

# THE IDES OF MARCH

Screenplay by  
George Clooney &  
Grant Heslov and  
Beau Willimon

Based on the play  
"Farragut North"  
By  
Beau Willimon

INT. MIAMI UNIVERSITY - OXFORD OHIO - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Stephen Meyers, Press Secretary to Governor Morris is standing at a podium on a stage...there is a single spotlight on him. The rest of the stage is dark.

Stephen is talking into a mic with no emotion...just matter of factly.

STEPHEN

I am neither Christian...nor  
atheist. I am not Jewish or  
Muslim. What I believe...my  
religion is called the  
constitution...

A pause.

Stephen snaps his fingers in the mic. We hear the distinct sound of feedback getting louder until it stops.

We hear the director speak over the loud speaker.

DIRECTOR

Hang on...let me open these up....

We wait as Stephen looks around. He looks at stage hands who are busy working. No one pays any attention to him as he stands there. This isn't awkward for Stephen, THIS IS ROUTINE.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Okay...

Lights come up on another podium revealing a debate stage.

Stephen continues.

STEPHEN

I will defend till my dying breath  
your right to worship whatever god  
you believe in...

The lights on Stephen's podium go out, he's in the dark. He keeps going.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

If I'm not religious enough for  
you, don't vote for me.

To the Director.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

You got it?

His podium light comes back on.

No answer from the Director, Stephen continues.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

If I'm not experienced enough don't vote for me. If I'm not...

DIRECTOR

Okay got it, thanks.

STEPHEN

Thanks. We'll need these monitors turned up a bit...it's a big space and he wants to be able to hear.

STAGE MANAGER

You got it.

STEPHEN

Also we'll need these podiums put on a riser as we agreed to in the pre-conditions. You're a few inches short and it makes it harder for the Governor to read his notes.

STAGE MANAGER

No I know, we just got those specs last night and they're building a piece to go under...

STEPHEN

Great, thanks. See you guys in a few hours.

We see we're in an auditorium of a college.

Stephen meets up with BEN HARPEN his staffer.

BEN

I didn't know the Governor had trouble reading his notes. Why doesn't he wear...

STEPHEN

He doesn't but Pullman is 5'8" he'll look like a hobbit behind that podium.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They walk off...

CUT TO:

EXT. MIAMI UNIVERSITY - OXFORD OHIO - DAY

ROB BRAUN, a local Cincinnati anchor, talks to camera as we see STEPHEN and BEN exit the building. Under this we hear Rachel Maddow reporting.

RACHEL MADDOW (O.C.)  
Well it all comes down to this...We  
are one week away from the Ohio  
primary...

Camera now moves past ROB to another news truck where an MSNBC REPORTER stands in front of a camera waiting to go live. There is a monitor in front of him.

The camera keeps moving into the monitor where RACHEL MADDOW does the lead in.

As RACHEL's audio continues we see the following images.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDDLE AMERICA

We cruise along a snow-covered rural landscape - flat, gray, desolate. In the distance we see a barn with huge red-white-and-blue letters painted on the side. They read "OHIO FOR MORRIS".

RACHEL MADDOW (O.S.)  
Two democrats are left standing.  
Senator Pullman of Arkansas who is  
trailing Governor Morris from  
Pennsylvania.

Moments later we roll past another farm with a large billboard staked into the ground beside the road: "PULLMAN - AMERICA'S FUTURE BEGINS ON MARCH 15th".

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET

We cut to canvassers - bundled to the hilt against the cold - knocking on doors in a suburban neighborhood. Yard signs for both candidates line the street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL MADDOW (O.S.)  
 Governor Morris has mounted a  
 sizable lead with 2047 delegates,  
 winning New Hampshire, California,  
 New York and Michigan...But Senator  
 Pullman with 1302 delegates is  
 still in the hunt having won  
 Florida, Tennessee, Virginia and  
 Missouri...

EXT. CITY INTERSECTION

Supporters at an intersection waving hand-made signs to cars:  
 "HONK FOR MORRIS". A passing car lays on the horn and the  
 supporters cheer.

RACHEL MADDOW (O.S.)  
 A win in Ohio could turn it all  
 around for the Arkansas Senator...

CLOSE UP of a Pullman bumper sticker on an SUV at a  
 stoplight, right next to a "My Child is an Honor Student"  
 decal.

RACHEL MADDOW (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 So one week from Tuesday the all  
 important hundred and eighty one  
 Ohio delegates could be the  
 deciding factor..

EXT. HARDWARE STORE

A clerk placing a Morris sign in the store window. In the  
 shop next door various TV's are in a window display. We see  
 RACHEL MADDOW'S report on them.

RACHEL MADDOW (O.S.)  
 And once again the old adage is  
 true..."As goes Ohio, so goes the  
 Nation."

CUT TO:

EXT. MIAMI UNIVERSITY - OXFORD OHIO - AFTERNOON

We see Satellite trucks, press vehicles, police cars, etc.

At a catering truck, MOLLY STEARNS, a 19 year old intern  
 grabs a tray of coffees and a box of doughnuts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We stay on her as she runs across the street and through a door...

CUT TO:

INT. MIAMI UNIVERSITY - RAPID RESPONSE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MOLLY enters and we follow her through the campaign war room, it's the size of a coffin, jammed to the hilt with twenty-something staffers manning laptops.

We're in the hustle and bustle of a live telecast. We see multiple angles of the telecast...

SENATOR PULLMAN

Would you call yourself a Christian?

GOV. MORRIS

How would that matter?

SENATOR PULLMAN

(Reading)

"I have no idea what happens when we die, maybe nothing...maybe it was like before we were born." You did write this Governor...

GOV. MORRIS

Then let me try and clarify...I was raised Catholic, I am not a practicing Catholic...I have no idea what happens when you die and if the Senator does, then perhaps he should be President. I'll even vote for him.

The audience laughs.

SENATOR PULLMAN

Is that your idea of being specific?

MOLLY passes out coffee.

CUT TO:

INT. MIAMI UNIVERSITY - AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

We're now live inside the debate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOV. MORRIS

Let me be more specific. I am neither a Christian, nor an atheist, I'm not Jewish or Muslim...what I believe...my religion is written on a piece of parchment called the Constitution. Meaning I will defend, till my dying breath, your right to worship, in whatever God or lack thereof you believe in, as long as it doesn't hurt others. I believe we should be judged as a government by how we take care of those who can't take care of themselves. That's my religion. If you feel that I'm not religious enough, then don't vote for me. If you feel I'm not experienced enough or tall enough then don't vote for me. Because I'm not going to change those to get elected.

SENATOR PULLMAN

I just wanted you to say out loud if you believed in the teachings of the Bible.

GOV. MORRIS

Is this a Democratic primary or a general election?

People laugh.

SENATOR PULLMAN (ON MONITOR)

Well Governor, whoever wins this contest will be running for President...and if you don't think that these questions won't be central in a general election then you are living in fantasy land. I applaud your honesty Governor, I do...I'm simply pointing to what is obvious...we are running for President of the United States...not for student council president.

INT. MIAMI UNIVERSITY - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

PAUL ZARA - Morris's campaign manager - is waiting in the wings off stage. STEPHEN sidles up next to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In the background we can see the candidates shaking hands. There is applause.

PAUL is pushing fifty with the grizzled look of a hardened campaign veteran. He's Stephen's boss, the only guy between him and Governor Morris.

Arms crossed, they watch their man on stage.

PAUL  
A double?

STEPHEN  
A double.

PAUL  
Fucking national security.

The GOVERNOR looks off stage to PAUL and STEPHEN for approval.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Outta the park.

STEPHEN  
Home run.

We hear the announcer thanking everyone for attending the debate.

TOM DUFFY - campaign manager of the rival Pullman Campaign - is also watching from the wings. Duffy's smooth, calculated and icy. He walks over to Stephen and Paul.

DUFFY  
I'm trying to remember if the democrats ever nominated an atheist before...

PAUL  
Well, we know they've nominated jackasses before.

DUFFY  
(to Stephen)  
Must've been you that did the prep work. Paul's not that clever.

PAUL  
You always had the brains Duffy, but me - I always had the balls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DUFFY

(nodding to Stephen)

Looks like you got some brains now  
too. Be careful. I just might  
have to steal him from you.

Duffy walks off to greet Senator Pullman as he makes his way  
to the wings. Paul and Stephen eye him as he goes.

PAUL

What a prick.

CUT TO:

INT. CINCINNATI RAMADA INN - THE BAR - NIGHT

Stephen, Paul, Ida, and Ben are having drinks around a table.  
The mood is festive. There is a piano player playing,  
singing.

PAUL has a roll-away suitcase beside him.

IDA

So Paul, tell me something I don't  
know...tell me what's gonna happen  
on the 15th.

PAUL

Ha-ha.

IDA

What?

PAUL

What do you think Stevie?

STEPHEN

It's ours for the taking.

PAUL

Ben?

BEN

We'll win.

PAUL

What do you think Ida?

IDA

I'm asking you.

PAUL

You tell me and I'll tell you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IDA  
If had to say, I'd say it'll be  
close, but you'll eke it out.

PAUL  
Eke?

To STEPHEN.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
You see, she's trying to get under  
my skin.

IDA  
So what's gonna happen?

PAUL  
Us by nine.

IDA  
Nine? There's no way you'll win by  
nine.

STEPHEN  
At least. Maybe more.

IDA  
(To PAUL) So you're certain you're  
gonna win here?

PAUL  
Certain? No. Confident? Yes.

IDA  
You just said you'll win by nine.

PAUL  
And I think we will, but I won't  
tell you it's a sure thing. Fucking  
Saint Gabriel can blow his horn on  
election day and get his four  
horseman to rig the ballot boxes  
for Pullman and it wouldn't  
surprise me. Don't get me wrong.  
Six presidentials I've done and  
I've never felt this good. But am I  
gonna sit here and say "Yes -we  
will definitely win Ohio"? Not a  
chance. In the last thirty years  
seventy-three Democrats have run  
for president. How many have won?  
Three.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL (CONT'D)

That means seventy guys ran who thought they had a chance, and they all lost.

IDA

So you're saying there's a good chance you won't win.

PAUL

Don't twist my words. What I'm saying is that I'm not going to promise we'll win. But he's decorated by Bush Senior from the first Gulf war and protested the second. He left his state with a balanced budget and the fourth highest education rate. The Republicans have nobody out there that can touch this guy...so for this moment, this election, this primary is the presidential. And that Ida, is the state of the union. And on that note, I'm gonna take a shit.

PAUL swigs down the rest of his drink and exits.

IDA

So Stephen...

STEPHEN

Yes Ida?

IDA

Stephen, Stephen, Stephen....

STEPHEN

Here it comes...hit me.

IDA

Paul's going to the airport?

STEPHEN

Yes?

IDA

Getting on a plane.

STEPHEN

Mhmm.

IDA

Where is that plane going?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STEPHEN

Three guesses.

IDA

Not going back to headquarters.

STEPHEN

Correct.

IDA

He's not going to Texas?

STEPHEN

No need, we'll split Texas, it's a wash.

IDA

What if I said North Carolina?

STEPHEN

That's your guess?

IDA

He's going to North Carolina.

STEPHEN

I will neither confirm nor deny that statement.

IDA

I knew it. Now tell me why.

STEPHEN

That I cannot do.

IDA

I hate you.

STEPHEN

You love me.

IDA

I love Paul. You I hate.

STEPHEN

You only love him because he gives you all the scoops.

IDA

Sexual favors?

STEPHEN

You're engaged.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

IDA

If it meant a good scoop my fiance would understand.

Beat.

IDA (CONT'D)

You really buy into all this crap? All this take back the country nonsense?

STEPHEN

Ida I'm not naive about this stuff. I've worked on more campaigns than most people do by the time they're forty...I'm telling you this is the one.

IDA

You really have drunk the kool-aid.

