged a special feature, just in case. I know you'll like it.

Evans sees the Technician in the operating room signal him.

EVANS

(to Scientist)

Begin recording.

The Scientist puts the computers into "record" mode. The huge computer tapes spin and CLICK.

Display terminals flicker, flash screen after screen of computer language in rapid, staccato fashion.

LOCKWOOD

What's that?

EVANS

First, we extract all of Townsend's memories. And feed them into the main computer.

LOCKWOOD

That's impossible. He's been dead for more than an hour.

EVANS

The part of his brain holding his thoughts can still be tapped. We use chemicals and electrical stimulation. Information is recorded onto the computer tapes. Then, we feed it into the brain of his... replacement.

BOYD

But, Doctor. Won't the... clone remember what happened tonight? You know, the accident? The meeting with Harrison?

EVAN

What we can record, we can also erase. And edit. All he'll remember is Harrison never showed up. We'll introduce new information to cover the time period from then till now.

LOCKWOOD

How can you do such a... ghoulisn thing like this?

EVANS

I don't see it that way... Since the beginning of time, man has searched for a way to live forever. Now, that dream has come true... Life after death... Immortality.

LOCKWOOD

It's not a dream, you maniac. It's a goddamn nightmare.

BOYD

And, it won't work. How long do you think you can pull this off, before somebody figures it out?

HAMILL

It only has to work until he gets elected.

EVANS

Right. We'll preserve Townsend's body. If we have to, we'll switch bodies the day after the election. Make it look like a heart attack. Or, like I said. Blow up his limo.

BOYD

I hope to God that... thing... never gets off the operating table.

HAMILL

You better hope to God it does.

The men stare at the bodies of Townsend and the clone. Computers continue to function.

EXT. HAMILL ELECTRONICS PLANT - NIGHT

Hamill's wagon stops at the gate with the van behind it.

The guard waves both vehicles on.

INT. HAMILL STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Roy at the wheel. Hamill next to him.

Boyd and Lockwood in back. Townsend sits between them, eyes closed. The men look beat, stare straight ahead.

Hamill glances back at Townsend. Takes a remote control device from his pocket.

He smiles. Presses a button. Townsend's nostrils flare, and his eyes open.

HAMILL

Senator?

Boyd and Lockwood both flinch away from the Townsend clone and stare at him, horrific looks on their faces.

The clone appears as a different personality. Deliberate speech pattern, with little emotion or color.

TOWNSEND

Oh. Excuse me. Must have fallen asleep. I enjoyed the tour of your plant, Ralph.

Boyd and Lockwood look away. Townsend glances at his watch.

TOWNSEND

Sorry to keep everyone up so late.

Townsend notices Boyd's expression.

TOWNSEND

What's wrong, Walter?

Boyd stares open-mouthed, mute.

HAMILL

Too much partying.

Townsend laughs. Hollow. Mechanical.

HAMILL

I'm looking forward to being with you in Grant City. Thanks so much for the invitation. I also hope to be with you for your inauguration.

Hamill grins. When Townsend looks away, Hamill presses the "off" button.

Townsend leans back against the car seat, in an odd kind of somnambulant state.

HAMILL

Ha, I like it. That Evans is a genius... I'll turn Townsend back on when we get to the hotel.

Boyd glares at Hamill with contempt. Lockwood gazes at the unconscious Townsend.

LOCKWOOD

Jesus Christ... You'd think he was really Chuck.

HAMILL

Keep thinking that.

INT. MIAMI HILTON/PEGGY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peggy in bed, unable to sleep. Switches on the night table lamp. A clock indicates: "3:00".

She heaves a sigh, then heads into the bathroom.

INT. MIAMI HILTON/PEGGY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Peggy turns on the overhead light.

She takes a bottle of pills from the medicine cabinet. Washes down a couple with a glass of water.

Peggy stares into the bathroom mirror. She sees a REFLECTION of Townsend in the mirror, who appears to stand behind her. She stiffens for an instant.

PEGGY

Chuck...

Peggy turns around.

No one there.

She rubs her eyes and thinks for a moment.