STEPHEN

I have drunk it it's delicious. I don't care whether he leads in the polls...I don't care whether he has all the tools...Because the truth is, he's the only one that's going to make a difference in peoples lives...Even the people that hate him. If Mike Morris is President it says more about us than it does about him. I don't give a fuck if he can win. He has to win.

IDA

Or what? The world will fall apart? It won't matter...Not one bit to the everyday lives of everyday fuckers who work and eat and sleep and get up and go back to work again. If your boy wins...You get a job in the white house...If he loses you're back at a consulting firm on K Street...That's it. You used to know that before you got all goosebumpy about this guy. Morris is a politician...He's a nice guy...They're all nice guys.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

IDA (CONT'D)

He will let you down...sooner or later.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMADA INN SIDEWALK - LATER

IDA and PAUL walk to Ida's car.

PAUL

This is off off off the record.

IDA

What?

PAUL

Franklin Thompson.

IDA

Seriously?

PAUL

Off the record. The only people who know are the Governor, Stephen and me.

IDA

My lips are sealed.

PAUL

I have a meeting tomorrow at Thompson's house.

IDA

He's gonna endorse?

PAUL

After I'm done talking with him, what do you think?

IDA

That's huge.

PAUL

It's more than huge. He has 356 pledged delegates...they all travel with him. That puts us over the top.

IDA

He's said publicly he's not gonna endorse anyone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

That's what they all say until we get them alone in a room.

IDA

So this is for real?

PAUL

Yup. It's just about in the bag.

IDA

When are you gonna announce?

PAUL

Nope. That's all you get for now.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORRIS HEADQUARTERS - CINCINNATI - NEXT DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. MORRIS HEADQUARTERS - CINCINNATI - NEXT DAY

Ben walks around to all the staffers, he hands out new cell phones.

BEN

Okay so listen up...these are your new cell phones...Shelly has pre-programmed everyone's numbers in...thank you Shelly...no personal calls...if you lose them, Paul has authorized me to kill you.

Ben walks into Stephen's office and hands him his new phone.

BEN (CONT'D)

New phones...

STEPHEN

I'll get it in a bit...

As Ben leaves, we see that Stephen is looking at early footage of Governor Morris. Another staffer and an editor are watching it with him. Outside the office we can see other staffers, through the glass partitions, running around in campaign mode.

We see some of the footage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOV MORRIS (ON MONITOR)

The economy...health care...I've got to believe we can do it. We have enemies...we have to understand why our enemies are our enemies, and see if there is something we can do about that besides using force. What we know from history is the answer to extremism is not extremism. Whoever is the next president, whoever steps up, has got a lot of work to do, but you have a little work to do yourself.

Stephen hits pause.

STEPHEN

Fucking kill me...where did we get this?

EDITOR

Before he announced at a town hall meeting in Pennsylvania...

STEPHEN

Thank God it wasn't overseas. Just get rid of it -

EDITOR

It plays to his base, if-

STEPHEN

Are you fucking stoned...this is the same...the exact same piece the Republicans are gonna run against him in the general...we don't need to brag about it...Hi I'm Neville Chamberlain and I want to be your commander in chief.

EDITOR

If it's gonna come out-

STEPHEN

It's gonna come out but not paid for by us pal. (To Staffer) Any truth on whether Pullman had investments in those diamond mines in Liberia?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STAFFER 1

We're still checking...it was a blog so who the fuck knows...

STEPHEN

Doesn't matter I want to hear him denying it. If it's true, find out, if it's not, let them spend the next day telling the post that he doesn't own a diamond mine in Liberia...win win.

STAFFER 1

Okay.

STEPHEN

We need to counter this Christian shit we're taking from last night...so get going...Where's our cut on the new thirty and a sixty second spots? We'll show it to him this afternoon in the staff meeting.

EDITOR

Got it.

The Editor and staffer exit.

Stephen turns to his computer and types as Molly walks in and hands him some papers.

MOLLY

Ben wanted me to get you to sign off on this before the staff meeting.

STEPHEN

Oh, right. Thanks. I've been waiting for this.

MOLLY

Anything interesting?

STEPHEN

Just some white paper I gotta pass out tonight.

MOLLY

White paper?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STEPHEN

Negative shit. Our oppo guys do research - we feed it to the press, hope they bite.

MOLLY

So like what sort of negative stuff?

STEPHEN

Read tomorrow's paper and you'll see.

MOLLY

Which paper?

STEPHEN

All of them.

MOLLY

So it's something big?

STEPHEN

I wish it were something bigger actually. Just some transportation numbers. I'll have to spin this shit pretty heavy if we want it to stick.

MOLLY

Well that's what you're good at, right?

STEPHEN

I guess.

MOLLY

(Holding up her phone)  
Did you get your phone?

STEPHEN

(Holds his up)  
Just now.

MOLLY

(Mock serious)  
It's exciting isn't it?

He looks at her.

STEPHEN

You a Bearcat...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MOLLY

A what?

STEPHEN

A Cincinnati Bearcat?

MOLLY

Oh no...I'm not from here...I worked with you in Iowa actually.

STEPHEN

Oh that's right...but you changed something. (Searching for a way out.)

MOLLY

My hair?

STEPHEN

You changed your hair.

MOLLY

(Enjoying this)  
No..

STEPHEN

I must look like a total dumb ass right now.

MOLLY

Not at all...you're the big man on campus...I'm just a lowly intern.

STEPHEN

Come on it's not like that.

MOLLY

Sure it is...you get to stay at the Millennium, they put us into a motel on the other side of the river.

STEPHEN

You're right, I am big man on campus.

MOLLY

Now you're starting to see.

She starts to leave.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

We do have the better bar though.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

STEPHEN

I heard that.

MOLLY

You ought to stop by one night and  
have a drink with the worker bees.

STEPHEN

Maybe I will...when's a good night?

MOLLY

Tonight's good...

STEPHEN

Really? Tuesday?

MOLLY

Yeah it's quiet.

STEPHEN

Quiet's good.

MOLLY

Well you have my number.

STEPHEN

I do?

MOLLY

Programmed right there in your  
phone.

STEPHEN

Oh...right...(He opens the phone)

MOLLY

Under Mary.

STEPHEN

(Looking at the phone)  
Yup...Mary.

Molly laughs. Then, as she exits:

MOLLY

Molly...my name's Molly...

Stephen smiles to himself.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATOR THOMPSON'S HOUSE - CHARLOTTE N.C. - DAY

We follow a housekeeper down the hallway and into the living room where we see Paul sitting with, Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON

That's what I'm hearing...since Super Tuesday I'm a very popular guy. What are your polls telling you?

PAUL

That Pullman's negatives are high...mid forties. Senator we have an open seat in the White House and the Republicans don't have dick. They're disorganized and they can't find a nominee that isn't a world class fuck up. They look like Democrats. No Republican is gonna show up to vote for their guy. But if Pullman gets the Democratic nod they'll show up to vote against him.

SENATOR THOMPSON

And so you think they won't for your guy...you think Morris gets into the independents?

PAUL

I sure do. Senator...I'm a bit confused...we need your delegates...we need you...your fund raising. It was my understanding that...your endorsement a week before Ohio...would win this for us...

SENATOR THOMPSON

(Looks to his aide)

Estella...hand me that ice bucket.

CUT TO:

INT. MORRIS HEADQUARTERS - CINCINNATI - SAME DAY

We're in a staff meeting with the brain trust. Paul's gone but the rest are there...STEPHEN, BEN, GOVERNOR MORRIS. MOLLY is running in and out, she gets glances from all the guys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHEN

Paul knows...Paul agrees...

GOV. MORRIS

Ben, where's my op ed on national service? It's better for me to work off of that.

BEN

Got it right here. (He opens his laptop.)

GOV. MORRIS

Get me a hard copy...I hate these fucking things...

STEPHEN

Print it out.

BEN

I'll get it printed.  
Molly, I'm printing out this op ed...can you grab it off the printer?

MOLLY

Be right back.

STEPHEN

Governor...if you want to change...or lets call it refresh...

GOV. MORRIS

Just give me a second...

STEPHEN

National service isn't polling like the rest of your domestic policy.

GOV. MORRIS

I don't give a shit about polling...I'm not going to play this game with you Stephen...and if this is your good cop bad cop act with Paul...

STEPHEN

Good cop, good cop.

GOV. MORRIS

I'm not changing it.

MOLLY returns and hands the Governor a copy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)

Hang on.

He reads down until he finds what he's looking for.

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)

Yeah I said it all here, "It's going to help people get an education...it's going to create national unity...it's going to teach young people a trade...and it's going to help get people out of debt from college loans. Tell me where that fails.

STEPHEN

All of that is exactly right...Governor if you're going to do it...then do it. Don't make it voluntary...mandatory.

GOV. MORRIS

That'll poll well.

STEPHEN

Mandatory!...everyone who graduates high school or turns eighteen, gives two years to his or her country. Military...peace corps...plant fucking trees, I don't care...and for that...their college education is paid for...period.

GOV. MORRIS

We do all of that now, with this...

STEPHEN

No sir you don't...do it all...all the way. Mandatory.

GOV. MORRIS

Paul likes this?...you guys are my brain trust.

STEPHEN

And here's the beauty of it...everyone who is older than eighteen and past the age of eligibility, would be for it...create national pride...give all the kids an education.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GOV. MORRIS  
And all the others?

STEPHEN  
Can't vote. Too young.

This sits with them. Some start to smile.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
You can't lose.

MOLLY enters.

MOLLY  
Stephen you have a call on three,  
your dad.

GOV. MORRIS  
Okay, you and Ben work it into the  
stump speech - get me a hard copy  
and I'll write it in my own words.

STEPHEN  
Remember, Governor... you have a  
six o'clock with Charlie Rose...

GOV. MORRIS  
Why am I doing him?

STEPHEN  
It's long form... he's flying in...

GOV. MORRIS  
Is Paul going?

STEPHEN  
No, he won't be back... Ben and I  
are taking you...

He exits.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S OFFICE / INT. DUFFY'S OFFICE CONTINUOUS

STEPHEN picks up the receiver and pushes line three.

STEPHEN  
...Don't tell me anyone's died...

DUFFY  
Hey Stephen...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHEN

Who is this?

DUFFY

Tom Duffy...sorry about the dad bit...but I didn't think you'd want my name yelled out at a Morris campaign office.

STEPHEN gets up and closes the door.

STEPHEN

What do you want?

DUFFY

You got a couple of minutes...I'd like to sit down with you.

STEPHEN

What for?

DUFFY

I think it's important.

STEPHEN

If it's important shouldn't you be calling Paul?

DUFFY

I'm calling you...This is all on the up and up...just give me five minutes.

STEPHEN

I can't be talking to you...

DUFFY

I hear you...but if you get five minutes...I'll be at the Heads First Sports Bar for the next couple of hours.

STEPHEN

I can't Tom.

DUFFY

There won't be anybody there...if you get a chance there's something I want to show you.

DUFFY hangs up. STEPHEN sits for a few beats. He picks up his cell phone and dials...it goes straight to voice mail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEPHEN

Paul, listen, call me as soon as you can...it's important.

STEPHEN hangs up the phone and we stay with him.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S RENTAL CAR - OUTSIDE HEAD FIRST SPORTS BAR - LATER

STEPHEN sits in the car, he watches the door of the bar making sure no one is around.

CUT TO:

INT. HEAD FIRST SPORTS BAR - CINCINNATI - LATER

We're in a run-down bar in Cincinnati. The furniture is shabby - Formica tables, cheap metal framed chairs. The place is desolate except for TOM and STEPHEN who sit at the bar.

DUFFY

You're working for the wrong man.

STEPHEN

You're working for the wrong man.

DUFFY

Oh on the contrary you are working for the wrong man. You've got something the other guys don't have.

STEPHEN

Yeah?