When she prepares to leave, Townsend's reflection reappears.

Peggy whirls and looks behind her.

Alone in the room. Gazes back into the mirror. All Peggy can see is her own face. Apprehensive.

EXT. HOTEL MARRIOTT - NIGHT

Only an occasional taxi around the hotel.

Hamill's station wagon and the van head into the underground parking lot.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cindy waits, impatient.

She removes a pair of undershorts from a dresser drawer. Stuffs them in her bra and moves to the door.

She grabs the door knob. Hears footsteps.

The door of the adjoining suite UNLOCKS. Cindy panics for a second. Hurries into the bathroom.

ROY (O.S.)

I'll check out the senator's room,  
Larry. You take the other one.

Roy comes into the bedroom. Looks it over, including the closet and under the bed.

He goes into the bathroom.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Light spills in from the bedroom.

Roy flips on the light switch and scans the room. Empty. He leaves and snaps off the light.

A heavy sigh emits from the shower. The curtain slides open. Cindy huddles and cowers inside.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S SUITE - NIGHT

Hamill, Boyd, and Lockwood wait. The reanimated Townsend stands beside Hamill.

Larry and Roy come in and nod to each other that everything is okay.

TOWNSEND

Goodnight, gentlemen. Nice to have you aboard, Ralph.

HAMILL

Goodnight, Senator.

Townsend goes into his bedroom. Hamill laughs.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Townsend undresses.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S SUITE - NIGHT

Boyd and Lockwood glare at Hamill.

HAMILL

You two. Go to your rooms and get some sleep. From here on in, you both act normal. If things work out, you're set for life... Talk to Boyd, Lockwood. He'll tell you about the fringe benefits.

Boyd and Lockwood hesitate, then go out the door.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Townsend clone, clad in pajamas, crawls into bed. He's ready to snap out the nightstand light.

The door opens. Roy peers in.

TOWNSEND

Yes?

ROY

Sorry, Senator. You want anything before you go to sleep?

TOWNSEND

No. Thank you. Goodnight.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S SUITE - NIGHT

Roy closes the bedroom door. Turns to Hamill.

HAMILL

He in bed?

Roy nods. Hamill grips the remote device and presses the "off" button.

ROY

Why do that, Mr. Hamill? Doc Evans said he could sleep on his own.

HAMILL

Sure. But, this way, we've got more control over him.

LARRY

What happens when he and his wife, you know? Get together? Won't she know something's... different?

ROY

Maybe the doctor programmed some headaches.

HAMILL

If there's a problem, we'll shut him down and take him to Evans. There's always the heart attack excuse. In the meantime, keep him isolated. Tell people he can't be disturbed.

Hamill leaves. Roy locks the door behind him.

ROY

Get some shuteye, Larry. I'll babysit for a while.

Larry shuffles into the other bedroom. Roy plants himself in an armchair and gets comfortable.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom door opens a crack.

Cindy comes in, carries her shoes. She notices Townsend "asleep" in bed.

The young woman listens at the door to the adjoining suite. Moves to the foot of the bed and disrobes.

Cindy creeps over to Townsend. Whispers in his ear.

CINDY

Senator Townsend? Please, don't say a word. It's me. Cindy. The party hostess, the one who kissed you? I've had the hots for you a long time. Don't throw me out. I'll show you a good time. Okay?

No response from Townsend.



CINDY

Good... I knew you were a stud.

Cindy crawls into bed beside Townsend.

She kisses him all over. Her hands work under the covers. Fondles his private parts.

She gets on top of Townsend. Her hips undulate. The Townsend clone doesn't respond. She stops.

CINDY

Come on, do something.

She massages his crotch under the covers. Nothing.

CINDY

What are you, a faggot?

Cindy stares at his face.

CINDY

Asleep? After my best moves?  
Jesus Christ. Dead to the world.

Disappointment on her face, she puts on her clothes and gets out of the bed.

CINDY

No wonder you ain't got any kids.  
I hope to hell you don't run the  
country like you fuck.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S SUITE - NIGHT

Roy dozes off. Hears the SLAM of the bedroom door. He staggers to his feet.