DUFFY

Yeah, what is it exactly? Charm isn't the right word. It's more than that. You exude something. You draw people in. All the reporters love you. Even the ones that hate you love you. You play them all like they're pieces on a chess board. And you make it look effortless. We both know how much work it takes, constantly being on guard, weighing every word so carefully, every move. But from the outside, you make it look easy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUFFY (CONT'D)

People are scared of you because they don't understand how you do it, and they love you for it. There's nothing more valuable in this business - the ability to win people's respect by making them mistake their fear for love. You can guess what I'm gonna say next.

STEPHEN

No...I don't think I can.

DUFFY

I want you to work for us.

STEPHEN

You gotta be kidding me.

DUFFY

Not in the least.

Beat.

You are going to lose Ohio.

STEPHEN

I am not.

DUFFY

You're sitting on about a six percent lead in both polls...six percent of the Democrats polled.

STEPHEN

Eight.

DUFFY

Six...but that doesn't matter...Independents and Republicans can vote for the Democratic candidate.

STEPHEN

You think they like your guy?...pro choice...tax and spend liberal?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DUFFY

Fuck no they hate him...they think they can beat my guy...but they're worried about yours...so starting tomorrow morning you're gonna see a fucking blitz...Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, all the right wing blogs are gonna start a "Get out the vote campaign"...it's already started...every fucking conservative in Ohio is gonna stand in line and punch my guys ticket...that's just one of the steps...Ohio is gone...the polls don't mean shit...tomorrow morning everyone will know...that's why I want you to handle the fallout we'll take in the press...

They look at each other.

DUFFY (CONT'D)

And by the way...we've got Thompson in the bag.

STEPHEN

I know for a fact that Thompson is going with us.

DUFFY

We promised him Secretary of State, Ohio is over...it's been over for weeks...and with Thompson's delegates...I'm thinking down the road now...that's why I want you...I'll bring you in straight at the top.

STEPHEN

I can't do it.

DUFFY

I'm not asking for an answer right this moment.

STEPHEN

I've played dirty but I don't have to play dirty anymore...you know why? Cause I got Morris!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DUFFY

None of this is about the democratic process Steve, It's about getting your guy into office. Simple as that.

STEPHEN

This is the sort of shit the Republicans pull.

DUFFY

You're right, this is exactly what the Republicans do, and it's about time we learned from them. They're meaner, tougher and more disciplined than we are. I've been in this business for twenty five years and I've seen way too many Democrats bite the dust because they wouldn't get down in the mud with the fucking elephants.

STEPHEN

Paul's a friend.

DUFFY

Do you want to work for a friend or do you want to work for the President? Think about it...you have my number.

Duffy gets up and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT HEAD FIRST SPORTS BAR / PAUL'S RENTAL CAR /  
RESIDENTIAL STREET

STEPHEN walks to his car. He dials PAUL on his phone. Paul is in North Carolina driving.

We intercut.

STEPHEN

Paul.

PAUL (O.S.)

They don't make quaaludes any more do they?

STEPHEN

Not that I know of. What's going on with Thompson?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL (O.S.)  
He wants something but we'll be  
fine... So what's so important?

STEPHEN  
It's nothing...never mind.

PAUL (O.S.)  
Alright...I'm on the cell if you  
need me. I fly to DC tomorrow and  
back tomorrow night.

STEPHEN  
Yeah okay...I'll look for  
quaaludes.

PAUL (O.S.)  
Good man.

STEPHEN ends the call. He stands in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CINCINNATI - NIGHT

We're in the bathroom of a hotel room. GOVERNOR MORRIS is being made up for the Charlie Rose Show. A SECRET SERVICE AGENT stands in the adjoining room. The GOVERNOR talks to the MAKE-UP LADY while STEPHEN and BEN stand in the adjoining room as well.

STEPHEN  
(to Ben)  
Just get online and see if there's  
any chatter on the blogs...

BEN  
What kind of chatter? There's  
always chatter.

STEPHEN  
I don't know... just see what  
they're talking about.

BEN  
Give me a second...

He sets his laptop down and starts typing.

The Governor, who's been talking the whole time, yells out through the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOV. MORRIS

Stephen... you're still single,  
right?

STEPHEN

I'm married to the campaign,  
Governor.

GOV. MORRIS

Good answer.

(to the make-up girl)

He's married to the campaign...

BEN

(looking at his computer)

Wall Street Journal poll has our  
numbers holding steady and Pullman  
dropped a point.

STEPHEN

Really? When did they do that?  
Governor... Wall Street Journal  
numbers are in... and Pullman's  
down a point.

GOV. MORRIS

Now we're moving in the right  
direction. Ben, are you still  
single?

BEN

I'm married to the campaign,  
Governor.

GOV. MORRIS

(to the make-up girl)

Crack team.

The GOVERNOR starts to sing "The Best Is Yet To Come".

STEPHEN

(to Ben)

Make sure Charlie Rose has these  
latest numbers before he goes on...

BEN

(jumps up)

I'm on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEPHEN

And get a copy of the show before  
we leave...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - MINUTES LATER

The room has been transformed into an interview space.

On air-

CHARLIE ROSE and GOV. MORRIS mid-interview...

GOV. MORRIS

Is it a difficult decision? I  
would have to believe that it is...  
would I do it? No... but I can't  
see myself... or anyone...  
certainly not a government, telling  
a woman what she can do with her  
body.

CHARLIE ROSE

So you would appoint a judge to...

GOV. MORRIS

... I would consider it arrogant to  
judge someone until I've walked in  
their shoes.

CHARLIE ROSE

But you're against the death  
penalty?

GOV. MORRIS

Yes. Because of what it says about  
us as a society.

CHARLIE ROSE

Suppose Governor it was your  
wife...

GOV. MORRIS

And she was murdered, what would I  
do.

CHARLIE ROSE

It gets more complicated when it's  
personal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOV. MORRIS  
Sure...well if I could get to him  
I'd find a way to kill him.

CHARLIE ROSE  
So you, you Governor would impose  
the death penalty.

GOV. MORRIS  
No, I would commit a crime for  
which I would happily go to jail.

CHARLIE ROSE  
Then why not let society do that?

GOV. MORRIS  
Because society has to be better  
than the individual. If I were to  
do that I would be wrong.

CHARLIE ROSE  
And what about guns?

GOV. MORRIS  
Isn't it time for a commercial.

They laugh.

CHARLIE ROSE  
This is public TV, we don't have  
commercials...

GOV. MORRIS  
That's unfortunate.

CUT TO:

25

INT. MOTEL - KENTUCKY - NIGHT

We're in Kentucky, just over the Ohio River from Cincinnati.  
This is where all the interns stay.

In the hotel bar, Stephen and Molly are sitting at a back  
table, they've both been drinking hard.

STEPHEN  
Where'd you go after Iowa?

MOLLY  
California for Super Tuesday.

STEPHEN  
I had to go to New York.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOLLY

I know...you guys needed a lot more help over there.

STEPHEN

Yeah. So why politics?

MOLLY

Because the pay is so good.

STEPHEN

It just seems like an odd fit.

MOLLY

My dad is Jack Stearns.

Beat.

STEPHEN

He's a good guy.

MOLLY

He's an asshole but he's your boss.

STEPHEN

He's not my boss. He's the head of the DNC.

MOLLY

You don't work for the Democratic National Committee?

STEPHEN

I work for Paul, Paul works for Morris and if Morris wins, he's going to be your dad's boss.

MOLLY

Don't tell my dad that.

STEPHEN

Don't tell your dad a lot of things.

MOLLY

Never.

STEPHEN

What time do you start tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MOLLY

Nine AM...I'm showing the new interns how to robo call...you see...I'm the experienced intern.

STEPHEN

I do see...

MOLLY

How old are you?

STEPHEN

How old do you think I am?

MOLLY

Thirty?

STEPHEN

You think I'm thirty?

MOLLY

I'm sorry, how old are you?

STEPHEN

Thirty...how old are you?

MOLLY

How old do you think I am?

STEPHEN

Twenty one?

MOLLY

Twenty.

STEPHEN

That's young.

MOLLY

Too young to fuck a thirty year old?

STEPHEN

See laws are different in different states. Here in your hotel, in Kentucky...it's frowned upon...but we'll go across the bridge into Ohio...

MOLLY

Where your hotel is?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STEPHEN

Yeah surprisingly they're very lax  
about their child endangerment  
laws...

MOLLY

You have a car? I don't drive.

STEPHEN

I took a cab.

MOLLY

I have the keys to the campaign  
bus...

On their smiles

CUT TO:

EXT. MILLENNIUM HOTEL - CINCINNATI - MINUTES LATER

The Morris campaign bus is parked badly, a tire up on the  
curb in front of the hotel.

INT. MILLENNIUM HOTEL - STEPHENS'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

STEPHEN is on his cell phone, he paces back and forth in  
front of the TV - A news show in on.

MOLLY is in bed - sheets pulled up around her, she's just  
waking up.

CHRIS MATTHEWS (ON TV)

In fairness, this has been tried  
before...Operation Chaos, as Rush  
Limbaugh called it, where  
Republicans voted for a Democrat  
they thought they could beat in the  
general election. We asked Senator  
Pullman's campaign manager if this  
sudden right wing support is  
welcome...

Cut to a pre-tape with DUFFY.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUFFY (O.S.)

Is it decisive?...Of Course  
not...look, we believe that the  
polls are within the margin of  
error and that the Senator will win  
Ohio...with Ohio Democrats...I  
can't really see Republicans  
showing up to vote for our  
candidate...having said that, we'll  
take all the support we can get.

STEPHEN

(On the phone)

What time does Paul land?...  
Christ...who do we talk to about  
polling?...no...I just...I just  
need to get some internal polling  
on the fucking Independents and the  
right-wing nuts.

MOLLY

Do you want me to go?

He gestures for her to wait.

STEPHEN

Listen, put me on the line  
with...what's the guy's name at the  
Wall Street Journal?... yeah...

MOLLY

You seem busy...I should go.

He whispers to her.

STEPHEN

Wait.

Back to phone.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Right...Adler...get me on the line  
with him.

MOLLY

Steve?

She starts to get dressed.

STEPHEN

Molly listen, just give me a  
second...I want to talk to you  
about something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MOLLY

We can talk about it later if...

Stephen holds his finger up.

STEPHEN

(Into phone)

What? No nobody...just the cleaning lady...listen Ben...keep trying till you get him. We're gonna go with the position that we've always said, the race is closer than the polling...right...no don't...don't say that...just get him on the line and call me...I'll handle it...yup.

He hangs up.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Sorry about that.

MOLLY

The cleaning lady.

STEPHEN

What?

MOLLY

You called me the cleaning lady.

STEPHEN

You're not mad about that are you?

MOLLY

No why would I be mad?

Beat.

MOLLY looks at the TV.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Look.

STEPHEN'S eyes go to the TV where CHRIS is still talking.

CHRIS MATHEWS

Earlier I spoke with Jack Stearns, head of the DNC, and he had this to say...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JACK STEARNS

I know you're looking for a reaction, but listen we have two great candidates in a very tight race...and at the end of the day the voters will decide who best can represent this party in the fall.

CHRIS MATHEWS

I understand Jack - but doesn't this kind of disruption take away from what you want to be pushing this year?

Back to STEPHEN

STEPHEN

Your dad is an asshole.

MOLLY

I'll tell him you said that.

STEPHEN

Do that.

MOLLY

You said you wanted to talk to me about something?

STEPHEN

Yeah, I just wanted...I just wanted to be clear about everything...so there's no confusion...

MOLLY

I won't tell anyone about last night.

STEPHEN

Well yeah, I'd appreciate it if we kept this...I mean, you know how people are.

MOLLY

Really wouldn't look good if you screwed an intern.

STEPHEN

It's not like I got drunk and this happened...I mean...I wanted to...I really like you...you're smart...but I just...I don't want there to be any expectations...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MOLLY

Steven, you don't have to say anything.

STEPHEN

I just don't want you to think I'm some kind of player.

MOLLY

Well you are kind of a player, but that's okay.

STEPHEN

No I'm not. I was being polite.

MOLLY starts to tie STEPHEN'S tie.

MOLLY

Bullshit...you were trying to pick me up.

STEPHEN

No I wasn't.

MOLLY

You were pretty obvious about it.

STEPHEN

I was?

MOLLY

Totally.

STEPHEN

I thought I was being all smooth and subtle.

MOLLY

You were pretty forward.

STEPHEN

You were pretty forward ...inviting me to the bar.

MOLLY

Well...I've been trying to fuck you for a while.

STEPHEN

Wow.

MOLLY

Pretty slutty of me, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

STEPHEN

No, not at all...I mean I kind of respect it in a weird sort of way.

MOLLY

Good.

STEPHEN

You have absolutely no idea how to tie a tie do you...

MOLLY

No no not a clue.

STEPHEN

You're very mature.

MOLLY

For a teenager.

Molly kisses him and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. TARMAC - LUNKEN AIRFIELD - CINCINNATI - LATER

We Intercut with PAUL driving.

STEPHEN walks towards a private jet, the GOVERNOR is at the plane talking to some aides.

STEPHEN

When are you coming back?

PAUL

I'll be at the event...a little late...these cock suckers...fucking dirty shit.

STEPHEN

What happened with Thompson?

PAUL

Nothing, the prick...we had him all sewed up...MOTHER FUCKER...how bad is it?

STEPHEN

I'm running some numbers now...I don't know...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Alright, I'll be there in three hours...I want hard numbers...and a strategy.

STEPHEN

Yeah I'm on it...I gotta go.

He hangs up.

INT. PRIVATE JET

The GOVERNOR and STEPHEN are flying through a bad storm, the plane is getting knocked all around. Also on Board are BEN and a SECRET SERVICE AGENT. Stephen is holding onto the armrests, white knuckling it, the Governor watches him.

GOV. MORRIS

You okay?

STEPHEN

Yup...(Nope) Just trying to figure out our stops on the ground.

GOV. MORRIS

I think the weather might determine that. If we get there.

Both men sit with their heads back on the headrests.

STEPHEN

We'll be fine...we have to do it...and it's the right thing. Nothing bad happens when it's the right thing.

GOV. MORRIS

Is this your personal theory...cause I can shoot holes in it...Roberto Clemente...on a humanitarian flight.

STEPHEN

Well there are exceptions to every rule...

They smile. The Governor looks at Stephen.

GOV. MORRIS

So how we doin'?

STEPHEN

Fine now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOV. MORRIS

No I mean...the campaign how we doin?

STEPHEN

Great...

GOV. MORRIS

Listen Stephen...you're not Paul. I pay him to use the word "great". I pay you to tell me the truth.

STEPHEN

I think we're solid.

GOV. MORRIS

Okay Paul.

STEPHEN

Governor there's a big difference between Paul and me. Paul only believes in winning so he'll do or say anything to win.

GOV. MORRIS

But you wouldn't.

STEPHEN

I'll do or say anything if I believe in it...but I have to believe in the cause.

GOV. MORRIS

You'll make a lousy consultant when you're out of this line of work.

STEPHEN

Well I won't be out of this line of work as long as you're in it.

GOV. MORRIS

So at best you've got eight years...then you'll end up with a nice little consultant firm on Farragut North...eating at the Palm...pulling in seven hundred and fifty grand a year...pimping out Senators to Saudi Princes.

They both smile.

STEPHEN

Pimping out ex presidents...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GOV. MORRIS  
Then I better win...

STEPHEN  
Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. KENT STATE UNIVERSITY - OHIO - LATER

We're in a large hall. GOVERNOR MORRIS is on stage, he stands in front of a huge American flag. Morris's wife CINDY is standing in the wings along with their seven year old daughter BETH.

GOVERNOR MORRIS addresses the crowd.

GOV. MORRIS  
Now, I've been married for eleven years, to the smartest person I know...and we have a normal marriage...which means when we disagree...she wins. What we don't ever disagree on is how we're going to leave this planet for our daughter. Are we gonna leave it better off, or worse? The richest people in this country don't pay their fare share. And when they're asked to, they cry socialism, they use phrases like redistribution of wealth. That scares everybody and they all run and they hide. For the record, my campaign is vehemently against the distribution of wealth to the richest Americans, by our government! And I will run on that!

INT. KENT STATE UNIVERSITY - BACK STAGE - CONTINUOUS

PAUL and STEPHEN are back stage behind the huge American flag. We can hear the Governor's speech in the B.G.

STEPHEN  
I didn't think it was true.

PAUL  
Whoa...

STEPHEN  
But I should have told you this yesterday...sorry...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

-Slow down.

STEPHEN

I met with Tom Duffy yesterday.

PAUL

What?

STEPHEN

You were on a plane and he called me and he asked if we could meet...And I said why...he said it was very important so I did...but I should've fucking told you...

PAUL

Stop Stop let me get this straight. You met with Tom Duffy?

STEPHEN

Yes.

PAUL

What'd he want Stephen?

STEPHEN

-the gist of it is he wants to hire me. He wants me to jump ship and come work for him...this is bad Paul. He showed me poll numbers with Pullman ahead by four. We're in really deep fucking trouble he laid out their whole plan. Robo-calls, traffic jams, fake lit, and fucking Thompson. They promised him Secretary of State.

CUT TO:

INT. KENT STATE UNIVERSITY - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

GOV. MORRIS

You know how you fight the war on terror?...Don't need their product anymore. Their product is oil, just don't need it and they go away. We don't have to bomb anyone we don't have to invade anyone!

CUT TO:

INT. KENT STATE UNIVERSITY - BACK STAGE - CONTINUOUS

PAUL

If this is some sort of practical-I mean -my fucking blood pressure is going through the roof right now.

STEPHEN

Paul I'm sorry. Believe me...I just didn't think it was true.

PAUL

It doesn't fucking matter what you thought. It matters what you did. It matters what you didn't do. If all this shit is true I made a fucking ass of myself at Thompson's place. And I gave away our game plan.

STEPHEN

Please believe me that I honestly believed you were gonna come back and you were gonna tell me that we have Thompson in the bag and I didn't see the point. But it doesn't make it right and I'm sorry.

PAUL

Let me think...let me think...

CUT TO:

INT. KENT STATE UNIVERSITY - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

GOV. MORRIS

If I'm your president, the first thing I put in motion, ten years from the day I'm in office...no new car in America runs on an internal combustion engine. It'll create hundreds of thousands of new jobs...we will start the next technological revolution and we will lead the world again...like we used to...

CUT TO:

INT. KENT STATE UNIVERSITY - BACK STAGE - CONTINUOUS

PAUL

We get the Governor right after he finishes singing Kum Bay Ya and give him everything we know.

STEPHEN

Who do you want...

PAUL

You, me and the Governor, that's it! What's he got after?

STEPHEN

A fund-raiser in Cleveland tonight.

PAUL

He'll be late...we're gonna tell him that if he doesn't offer Thompson a cabinet position...he's not gonna get the nomination.

STEPHEN

Will he go for it?

PAUL

I don't fucking know Stephen.

As Paul exits he shoots back.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Find us a room...

CUT TO:

INT. KENT STATE UNIVERSITY LOBBY

MOLLY walks up the steps of the auditorium into the lobby, a staffer hands her some papers and she continues. We pull her down a corridor and land at a rehearsal room door. She hands the papers to BEN.

The Governor's wife CINDY, daughter BETH and a security man are waiting outside the door.

INT. KENT STATE UNIVERSITY - REHEARSAL ROOM

GOV. MORRIS

How real are the numbers?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHEN

We might pick up a couple of points...but we're...I don't know, we lose by three or four percent.

PAUL

Who the fuck knows Governor...but we can't take the chance...

GOV. MORRIS

What do you think?

PAUL

I think we fold up the campaign in Ohio...take a loss and blame it on the Republican's playing games...head to North Carolina.

GOV. MORRIS

I can't run from Ohio...they'll kill us.

PAUL

Not if you get Thompson's endorsement.

GOV. MORRIS

I'm not gonna do it. What's he want head of the FDA or something ridiculous?

STEPHEN

Cabinet post.

GOV. MORRIS

Labor?

STEPHEN

State...

This sits with them.

GOV. MORRIS

Are you fucking kidding me...I'm gonna give Secretary of State to a guy who wants to cut the top ten floors off the UN? Paul when we started this campaign I said I wasn't gonna make those kind of deals.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL

Governor, if you lose Ohio, and they get Thompson's delegates...Then they get North Carolina...then they get the lead. A lead you can't beat. But if we walk from Ohio, take Thompson, give him a cabinet post, then we take North Carolina. His state. Then Pennsylvania. Your state. And then it's simple math Mike. Take his endorsement and the race is over.

GOV. MORRIS

Paul, I respect you...respect your opinion...but I'm never gonna do it...so I suggest we find a way for me to win Ohio.

They sit there looking at their shoes.

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)

Anything else?

Off their looks we-

CUT TO:

INT. MORRIS HEADQUARTERS - CINCINNATI - LATE AFTERNOON

We're mid action. Everyone is there. Phones...emails...people running in and out. STEPHEN, BEN, MOLLY...sleeves rolled up. PAUL is in a closed room but we can see him on the phone.

STEPHEN

(On the phone)

Do we have any other senators that can go to bat for us? House members won't do.

BEN

(Whispering to him)

Or a Congressman from Ohio maybe.

STEPHEN

Right...but we need a Senator...one from Ohio would be nice.

We push the camera through the room, edging closer to PAUL.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOLLY

(To Stephen)

This is all the car rental companies in Northern Ohio...they've booked every single van for Tuesday...

STEPHEN

Fuck...Jess, I'll call you back...  
(To Molly) All of them? Goddamit!

BEN

(On the computer)

Here's what I have so far...Independents don't seem to be biting, but Republicans are...or say they are.

STEPHEN

They're not gonna tell a pollster that they're gonna vote Democratic...I don't even know how to read these polls.

MOLLY

I called and we can get a hundred vans out of Covington and Newport Kentucky.

STEPHEN

We don't need the fucking vans...we just don't want Pullman to have them...

We keep pushing in on PAUL until we can hear him talking to a reporter on the phone. - During this conversation he types on his laptop.

PAUL

No, No that's not what I'm saying...we were the underdog before we got into this and we continue to be the underdog...well the numbers...we knew the numbers would get closer the closer we got to Tuesday...I'm not lowering expectations...have you ever heard me say that we had Ohio locked?... Then at least give me the courtesy of printing that in your column.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOVERNORS SUV - NIGHT

We see The SUV drive down the highway.

INT. GOVERNORS SUV - NIGHT

We're in the second row of seats of the Governor's SUV. CINDY'S head on his shoulder. They are very comfortable and easy with each other. The Governor is writing a speech on a legal pad.

CINDY

What're you writing?

GOV. MORRIS

The greatest speech ever given on hydrogen power.

CINDY

The bar is awfully high on that one.

GOV. MORRIS

Don't I know it.

CINDY

I got hit up by Mitchell's wife for you to show up at her "Daughters of the American Revolution" luncheon.

GOV. MORRIS

Who's Mitchell?

CINDY

Congressman from the first district. You might want to remember that.

GOV. MORRIS

Fucking Congressmen. Could you imagine doing this every two years?

CINDY

No I can't. Lets just do this one more time.

GOV. MORRIS

In four more years.

CINDY

That's it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOV. MORRIS

Deal.

Beat

CINDY

You think we'll lose Ohio?

GOV. MORRIS

I don't know.

CINDY

If you took Thompson's delegates the race is over. Ohio wouldn't matter.

GOV. MORRIS

Is Paul working on you?

CINDY

(Shaking her head)

Stephen.

GOV. MORRIS

(Smiling)

They are good.

CINDY

Is Thompson so bad?

GOV. MORRIS

He's a shit.

CINDY

Worse than Pullman?

GOV. MORRIS

Yes Stephen.

Beat.