INT. MARRIOTT/TOWNSEND'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Roy flips on the ceiling light. The room appears normal. Townsend inactive. Roy snorts.

ROY

No. I don't believe in ghosts.

He shuts off the light and leaves.

EXT. GRANT CITY AIRPORT - DAY

A clear November sky.

A small private plane taxis in and stops. ATTENDANTS push a portable stairway into place.

Townsend and his party come out. He smiles without emotion.

EXT. GRANT CITY AIRPORT/PICKUP AREA - DAY

Two limousines wait curbside. Peggy and Linda exit one of the vehicles.

They spot Townsend's group come out of the baggage area. Peggy smiles.

Lockwood goes to Linda. They hug.

LOCKWOOD

Hi baby. Boy, I missed you.

Peggy's smile turns to bewilderment. She stops.

Peggy observes an identical Townsend DUPLICATE appear alongside him. They walk stride-for-stride.

She blinks her eyes. Delivers an intense stare.

The double image of Townsend remains.

Townsend reaches Peggy, and the second image dissipates.

Peggy shakes her head, confused.

When Townsend embraces her, a chill goes through her body. She shudders. Peggy stares at her husband.

HAMILL

Hello, Peggy. I'm Ralph Hamill.

Peggy continues to stare at Townsend and offers Hamill a weak handshake.

Boyd does not enjoy the situation. Hamill slaps his shoulder and grabs him by the wrist.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The two limousines travel down a busy highway.

INT. TOWNSEND'S LIMOUSINE - DAY

Roy and Larry sit in front. Townsend and Peggy in back, separated from the front by a glass partition.

Peggy appears lost in deep thought. Townsend glances at her and gives an awkward smile.

PEGGY

I hear you left the party last night. For a meeting.

Townsend's speech seems slow and methodical.

TOWNSEND

I went to Ralph Hamill's plant. For a tour.

PEGGY

Chuck? Is something wrong? Are you annoyed with me? Over what we talked about last night?

TOWNSEND

Last night?

PEGGY

Yes. You called me from Mr. Hamill's place.

TOWNSEND

I did? I don't seem to recall. I suppose I had more to drink than I thought... What did we talk about?

This alarms Peggy, and she wrings her hands. Speaks to Townsend with caution.

PEGGY

Why... nothing much. Just about me meeting you here today.

TOWNSEND

Oh.

She shivers.

EXT. HOTEL GRANT - NIGHT

Heavy early evening traffic.

A huge banner in front of the hotel reads: "Welcome Home, Chuck Townsend." SUPPORTERS and NEWS PEOPLE gather.

Townsend's limo stops at the curb. A great cheer goes up when he exits and heads into the hotel.

Peggy and the others lag behind him.

INT. HOTEL GRANT/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The door to Townsend's suite opens.

Townsend and others file into the room.

Peggy takes Linda aside. The rest of the group go inside.

PEGGY

Oh, Linda. Wait a second.

LINDA

What can I do for you, Peg?

PEGGY

I forgot my night creme. Do you have any?

LINDA  
I've got an extra jar. Come over  
to our room.

Linda leads Peggy into another suite.

INT. HOTEL GRANT/LOCKWOOD'S SUITE - NIGHT

Peggy stands around, with an awkward expression. Linda comes in from the bedroom with a jar.

LINDA  
Here you go.

PEGGY  
Thanks. Linda. Have you noticed  
anything strange about your  
brother?

LINDA  
He does seem a bit distant.  
Probably the campaign. Chris and  
Walter look tired too. I wouldn't  
worry. Unless they're the same  
after the election.

PEGGY  
What do you mean?

LINDA  
You know. Extra-curricular  
activities.

Peggy forces a laugh. Linda hugs her.

INT. HOTEL GRANT/TOWNSEND'S SUITE - NIGHT

Roy relaxes in a chair. Larry gazes out the window.

LARRY  
They call this a city? It's only  
eight o'clock. They've already  
pulled in the sidewalks.

ROY  
What's the matter? You haven't had  
enough excitement lately?