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)

Every time I draw a line in the sand...and I keep moving it. Fund raising, union deals...I wasn't going to do any of it...negative ads...I can't on this one. Not Thompson.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)  
Tell Mrs. Mitchell I'll make her  
goddamn luncheon.

Beat.

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)  
Let the old ladies pat me on the  
head.

They smile.

CINDY  
You've got great hair.

GOV. MORRIS  
You too baby.

They lay their heads back onto the headrests.

CUT TO:

INT. PERFORMING ARTS BUILDING - DAYTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE -  
A BIT LATER

A few hundred students sit around The GOVERNOR in a theater  
as he fields questions.

MORRIS is cornered by a conservative student.

STUDENT 1  
Gay marriage?

GOV. MORRIS  
It's a silly argument.

STUDENT 1  
Not to fifty percent of Americans.

GOV. MORRIS  
Over the age of fifty.

STUDENT 1  
That's who votes...that's who shows  
up at the polls.

GOV. MORRIS  
Well that's changing...and  
hopefully the way we frame the  
argument is...

At this point the camera travels backstage to find STEPHEN,  
BEN, PAUL and MOLLY working the phones and laptops.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL  
(To Stephen)  
Keep an eye on the Governor.

STEPHEN  
(To BEN)  
Let me know how it's going out there.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
I'm on it.

BEN takes us back out, and under this we hear the GOVERNOR continue debating..

STUDENT 1  
From...a religious...a

GOV. MORRIS  
From a religious to a civil rights issue.

STUDENT 1  
But one could argue a great difference between gender and race.

GOV. MORRIS  
Not really. They used to ban interracial marriage...women couldn't vote...the list goes on...

STUDENT 1  
The argument of course-

We hear boos from students in the audience.

At this point the camera finds MORRIS.

Morris quiets the students.

GOV. MORRIS  
Now wait she has a point to make....

STUDENT 1  
The argument is that men and women, can in fact be separate but equal, races cannot.

GOV. MORRIS  
How so?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STUDENT 1

You have separate public bathrooms for men and women but it would be illegal to have separate bathrooms for two races.

GOV. MORRIS

Now.

STUDENT 1

(Laughing)

Yes now.

Audience laughs.

GOV. MORRIS

So that's what I'm saying.

CUT TO:

INT. PERFORMING ARTS BUILDING LOBBY - AFTER

STEPHEN, BEN and the rest, head out of the town hall to get on the bus.

STEPHEN

What time is this on tonight?

BEN

Nine o'clock.

STEPHEN

How'd he do?

BEN

He did good.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPAIGN BUS - NIGHT

The bus rolls down the highway

INT. CAMPAIGN BUS - NIGHT

It's a flurry of activity. STEPHEN, BEN, MOLLY and our REGULAR STAFFERS...are all on phones, Blackberry's and laptop's. MOLLY looks back over her shoulder to STEPHEN, who's face is lit by his laptop. He looks up...they lock eyes.

INT. MILLENNIUM HOTEL - STEVEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

We're tight on a TV. It's the taped broadcast of the previous town hall meeting. As the scene plays we pull back to see STEPHEN and MOLLY making love. We see pieces of body parts. Hands...a leg...hair being pulled...it's what we've grown used to seeing in a seventies love scene, all lit by the flickering of a television. The only score we hear is the sound of the TV.

GOV. MORRIS

See we're framing the argument based on the idea that homosexuality is a choice, you choose to be gay, not that you were born that way like being born black. Because if you start the discussion with the idea that gay is not a life choice but part of your DNA, then gay marriage is and can only be a civil rights issue.

ANOTHER STUDENT steps up to the microphone.

STUDENT 2

Do you think candor is your appeal? Is that what you're running on as much as your platform...?

GOV. MORRIS

We'll see. It'll drive them to the polls one way or the other.

STUDENT 2

I just heard a lot of Christian Coalition cars start up.

We pull focus now onto STEPHEN and MOLLY.

STEPHEN on top not moving.

He looks down to the area where an erection would normally be at this time...then he looks back to Molly.

STEPHEN

It's not you.

They laugh.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLENNIUM HOTEL - STEVEN'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Stephen is lying in bed working on some papers. Molly is asleep next to him. Stephen's cell phone rings.

STEPHEN

Hello...

Almost at the same time we hear another man's voice on the phone.

VOICE

Molly?

They both stop. No one speaks. Stephen is about to speak again when the caller hangs up. Stephen looks at the phone...he then looks to the bedside table where he sees an identical phone. His phone. He's picked up Molly's phone by mistake. He looks at the name of the incoming call...there is none...he looks at the caller ID number...he looks at the clock...2:30 AM.

STEPHEN

Your phone rang.

MOLLY

Really?

STEPHEN

Who's calling at 2:30 in the morning?

MOLLY

I don't know?

STEPHEN

He asked for you by name.

MOLLY

You answered it?

STEPHEN

I thought it was mine. Who was it?

MOLLY

I don't know...

STEPHEN

One of the other interns drunk dialing you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOLLY

(Kidding)

Oh that never happens...let me see  
the number...

She reaches for the phone, but Steven keeps it away from her.

STEPHEN

Hold on...

MOLLY

(Still waiting for it)

Stephen...

STEPHEN

I'm gonna call him back.

He pushes the redial button.

MOLLY

No!

STEPHEN

...And I'm gonna tell him that I'm  
your dad...

MOLLY

Gimme my phone Stephen!

STEPHEN

And I'm gonna tell him I'm coming  
over there with a shotgun...

MOLLY

(Getting more urgent)

Don't do that Stephen...  
Hang up!

Stephen, listens to the outgoing message, while he looks at  
Molly...her eyes starting to well up.

We hear the buzzing of the message through the phone. Then  
we see Stephens reaction as it begins to dawn on him who he's  
listening to.

He closes the phone without leaving a message.

Beat.

STEPHEN

Why is the Governor calling you at  
2:30 in the morning?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She says nothing.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Why is the Governor calling you at all?

MOLLY

I'm in trouble...

STEPHEN

With the Governor? What's going on?

MOLLY

I was working on the campaign in Iowa...we had a party in Ben's room after the rally in Des Moines...

STEPHEN

There was a party with you...and Ben...and the Governor.

MOLLY

No he wasn't there.

STEPHEN

Where was he?

MOLLY

I took him up a hard copy of the polling numbers...

STEPHEN

After the party?

MOLLY

(Shaking her head yes)  
About midnight I guess...I stood in the doorway with him...we were talking...a long time...then he just reached behind me and closed the door.

STEPHEN

Jesus fucking Christ...Were you drunk?

MOLLY

Not that drunk...

STEPHEN

How many times?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MOLLY  
Just that once.

STEPHEN  
Does anybody know? Did anyone see  
you?

MOLLY  
No.

STEPHEN  
How could you know?

MOLLY  
I know!

STEPHEN  
Then why is he calling you now?

MOLLY  
I called him first.

STEPHEN  
Why?

MOLLY  
Because I didn't know who to go  
to...and I needed nine hundred  
bucks...

STEPHEN  
For what?

MOLLY  
I can't go to my dad...We're  
catholic.

Beat.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
So what should I do?

A long beat.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - CINCINNATI - NEXT DAY - MORNING

We're close on STEPHEN as he walks down the sidewalk and  
into...

INT. MORRIS HEADQUARTERS - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

STEPHEN walks into the campaign office. He looks at all the posters with pictures of Morris. People greet him as he walks past.

The signs all look wrong now. The smile on Morris's face looks fake. He sees MOLLY as he passes and heads into the war room.

CUT TO:

INT. MORRIS HEADQUARTERS - LATER

STEPHEN is going through the drawers in his desk... he goes to the office door, opens it and yells to Ben in the bullpen.

STEPHEN

Ben... come here a minute

BEN stops what he's doing and heads into Stephen's office.

BEN

What's up?

STEPHEN

What's our limit on petty cash?

BEN

It's probably five hundred. Why?

STEPHEN

I need as much as we have.

BEN

Everything okay?... anything I can help with?

STEPHEN

Yeah...don't put it on the books. That's all.

BEN

What should I put it down as?

STEPHEN

Don't put it down as anything...

BEN

Anything over a hundred I got to put it down as something...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHEN  
 (raising his voice)  
 Just do it!

BEN exits.

We follow BEN into the bullpen, past the STAFFERS who look up at the outburst... MOLLY watches BEN and then looks to STEPHEN who closes his door. We stay on MOLLY.

We see MOLLY watching through the door... as STEPHEN finishes, he opens the door.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
 Molly...

She gets up and comes into his office. Stephen hands Molly a folder that he writes on the inside of

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
 Here...

Molly opens the folder and reads "Meet me in the stairwell at noon". She closes the folder.

MOLLY  
 Okay.

Stephen holds out his hand.

STEPHEN  
 I'll take that. That's all.

He takes the folder and tears it into several pieces as Molly leaves... he throws the pieces into the trash can.

CUT TO:

INT. STOCK YARDS BANK - CINCINNATI- LATER

STEPHEN stands at a tellers counter, he writes out a check for eight hundred dollars to cash. The teller hands him the money.

Stephen exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. STOCK YARDS BANK STEPS - CONTINUOUS

STEPHEN walks down to the sidewalk. He's on the phone with Ida.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IDA

Stevie ... off the record ...

STEPHEN

No I can't tell you what happened in North Carolina.

IDA

That's not what I wanted to ask you about.

STEPHEN

Okay what?

IDA

You met with Duffy.

A pause.

STEPHEN

Who told you that?

IDA

A little bird.

STEPHEN

Who?

IDA

Did you meet with him?

STEPHEN

Where are you?

CUT TO:

INT. SKY WALK - CINCINATTI - MINUTES LATER

IDA

I know you met with him at a little bar in Cincy, two nights ago, just before the press conference. Duffy ordered buffalo wings.

STEPHEN

Did Duffy tell you this?

IDA

Anonymous. What happened with Duffy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHEN

You're supposed to be my friend  
Ida. You'd stab me in the back  
like this? You'd ruin my  
reputation just so you-

IDA

Wait wait wait -is that what you  
thought? That we were friends?

STEPHEN

I've given you everything -every  
fucking scoop, your profile with  
Paul....

IDA

You're right -you've given me a  
lot. But let's get real here  
Steve. The only reason you ever  
treated me well was that I work  
for the Times. Not because I was  
your friend. You give me what I  
want, I write you better stories.  
Don't pretend it's any more than  
that. Why'd you meet with Duffy?

STEPHEN

Go fuck yourself.

STEPHEN starts walking away.

IDA

Okay, I'll make it easier on you.  
Forget Duffy. What happened at  
Paul and Thompson's meeting?

STEPHEN

(Stopping)

Will you keep your voice down. Do  
you have any idea what a story like  
this could do to me?

IDA

Of course I do. That's why I'm  
giving you a choice here.

STEPHEN

I could get fired.

IDA

So it's not a difficult choice, is  
it? I've got to file by three p.m.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IDA (CONT'D)  
tomorrow. You've got till then to  
make up your mind.

Stephen is left standing there.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOUNTAIN SQUARE - CINCI / INT. MEMORIAL HALL -  
A FEW MINUTES LATER

Stephen is on a pay phone in front of the fountain. DUFFY is  
at a campaign event, he also talks on his cell.

STEPHEN  
You mother fucker.

DUFFY  
Excuse me?

STEPHEN  
You leaked it.

DUFFY  
Leaked what?

STEPHEN  
Don't bullshit me Tom.

DUFFY  
Bullshit you...I have no idea what  
you're talking about.

STEPHEN  
I just spoke with Ida Horowicz.

DUFFY  
Yeah?

STEPHEN  
She's threatening to release the  
story.

DUFFY  
What fucking story?

STEPHEN  
That we met! That I fuckin met  
with you!

DUFFY  
How did she find out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHEN  
Don't play dumb here Tom.

DUFFY  
You think I leaked it to her?

STEPHEN  
Who else?

DUFFY  
I didn't leak it to her.

STEPHEN  
Well I know I didn't, so that  
leaves you.

DUFFY  
What's she know?

STEPHEN  
She knows whatever you told her.

DUFFY  
I swear to Jesus I didn't leak it  
to her Steve. I don't want this  
story out any more than you do.

STEPHEN  
Well too late.

DUFFY  
What did she tell you?

STEPHEN  
She knows where we met, she knows  
when we met... she knows you had  
buffalo fucking wings.

DUFFY  
She has a source?

STEPHEN  
Yes she has a source.

DUFFY  
And you have no idea who it could  
be?

STEPHEN  
Yeah, you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DUFFY

Well it wasn't me, and for the record I didn't have fucking buffalo wings. It's gotta be some one else.

STEPHEN

Did you tell anyone?

DUFFY

No. Did you?

STEPHEN

No.

DUFFY

Did you admit to meeting with me?

STEPHEN

No.

DUFFY

Then we stonewall her and she's got nothing.

STEPHEN

She's gonna take the story to Drudge, or Roll Call...shit like that.

DUFFY

You can't stop her?

STEPHEN

She's trying to blackmail me - wants info about Thompson.

DUFFY

Then tell her what she wants to know.

STEPHEN

I can't do that.

DUFFY

You can't let this story get out.

STEPHEN

I'm not gonna be blackmailed Tom.

DUFFY

You don't have much of a choice here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STEPHEN

If I tell her about Thompson I gotta tell her he's gonna endorse you guys.

DUFFY

Then tell her. I can handle it from my side if I start getting calls.

STEPHEN

No fucking way. Paul told her we had Thompson in the bag. It'll make us look like fools.

DUFFY

You're gonna look like fools anyway when he endorses us.

STEPHEN

I can't do it.

DUFFY

You're on a sinking ship Steve. Tell her what she wants to know and jump. Come over to our side. We can control this thing.

Pause.

No answer from STEPHEN.

DUFFY (CONT'D)

Steve?

STEPHEN

I Gotta go.

Stephen hangs up.

CUT TO:

INT. MORRIS HEADQUARTERS - STAIRWELL - AFTERNOON

MOLLY walks in... it's dark in some places... she doesn't see anyone at first. She stands there... then from the shadows we hear STEPHEN.

STEPHEN

I'm up here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOLLY  
(startled)  
Shit, you scared me.

She goes up the next flight of stairs and stands next to him on the landing.

STEPHEN  
Take this.

He hands her an envelope.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
It's almost 1800 bucks... you make the appointment now... today... from a pay phone... I'll take you to the clinic and pick you up... no one else... you understand?

MOLLY  
Yes.

STEPHEN  
You take the rest of the money and you buy a ticket home... you can't be here anymore... we can't afford it... not with everything that's gonna happen in the next week. This situation just can't be here.

MOLLY  
You mean I can't be here.

STEPHEN  
Right.

MOLLY  
But I would never tell anyone...

STEPHEN  
I would hope not.

MOLLY  
Then why?

STEPHEN  
You fucked up, Molly...

MOLLY  
He and I both fucked up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEPHEN

But I have a responsibility to him... and more importantly I have a responsibility to this campaign.

MOLLY

I could go to North Carolina and work on the campaign...

STEPHEN

Molly you've got to wake the fuck up... this is the big leagues... it's mean...and when you make mistakes you lose your right to play. Make the appointment and tell me when and where we have to go.

He exits.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

STEPHEN sits at the desk in front of his laptop. BEN sits on the floor surrounded by papers and a laptop. As BEN is talking Stephen is staring blankly at the screen.

BEN

Listen to this. I got the placement in the Times...this is a match up of hope versus fear. Nine times out of ten the fear candidate tends to be the most experienced...but in our presidential races the least experienced candidate almost always wins. JFK versus Nixon...Carter versus Ford...Bush versus Gore...I like our chances with the new kid on the block, end quote. Thomas Fucking Duffy...he's gotta be having a stroke right now.

STEPHEN'S phone buzzes, he picks it up and reads the text.

It reads: NOON TOMORROW, MOLLY.

He sets the phone down...BEN continues talking.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOLLY'S MOTEL - A BIT LATER

STEPHEN sits in his car in the back of the parking lot, waiting... his phone rings. He looks at the caller ID... it's Ida... he sets the phone back down, waits, and sees MOLLY come out of the hotel. She looks around and heads toward Stephen. She gets into the car and they drive off in silence.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. STEPHENS CAR - ROEBLING SUSPENSION BRIDGE -  
A BIT LATER

STEPHEN AND MOLLY drive in silence.

INT. STEPHEN'S CAR - DAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

STEPHEN and MOLLY driving down the street. Stephen drives until he sees the clinic. He stops.

INT. CLINIC - WAITING ROOM - DAY

STEPHEN stands at the receptionists window and hands the NURSE a clipboard with the forms Molly has filled out. She hands him back the yellow copies and he sits down next to MOLLY.

STEPHEN

So just call me when you can leave  
okay.

MOLLY

(Looking at the clinic)  
I hate this shit...

STEPHEN

I'll be back, this'll all be  
over...

MOLLY

Yeah...

STEPHEN leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLENNIUM HOTEL - PAUL'S ROOM - DAY

We're in PAUL'S room. He's lying on the bed, talking on his cell phone.

BEN sits at the desk working on a laptop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL  
 Absolutely -there's no question  
 about it ....

A knock. PAUL goes to the door, opens it and waves STEPHEN  
 in, shutting the door behind him as he enters.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
 But we've got to think broader  
 strokes here, rethink  
 everything....uh-huh....Yeah, I  
 know how to handle  
 it....Look,Stevie just got here.  
 Can I call you back in a few  
 minutes? ..Okay, bye. (He hangs up)  
 The Governor. We had a good long  
 talk on the way back. He's up to  
 speed with everything.

STEPHEN  
 How'd he take it?

PAUL  
 Better than I thought he would.  
 Still won't take Thompson's  
 endorsement.

STEPHEN  
 Paul-I gotta tell you something.

PAUL  
 What's up?

STEPHEN  
 Ida knows I met with Duffy.

PAUL stares at him blankly.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
 I don't know how she found out.  
 Tried to blackmail me. Said she was  
 gonna let the story out if I didn't  
 tell her what happened at your  
 meeting with Thompson.

PAUL  
 So it's gonna hit the papers.

STEPHEN  
 Probably. Yeah. Whoever she takes  
 it to, they're gonna call me for a  
 statement.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I could just deny the whole thing, but if they call Duffy and he admits to it, that could look worse. If I say no comment they won't let up.

PAUL

I leaked it to Ida.

Pause.

BEN looks up from his laptop.

PAUL (CONT'D)

At the event.

STEPHEN

I don't understand.

PAUL

We made a deal.

STEPHEN

Paul...they're gonna print that story in the paper tomorrow morning.

PAUL

I know.

STEPHEN

But why? Why would you do that to me? Why would you do that to the campaign.

PAUL

The campaign will survive.

STEPHEN

Then why would you do that to me?

PAUL

Makes it easier to let you go.

STEPHEN

What?

PAUL

Why'd you meet with Duffy?

STEPHEN

I made a mistake - a stupid mistake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PAUL

No Stephen. You didn't make a mistake. You made a choice. You called me and left a message to call back...that it was important. But when I did...you said to forget about it. You chose not to tell me. Why did you make that choice?

STEPHEN

I didn't think it was important.

PAUL

Sure you did. But you went because you were curious, because you were flattered. Because it made you feel special to think Duffy wanted to speak to you instead of me. Because you thought to yourself: maybe I can get something out of this. Because it made you feel big. First campaign I ran tiny little race in Kentucky -state senate seat. Workin for redneck nobody named McGuthrie. Had no money, no staff, no fuckin office. Everyone thought we didn't stand a chance. There's no way we can compete. And about this time, a guy running a congressional campaign a few districts over gives me a call. Says, "I really like what you were able to do for poor ole' Sam. But let's face it, he's a goner, so why don't you come work for me?" What do I do? Well Stephen -this is where you and I are different. I told Sam about the call. And Sam says to me, "Paul, you think this other's guy's got a shot at winning, and he can pay you more than anything I can afford, so if it's what you feel you need to do, then I won't get in your way." So I say, "Sam -you took a chance and hired me when I was even more of nobody than you are, and I'd be damned if I'm gonna jump ship just because the shit hit the fan." We lost the race, but three years later, when Sam decided to run for Governor -who do you think he called? We won that race.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PAUL (CONT'D)

And twenty years later I'm where I am now. (Beat) There's only one thing I value in this world Steve, and that's loyalty. Without it you're nothing and you have no one. And in politics it's the only currency that you can count on. That's why I'm letting you go. Not because you're not good enough. But I value trust over skill. And I don't trust you anymore.

STEPHEN

Well it really isn't whether you trust me, it's whether the Governor does.

PAUL

The Governor knows, he thinks it's the right thing to do.

STEPHEN

He does.

PAUL

If I were you? I'd get a good night sleep because you're gonna get fucking pounded by calls from the press in the morning...

Off of Stephen we:

CUT TO:

INT. CLINIC - DAY - LATER

MOLLY is sitting in the clinic waiting room, Post-Op.

The NURSE comes out with a bag of prescription drugs and some instructions.

NURSE

These are Vicodin...they're for the pain. You have Ambien...that'll help you sleep...and I threw in a couple of Xanax for the next couple of days. Did the doctor explain there would be some bleeding?

Molly nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE (CONT'D)  
 Not much...and it shouldn't last  
 very long. If it does you'll need  
 to call us.

Molly just sits there staring.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
 Do you have a ride?

Molly shakes her head yes.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
 Okay...if you need anything you  
 just call the clinic...okay.

MOLLY  
 (Nods)  
 Okay.

The NURSE walks back into the office. MOLLY just sits  
 there...by herself.

We stay with her for a while.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEPHEN'S RENTAL CAR - AFTERNOON

STEPHEN is driving.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLINIC - AFTERNOON

MOLLY walks outside the clinic and down the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFE NEAR CLINIC - LATER

Through the front window we see Molly sitting in a booth  
 making a phone call. There is a TV on the wall, the news  
 plays.

DEBBIE DIXON  
 Yes Mike, Senator Franklin Thompson  
 of North Carolina arrived at the  
 Lunken airfield today igniting  
 rumors of a deal in the works.  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEBBIE DIXON (CONT'D)

The NY times is reporting that  
Senator Thompson will pledge his  
three hundred and fifty-six  
delegates to Senator Pullman.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLINIC STREET - NIGHT

STEPHEN drives by the clinic, he slows to see if Molly is  
still there. The clinic is closed.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOLLY'S MOTEL - KENTUCKY - NIGHT

MOLLY gets out of a cab and walks into the hotel.

Under this we hear:

BEN

Hey, where were you today?

MOLLY

I'm not feeling great Ben...

INT. MOLLY'S MOTEL - KENTUCKY - NIGHT

We're in front of MOLLY'S door as the scene continues.

BEN

You picked a hell of day to call in  
sick...Jesus...fucking wild day...

MOLLY

Why?

BEN

Stephen's off the campaign. Paul  
fired him. Some fucking set up  
about loyalty and it looks like  
Stephen was doubling down with  
Duffy on the Pullman campaign. I  
was sitting in the room when Paul  
told Stephen that he was fired.  
Stephen said who's gonna take over  
and Paul said me...and I'm  
like...easy there soldier...but  
Stephen goes ape shit then Paul  
gives the speech about loyalty and  
then shits on Stephen like I've  
never seen  
before...christ...humiliating shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOLLY

When was this?

BEN

Molly listen to me...I'm gonna run the campaign under Paul...Stephen is going to Duffy. I just jumped three years ahead...so starting tomorrow morning we go into full damage control and I'm telling you Stephen's going ape shit...he said he's taking everyone down on his way out...Morris, everybody!

Phone rings.

BEN (CONT'D)

Shit I gotta take this. Do you need anything?

MOLLY

No.