The bedroom door opens. Peggy enters.

ROY  
Oh, Mrs. Townsend... If you need  
anything, one of us'll be outside.

PEGGY  
Thank you. Goodnight.

Peggy looks toward the bedroom door and shudders.

INT. HOTEL GRANT/TOWNSEND'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Peggy stares into the mirror and sighs. Takes out a cell phone and punches in a number.

PEGGY  
 (into phone)  
 Hello?... I'd like to speak to  
 Reverend Ballard.

INT. POLLING PLACE - DAY

NEWS MEDIA surround Townsend and his group, along with several OFFICIALS.

Townsend and Peggy go to a registration table and sign. The clone offers a cold smile.

INT. HOTEL GRANT/BALLARD'S ROOM - DAY

Late afternoon. Ballard watches Peggy draw the drapes and plunge the room into near darkness.

PEGGY  
 Thank you so much for flying in and  
 not telling anybody. I don't want  
 anyone to know what's going on.

BALLARD  
 That's why we're in a private room?  
 Peggy, I'll be honest with you. I  
 don't know what to make of these  
 manifestations of yours.

PEGGY  
 Tom. I saw them. There's  
 something wrong.

BALLARD  
 But, it doesn't make sense. Your  
 husband's alive.

PEGGY  
 I feel so strange around him.

Peggy breaks down and cries.

PEGGY  
 What's happening? Is it me? Am I  
 going crazy?

Ballard comforts Peggy.

BALLARD  
 If your trouble is coming from the  
 spirit world, maybe that's where  
 the answers are.

PEGGY

I've tried to reach the other side.  
But, I can't. There's something  
blocking me... Tom, will you try?

Ballard nods.

Peggy dries her eyes and composes herself.

Ballard sets up two chairs at a table. Positions a lamp to provide light. They sit opposite each other.

Ballard and Peggy place their palms down on the table.

He closes his eyes and concentrates. Peggy remains rigid in her chair, eyes fixed on Ballard.

Ballard's concentration deepens. His face strains. Hands tighten. Beads of sweat appear on his forehead.

He utters a soft cry of pain, and his body begins to sway.

Unearthly, low, deep MOANS. Flashes of colored LIGHT surround Peggy and Ballard.

Objects in the room FLY toward them. SMASH against the walls. The eerie sounds build.

INT. HOTEL GRANT/LOVERS' ROOM - DAY

A semi-dark room. A MAN and WOMAN make love in bed.

Weird NOISES from Ballard's room. The Man bolts upright.

MAN

What the hell's going on in there?

WOMAN

Some party.

MAN

A little early for celebrations.

WOMAN

We're celebrating. Aren't we?

The eerie sounds intensify.

MAN

That's it, I've had it. I'm  
calling the manager.

INT. HOTEL GRANT/BALLARD'S ROOM - DAY

A mess. Bed collapsed. Desk overturned. Broken objects litter the floor.

Ballard tosses in the chair. An unseen force PUMMELS him around. Peggy cries out in hysterics.

Ballard propels out of his seat. Smashes against the wall in a violent crash.

His body crumples to the floor. Twisted. Contorted.

Peggy screams.

The ungodly racket disappears. The room is still. Peggy rushes to Ballard.

PEGGY

Tom... Tom?

She turns his head to one side. His eyes are open, and his face is in a frozen grimace.

PEGGY

Oh, God.

Ballard lies dead.

Peggy is stunned. Helpless.

She holds back tears. Hears the sharp, staccato BUZZ of an overturned telephone. She hangs up the receiver. A beat later, the phone RINGS.

This startles Peggy. She recoils. Gathers herself together. Reaches the front door and opens it.

She turns and stares at Ballard's body for a final, grief-stricken moment. Goes out the door. The phone continues to ring.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

PATRONS fill it to capacity. Imbibe and watch a TV at one end of the bar. A NEWSCASTER appears onscreen.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

(on TV)

It's apparent Senator Charles Townsend has won a smashing victory in his bid for the presidency.