CUT TO:

INT. PULLMAN HEADQUARTERS - CINCINNATI - NIGHT

STEPHEN enters the offices, staffers look up and recognize him.

STEPHEN

Where's Duffy...

STAFFER 1

You got an appointment?

Stephen keeps walking.

Stephen arrives at a medium sized, glass partitioned office. As he looks in, we see Duffy and five or six staffers around a table. Duffy is holding court, the mood is light.

Duffy notices Stephen standing there.

Duffy walks Stephen a few doors down to a conference room. A single staffer is working on a laptop.

DUFFY

Joe can you excuse us for a minute.

The staffer leaves and Duffy closes the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUFFY (CONT'D)

Not very bright, walking in here...

STEPHEN

I'm in. I'm coming to work for you.

DUFFY

A reporter at Roll Call phoned me this afternoon.

STEPHEN

I know who leaked it.

DUFFY

Who?

STEPHEN

Paul.

DUFFY

You told Paul?

STEPHEN

Yeah. I told him we met. He leaked it.

DUFFY

You shouldn't have told him that.

STEPHEN

I felt like I should.

DUFFY

I've worked with Paul. He gets paranoid.

STEPHEN

Obviously.

DUFFY

So he fired you.

STEPHEN

I quit.

DUFFY

You're lying to me...come on...

STEPHEN

I quit! And I can give you everything on Morris. Everything.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I can lay out his whole strategy for you.

DUFFY

I already know his strategy. Paul gave it all to Thompson.

STEPHEN

What if I had something else?

DUFFY

You'd do that to Morris? To Paul?

STEPHEN

Yeah.

DUFFY

Revenge makes people unpredictable Steve. I can't have someone who's unpredictable. Who's unstable.

STEPHEN

(Calmly)

I'm not unstable.

DUFFY

If it had been a clean break -if you'd left Morris before this story broke, that'd be one thing. That we could control. But the way it'd look now -Paul fires you and then you come work for us. Looks like we're picking up the scraps. Puts Morris in the drivers seat. I can't have that.

We see a shot close on STEPHEN'S clinched fist holding the yellow copies from Molly's clinic visit down by his side. We pan up to his face.

STEPHEN

What if I had something big?

DUFFY

Like what?

STEPHEN

Something big. Something that'll bring Morris down.

DUFFY

What is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STEPHEN  
(Shaking his head)  
Give me the job.

DUFFY  
It's not gonna happen. I'm sorry.  
Go take a nice long vacation.

Beat.

DUFFY (CONT'D)  
You're a smart guy Steve.  
Everything I said yesterday is  
true. But maybe politics isn't for  
you.

STEPHEN  
Politics is my life.

DUFFY  
Do yourself a favor. Get out now  
while you still can. Go into  
entertainment, or business, or open  
a fucking restaurant in Costa Rica -  
anything. Do what will make you  
happy. You stay in this business  
long enough it makes you jaded and  
cynical.

STEPHEN  
Like you?

DUFFY  
Yeah. Just like me.

STEPHEN  
You knew I was gonna tell Paul.

DUFFY  
I didn't know. I thought you might,  
but I didn't know.

STEPHEN  
You knew if I told him he'd fire  
me.

DUFFY  
Thing you gotta know about Paul-  
he's big on loyalty.

STEPHEN  
Yeah I got a nice speech on that.  
You were never gonna hire me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DUFFY

Put yourself in my shoes Steve. Your opponent has the best media mind in the country working on his team. What do you try to do? You either try to hire him yourself, or work it so if you can't have him, the other team can't either. This was a win-win situation for me. You work for us -great. Paul doesn't have you. Then again, if Paul fires you and I don't take you -fine - Paul still doesn't have you. Either way I win. The moment I got you to sit down in that chair, I knew I'd won.

STEPHEN

This is my life you're talking about.

DUFFY

It's not easy for me to do this sort of thing Steve. Don't think I take any pleasure in it. I'm sorry for you. I really am. Take care of yourself.

CUT TO:

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STEPHEN pulls into the parking lot.

INT. MOLLY'S MOTEL - KENTUCKY - NIGHT

STEPHEN climbs the back stairwell to avoid seeing any of his former co-workers. He gets to the fifth floor and walks down the hall towards Molly's room. As he turns the corner he sees a maid's cart in front of her room. The door is halfway open.

As he starts walking towards her door, we see the HOTEL MANAGER come running out of Molly's room, he heads the opposite way towards the elevators...he's fumbling with his walkie-talkie.

STEPHEN gets to her room and we see a JANITOR kneeling over Molly's lifeless body.

Stephen steps into the room. He can barely move. He just stands there looking at the situation.

The JANITOR is on the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANITOR  
No ma'am she's not breathing...No  
nothing...

Stephen is looking at Molly...he looks around the room...he  
sees her prescription bottle empty on the bed next to  
her...he sees her clothes all around the room.

JANITOR (CONT'D)  
...I don't know, fifteen  
minutes...how far away are they?

The JANITOR now turns and looks at STEPHEN

JANITOR (CONT'D)  
Do you know her?

STEPHEN nods his head yes.

JANITOR (CONT'D)  
She's gone.

We hear the sound of a distant ambulance.

JANITOR goes back to the phone.

JANITOR (CONT'D)  
Hello...I'm sorry what? Yes I can  
hear them now...

STEPHEN looks down on the bed and sees Molly's phone. He  
reaches down takes it and slides it in his pocket.

Close on STEPHEN'S face as he stares down at Molly.

We hear the ambulance approaching the building

CUT TO:

EXT. MOLLY'S MOTEL - NIGHT - SECONDS LATER

Stephen comes running out the door. An ambulance has pulled  
up and EMT's are on their way in. Police are also pulling  
up. Stephen keeps walking - he gets in his car and sits  
there.

Nothing. No emotion.

Stephen pulls out his phone and listens to his messages.

PHONE  
You have four new messages and four  
saved messages. First new message.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beep.

MOLLY (O.S.)  
 Uhm...where are you?...it's  
 Uhh...(Crying) it's four  
 something...they're gonna close in  
 a few minutes...

Beep.

BEN (O.S.)  
 Stephen, it's Ben...listen ...what  
 the fuck...did Paul lose his  
 mind?...Jesus...what're you gonna  
 do? Call me.

Beep.

MOLLY (O.S.)  
 Stephen I just heard from  
 Ben...please don't do anything  
 fucked up...(She's losing it.)  
 Godamnit you motherfucker pick up  
 the phone! Don't do it you fuck!

Beep.

We now hear Molly in a very different tone, calmer, maybe  
 even drunk.

MOLLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 I'm not going away...

Beep.

Stephen hangs up.

We stay on him for a while.

CUT TO:

INT. MORRIS HEADQUARTERS - NEXT MORNING

The GOVERNOR, PAUL, BEN and the other staffers, sit in front  
 of a monitor watching a news piece.

We now cut to CNN footage in front of a hospital as we hear  
 the report continue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN KING (V.O.)

The coroner has stated, that based on the evidence found by the police in the hotel room, that this was an accidental overdose, a lethal cocktail of alcohol and prescription drugs. The Cincinnati police chief, Darryl Mathews, has called for a full investigation pending a toxicology report which could take up to two weeks. Just a terrible terrible situation for the former Senator, now DNC Chairman, Jack Stearns and his family.

Off the Governor's face we:

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK - KENTUCKY - DAY

STEPHEN and SENATOR THOMPSON are seated on a bench.

SENATOR THOMPSON

I want on the ticket...you need me on the ticket...and you need my delegates...you could use em before Tuesday. Make a fine story on the Sunday morning news cycle...so I expect to hear from you by noon tomorrow...or I endorse Pullman and take my cabinet seat.

They look at each other.

SENATOR THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Anything else you want to talk about?

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS ROOM - CINCINNATI - NEXT MORNING

We're at a press conference - The GOVERNOR, PAUL, BEN, and the rest of the staff, are standing behind the microphone. The Governor is making a statement

GOV. MORRIS

The entire staff is in a state of shock. We have sent our condolences to Jack and JoAnna Stearns and their whole family...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)  
and of course our hearts go out to them... it's hard to imagine what they're going through... All we know at this point is it appears to be a drug...an accidental prescription overdose. Ida?

IDA  
Is suicide ruled out?

GOV. MORRIS  
We have no reason to believe...

He looks to Paul.

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)  
I don't think we have any of that information yet. Obviously there will be a full investigation. Just wanted to say that our hearts go out...our prayers go out to the entire family...and she was part of our family.

REPORTER 5  
Did you know her well Governor?

GOV. MORRIS  
Not well. But I did know her, and what I saw was a hard working, young woman, with a great and positive spirit. It's a very sad day in our campaign and a very sad day for the people close to Jack.

REPORTER 6  
How long has she interned with you Governor?

The Governor looks back at Paul. Paul steps up to the mic.

PAUL  
She'd only been on the road with us for a few weeks...maybe four I think, I can check.

IDA  
Will you continue with your schedule today? You're set to tour Proctor & Gamble this afternoon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL

We will most certainly stay on schedule. This accident, and we have to assume for now it's an accident, is just simply a tragedy. The work, the schedule won't be altered. It just means that those of us that knew Molly will go about our jobs with a heavy heart.

As these questions continue, the Governor's cell phone vibrates. He pulls it from his pocket and reads the name of the caller. It reads "Molly." He looks up. Panic starts to set in - the only sounds we hear are his heart beating and the phone vibrating.

The Governor looks at each of his staff members. Then he scans around the room looking through the press corps up to the back doorway where he locks eyes with Stephen.

STEPHEN holds a cell phone to his ear. They stare at each other. Then Stephen hangs up, and the Governor's phone stops vibrating.

Stephen turns and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT - CINCINNATI - THAT NIGHT

STEPHEN approaches the restaurant - the lights are off. He peers through a window - we hear the door unlock. One of the Governor's SECRET SERVICE MEN opens the door. He motions Stephen in.

INT. RESTAURANT - CINCINNATI - CONTINUOUS

Stephen follows the secret service guy through the dark restaurant - they pass several other secret service guys sitting in booths. They cross towards the back to the kitchen door - STEPHEN enters.

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen is small and dimly lit. The Governor is standing behind the center island - hanging pans hide his face.

GOV. MORRIS

It seems you have something you want to talk about.

STEPHEN

Does it seem that way?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOV. MORRIS

If you have something...or think  
you have something you want to get  
off your chest...

STEPHEN

What's say I do the talking and you  
do the listening.

GOV. MORRIS

Okay.

STEPHEN

As of tomorrow morning there's  
going to be some changes in your  
campaign. Paul is out. I will be  
your senior campaign manager. I'll  
draft a statement, "we're at a  
point in the campaign where some  
changes have to be made etc." You  
can put your own words in there,  
you do it better than most.

GOV. MORRIS

And why would I do that?

Beat.

STEPHEN

Because you want to win. Because  
you broke the only rule in  
politics. You want to be  
President, you can start a war, you  
can lie, you can cheat, you can  
bankrupt the country, but you can't  
fuck the interns...they'll get you  
for that.

GOV. MORRIS

What do you think you have Stephen?  
A troubled young girl tells you a  
story.

STEPHEN

A troubled young pregnant girl...

GOV. MORRIS

Is that what she told you?

STEPHEN

...Who needed cash for an abortion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GOV. MORRIS

What did you do, give her money?  
Maybe she just wanted cash and you  
were the perfect guy to hit up.

STEPHEN

Is that your best play?

GOV. MORRIS

You need a job that bad Stephen?  
You walk in here with your dick in  
your hand...you've got nothing.

STEPHEN

So how did I get here? You're  
right Mike, there's nothing. No  
phone messages, no text, no e-  
mails, no photos or tapes, and yet  
I'm standing right here.

GOV. MORRIS

Well go home.

STEPHEN

She left a note.

The Governor stands in silence.

GOV. MORRIS

How would you know that?

STEPHEN

I cleaned up your mess. I took her  
phone and I found her note.

They stare at each other in silence.