Cheers go up from the bar room Crowd.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

(on TV)

Townsend's opponent, Governor Jack Slattery conceded just minutes ago. Very soon, the... let's call him the President-Elect, is due to make a victory statement... We switch now to Sandy Tallman, at Townsend headquarters...

INT. HOTEL GRANT/BALLROOM - NIGHT

A ballroom decorated in a campaign rally motif. Smoke fills the room.

Crowded with SUPPORTERS, men and women of all ages. Some wear Townsend hats and vests. Young HOSTESSES throw streamers. Others blow party horns and whistles.

Security GUARDS and POLICE at every door. Some circulate among the crowd. NEWS MEDIA report the event.

News reporter SANDY TALLMAN, 35, stands in front of enthusiastic campaign workers. Speaks into a camera.

TALLMAN

Pandemonium here, in the Hotel Grant ballroom... Senator Townsend has left his suite. He should be here any moment.

A side door opens.

Townsend and Peggy enter, flanked by Roy and Larry.

Boyd, Hamill, Lockwood, Linda, the Female Aide, and others trail behind.

Police surround the group. Close the door behind them.

The media records the scene. The crowd responds and cheers. Police push back people.

The Townsend group makes its way to a platform and podium.

Townsend raises his hands in a victory salute.

Peggy plays her role as wife of the victorious candidate. Beneath the facade, she is troubled, her eyes bloodshot.

Townsend steps to the podium. Raises his hands for silence. The cheers continue.

He smiles without emotion.

TOWNSEND

Thank you... Thank you so much.

The crowd noise dies down. Peggy backs away and stands to one side of Townsend.

TOWNSEND

Running for senate was nothing like this.

A cheer erupts and subsides.



TOWNSEND

Thanks to all who helped in the campaign... My campaign manager, Walter Boyd.

He glances back at Boyd.

TOWNSEND

He convinced me to run... I didn't think I had a chance.

The crowd laughs.

Peggy forces a smile. Closes her eyes to block out the past events. She clasps her hands together. Bows her head, as though in prayer.

TOWNSEND

I don't know how. But, we did it.

The people cheer and praise Townsend. He takes a step back and basks in the glory.

An eerie WIND enters. It becomes more intense. Drowns out the tumultuous cheers. Peggy notices it.

She stares at the closed doors, from where the sound seems to emanate. A faint smile appears on her face.

Every door of the ballroom bursts open. The piercing wind RUSHES into the room. Security guards attempt to close the doors, but the wind increases.

The mystified crowd reacts to the wind.

ROY

What the hell is it?

Decorations around the ballroom toss and blow about. Some come loose. They fall onto the floor and the audience.

Guards manage to close the doors. The wind subsides. The crowd looks around, uneasy.

Peggy looks at Townsend.

A cloud-like AURA encircles his body. The same kind of light present in the opening seance. It appears to be smoke which reflects in the lights that shine on Townsend and create the illusion.

Peggy watches, transfixed.

The cloud becomes a yellow VAPOR and enters Townsend's body.

His posture straightens. He leans back. Appears taller. A radiant look about him.

Townsend appears more vibrant. Full of energy. He glances at Peggy and gives her a warm smile.

Peggy responds and clasps her hands together. She goes to Townsend and kisses him. The crowd mumbles.

TOWNSEND

Peg... Everything's going to be alright now... You'll understand... I love you very much...

PEGGY

I missed you.

Peggy moves away from the podium.

Townsend clears his throat with great emotion. Hamill looks worried. He fingers the remote control device.

TOWNSEND

Ladies and gentlemen... It's a pity, that my wife Peggy will never be First Lady.

Puzzled murmurs from the crowd. This stuns Hamill and shocks both Boyd and Lockwood. Linda and the rest of the party exchange bewildered glances.

Townsend glowers back at Hamill with contempt. Returns to his audience.

TOWNSEND

Yes... I will never be president.

VARIOUS PEOPLE

What do you mean? Stop kidding.  
What's going on? You're elected.

Hamill panics. Aims the remote device at Townsend and pushes the "off" button. No effect.

He presses it again and again. Townsend is unchanged.

Hamill turns to Roy and Larry.

HAMILL

Stop him. Get him out of there.

TOWNSEND

I can never be president.

He raises his arms and looks skyward.

TOWNSEND

Because... I am nothing.

Roy and Larry grab Townsend. Try to drag him away. Townsend is immovable.

TOWNSEND

(screams)

I am nothing!

People in the ballroom freeze.

Roy and Larry struggle with Townsend. Each grabs an arm. Townsend throws them off like rag dolls.

The piercing wind returns.

The yellow vapor streams out from Townsend. Changes to the cloudy aura, then dissipates.

This alarms and frightens everyone. Paper and debris fly around the room.

HAMILL

(to Boyd)

Jesus Christ, Boyd. Do something!

Peggy watches the aura disappear. Forces a smile, with tears in her eyes. Her hair blows in the wind.

The ballroom doors fly open again. The wind rushes past everybody and out the doors.

Roy and Larry cower and crouch down.

ROY

The son of a bitch is haunted!

The spirit of Charles Townsend took possession of his clone. And then left it.

People stare at Townsend. He stands rigid and wears a static smile of triumph. Everyone focuses on him.

Townsend's body collapses. He topples off the platform and hits the hard ballroom floor, face-down.

LARRY

Holy shit!

The crowd screams and hollers. Some gather around his body. Their faces reveal horror at the sight. Some faint.

Peggy advances to the platform edge. Police, security, and media fight to get through the crowd to Townsend.

Peggy stares at Townsend's body. She weeps in silence and moves away.

Boyd, Lockwood, and Linda go to the end of the platform. Look down in terror.

The red, hairlike optic fibers hang out of the open incision in the back of the Townsend clone's head, along with the silver sensor which regulates the remote control.

Small wisps of SMOKE come from the clone's neck. Blood flows out of his body, onto the floor.

LINDA

... Chuck...

Linda turns catatonic. Lockwood leads her off.

The crowd reacts with various states of emotion.

Some fall to their knees and weep.

Others strain to get a macabre look at the body.

Several freeze in shock.

Police reach Townsend's body. An OFFICER rips a large American flag off a pole and drapes it over Townsend.

Boyd turns away, tears in his eyes.

He gazes back at Hamill, who has a beaten look. Boyd goes to the podium and grabs the microphone.

BOYD

This is all my fault! I knew what was going on, and I didn't stop it!

Boyd sobs. Points to Hamill.

BOYD

That man is the leader of this conspiracy!

Hamill regains his composure. Motions to Roy and Larry.

HAMILL

Kill him!

Roy and Larry hesitate and look at each other.

HAMILL

I said, kill him! Kill him!

Boyd continues to sob.

Roy and Larry draw pistols and FIRE. Gunshots reverberate.

Bullets strike Boyd, who slumps over the podium.

Panic increases. Many run helter-skelter through the ballroom in horror.

Several policemen rush toward the secret service men.

Roy and Larry shoot at them. One officer goes down. The others return the fire. The gun battle throws the audience into complete chaos.

Hamill's face fills with fright. He crouches at the far corner of the platform and cowers.

Police shoot Roy and Larry, and they fall to the floor. Officers rush to the wounded men and disarm them.

Hamill seizes an opportunity and runs off. A policeman spots him and points a gun in Hamill's face.

Hamill stops in his tracks. He trembles in fear.

HAMILL

No, no! Don't shoot!... Please,  
don't kill me!

The policeman grabs Hamill and handcuffs him.

Peggy goes to Boyd, who hangs onto the podium and bleeds. He looks up at her and gasps.

BOYD

Peggy... I'm sorry... I'm --

Boyd releases his grip on the podium and falls against the platform. Dead.

Peggy gazes at Boyd's body. After a beat, she moves off the platform and makes her way through the crowd.

Peggy appears oblivious to the pandemonium around her. A look of compassion in her tearful eyes. She walks through the open ballroom doors.

Sandy Tallman comes in. Hair disheveled. Her face reveals shock. She holds back tears and stares into the camera.

TALLMAN

Ladies and gentlemen... This is a  
nightmare!... Good God!

FADE OUT.

THE END