GOV. MORRIS

I thought it was an accident.

Then:

STEPHEN

You tell me, you were the last one  
she called. Note says she was  
pregnant, said you were going to  
pay for her abortion...it also said  
she didn't want to hurt you.

GOV. MORRIS

Then why would she leave a note  
that could only do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STEPHEN

Because she's twenty.

GOV. MORRIS

What do you want?

STEPHEN

Paul's gone today. I set a meeting with you and Thompson where you promise him the ticket. You get three hundred and fifty-six pledged delegates, you get North Carolina, and then you take office and make right what so many have made wrong. All the things we both believe in.

GOV. MORRIS

Well I don't believe in extortion...I don't believe in tying myself to you for the next eight years.

STEPHEN

Four years, let's not get ahead of ourselves.

A long beat.

Finally the Governor says:

GOV. MORRIS

What were you doing in her room?

STEPHEN

Housekeeping, before you ended up on page one.

GOV. MORRIS

No. You were already fired, you were out. What were you doing in her room?

STEPHEN

I was fixing a situation...I got a call, someone from the hotel thought I could help and called me.

GOV. MORRIS

You were off the campaign, but you thought it was important to come back and fix things? It was your voice on the phone the other night.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)  
You were fucking her. What did you do Stephen?

STEPHEN  
I loaned her some money and gave her a ride.

GOV. MORRIS  
I bet you did.

Pause.

And then:

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)  
There's no note.

STEPHEN  
Okay, there's no note.

GOV. MORRIS  
Show it to me.

STEPHEN  
You think I brought it here?  
That's how people get hurt.

GOV. MORRIS  
Okay let's play this out. You're not wearing a wire because everything you've suggested is illegal...and you wouldn't fare well in federal prison. You were fucking her and she told you about her situation. There are no records or conversations between us. And since she's had an abortion, no DNA evidence. So if there's no note, then it's your word against mine. Your word. A fired, disgruntled, employee, or a sitting governor...There's no note.

STEPHEN  
It's your call Governor.

As the Governor weighs his options we-

CUT TO:

INT. BARBER SHOP - EARLY MORNING

PAUL is sitting in a barber shop getting his hair cut... the BARBER cuts... Paul sits there. The TV is on... a sports show... no one talks. We watch Paul's face as the barber clips the back of his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE BARBER SHOP

PAUL walks out, starts down the street. As he passes the first corner, he sees the Governor's SUV and the Secret Service SUV both parked on the side of the road. Paul looks at the SUV... then walks up to the window. The window rolls down and the GOVERNOR leans his head out.

GOV. MORRIS

Paul you got a minute?

We stay outside the car for along time. We hear CHRIS MATHEWS under this shot. We see Paul get out of the SUV and the two SUVs drive off, leaving him standing there.

EXT. NICER HOTEL - CINCINNATI - NEXT DAY - ESTABLISHING

INT. NICER HOTEL ROOM- CINCINNATI - NEXT DAY

STEPHEN'S in a different hotel now.

The TV is on.

CHRIS MATHEWS

How much could a big shake up days before the Ohio primary hurt a campaign. I asked Paul Zara how his firing could actually help the candidate.

We See STEPHEN, shaving in the bathroom mirror, as he listens to the TV.

PAUL

The Governor and I both felt, that in light of some of these changing numbers, it was best to put a new face on the campaign...Stephen is very talented...very smart...

CUT TO:

EXT. WHEELING WEST VIRGINIA - SAME DAY

We see a shot of an old church. People are walking up the steps and through the big open doors.

INT. CHURCH - WHEELING WEST VIRGINIA

We're at a memorial service for Molly. We see a lot of young people. PAUL is sitting in the back row. As Molly's father JACK STEARNS speaks STEPHEN walks in. He sits in the adjacent row - he and Paul look at each other.

JACK STEARNS

You always hear people talking about events out of sequence...the order of things. There is no greater grief than a parent laying their child to rest...She was a little girl trying to make it in a very grown up world...a world where every mistake is magnified and she was smart and pretty and so so young.

He looks to the PRIEST next to him.

JACK STEARNS (CONT'D)

Father, you ask us to accept God's plan, to not question his judgment, with all due respect, I don't accept this judgment. She made the world better, not just for me, but for everyone she touched.

FADE TO:

EXT. CHURCH - WHEELING WEST VIRGINIA - LATER

We're on the street in front of the church. People are filing out. PAUL is waiting next to STEPHEN'S car as Steven walks up.

PAUL

You should hire Jack for a speech writer.

STEPHEN

I'll keep that in mind. Are you here to talk to me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

No. I'm friends with the family.  
I got her the internship...known  
her since she was born.

STEPHEN

I'm sorry.

PAUL

The Governor couldn't make the  
flight?

STEPHEN

He's meeting with Thompson.

PAUL

Look at you, all grown up with tits  
and all.

STEPHEN

I learned from the best.

PAUL

One day we'll grab a beer and  
you'll tell me what you had on the  
Governor that put me out.

STEPHEN

How do you know I didn't have  
something on you?

They both smile.

PAUL

You better get going, you've got a  
campaign to run and I've got  
offices to go look at.

STEPHEN

Farragut North?

Paul nods his head.

PAUL

Nice consultant firm right off of K  
Street.

Paul turns to leave.

PAUL (CONT'D)

A million a year and nobody to fuck  
you over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEPHEN  
Sounds relaxing.

Paul, without looking back.

PAUL  
Doesn't it.

CUT TO:

INT. XAVIER UNIVERSITY - CINCINNATI- DAY

GOVERNOR MORRIS with his WIFE and DAUGHTER, stand at the podium just behind Senator Thompson. There are a few hundred people in attendance, campaign workers, supporters and press.

SENATOR THOMPSON  
And the right man to lead this great nation of ours in these challenging times and the next President of the United States of America, Governor Mike Morris!...And I ask only one thing, that all of us stand shoulder to shoulder and arm in arm in a united Democratic party.

Huge cheers.

SENATOR THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
And I strongly urge that the three hundred and fifty-six loyal delegates that I have carried as a badge of honor, throw their support to the Governor. Let's end this primary and get on to the business of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave!

More big cheers.

SENATOR THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
Thank you. And God bless the United States of America.

Thompson turns and shakes the hand of Governor Morris. Morris steps up to the microphone.

CUT TO:

EXT. XAVIER UNIVERSITY - CINCINNATI

Under the following we hear the Governor's speech.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We see Satellite trucks, press vehicles, police cars, etc.

At a catering truck we see a pair of hands grab some coffee and cookies. This is another young intern, JILL.

We follow her across the street and into a door.

INT. XAVIER HALLWAYS & RECEPTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JILL comes through the door.

We follow her through the hallways crowded with television cables and technicians. She makes her way in to a large reception room, where Stephen is watching Governor Morris give his speech. She hands him a coffee.

We cut between The Governor and Stephen watching from the back.

GOV. MORRIS

Thank you Senator Thompson! Well the polls aren't quite closed, but I want to congratulate Senator Pullman...And his Republican constituents on their win here in Ohio.

The room explodes in laughter and applause.

GOV. MORRIS (CONT'D)

Senator Thompson I am honored to stand here today with you. I am humbled by your kind words, thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, today marks the beginning of a fight between two sets of ideals. Either we're going to move forward or were going to live in the past... Either we're going to lead the world in technology, or we are going to bury our heads in the sand... the sands of Saudi Arabia...the sands of Iraq! Either we're going to let greed and corruption ruin our industries and our shorelines or we are going to take back our country! We are not a nation used to coming in second or third...

Cheers.

CUT TO:

INT. XAVIER UNIVERSITY - HALLWAY & STAGING ROOM

While the Governor's speech continues we stay close on Stephen as he walks through the crowd. We follow him into Governor Morris's staging area.

Four monitors on a table show different network feeds. We watch Stephen roll down his sleeves and button his shirt. He ties his tie and puts his jacket on. From the monitors we hear reporters etc.

We push in on one of the monitors where DUFFY is being interviewed. As we push in we see STEPHEN cross out of the room. BEN is watching, he looks back and smiles at STEPHEN.

DUFFY

No it's not decisive, we still have several contests and those states are going to want to have their say. It does look like we'll win Ohio...

RACHEL MADDOW

But you must concede that these three hundred and fifty-six delegates put the pledged delegates out of reach. And with word today that the super delegates are breaking three to one for Morris.

DUFFY

We still have a lot of contests Rachel, Ohio is-

RACHEL MADDOW

Well then do you have the funds?  
As we read it-

DUFFY

(Smiling)

Of course we have the funds. We're getting new donations daily...

Our new intern, JILL crosses into frame looking down at BEN.

JILL

Hey...Ben...I was told to talk to you. I'm supposed to get a phone...

BEN

Right...you're....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JILL  
Jill Morris...no relation.

BEN  
Are you a Bearcat?

JILL  
No...I'm from Columbus I'm a  
Buckeye.

CUT TO:

EXT. XAVIER UNIVERSITY - QUAD - CONTINUOUS

A shot of STEPHEN walking across the quad towards the gym.

INT. XAVIER UNIVERSITY GYM CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

We pick up Stephen walking with Ida.

IDA  
You're making me look bad.

STEPHEN  
How so?

IDA  
I just filed a story that said you  
were off the campaign and Thompson  
was going to Pullman.

STEPHEN  
You can't believe everything you  
read.

IDA  
I want to give you an opportunity  
to comment on my next story. It  
says that you delivered  
Thompson...You got the three  
hundred and fifty-six delegates,  
you delivered the nomination. And  
all you asked in return was Paul's  
job. Any chance of you confirming  
that?

They approach a security guard standing by a set of double  
doors.

STEPHEN  
No press beyond this point...she's  
press. I'll read about it in the  
funny papers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IDA

Come on Stephen...aren't we friends  
anymore?

STEPHEN

You're my best friend Ida.

And Stephen walks through the doors.

INT. XAVIER UNIVERSITY - GYMNASIUM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

A wide shot of the darkened gymnasium. Stephen sits on a stool in front of a camera lit by a single television light.

We're now in tight - One PERSON is putting a mic on Stephen while the OTHER is applying make-up.

No one speaks.

The sound man then puts an earwig into Stephen's ear.

SOUND MAN

You should be able to hear  
them...do you hear them?

We hear the buzzing in his ear of the broadcast from New York.

STEPHEN

Yeah I can hear them.

SOUND MAN

Good, quick mic check can you count  
to ten for me?

Stephen counts to ten. Everyone stands behind the camera. The sound man with his headset on whispers..

SOUND MAN (CONT'D)

They're coming to you in about  
forty five seconds.

We sit in silence staring at Stephen's face.

Ten seconds - nothing.

Twenty seconds - nothing

This scene starts to resemble our opening - A dark auditorium - only a few people doing their individual jobs.

Stephen looks at two interns holding clipboards and cell phones.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The FIRST AD is sitting on the floor talking on his headset.

The CAMERAMAN makes adjustments.

A MAN sweeping the gym floor in the distance.

They all seem to be staring at him. They probably aren't - but he feels it. The enthusiasm and excitement of Stephen has given over to emptiness. The price of winning at all cost.

We stay on Stephen's face.

We now hear the Governor's speech through Stephen's earwig.

GOV. MORRIS

Senator Thompson I am proud that you have brought integrity back to this election. Because that's what this comes down to, integrity. Who we are. Because how we project ourselves to the rest of the world matters!...Dignity matters!...Integrity matters!...Our future depends on it!

Forty seconds - the silence is broken by the SOUND MAN.

SOUND MAN

Coming to you in  
five...four...three...two...

Through the earwig we hear an JOHN KING.

JOHN KING

We now have Governor Morris's new senior campaign advisor, Stephen Myers, coming to us from Xavier University where Senator Thompson has just endorsed Governor Morris, essentially ending this primary race. (To Stephen) Stephen, can you give us some insight into how this whole thing unfolded?

And before he can answer we:

CUT TO BLACK: