

ACT ONE

FADE IN

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

Only a few lights are burning at this hour. A limo pulls into the driveway, is met by SEVERAL DARK FIGURES. A MAN gets out, goes inside.

Numbers fill the screen and form a super: "1987"

INT. WHITE HOUSE ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The man is MICHAEL DEEVER (late 40's,) once an aide to President Reagan, now a lobbyist. He looks nervous. Grim.

INT. HALLWAY - EAST WING - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Deever hurries down a dark, nearly deserted hallway. The lights glimmer, casting ghostly shadows.

He turns a corner, and heads down another hallway, where an ARMED SECURITY GUARD who's been waiting for him salutes.

Deever hurries on. The guard looks after him, his face filling with dislike.

TWO MAIDS stand beside a linen closet, talking. They fall silent as Deever passes, and stare suspiciously after him.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUING

Another SECURITY GUARD sitting in front of the Reagan bedroom door, watching a tiny tv, with the sound low: *Oliver North talking with microphones shoved in his face.*

As Deever approaches, the guard stands up, salutes.

WHITE HOUSE GUARD 2

Good evening, sir. They're waiting for you.

The guard knocks on the bedroom door with a gloved-hand.

WHITE HOUSE GUARD 2

Mr. Deever to see the President.

MUFFLED VOICES WITHIN. THEN, A WOMAN'S VOICE (NANCY):

NANCY: OC

Let him in.

The Guard opens the door for Deaver.

INT. REAGAN BEDROOM - WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUING

The room is dark, lit only by a flickering tv. Two ghosts are sitting in front of it: RONALD REAGAN (75) in bathrobe and slippers, watching tv--his eyes hollow, and dark. On the table beside him, a glass of milk and a plate of Oreos.

Next to him is his wife, NANCY (63). She's pale, gaunt. She looks up at Deaver with eyes full of silent panic.

MIKE DEAVER

I got a call from John Tower..He wants to talk to you, Mr. President..

Reagan is still staring into the tv. It's a cowboy movie.

NANCY

It's okay, Mike. Go on.

Deaver turns to Nancy, lowers his voice.

DEAVER

(in a whisper)

They're beginning to talk about impeachment.

She begins to tremble.

NANCY

They'll never impeach him. They won't have the votes for it in the Senate.

DEAVER

I know but John thinks...so does George, and so do I...the evidence is overwhelming...and if the President doesn't say something, Congress is going to start its own investigation...Ed Meese and I and some of the other Republican Senators...well, we all think the President should hire a criminal practice attorney.

NANCY

He's not a criminal.

She begins to weep, silently. Deaver kneels beside Reagan, and gently touches his arm. Reagan looks at him, confused:

REAGAN

Why do I need an attorney?

DEAVER

(carefully, gently)

No, you don't need an attorney, Mr. President, but you want to have one, that's all. Have one to talk to. Someone to stand up for you.

NANCY

Ronnie, we've got to have somebody.

REAGAN

We haven't broken the law.

DEAVER

Nobody's saying you've broken the law. It's just there are so many questions...

REAGAN

Tell them to ask that bastard...that lying son of a gun, Oliver North! He's the one who knows! Ask Oliver North who gave the money to the Contras-

DEAVER

They will, Mr. President...They will...

NANCY

Ronnie, listen...Listen to me...We've got to do something...We've got to stand up for ourselves, for Christ's sake. We can't just keep sitting here, doing nothing.

REAGAN

But I'm not the one who broke the law.

DEAVER

Yes, Mr. President. I know.

NANCY

You've got to talk to them.

DEAVER

I could set up a press conference-

Nancy turns to Deaver, her panic flares:

NANCY

No. No press conferences.

DEAVER

How's he going to talk?

NANCY

He'll talk to the people. The people. They always believe him.

DEAVER

Alright. But not before he's gotten an attorney-

REAGAN

They got Nixon, and now they think they're going to get me. Well, I'm not Nixon. I'm not.

Nancy grabs his hand. Her grip is like iron.

NANCY

Everybody knows that, Ronnie. All you have to do is talk to them. Talk to the people and make them believe you.

Reagan wipes the tears off her cheek, kisses her tenderly.

REAGAN

Okay, okay, Nancy-pants. Settle down. Don't worry. I can handle this. Stop crying.

(to Deaver, smiling)

She cries more than any woman I know. She cries every time we send out the laundry.

Deaver smiles. Nancy and Deaver get up, and go to the door.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUING

As Nancy and Deaver come out, the Guard switches off Oliver North on the tv.

FOLLOW NANCY AND DEAVER -

down the hall together. She leans on his arm, murmuring:

NANCY

"Dire events," she said. Well, these are dire events.

DEAVER

Who said that? Your friend?

NANCY

She said the first few months of 1987. And it's all happening the way she said it would. Everything.

Deaver is careful to keep his voice even.

DEAVER

Just make sure he gets an attorney.

NANCY

I will. And then I'll call my friend...Find a good date for him to go on tv...We've got to listen to her, Mike. When we don't listen to her, we get into trouble...

DEAVER

Okay, fine. Give me a date, and I'll set it up for the networks.

She looks at him, smiles shakily.

NANCY

Thank you, Mike. You're the only one we can trust, you know. It's come down to you. Out of all these people...We're surrounded by traitors.

DEAVER

Don't worry. It's going to be ok. It is.

Nancy squeezes his arm gratefully. He leaves.

ANGLE - As Nancy returns to her bedroom door, the security guard has changed the channel to the cowboy movie.

GUARD

I'm sorry, Mrs. Reagan. It was the guard before me who turned it on...

NANCY

You're fired.

She goes into the bedroom. The guard stares after her, stunned.

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - CONTINUING

Reagan is staring into his movie, once again. Nancy puts her arms around him from behind, kisses his ear.

REAGAN

All I wanted to do was save those people.
That's all I wanted.

NANCY

I know...I know...I love you...I love you.

MOVE IN ON his eyes, dark and confused...

AN IMAGE - BLACK AND WHITE

The lithe body of an expert swimmer rising to the surface of a perfect blue body of water. In slow motion, the body breaks through the water. Golden sun reflects off the wet skin and hair of this beautiful young man (a young Reagan) dressed only in a 1920's lifeguard uniform. The image of a god. The perfect American hero.

MUSIC FADES UP: Doris Day singing "SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY":

DORIS DAY

(singing)

Gonna take a sentimental journey
Gonna see my heart's desire...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. REAGAN'S 1948 CADILLAC CONVERTIBLE/MOVING -
CULVER CITY, CA - DAY

Numbers fill the screen, as they will throughout: "1949"

Reagan (38) drives through a gorgeous Hollywood afternoon... singing along to DORIS DAY ON THE RADIO. He's wearing glasses, and a cast on his left leg. Two crutches are on the seat beside him.

DORIS DAY

(singing)

Gonna take a sentimental journey
Gonna take that journey home...

EXT. MGM STUDIO GATES - DAY

Reagan's green convertible driving onto the lot. He smiles, and waves, as he passes ACTORS, CREW MEMBERS, etc.

NEAR A SOUND STAGE - CONTINUING

Reagan parks and gets out, using his crutches. He limps past a COUPLE OF STARLET BELLYDANCERS. They smile at him. He smiles back.

He passes TWO ACTORS IN BLACK-FACE, working on a tap-dance routine...

He passes A GROUP OF ACTORS IN TUXES AND GOWNS clustered around a lunch wagon, eating as if they haven't eaten in days.

He opens a stage door marked "East Side, West Side", and enters.

INT. SOUND-STAGE - CONTINUING

The set is a NYC apartment. A FILM CREW is crawling all over it, setting up for the next take. Reagan approaches the director, MERVYN LEROY (50's), who's talking to his DP.

REAGAN

Hi, Mervyn.

LeRoy turns, smiles, sees Reagan's leg.

LEROY

Good God, Ronnie...what have you done to yourself?

REAGAN

Don't ask. A charity baseball game. I tried to win one for the Gipper.

LEROY

(laughs)

Thanks for coming down. I hope I'm not taking you away from anything.

REAGAN

It's fine. I'm not working. I mean, I have the day off.

The DP leaves. LeRoy takes Reagan by the elbow, walks him towards an isolated corner. They drop their voices:

LEROY

Alright, listen. This is the thing. I've got this actress. Over there, see her?

LeRoy nods to a young woman nearby, sitting by herself. It's Nancy, elegant, strong-jawed. She's in costume—a plain

secretary's dress—smoking a cigarette. She's deep into a movie-magazine.

LEROY

Her name's Nancy Davis. Just came out from Chicago. Extremely conservative. Extremely Republican, if you know what I mean. Anyway, last week, the Hollywood Reporter came out with a list of Communist sympathizers, and her name was on it.

REAGAN

(carefully)
Oh, yeah?

LEROY

Of course she's upset. Scared about her career, her apartment, her friends. She asked me for advice. I said I knew you, and since you were President of the Screen Actors Guild, maybe you could help.

Reagan hesitates, looking at Nancy suspiciously.

REAGAN

So she's not a Communist sympathizer?

LEROY

No way. I'm telling you, she's Republican. Father's a society doctor in Chicago. That's why she's upset, she keeps saying, if he finds out, she's screwed.

(pause)

Anyway, that's it. Think you can look into it?

REAGAN

Sure. Let me see what I can find out.

LeRoy glances at Nancy, then back to Reagan. Lowers his voice still further:

LEROY

Do me one more favor—take her out to dinner, or something. You know, just to set her mind at ease.

REAGAN

(groan)
Dinner?

LEROY

Nothing expensive. Just something nice.
I'm telling you, she's a wreck.

Reagan glances at Nancy again. She doesn't look like a wreck.

REAGAN

(reluctantly)

Yeah, well. Okay. I'll do it.

LEROY

Thanks, Ronnie. You're a pal.

LeRoy starts back toward the set. Reagan pulls him back.

REAGAN

Hey, Mervyn...Since I'm doing you a favor?

LEROY

Anything.

REAGAN

Cast me in whatever you're doing next.

LEROY

(laughs)

You got it.

LeRoy starts toward the set. Reagan calls after him:

REAGAN

As long as it's good. No B-movie stuff.

LEROY

Gotcha.

ANGLE - Nancy looking up from her movie-magazine, watching him leave.

MOVIE MAGAZINE - BLACK AND WHITE

It's an article on Reagan—pictures of the break-up between him and his wife, Jane Wyman. The headline reads: 'Heart-broken Ronnie: "I'll Never Love Again."

A SHADOW FALLS ACROSS THE MAGAZINE

Nancy looks up, as LeRoy whispers into her ear:

LEROY
Mission accomplished.

Nancy laughs, delighted. She has a gorgeous smile.

NANCY
Mervyn, you're a peach!

EXT. NANCY'S APARTMENT BUILDING (WESTWOOD) - NIGHT

Reagan's green Cadillac pulls up outside Nancy's modest building.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NANCY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUING

Nancy watches through the blinds, as he limps up the walk. Checks herself in a mirror--she's deeply insecure about her looks. The doorbell RINGS. She takes a deep breath.

OUTSIDE THE DOOR

Reagan smiles, as she comes out.

NANCY
It's so nice of you to make time for me,
you must be terribly busy...

REAGAN
It's okay. I'm afraid we'll only have time
for a quick bite. I've got an early call
tomorrow.

NANCY
Me, too.

As they walk to the car...

NANCY
Mervyn told me about your leg. It looks
awfully painful.

REAGAN
It's not so bad, anymore. As long as you
don't make me dance.

They both laugh.

INT. EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT (LARUE'S) - EVENING

The WAITER hands them menus, and leaves. Nancy lights a cigarette and listens intently, as Reagan quietly explains:

REAGAN

Okay, here's the deal. There are a bunch of petitions going around--trying to solicit the Supreme Court against the House Un-American Activities Committee. Your name appeared on one of those petitions, which is how it ended up in the Hollywood Reporter.

NANCY

But I didn't sign any petitions. *I didn't. I'm the least political person I know.*

REAGAN

It's okay. I made a few phone calls, and the Nancy Davis who signed this particular petition lives over on Cahuenga Boulevard. A completely different Nancy Davis.

NANCY

(sighing with relief.)
I knew it.

REAGAN

In fact, if you want to know, Nancy Davis is a pretty popular name. There are 3 of you in Los Angeles.

NANCY

(horrified)
Three?

REAGAN

Yeah. If I were you, I'd think about changing my name.

NANCY

(snorts)
Forget it. Nancy Davis is my name. Let the other girls change theirs.

He laughs, impressed.

REAGAN

I like your attitude. Now, let's see if we can find anything edible on this menu.

INT. LARUE'S - NIGHT

The lights have dimmed. The room is thick with cigarette smoke, candles on every table. In the shadows, BEAUTIFUL

WOMEN laugh and murmur over martinis with their WEALTHY ESCORTS.

Reagan and Nancy have long since finished dinner.

NANCY

My mother used to be an actress. My father is a brain surgeon, I got my hands from him. Anyway, he's the one with political beliefs. He hates the Reds. *Hates them.*

Reagan sighs.

REAGAN

I was an FDR Democrat until the war. I still believe in the Democratic party. But the Democrats...they don't get it. They won't believe that Moscow's trying to take over the world. They've taken over half of Europe. Czechoslovakia. China. And now they're here in America, trying to take over *Hollywood*. I'll tell you—anybody in their right mind ought to be scared stiff.

Nancy nods, in agreement. He smiles.

REAGAN

Sorry. When we came out tonight, all I wanted to do was show you a good time.

NANCY

It's okay. You talk the way my father talks. Only nicer...Never mind.

She smiles, embarrassed. He smiles, too.

REAGAN

Too bad you've got an early call.

NANCY

You, too.

Pause. Now it's his turn to look embarrassed.

REAGAN

You know, Nancy...I've got a little confession to make...

NANCY

Yeah, I know. I don't have one, either.

They laugh.

REAGAN

Say, Sophie Tucker's singing at Ciro's.
You want to go?

EXT. CIRO'S - NIGHT

Ciro's is swinging. SOPHIE TUCKER'S VOICE IS ROCKING THE STREET, as Reagan, on crutches, escorts Nancy inside.

INT. CIRO'S - LATER

The place is packed, as SOPHIE TUCKER sings. Everyone is drunk, dancing. Reagan and Nancy are dancing--slowly. He's leaning on one crutch, and her.

REAGAN

I was finally getting some good parts when the war came along. Then I was drafted. When I got back, it was all...different. All these young actors. Suddenly I felt like I was...out of fashion.

Nancy nods, sympathetically.

NANCY

Did you see much action during the war?

REAGAN

Look into my eyes. What do you see?

She does. He has nice eyes. Honest.

REAGAN

(wryly)

Contact lenses. Blind as a bat without them, kept me out of combat. I spent the war in Culver City making films for the Army. The Hollywood Commandos.

She laughs.

REAGAN

I talk too much, don't I? That's what Jane said, when she filed for divorce. I talk too damn much.

NANCY

It's okay. I'm a Cancer. I like listening.

He looks at her. Slowly, he leans toward her...They kiss. Her arms tighten around him. When the kiss ends, they keep dancing. Looking into each other's eyes.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE (MAGNIN'S, BEVERLY HILLS) - DAY

In a VIP dressing room, Nancy tries on a new dress, looks at herself critically, in the mirror. It's fashionable, expensive...but somehow all wrong.

EDITH: OC

If you ask me, that Ronald Reagan is the best-looking man you've had in a while. If you don't grab him, somebody else will.

NANCY

What am I supposed to do? Throw a rope around him?

EDITH LUCKETT DAVIS (50'S), Nancy's mother, is an earthy woman, former actress, stylish in furs and jewels.

EDITH DAVIS

No, but it wouldn't hurt if you dressed better. God, you look awful. It's your skin. I never saw anybody with such sallow skin.

(calling)

Hey! Somebody! Who the hell is out there?

The SALESWOMAN peeks in the door, gritting her teeth.

SALESWOMAN

Yes, Mrs. Davis?

EDITH

Aren't you supposed to be helping us? Get my daughter something that'll make her look decent, for Chrissakes.

The Saleswoman is seething, as she leaves.

NANCY

Mother, I wish you'd keep your voice down.

EDITH

Why? You should be glad I've got a big voice—that's how I made my career. And yours, too, little girl. If I wasn't friends with Spencer Tracy, do you think

you'd be out here in Hollywood, with your very own contract?

As Edith pulls a silver cigarette case out of her purse, and lights it, Nancy sighs:

NANCY

I just don't think Ronnie wants to get serious about me. Anybody. I mean, God, his wife threw him out. Can you imagine how humiliating that would be?

Listening is not Edith's strong suit.

EDITH

I know what--tell him you want to meet his kids. Show him what a great mother you'll make, that'll get him.

Nancy suddenly remembers, looks at her watch:

NANCY

We're late for Dr. Loyal.

EDITH

Christ. Strip off that rag--we've got to run.

INT. EXPENSIVE TEA-ROOM - BEVERLY HILLS - AFTERNOON

A string quartet plays MOZART in the corner. Nancy sits next to her step-father, DR. LOYAL DAVIS (50's). He's holding her hand and stroking it, as Edith looks on, beaming.

DR. LOYAL DAVIS

Nancy, I don't know what you see in Hollywood. As far as I can tell, it's nothing but Communists and drug addicts.

NANCY

It didn't used to be this bad--did it, Mother?

EDITH

Hell, no. When I was here, it was just wall-to-wall Jews and queers.

Loyal laughs--Nancy stiffens.

LOYAL DAVIS

(wiping his mouth with a napkin)
Well, frankly, I think we should consider heading to Phoenix early. Nancy, darling—you come, too.

NANCY

I wish I could, but Dr. Loyal, you know I'm working.

LOYAL DAVIS

We're going to see the Goldwaters. You love spending time with the Goldwaters.

NANCY

I really can't. I'm sorry...

EDITH

Ask her about Ronnie Reagan.

DR. LOYAL DAVIS

Nancy, no! You're not serious about him, are you?

NANCY

No, not at all. Well, yes, but...Oh please, Dr. Loyal. He's the only man I've ever met who could hold a candle to you.

EXT. NANCY'S BATHROOM DOOR - DAY

The bathroom door is ajar, as NANCY'S VOICE IS HEARD:

NANCY: OC

"Jews and queers." You bigot, Mother. Why didn't I tell you to shut up? But I never would, would I? Why not?

AROUND THE CORNER OF THE DOOR

Nancy is taking a bubble-bath, ranting to herself:

NANCY

Because I'm a coward, that's what. Coward. Coward, coward, coward, coward, coward—

DOORBELL RINGS. Nancy glances at the clock on the wall.

NANCY

Oh Christ! He's early!

EXT. NANCY'S DOOR - CONTINUING

Reagan turns, calls to TWO CHILDREN waiting in the car.

REAGAN

Michael, stop hitting your sister! Mermie, stay in the car! Do not—do you hear me—do not get out of the car!

The door opens. Nancy's wet face, wet hair.

NANCY

Ronnie...Hi...

REAGAN

You ready? I brought the kids, I thought we could go out to the ranch and go horseback-riding. What do you think?

Nancy looks at the kids, looks at him. Puts on a smile.

NANCY

Give me 2 secs.

EXT. RONNIE'S RANCH (MALIBU CANYON) - DAY

Nancy's awkward on her horse, as they start out. He grabs her reins, leads her toward the gate. The two kids are following, on their horses—MAUREEN (10) and MICHAEL (5).

REAGAN

Come on, Nancy. Pull in those reins, let him know who's boss.

NANCY

(barely hanging on)
I think he already knows.

REAGAN

(laughs)
Mermie! Mike! Let's take Nancy down to the pond!

He spurs his horse ahead, leaving her with the kids. They pass thru a gate with an ornate metal sign: YEARLING ROW.

NANCY

You kids are pretty good at this. Whoa.
Whoa, Sugar.

MAUREEN

We've been riding since we were 2. Have you ever won an Oscar?

NANCY

(taken aback)

An Oscar?

MAUREEN

Mommy has. She won an Oscar for "Johnny Belinda".

Mike interrupts:

MIKE

I'm special because I'm adopted.

Nancy turns to Mike, even more taken aback.

NANCY

You're what?

MAUREEN

He's adopted. Daddy wanted a boy so they adopted one.

(to Mike)

You're not special. You're a brat.

MICHAEL

You're a brat!

MAUREEN

Daddy! Mikey called me a brat!

The argument continues. Nancy smiles weakly. They ride on.

ON A HILLSIDE - LATER

A picnic under a tree. The kids play in the distance, as Reagan and Nancy lounge in the shade. He's reminiscing:

REAGAN

Those were the best days of my life—
sitting up high in that lifeguard chair.
Watching out for all those families. In 7
years, I saved 77 lives.

NANCY

Seventy-seven?

REAGAN

With a little help from God. But it was pretty good for a scrawny kid from Dixon, Iowa, who grew up over a bank. Actually, that was as close as I ever got to that bank.

They both laugh. Pause.

NANCY

You never talk about your folks. What were they like?

Reagan doesn't seem to hear her. He gets up and calls:

REAGAN

Mermie! Mike! Time to head back!

The kids run for their horses. He goes to his horse. Nancy watches him, curiously--then gets up, and heads to hers.

INT. MGM STUDIOS - COSTUME DEPARTMENT - DAY

A chain-smoking COSTUME LADY (50s) is flipping through Modern Screen as Nancy looks dejectedly at a rack of housedresses.

NANCY

Maybe I could wear something different for this part. Something a little more--

COSTUME LADY

You're playing a housewife, doll. Your wardrobe has to say housewife.

Sighing, Nancy chooses a dress; looks at some aprons.

COSTUME

Hey, look at this. You're in Modern Screen.

Shows her a small photo of Reagan and "starlet Nancy Davis" at a premiere--under a large one of him and Jane Wyman: "Ronnie Dates Again But Can't Forget His Perfect Love." Nancy stares at it, stung...

COSTUME LADY

Slip this on under the dress.

She's holding a bulbous rubber object--

COSTUME LADY

It's your pregnancy pad. You get pregnant
in act two.

EXT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - STUDIO STREET - DAY

Reagan walks with his agent, LEW WASSERMAN (30's).

REAGAN

This is a mistake, Lew. I can't afford
another bad picture.

WASSERMAN

Come on--it's a fun movie and I bet it'll
make a lot of money.

REAGAN

We should have waited for a better offer--

WASSERMAN

The offers aren't coming, Ronnie. The
studios are drying up. But all that Red
Menace crap doesn't help, either. You know
a lot of people around town are convinced
you're an informer for the blacklist.

REAGAN

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I keep telling you, Lew,
there is no blacklist.

WASSERMAN

And thank God we're not on it.

(pause)

All I'm saying is, lay off the Evil Empire
talk. I can get you all the work you want
in television--

REAGAN

Forget it. Television is for somebody
who's all washed up. I'm not washed up.

At the stage door, a PUBLICIST and PHOTOGRAPHER wait.

STUDIO PUBLICIST

Hey, Ronnie! How ya doin'? Ready to meet
your co-star?

The photographer gets ready. The publicist opens the stage
door, and out bursts a CHIMP and his TRAINER. The chimp is
wearing a t-shirt that says "Bedtime for Bonzo".

PUBLICIST

(laughing)

Hey, Bonzo! Shake hands with Mr. Reagan!
Big smiles, you two!

Bonzo starts jumping all over Reagan. Reagan tries to turn on a smile as a FLASHBULB POPS.

INT. NANCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Reagan and Nancy are watching "Casablanca" on tv, as Reagan and Nancy finish a bowl of popcorn. She's subdued. Smoking.

REAGAN

(re: Bogart)

That was supposed to be my part, you know.
They wanted me to play it, but I was busy.
Busy doing nothing...Bogart gets Ingrid
Bergman, I get a chimp.

NANCY

You're still in love with her, aren't you?

The words have popped out of her mouth before she could stop them. Reagan looks at her, stunned.

REAGAN

Who?

NANCY

Jane. You're still in love with her. You
even told Modern Screen. "Heartbroken
Ronnie Tries to Forget his Great Love".

REAGAN

Nancy, come off it. Those magazines are a
bunch of crap, you know that.

(joking)

Thank God they still think I'm worth
writing about.

He turns back to the movie. She stares at him in disbelief.

NANCY

Ronnie, look at me. Ronnie.

He looks at her. She summons up her nerve.

NANCY

I want to know where I stand with you.

REAGAN

You know where we stand.

NANCY

I don't know anything. We go out, we laugh, we...

(embarrassed, dropping her voice)

We make love...but I don't know anything about you, about how you feel. Oh you talk plenty about everything else—politics, the industry. But not about me. Not to me.

His eyes harden. He looks trapped.

REAGAN

I don't talk about those things, Nancy. You know that.

NANCY

Why not? You're an actor, you play people who have feelings. Come on. Tell me about your feelings.

No response. She gets up.

NANCY

It's late. We both have early calls.

Nancy takes the bowl into the kitchen. He stares moodily at the popcorn in his hand.

NANCY: OC

I've told my agent to find me something in New York. On the stage. I've had it with Hollywood.

He gets up, follows her into the kitchen, where she's washing the popcorn bowl.

REAGAN

You can't go back to New York...

NANCY

Is there some reason I should stay here?

(off his silence.)

No, I didn't think so.

He grabs her arm, swings her around. He's angry.

REAGAN

You can't do this to me.

He starts kissing her, hard. Desperate. She pulls back, surprised. He pushes her against the sink, still kissing her. The tap water run and runs.

INT. DAVIS LIVING ROOM - HOME - CHICAGO

Wealthy. Intellectual. Midwestern. Nancy sits in a chair, crying. Edie sits, opposite. They whisper:

EDIE

Well, one thing is clear—you can't tell Ronnie. He's too religious, he'll never marry you.

NANCY

I can't tell him?

EDIE

But you'd better get him to marry you. And quick. You don't have any time to lose.

NANCY

I can't force him marry me, Mother. For God's sake.

She sobs hysterically.

EDITH

Shh, keep it down, or Dr. Loyal will hear you—

Nancy can't stop crying. Edith pats her on the arm.

EDIE

(in a whisper, anxiously)

Don't worry, honey. Don't worry, we'll get it fixed. I know somebody right here in Chicago, she can fix it. She's good. She never hurts anybody. But we can never tell Dr. Loyal, you hear? Never. Never.

Nancy stares at her mother, stricken.

INT. SOUND STAGE - "THE NEXT VOICE YOU HEAR" - DAY

The set is a drab tenement kitchen. Nancy stands in the shadows, smoking a cigarette. She's in costume: a house-dress with a pregnancy-pad. She looks utterly miserable.

The COSTUME-LADY pushes and pulls the pregnancy-pad:

COSTUME-LADY

These pregnancy pads are a joke. Hold still. Hold still.

(looking at her)

You look sick. You sick?

NANCY

I'm fine.

DIRECTOR

(from the shadows)

Okay, we've reset. Nancy, you ready?

Nancy stubs out her cigarette, and goes to the table, sits down. Reagan appears in the shadows, watching her.

DIRECTOR: OC

Do we have rain? What's the matter with the rain? Hold please. *Hold.*

Nancy settles down for a long wait.

REAGAN: OC

Nancy?

NANCY

(turns, sees)

Ronnie? What are you doing here?

Nancy gets up, crosses to him in the shadows.

NANCY

What's the matter?

DIRECTOR

Nancy, where are you? Where the hell did you go?

NANCY

(to the director)

I'm talking to somebody, okay?

DIRECTOR

Don't leave. We'll be ready in a minute.

Reagan pulls Nancy further into the shadows, desperate.

REAGAN

Okay, here it is. My father was a drunk. Everywhere we lived, he'd lose his job, because of the drink...I remember when I was young, coming home from the YMCA one

afternoon...and there he was on our lawn, passed out drunk in the snow. It broke my heart to see him like that...He must have been in so much pain. I had to drag him inside.

(pause)

But my mother...she kept right on living the way she thought was right. She was always good to my father. She never held it against him, no matter how many jobs he lost, or how often we moved...She was the one who kept the family together.

NANCY

I understand, Ronnie. I do.

REAGAN

No, you don't. You come from Chicago-

NANCY

I had it tough, too-

REAGAN

But your father had money. Money is everything.

NANCY

Dr. Loyal isn't my father. My real father left, before I was born. My mother was broke, she went on the road just to make money, and stuck me with her sister for 6 years. For 6 years, I cried myself to sleep, every night. So don't tell me I've never had trouble, because I have.

Reagan is stunned, looking at her.

REAGAN

I love you. I'd do anything for you. Ask me to crawl halfway across the country for you, I would. On my knees. *On my knees.*

She's on the verge of tears, touches him, whispering:

NANCY

Ronnie, don't say that. Please...You don't know...I'm pregnant.

He looks down at her pregnancy-pad.

REAGAN

Yeah, and you look cute as a bug, too.

He puts his arms around her, picks her up. Kisses her.

REAGAN

Come here, Mommy. You want to marry me?

NANCY

Ronnie, stop it...you don't mean it...

REAGAN

I do. I love you, Nancy...I really do, I love you...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. LEW WASSERMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "1953"

Lew's uncomfortable, awkward, as he pushes an envelope across the table to Reagan, and tries to explain:

LEW WASSERMAN

It's not you, Ronnie. It's Warner Brothers. Now that the Government forced the studios to sell off their theatres, they can't afford their stable of stars.

REAGAN

It's because my movies haven't been making enough money. That's why they're letting me go.

LEW WASSERMAN

(re: the envelope)

Go on, take it. It's your last paycheck.

Reagan takes the envelope, stunned.

REAGAN

I worked for those bastards for 13 years—

LEW

They'd fire their own mother, if it would help them balance their books right now.
(cautiously)

Listen to me. I know you said you'd never do television, but I think I've engineered a deal with GE. They're going to do a series and they want you to host it. A different story every week, some of them starring you. And there'd be speaking engagements, too, you'd be their spokesman—

REAGAN

(dubiously)

A spokesman...for General Electric?

LEW

You'd go around the country, talking to employees and consumers. When people see GE, they'd think of you.

Reagan is getting more depressed by the minute.

REAGAN

Oh great.

LEW

It's going to be a lot of money. A lot.

REAGAN

Yeah, and the government will take out 94% of it in taxes. I'm telling you, Lew, I don't know why I bother working.

Reagan gets up, heads for the door.

LEW

Think about it. It's a good opportunity. Keep you in the public eye. Then, when that next picture comes along..bang. Talk to Nancy, and call me. They want an answer as soon as possible..

Reagan's gone. The door hangs open, allowing a view of the SECRETARY, AND A COUCHFUL OF ACTORS.

EXT. REAGAN HOUSE - AMALFI DRIVE, PACIFIC PALISADES - DAY

A small hour, immaculate garden. The EAR-SPLITTING SCREAMS of an enraged toddler.

INT. REAGAN KITCHEN - DAY

"Dr. Spock's Child Care" on the floor, covered with cereal. Nancy is on the phone, with a finger in one ear, as PATTI (2) screams, and sends her bowl of cereal flying.

NANCY

(into the phone)

We'd love to come to Phoenix, Mother, but we're a little busy right now.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. POOL - BILTMORE HOTEL, SCOTTSDALE AZ - DAY

Swathed in caftan and turban, Edie takes a martini from Loyal and sips, rolling her eyes heavenward with delight.

EDIE

The Goldwaters keep asking me about you, I told them you're married to Ronald Reagan, they can't believe it. They're dying to

meet him. You can fly down on Friday,
spend the weekend-

NANCY

(covering the mouthpiece, hissing)
Patti! Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!

EDIE

What? I can't hear you-

NANCY

Oh God, Mother, I'd love to come down.
But...Patti!

EDIE

--we're having a party Friday night. Dr.
Loyal will make you a martini that's out
of this world-

NANCY

I'll talk to Ronnie.

EDIE

Promise.

NANCY

I will. Bye, Mother.

Nancy hangs up the phone, turns to her purpling child, and
SCREAMS BACK at her.

EXT. BILTMORE HILTON - SCOTTSDALE, AZ - DAY

The hotel is surrounded by lush bougainvillea and palm
trees--the watering-place for local and imported wealthy.

INT. DAVIS SUITE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

In shorts, golf shirts and deep tans, Loyal Davis, Ronnie,
and Arizona Senator BARRY GOLDWATER sip tall drinks and
discuss politics. Reagan dandles Patti on his lap, while:

BARRY GOLDWATER

...In this country we don't make a man join
a church and tithe...We don't insist he join
a fraternal order and pay dues...but union
bosses like Hoffa can force that man to
join the union and pay his dues, or he
doesn't work.

Loyal leans over to Reagan, proudly:

DR. LOYAL

That's what I like about Barry. He shoots straight from the hip.

REAGAN

But the federal government is worse than the unions. The Republicans are taking control of business. They killed the movie studios. And liberal Democrats are leading us down the road to socialism. The welfare state has done as much to destroy our way of life as the Commies. Right, Shorty?

PATTI

Right.

In the b.g., Edie crosses with 2 martinis to Nancy, who lies on a chaise, exhausted, sunning herself.

EDIE

Those two are going to have your husband voting Republican before the day is over.

NANCY

Let them try. The Reagans have been Democrats for generations.

EDIE

Well, we'll see what happens, once he starts working at GE. I hope you take his first pay-check to hire yourself a nanny and a housekeeper. I didn't raise you to wait table on a toddler.

NANCY

(wincing)

Oh God. I want to be a good mother. I do.

Edie scoffs, pats Nancy on the arm consolingly:

EDIE

You're no worse than I was. The only thing that's important is you and Ronnie. Kids will come and go, but if you're good to Ronnie, you'll have him for the duration.

FAMILY PORTRAIT

The three Reagans smiling from the cover of TV GUIDE.
Headline : "TV'S HOTTEST HOST: STAR OF GENERAL ELECTRIC THEATRE SAYS FAMILY IS HIS MOST IMPORTANT PRODUCT."

ESTABLISHING: REAGANS' NEW HOUSE - PACIFIC PALISADES - DAY

SUPER: "1954"

INT. REAGANS' HOUSE - PACIFIC PALISADES - DAY

A FILM CREW is swarming all over the living room, setting up lights, cameras, etc. Reagan sits in the middle, putting on his own make-up, as he tells a joke:

REAGAN

Did you hear the one about the two little kids, one's an optimist, and the other's a pessimist? Their parents gave the pessimist a shiny new bike to teach him that things weren't always so bad. And to teach the optimist that things weren't always so good, they gave him a big pile of horse manure--

(pause)

Well, when the pessimist saw the bike, he burst into tears, sure he'd fall off and hurt himself. But the little optimist just smiled. He knew that somewhere around all that manure, there had to be a pony.

The crew laughs.

INT. UPSTAIRS - PATTI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUING

Nancy arguing with Patti, (5), who won't come down.

NANCY

Come on, Patti. They're all set to go.

PATTI

No. I won't. I want to stay up here and play.

Nancy grits her teeth, and takes Patti by the wrist.

NANCY

No arguing. We're going down, right now.

PATTI

No! No! No! No! NO! NO!

Nancy reaches out, and slaps Patti. Patti reels, holding her cheek. Nancy freezes.

NANCY

I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Patti...I'm sorry...

Patti begins to cry. Nancy picks her up, and carries her out of the room.

INT. DINING ROOM - PALISADES HOUSE - DAY

Chandelier over the table, which is set with enough linen, silver and flowers to satisfy Emily Post. Beautifully dressed and coiffed, Nancy, Reagan, and Patti eat lunch as if this is the way they always live.

PATTI (5)

Daddy, what's 'lectricity?

REAGAN

Well, Patti, electricity is a wonderful thing. Let's go into the kitchen and maybe I can explain it.

FOLLOW THEM AS THEY GET UP AND TROOP OUT TO THE KITCHEN

Which is state of the art, GE's logo prominent everywhere.

REAGAN

We ought to be able to find lots of electrical appliances in here.

(picks up an iron from counter)

What's this?

PATTI

Mommy's iron.

NANCY

That's right, it's one of the new steam-and-dry irons.

PATTI

(overriding)

I'm hungry. Can we cut now?

ANGLE - the Film Crew howling with laughter.

DIRECTOR

Cut! Okay, everybody! Take ten!

NANCY

(to Patti, exasperated)

That's the third time you stepped on my line. What am I going to do with you?

She puts her hands around Patti's neck, and laughing, pretends to strangle her. As everyone laughs:

INT. GE FACTORY LUNCH ROOM - DAY

It's raining against the windows. SOUND: THUNDER.

A sign at the door says: "Meet Ronald Reagan in Person: GE'S Roving Ambassador of Good Will". The room's packed with GE EMPLOYEES, all male, white, in white short-sleeve shirts and black ties, listening, as:

REAGAN

America is a land of unlimited opportunity—all of us here are proof of that. We're blessed with the freedom to make of ourselves whatever we want to be.

In the back of the room, a man (BEN WELDEN, 40) is quietly watching the response.

REAGAN: OC

But there are people who want to take that freedom away from us—big government that rewards laziness with welfare—that wants to tell you how to pray, and what doctor you'll see, and what school you'll send your kids to!

Some employees applaud in agreement.

REAGAN

Gentlemen, you and I have a rendezvous with destiny. Will we preserve our American way of life? Or doom our children to a lifetime of tyranny??

An explosion of applause. Welden watches, impressed.

INT. GE LUNCHROOM - LATER

Welden hovers as Ronnie signs autographs, surrounded by enthusiastic employees.

REAGAN

Just a couple more, fellas. I got to go to Atlanta.

WELDEN

Need a lift to the train station?

INT./EXT. WELDEN'S CAR - MOVING - STREET - DAY

The rain pelts against the windshield. Ronnie's exhausted, trying to rest. Welden talks:

WELDEN

Quite a flag-waver you gave. Company give you a script?

REAGAN

The words are mine. So are the convictions.

WELDEN

And that thing about "Rendezvous with Destiny". That's good.

REAGAN

It's FDR.

WELDEN

You a Democrat?

(Ronnie nods tiredly)

You sure don't talk like one.

REAGAN

The Democrats have changed, not me.

WELDEN

My name's Welden. Ben Welden. I work for the Republican Party. I've got a few friends you might like to meet.

REAGAN

(suspiciously)

Why?

WELDEN

Why not? They're people, just like you and me. People who care about their country. Besides, my friends are going to be real, real interested in you.

INT. REAGANS' PALISADES BEDROOM - LATE DAY

Wearing a silk slip, hair pin-curled, Nancy scowls at the half-dozen evening dresses spread out on the bed.

NANCY

Ronnie? Honey, come and choose for me, will you?

No response. She crosses to the intercom by the door.

INTERCOM - INSERT

A button for every room in the house. Nancy's finger presses Nursery. HEAR, CLEARLY:

REAGAN: VO

Well, saying your prayers is like talking to God...God listens to you, like I do.

PATTI: VO

Mommy doesn't.

REAGAN: VO

What do you mean?

PATTI: VO

Mommy doesn't listen to me. She hits me.

REAGAN: VO

She doesn't hit you.

PATTI: VO

She does, too. She hit me tonight, when I wouldn't take a bath.

REAGAN: VO

Listen, Shorty, maybe she spansks you, but when I was your age, I got spanked a lot, too. That's what parents do.

PATTI: VO

(sullenly)
You're always on her side.

REAGAN: VO

Go to sleep. Close your eyes.

Nancy leans against the wall, reeling with guilt.

EXT. ALFRED BLOOMINGDALE'S HOUSE, BEVERLY HILLS - NIGHT

A crowd of WEALTHY REPUBLICAN COUPLES milling around under a large white tent, dancing to a small band, drinking, flirting, gossiping, etc.

Ronnie is sitting with a group of PROMINENT BUSINESSMEN. The men are all half-drunk, laughing, as he says:

REAGAN

Well, you know what I always say...Big Government's like a baby—a big appetite at

one end, and no responsibility at the other...

The men ROAR with laughter. Ben Welden approaches, with ALFRED BLOOMINGDALE AND HOLMES TUTTLE.

BEN WELDEN

Ronnie...I want you to meet two friends of mine. Alfred Bloomingdale, and Holmes Tuttle.

REAGAN

Hello, gentlemen.

Alfred and Holmes take the cigars out of their mouths, long enough to shake hands.

ALFRED BLOOMINGDALE

Ben here says you're a Democrat. That true?

Holmes intervenes, with a grin:

HOLMES TUTTLE

Yeah, he's a Democrat. For now.

Everybody laughs. Reagan looks a little nervous.

A TABLE UNDER THE TENT - NIGHT

Nancy is sitting with a group of women...They're all drinking and smoking. Her smile is showing signs of strain.

WOMAN 1

I had all the kids' horoscopes done just last year. You won't believe what I found out.

WOMAN 2

Carol? Did she do them?

WOMAN 1

Only the best for those little monsters.

Everyone laughs. Nancy leans over to the woman next to her, who is bleached-blond, tanned, face-lifted. Her name is BETSY BLOOMINGDALE.

NANCY

Excuse me...is she talking about Carol Ryder...the astrologer?

BETSY BLOOMINGDALE

You've never met Carol? She's a genius. She knows what days are good, and what days are bad. She'll tell you when it's okay to get on a plane, when to ask for a promotion, and even what boarding school to put your children in.

WOMAN 3 leans over, whispers to both of them:

WOMAN 3

Carol told me about this girls' school in northern California. We sent our two daughters there, they've never been happier. And it saved my marriage.

Betsy laughs. As Woman 3 returns to her drink:

BETSY

Betsy Bloomingdale.

NANCY

Nancy Reagan.

Nancy takes a sip of her drink, then cautiously ventures:

NANCY

I wonder if she could tell me whether I'm having a boy, or a girl.

BETSY

...Honey, don't tell me you're pregnant.

NANCY

Only just. Ronnie wants a boy. So do I.

BETSY

So you won't have to go through it again. I'll drink to that.

Betsy laughs, drinks. So does Nancy. She's found a friend.

INT. REAGAN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reagan brings in a cup of warm milk to Nancy, as she's climbing into bed, exhausted.

REAGAN

I liked those people tonight. They were really nice people, don't you think? And

rich. I've never seen so many rich people in one place.

NANCY

Ronnie, you've met plenty of rich people in Hollywood.

REAGAN

But not like this. This is different. Texaco. Shell. Mobile Oil. And these people don't even look tired. They look like they spend all their time on vacation.

(Nancy laughs)

Yeah, nice fellows. Real nice fellows. A couple of them asked me if I'd ever thought of running for Senator.

Nancy stops laughing.

NANCY

Senator? You?

REAGAN

In the spring primary. Why not? I'd be sort of like Jimmy Stewart, you know? In "Mr. Deeds Goes to Washington"?

NANCY

Ronnie, that's a movie. There's also a little matter of them being Republicans, and you being a Democrat. Unless you're thinking about switching parties. Are you?

(off his silence)

...Ronnie?

REAGAN

Do you want me to switch?

NANCY

(evasively)

...Dr. Loyal would like it.

REAGAN

No. No, I don't want to be a Republican. Hell, I want to act. Acting is the only thing I ever wanted to do. And if I can just keep with this GE thing long enough- I'll get back into the movies, I will. Sooner or later.

NANCY

Well, every producer in Hollywood is a Democrat. If you want to be an actor, I guess you've got to stay a Democrat.

REAGAN

I know. I'm an actor, not a politician. Say, where's my script? Want to help me run lines for tomorrow?

Reagan heads into the bathroom for his toothbrush.

NANCY

Sure, but first I want to talk to you about something. One of the women at the party was talking about a boarding school for girls, up north. She went on and on, about it. It's supposed to be real nice.

REAGAN: OC

You mean, for Patti?

On the wall beside Nancy's head, a little red light is blinking. It's the intercom.

INT. PATTI'S ROOM -

Patti sits in bed in the dark, listening.

NANCY: VO

Not now, but when she gets a little older. Boarding school can be good for girls, particularly girls like Patti.

REAGAN: VO

Maybe you're right. Mermie and Michael went to boarding school. It's up to you, Nancy-pants. You're running the show.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. NANCY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nancy in bed, looking up at Reagan as he holds BABY RON. In the b.g., Edith and Loyal Davis, hugging Patti.

REAGAN

Hi, Skipper...

(hugging him)

I've got a son...a son...You're going to be a chip off the old block, aren't you, kid?

INT. SOUND STAGE - SALOON - DAY - SLATE CLAPS

"GE Theater, Episode #284; Scene 49, Take 1". On action, Reagan (the Sheriff) begins duking it out with the Bad Guy. Reagan throws a punch and the Bad Guy goes for his gun. Reagan's faster: he draws, pulls the trigger, but--click, click--the gun doesn't fire. Reagan deadpans to the Bad Guy:

REAGAN

Mind if I borrow your gun?

The Bad Guy cracks up, so does the rest of the set.

A.D.

Oh Christ. What's the matter with the gun?
Guys, why can't we get this right?

REAGAN

Yeah, I'm giving a talk at the VFW tonight. If you don't watch out, I'll name you as a threat to American freedom.

LAUGHTER. As they fix the problem, Lew Wasserman has been watching from the dark. Reagan crosses to him, and says:

REAGAN

So, Lew...What's with the face?

Lew takes him into a corner.

LEW

I got another call from GE--

REAGAN

My speeches make them nervous, I know.

LEW

They're getting too extreme.

REAGAN

Come on, Lew. The Reds are making a bomb to blow us up, and I'm being "too extreme"?

Lew pulls Reagan further into the corner. Quietly:

LEW

The head of GE heard you give a speech at the plant in Tarrytown. He said you sounded like some kind of right-wing reactionary nut. Democrats buy GE products, too, so lay off the Commie-thing.

REAGAN

I'm not going out there to peddle toasters, Lew.

LEW

You're going to push General Electric to the wall?

REAGAN

They're not going to fire me.

LEW

But they can sure as hell cancel the show.

REAGAN

And you're going to support them against me?

Silence. This is suddenly looking like a parting of the ways.

A.D.: OC

Ready! Ronnie, we've got your gun!

Reagan turns on his heel, and goes back to work. Lew stares after him, irritably.

INT. PALISADES HOUSE - BABY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Nancy bending over Ron's crib, making sure he's asleep. Suddenly, the TV BLARES from the next room. Nancy stiffens.

INT. PALISADES HOUSE - CONTINUING

Patti watching tv. Nancy enters, angrily snaps it off.

PATTI

Hey!

NANCY

Patti, I told you 3 times. Not. While.
Baby. Ron. Is. Napping.

Patti turns the tv back on.

NANCY

Patti? Did you hear me?

Patti ignores her. Nancy starts to slap her, but stops.

NANCY

Go to your room! Now! NOW!

Patti saunters off. Nancy snaps off the tv.

STAY ON NANCY, seeing herself in the mirror—an angry mom.
She winces at her reflection, pats her hair into place.
She doesn't see the MAID behind the door, watching..

EXT. PALISADES HOUSE - DUSK

Reagan pulls into the driveway, turns off the engine, sits
in the car. Nancy appears in the screen door, with Patti.
She comes out, alone.

NANCY

So did you do it?

Reagan gets out of the car. She puts her arms around him.

REAGAN

Yeah. It's over. They wanted me to stop
talking, and I'm not going to.

NANCY

Good. I'm proud of you. You'll be happier
making movies.

REAGAN

Maybe.

NANCY

Did you talk to Lew?

REAGAN

I can't even get him on the phone.

NANCY

(stunned)

...What?

REAGAN

Yeah. Funny, isn't it? Why am I surprised?
He hates everything I stand for.

NANCY

Oh God, Ronnie...He's been your agent since
the beginning. How can he do this to you--

REAGAN

I don't know--

NANCY

And now he's betrayed you...

REAGAN

It's over, okay? Don't look at me like
that. I'll get a new agent. And a new job.
I have a family to support, don't I?

He twists away from her, and goes into the house, pushing
past Patti in the doorway.

TV - BLACK AND WHITE

JFK's coffin in the Rotunda, as Jackie, Caroline, and John-
John stand before it.

SUPER: "1963"

INT. REAGAN LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nancy, Reagan, Patti (11), and Ron (5) are watching the tv.

NANCY

That poor woman...

As John-John salutes his father's coffin...Little Ron grins
and salutes, too. Nancy grabs him, holding him tightly:

NANCY

No, Ronnie, no. Don't do that.

INT. BEDROOM/PALISADES HOUSE - DAY -
WATCHING THRU THE WINDOW - NANCY'S POV

Reagan sitting beside the pool, talking to Ben Welden and a blonde man (Mike Deaver).

NANCY: OC
Hello...is this Miss Ryder?

CAROL RYDER: VO (FILTERED)
Yes.

NANCY: OC
My name is Nancy Reagan. My husband...my husband is-

CAROL RYDER: VO (FILTERED)
Ronald Reagan. The actor. Yes.

ANGLE - NANCY IN HER BEDROOM On the phone. Terrified.

NANCY
(into the phone)
Well, the thing is, Miss Ryder...Some people are trying to get my husband to go into politics...the Republicans...They want him to switch parties, and make speeches for Barry Goldwater, but he keeps telling them, he's an actor, and...I don't know...Everything's so mixed up...I just wonder if you could just tell me whether we're on the right path...Hello?

INTERCUT WITH CAROL RYDER'S MOUTH, TALKING INTO HER PHONE:

CAROL RYDER
Would you rather have a consultation on the phone, or in person?

Nancy watches Reagan shake hands with Welden and Deaver. Something's been decided.

NANCY
(trembling)
On the phone. If you don't mind.

EXT. REAGAN HOUSE - PACIFIC PALISADES - NIGHT

A beautiful, starry night. The house is lit up.

INT. REAGAN DEN - CONTINUING

MICHAEL REAGAN (18) drops his backpack on the sofa, as Reagan moves around the room, turning on lights.

MICHAEL

So this is it? I sleep on the sofa, like a dog?

REAGAN

We don't have much room, Michael. But it's good you came. We're all glad you came, aren't we, guys?

Nancy, Patti, and Ron stand in the doorway, watching.

NANCY

Yes. Of course we are. Of course.

Michael glances at Nancy, uneasily, turns back to Reagan:

MICHAEL

But Dad...did Mom tell you?

REAGAN

Sure. We knew you were coming. We just didn't know it was going to be tonight.

MICHAEL

No, not that. Did she tell you I flunked out of that stupid school?

REAGAN

(smiles)

Listen, Mike, it's okay, I never got much in the way of grades, myself. You can try again, here. Go to the public high school. We can even get you some tutoring. Nancy can find you a tutor, can't you, Mommy?

NANCY

Yes, of course. Certainly. I'll get the linens.

FOLLOW NANCY HURRYING DOWN THE HALL TO THE LINEN CLOSET

Patti and Ron follow, whispering:

PATTI

That guy is my brother?

NANCY

Half-brother. His mother was Daddy's first wife. And he's got a sister, Maureen, and the two of you had better be nice, you hear?

PATTI

I have a sister, too?

INT. REAGAN DEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

The sofa has been made up. As Mike unpacks his backpack, Patti and Ron watch.

RON

Why don't you live with your real mommy and daddy?

PATTI

Dad is his Dad, fleabrain.

RON

You're a fleabrain. Is Maureen going to move in, too?

MIKE

Maureen's married. Actually, she's married to this really weird guy...Hey, don't mess with my stuff!

Ron's found a copy of Playboy in the suitcase. Mike snatches it away.

RON

It's just naked ladies. So what?

Patti and Mike laugh. Ron laughs because they're laughing. Reagan appears in the doorway, smiling:

REAGAN

Somebody must have told a good one.

They jump. Mike neatly lowers the magazine out of view.

REAGAN

You guys try to keep it down, okay? Mommy's got a headache.

As he goes, Patti turns to Mike with a dark grin:

PATTI

Yeah. And we're it.

INT. AMBASSADOR HOTEL (COCONUT GROVE) - NIGHT

A huge photo of BARRY GOLDWATER—"IN YOUR HEART, YOU KNOW HE'S RIGHT"—looks down on a room packed with well-heeled SUPPORTERS, as Reagan addresses them from a podium.

REAGAN

We are at war with the most dangerous enemy mankind has faced in his climb from the swamp to the stars...a war for our American way of life. If we lose that war, we'll have only ourselves to blame...

INTERCUT Deaver and Welden standing in back, checking the reaction. Deaver's impressed.

MIKE DEAVER

He's got them hypnotized...Too bad he's only an actor, huh?

BEN WELDEN

Yeah. I wish he'd mention Goldwater.

Nancy, Betsy, Arthur Bloomingdale and Holmes Tuttle are sitting at a nearby table, listening intently.

RONNIE: OC

You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We can preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we can sentence them to take the first step into a thousand years of darkness.

The audience applauds thunderously. Betsy leans over to Nancy, whispers:

BETSY

Did you talk to Carol? What did she say?

Nancy whispers into her ear. As the applause fades, A WOMAN stands up in the audience, calling to Reagan:

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

Mr. Reagan! Mr. Reagan! Have you registered as a Republican, yet?

REAGAN

(grin)

Well, no, I haven't yet...but I intend to.

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

It just so happens that I'm a registrar.

As everyone laughs in shock, she walks down the aisle and places a registration form on the podium in front of him. He signs it.

REAGAN

Now, where was I?

The audience rises to their feet, cheering. Reagan acknowledges them. He finds Nancy in the sea of cheering faces, and smiles.

INT. COCONUT GROVE - LATER

Almost everyone is gone. The dance band is playing one last song. Nancy and Reagan are standing near the exit, talking to ADMIRERS. Betsy is with them.

On the other side of the room, Ben Welden, Alfred Bloomingdale, and Holmes Tuttle are sitting at a table, talking quietly.

ALFRED BLOOMINGDALE

Listen, Ben. Holmes and I are ready to write checks right now...

BEN WELDEN

Mr. Goldwater thanks you both.

ALFRED BLOOMINGDALE

We've already given to Goldwater. We're talking about Ronald Reagan.

HOLMES TUTTLE

The governor's race is going to be wide open next year. The party in California's in a shambles. We have a feeling that he might be the man to bring it together.

Mike Deaver arrives with a beer, sits down.

MIKE DEAVER

Yeah, but can you really run an actor for Governor?

BEN WELDEN

Gentlemen, this is Mike Deaver. He can get anybody elected to anything.

The excitement at the table rises, perceptibly.

HOLMES TUTTLE

Reagan's not an actor, he's a movie-star. Besides, it's good that he doesn't know anything about Government. It makes him more a man of the people.

ALFRED BLOOMINGDALE

And since he's a movie star, everybody knows him. Running Reagan will cost half what it would cost to run somebody that nobody's ever heard of.

BEN WELDEN

Listen, Alfred. I've been talking to Ronnie about running, for years. I've talked until I was blue in the face. He's not interested.

HOLMES TUTTLE

Well...Maybe you've been talking to the wrong Reagan.

They all look over at Nancy, who is pulling Reagan onto the dance floor. Silently, they watch them begin to dance.

ANGLE - Reagan and Nancy dance well, together. Perfectly matched. He pulls her close, gives her a tender kiss.

NANCY

Congratulations, Mr. Republican.

REAGAN

(teasing)

Did you pay that woman to come up and register me?

Nancy laughs, slyly.

NANCY

Oh, Ronnie. I wish I had.

They laugh, as they continue to slow-dance.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. REAGANS' HOUSE - PACIFIC PALISADES - NIGHT

SUPER: "1964"

A few cars in the driveway. Walter Cronkite's voice reporting *Goldwater's* defeat by LBJ; the worst in election history.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUING

Reagan watches tv, while eating jellybeans out of a jar. Nearby, are Deaver, Welden, and Betsy and Alfred Bloomingdale. Grim. The maid is emptying ash trays.

MIKE DEAVER

Four more years of LBJ.

BETSY BLOOMINGDALE

He's going to double taxes, you watch.

ALFRED BLOOMINGDALE

Yup. By the time the Democrats are done, there'll be no corporations left, in this country. We'll all be bankrupt.

(pause)

Ronnie, I'm telling you. You're our only hope.

REAGAN

What makes you think I could be Governor? I've never even played one.

They laugh.

EXT. REAGANS' POOL - CONTINUING

Alfred Holmes talks to Nancy in the shadows, by the pool.

HOLMES TUTTLE

Nancy, we want to put your husband in the Governor's seat, and keep him there for 8 years. Then we're going to put him in the Presidency for another 8 years. By the time he's done, Communism will be dead, the Republican Party reunited, and "conservative" won't be a dirty word, anymore.

NANCY

Holmes, he's told you and told you...He doesn't want to do it. He likes his life the way it is.

HOLMES TUTTLE

Yeah, but do you?

Nancy turns silent, wary.

HOLMES TUTTLE

Sure, it's nice being the wife of a movie star. But think what it would be like to be the wife of the Governor of California.

(pause)

First Lady of California--sounds pretty good, doesn't it? There you'll be, in the Governor's mansion--

NANCY

It's a dump.

HOLMES TUTTLE

Then we'll get you someplace nicer, somewhere right in Sacramento--

NANCY

I hate Sacramento.

Holmes pauses again.

HOLMES TUTTLE

Nancy, listen...Ronnie's not the only one who can unite the party. So can you. He's the Governor, but you're the power behind the throne. And with all that power, all that money...You'll have your own projects, but you can also influence your husband's decisions on the economy, the welfare state, and the future of California. You'll be the social and political center of power. I tell you--comparatively speaking, it makes Hollywood look like Tobacco Road.

She turns, without a word, and goes into the house. He slowly follows.

INT. REAGANS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone's laughing, as Nancy comes back into the room. She sits on the arm of his chair, putting her arm around him.

REAGAN

How's Ron?

NANCY

Fast asleep.

BEN WELDEN

Nancy, we want to form a "Friends of Ronald Reagan" Committee. What do you say?

REAGAN

I told them, you and I are already friends.

Nancy laughs. Holmes appears in the doorway, re-lights his cigar while the conversation continues:

REAGAN

I don't know. It means turning everything upside down...especially your life, Nancy. Your life will never be the same.

All eyes turn to Nancy. She smiles mysteriously, and gives him a kiss on top of his head.

NANCY

Oh God, Ronnie...I'm tired of fighting it, aren't you? These people need you. California needs you.

(pause)

And besides, I have a very special friend who says you'd make a great Governor.

Reagan turns to the others, smiling:

REAGAN

Isn't she the greatest?

NANCY

(then)

Okay, gentlemen. Where do we start?

INT. REAGANS' DEN - NIGHT

The den is filled with NEW FACES (CAMPAIGN AIDES) making posters, stuffing envelopes, on the phone, etc.

One of the aides comes out...Bumps into little Ron in the hallway, who's dancing to his own silent music...

Keeps going into the kitchen, where he opens the fridge and starts rummaging for food. A PUBLICITY STILL OF THE FAMILY-EXCLUDING MIKE AND MAUREEN ("VOTE FOR REAGAN!") is taped to the refrigerator door.

Nearby, Nancy is trying to talk on the phone and deal with an angry Patti at the same time:

NANCY

(into the phone)

I know he's about to flunk out...I've gotten him tutoring, but it doesn't seem to help...

PATTI

I'm not going to boarding school, and you can't make me.

NANCY

Patti, I'm talking to Mike's teacher-

PATTI

I'll run away! I will!

NANCY

Patti, go to your room! Now!

Patti kicks the refrigerator, and runs off in tears. Nancy turns to the cupboard, takes out a bottle of Valium, takes one. Holds onto the cupboard to steady her nerves.

CAMPAIGN AIDE

Do you have anymore mayo?

INT. NANCY'S BATHROOM - PALISADES HOUSE

Patti sneaks in, and quietly opens Nancy's medicine cabinet. It's full of prescription drugs. She takes down a bottle, pours some pills into her hand, stuffs them in her pocket.

EXT. MIKE'S SCHOOL - DAY

Mike is sitting on the curb, tightly coiled, as Nancy drives up with Ron and Patti in the back seat. He climbs in. The car roars away from the curb.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - DAY

Nancy turns to Mike. Her hands clenched to the steering wheel. In the back, Patti is asleep on the seat.

NANCY

So what happened?

MIKE

I didn't start it. The other guy hit me.

NANCY

You're getting a reputation. Listen, Mike...Your father and I want to help you, but we've come to a dead end. Either you start living up to the Reagan name, or get out.

MIKE

You want me to leave?

NANCY

Unless you shape up.

MIKE

You don't want me, anyway. You never did.

NANCY

I'm not your mother. I don't have to want you. Go back to your real mother and your real father...whoever they were.

The words are barely out of her mouth, when Nancy wishes she could stuff them back in.

Too late. The damage is done. They ride, in silence.

INT. REAGANS' FOYER - PALISADES HOUSE - LATER

Mike slams in from outside, stomps thru the house, and out the door to the pool.

A moment later, Nancy comes in with Patti. She goes to the den, where Reagan is meeting with Deaver and Welden.

NANCY

Ronnie, may I speak to you for a moment?

REAGAN

Sure, Mommy.

Reagan comes out. He's overwhelmed, too.

REAGAN

Mermie called. She's on her way here. She needs a place to stay for a few days.

NANCY

Why?

REAGAN

She won't say. But she's leaving her husband. I told her she could help out with the campaign.

NANCY

Oh God. Okay, and here's some news for you—Mike got into another fight at school. And I...I said some things I shouldn't have said.

(then)

I've had it, Ronnie. I really have. He's got to go.

REAGAN

Where? Where will he go?

NANCY

Anywhere. Home to Jane. For God's sake, he's old enough to live on his own.

REAGAN

But I like having him here—

NANCY

Ronnie, I can't deal with him, and take care of Ron, and get Patti off to boarding school and besides, all these people—we don't have any privacy, none at all—

She's on the verge of tears. Reagan kisses, hugs her.

REAGAN

Okay, fine, I'll tell him.

Nancy can see his reluctance.

NANCY

Never mind, you don't have to. I'll take care of it. He already thinks I'm a monster. I am a monster.

REAGAN

How could you possibly be a monster? Come on, Nancy-pants. Don't cry, it'll put lines in your face. Smile. Smile.

She tries to smile. He kisses her. DOORBELL. Before they can move, Ron runs to the door, and opens it.

Maureen (24) is standing on the threshold, with a suitcase.

MAUREEN

Hi, are you Ron? I'm your big sister
Maureen.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nancy is getting linens out of the hall-closet. She heads
towards the den...

...passing the kitchen, where Reagan, Welden and Deaver are
sitting around the kitchen table, talking...

...checking the patio where Mike sulks, while Ron and Patti
are playing cards...

AS NANCY PASSES, Patti turns to Ron and whispers:

PATTI

She's getting rid of me, and she's getting
rid of Mike. The next one to get rid of is
you.

Little Ron's eyes grow big.

INT. DEN - CONTINUING

Nancy sets the linens on the sofa. Maureen is setting up
her things on a shelf.

NANCY

These are for you. Since Mike's on the
sofa, I imagine you'll have to sleep on
the floor.

MAUREEN

Fine.

NANCY

I want to say something here. Girl-talk.

Maureen turns and looks at her.

MAUREEN

What is it?

NANCY

Since your father is running for public
office...and you're in the middle of a
divorce...I really think it's best if you

would exempt yourself from taking part in his campaign.

MAUREEN

(astonished)

Dad was divorced, too--

NANCY

Yes, but the voters already know that. Frankly, Mermie, if you want to help your father, the best thing you can do is stay away.

Nancy is about to pat Maureen on the shoulder, when she sees a ferocious bruise on Maureen's upper arm. She stares at it for several moments--then turns, and walks out.

Maureen stares after her, darkly.

EXT. PALISADES HOUSE - MORNING

A chartered bus smokes in the driveway, a banner on its side reads "Reagan for Governor". Nancy and Reagan come out of the house, accompanied by aides carrying their suitcases. Reagan helps Nancy onto the bus. Maureen is nowhere to be seen.

Welden and Deaver are talking.

MIKE DEAVER

We could cover a lot more ground if he'd fly.

BEN WELDEN

He's afraid of it. Been afraid of it since he was a kid.

Deaver looks at the bus, and sighs.

INT. BUS - CONTINUING

It's filled with CHEERING VOLUNTEERS. Reagan grins at them:

REAGAN

Until last night, I thought I was agreeing to do something that would last only until November, and then I'd go back to private life. But then Nancy said to me, "What if you win?"

(mock-horror)

I said, "Wait a minute! If I win this damn thing, I'm out of show business! And I'm in politics!"

Everybody roars with laughter.

A SERIES OF SCENES: Reagan and Nancy on the campaign trail. Receptions in homes and drab hotels. Endless hand-shaking. Welden and Deaver always at Reagan's side.

TV - COLOR

Governor Pat Brown in a commercial, talking to a classroom of kids:

PAT BROWN

I'm running against an actor, and you know who shot Lincoln, don't you?

EXT. SMALL CALIFORNIA TOWN - DAY

The Reagan bus stops at an American Legion Hall, where a CROWD is waiting. They burst into cheers, as an exhausted Reagan gets out, smiling and waving.

He plunges into the crowd, shaking hands, bantering (ad lib) as Welden tries to keep him moving. Nancy follows, looking nervously at A GROUP OF STUDENT PROTESTORS at the edge of the crowd.

STUDENT PROTESTORS

REAGAN'S A FASCIST! REAGAN'S A FASCIST!
(ETC.)

An object flies out of the group, intended to hit Reagan in the head. He catches it--an orange--throws it back.

REAGAN

This thing isn't ripe. And neither are you!

The crowd laughs. Reagan shouts to the students:

REAGAN

And you know what? If I had any doubts that I'm doing the right thing, I just lost them! So when I'm your next Governor...

His supporters cheer...the students boo...

REAGAN

The first thing I'm going to do is clean up the mess on our college campuses!

A turmoil of cheers and jeers. Supporters and students exchange angry shouts. A scuffle breaks out.

EXT. ORME SCHOOL FOR GIRLS - PHOENIX, AZ - NIGHT

A posh private school for girls...Horse stables, etc...

INT. DORMITORY HALLWAY - ORME - NIGHT

VERY LOUD MUSIC: Rolling Stones ("19th Nervous Breakdown"). GIRLS (age 12 - 16) running in and out of their rooms, shrieking, dancing. Another night at boarding school.

INT. STUDENT LOUNGE - ORME - CONTINUING

Cigarette smoke swirls in the student lounge, where a big hand-made sign ("Vote for Pat Brown") covers almost an entire wall. A GROUP OF A DOZEN GIRLS IN HIPPIE GARB sit, glued to the tv.

DAVID BRINKLEY (TV)

And in California, Ronald Reagan has won the gubernatorial election by nearly a million votes, taking 55 of the 58 counties in that state...

A GENERAL GROAN. ONE GIRL bursts into tears (Patti, 14).

PATTI

Jesus Christ. We're all screwed.

GIRL 1

Look out, everybody. Hitler's just been elected Governor.

A titter goes around the room. Another girl rolls over into Patti's lap, and hugs her:

GIRL 2

It's okay, Patti. We still love you.

Laughter. Patti shrinks into her seat, still crying.

INT. YACHT MARINA BAR - SALTON SEA, CA - NIGHT

Michael hangs out with sailboat-racing buddies as he stares at the bar tv, which is showing pictures of Reagan Headquarters filled with cheering crowds.

He and his friend whoop and holler.

INT. BACK ROOM - REAGAN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Reagan and Nancy holding each other, as their AIDES, including Ben Welden, slap each other on the back. Ron watches from the corner, reeking of loneliness. The deathly chant of VOICES CALLING (OC):

VOICES: OC
WE WANT RONNIE! WE WANT RONNIE! WE WANT
RONNIE! (etc.)

INT. PRESS ROOM - REAGAN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

The camera-lights are blinding, as Reagan pulls Nancy through the crowd to the podium. He's holding up his hands for silence, but the CROWD IS CHANTING FASTER AND FASTER:

CROWD
RONNIE! RONNIE! RONNIE (etc.)

The chanting builds almost to the point of hysteria, then...

BELL TOLLING MIDNIGHT

EXT. SACRAMENTO CAPITOL STEPS -

A marble statue of the Holy Virgin looks down on a solemn ceremony waiting to begin. Reagan and Nancy stand before a robed JUSTICE, heads bowed. Nancy is holding an old, taped Bible—Reagan's mother's Bible.

A group of SPECTATORS shivers, as well as Loyal and Edith Davis, and little Ron, who's half-asleep, being held up by Maureen. Nearby, the all-white members of Reagan's administration—including ED MEESE, (we'll meet him later), Ben Welden, and Mike Deaver.

When the TOLLING stops, Nancy hands the Bible to the Justice. Reagan puts one hand on it, and raises the other, repeating after the Justice:

JUSTICE/ REAGAN

I, Ronald Wilson Reagan, do solemnly swear...

ANGLE - Welden and Deaver watching, as the oath continues. Deaver tries to restrain a yawn of exhaustion, whispers:

MIKE DEAVER

For the love of Pete, why did we have to do this at midnight?

BEN WELDEN

It's her "special friend".

(off Deaver's look)

Some astrologer. Mommy talks to her on the phone almost every day.

Welden nods to Nancy, who is standing next to Reagan, looking at him with so much adoration, it's almost scary.

BEN WELDEN

The astrologer said it had to be right after midnight. When Jupiter was rising. The same time they crown Kings. And one more thing—it had to be in a part of the Capital that had never been used for a swearing-in before.

Deaver stares at him, wishing he could laugh. As Reagan finishes the oath, he turns to Nancy, gives her a kiss.

BEN WELDEN

By the way, Mike, I'm giving you a special job. From now on, you're on Mommy Watch.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE: Music: the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby" over...LBJ grins, shows his gallbladder scar to the press... Mohammed Ali indicted for refusing to be drafted...Crowds of Viet Nam protesters...

EXT. BERKELEY CAMPUS (SPROUL HALL) - DAY

SUPER: "1967".

An explosion of shouts, chants, jeers from STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS. As Reagan comes out of the hall, escorted by POLICE, he's immediately met by another mob: the MEDIA.

REAGAN

I've just put the Trustees of this University on notice. The people of this state are sick and tired of sit-ins and walk-outs. It's time we had a few throw-outs!

STUDENT: OC

Go back to Hollywood, Bonzo!

REAGAN

The People put me here, son! I don't know what drugs you're on, but starting right now, you're going to obey the rules, or get out!

Students hissing and booing. FLASHBULBS POP.

THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Reagan's angry face beneath a headline: "Reagan fires Berkeley President: Vows Deep Cuts in State Spending".

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - DAY

The mansion is a classic wedding-cake Victorian on a busy street. Traffic booms noisily past as...

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - FOYER - CONTINUING

Nancy follows Mike Deaver into the Governor's mansion for the first time. The walls are peeling, the rug is torn. Dust hangs in the air. Outside, TRAFFIC ROARS PAST.

NANCY

(grimly)

It certainly is historic, isn't it?

As if to punctuate this remark, ANOTHER TRUCK RUMBLES PAST.

EXT. REAGANS' HOUSE - POOL - PACIFIC PALISADES - DAY

Nancy beside the pool, watching Ron swim, as she talks to Carol Ryder on the phone:

NANCY

It's a fire-trap. We'd be asleep, the wiring would catch fire, and we'd all be burned alive.

INTERCUT WITH CAROL RYDER ON THE PHONE IN HER OFFICE -

CAROL RYDER

You already know you don't want to live there. Use your power.

NANCY

But what about the press? The Governor's family has always, always lived there...

CAROL RYDER

What do they say in Hollywood? Buckle your seat-belt. It's going to be a bumpy ride.

INT. EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT - DAY

Nancy takes a sip of her wine, and leans forward to Betsy Bloomingdale, furious:

NANCY

...So then Mike Deaver says, "Why don't you fix it up? It can be your own little project, like Jackie Kennedy fixing up the White House."

BETSY

Only Jackie Kennedy had a budget.

NANCY

Exactly. I'm not going to have Ronnie living in a flea-trap. We're going to rent a nice house, a beautiful house where we can entertain people from the industry, and ambassadors and all the rest of our friends, and anyone who doesn't like it

can go to hell, and I don't care how much it costs.

BETSY

You don't?

NANCY

(smile)

Well, that brings me to you.

Betsy smiles back, and turns to a PASSING WAITER:

BETSY

Waiter. Get me a phone, would you?

(back to Nancy)

Alfred and Holmes Tuttle got you into this mess. They should get you out.

A PAUNCHY MAN IN A BAD SUIT is standing outside the door with a zoom lens, quietly taking pictures.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE -

Two headlines ("Fancy Nancy Turns Up Her Nose at Governor's Mansion" and "Nancy Eats Out, While Hubbie Cuts School Lunches") are being prepared with a picture of Nancy and Betsy at lunch. AN EDITOR is looking at them. He picks "Fancy Nancy..."

EDITOR

Go with this one.

EXT. REAGANS' RENTED HOUSE - SACRAMENTO - DAY

A garage door rises, and the Governor's limo emerges from the dark, heading down the driveway.

A SMALL CROWD OF DEMONSTRATORS are gathered on the lawn of the Reagans' magnificent rented house.

Nancy and little Ron are in the back seat. He's got his school bag. Suddenly, out of nowhere, A TOMATO splats against the window. Nancy and Ron scream, and grab each other in fright.

BACK TO THE NEWSPAPER EDITOR'S OFFICE - as he picks a picture of a single, black Welfare mom with her children, matches it with a headline ("Welfare is a Cancer, Says Reagan") and hands it to his ASSISTANT.

EDITOR

Go with this.

JUMP CUT - The editor holds up a mock-up of another front page with another headline: "Reagan Issues Biggest Tax Hike in U.S. History"...

EDITOR

This one.

JUMP CUT - a picture of a mental hospital stamped "Closed".

EDITOR

Yeah. Perfect.

BLACK AND WHITE STILL - AARON MITCHELL

Police mug shot of a black man.

ED MEESE: OC

This is Aaron Mitchell. Convicted cop-killer on Death Row in San Quentin. Governor Brown upheld the sentence before he left office, and both the state and national Supreme Courts have denied a stay of execution. He's scheduled to die tomorrow night.

Mitchell's face projected on the wall of the Gubernatorial Cabinet Room—a dingy room with a long table, torn rug, and cigar burns on the furniture.

Reagan and Mike Deaver are at the table, going through Mitchell's file. ED MEESE, (40's), Reagan's clemency secretary, continues:

ED MEESE

He has his final mercy hearing this afternoon. After that, Governor, it's up to you.

MIKE DEAVER

Even Pat Brown said he should die. And he was against the death penalty.

Reagan hands Mitchell's file back to Meese.

REAGAN

(grimly)

Thanks, Ed. If the law says Aaron Mitchell has to die, then I agree.

Pause.

BEN WELDEN

His mother is in the hallway. She's got her attorney with her, and a helluva lot of reporters.

REAGAN

(nodding)

It's a sorry mess. Listen, Ed, I'd talk to her myself, but I've got to get on a plane in 20 minutes for a meeting in Los Angeles. Can you talk to her?

ED MEESE

(surprised)

Yes, sir.

DEAVER

You might want to use the security entrance, sir.

Reagan stands up, ending the meeting. Welden turns on the lights, and Mitchell's projection disappears.

As Reagan and Deaver leave, Meese turns to Ben Welden:

ED MEESE

What's the meeting in Los Angeles?

BEN WELDEN

(sigh)

Academy Awards.

ON MEESE'S INCREDULOUS FACE -

EXT. STATE CAPITOL -

AARON MITCHELL'S MOTHER emerges, being held up by her ATTORNEY, sobbing in agony:

MRS. MITCHELL

Why, Jesus, why? Why? Why?

MRS. MITCHELL'S ATTORNEY
Ronald Reagan doesn't care about people
like us. He's running for the Presidency...

EXT. REAGANS' RENTED HOUSE - SACRAMENTO - NIGHT

Outside, AN ENORMOUS GROUP OF DEMONSTRATORS are gathered in
the dark, holding candles and ringing handbells, singing:

CROWD
"We shall overcome
We shall overcome...(etc.)"

They hold up signs: "Ronald Reagan-No Academy Award for
Legal Murder"; "California's First Execution Since 1963".

INT. REAGANS' RENTED HOUSE - CONTINUING

Little Ron watching from his bedroom window in the dark.
The door opens, and Nancy enters in her nightgown.

NANCY
Ron. Get back into bed.

RON
What are they singing?

NANCY
It's nothing. A song, that's all.

She lifts him back into bed, covers him with the blankets.

RON
But why are they mad at us? What'd we do?

NANCY
Shhh...they're not mad at us. Close your
eyes. Sleep. Everything's fine.

Nancy kisses his forehead, smooths his hair one last time,
and leaves the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUING

Nancy emerges from Ron's bedroom, passes Mike Deaver and
NANCY REYNOLDS, her press secretary, hiding behind a
curtain, looking out the window at the demonstrators.

NANCY
(hissing, furious)
Tell me...What gives those...people...the right
to terrify an 8-year-old boy?

INT. REAGAN'S STUDY - SACRAMENTO HOUSE - CONTINUING

Reagan is in his study, with REVEREND DONN MOOMAW, a born-again former football star. They're on their knees, praying in front of a picture of a blonde, blue-eyed Jesus.

REAGAN
My heart can't be wrong, can it? If I love
Jesus and follow his teachings, I can't be
wrong, can I?

REVEREND MOOMAW
You're not wrong, Governor...

REAGAN
Aaron Mitchell is going to die, and it's
because of me. I could have saved him...

REVEREND MOOMAW
No one can save Aaron Mitchell from the
sin he committed.

REAGAN
(anguished)
Why do I feel as if it's my fault?

REVEREND MOOMAW
Let Jesus carry your burden, Governor.
That's all he asks—to carry your burden.

OUTSIDE, A CHURCH BELL BEGINS TO TOLL. A CRY OF AGONY GOES
UP FROM THE CROWD.

REAGAN
(choking)
Why don't they ring those bells every time
there's a murder?

Moomaw begins to pray:

REVEREND MOOMAW
We pray for your will to be revealed, oh
Lord...

REAGAN

We pray for your will to be revealed, oh Lord...

REVEREND MOOMAW

We pray for Armageddon, when, according to your will, the dark forces of the world will be defeated by a leader from the West, who will be revealed as the Antichrist. He, too, will fall, and then Jesus Christ will triumph in the creation of a new heaven and a new earth..

MOOMAW AND REAGAN

Amen.

EXT. SAN QUENTIN STATE PRISON - NIGHT

THE PRISON BELL TOLLS as the gates of San Quentin part, allowing AN AMBULANCE to rumble slowly through A SMALL CROWD which is holding up signs ("Killing a Cop is Worse than Killing 3,000 Vietnamese Peasants?"; "Hang Down Your Head, Black Aaron-Po'Boy You Gonna Die"). AUDIBLE SOBBING as the ambulance drives off into the night.

EXT. REAGAN RESIDENCE - BACK YARD - DAY

The endless California sun is shining, as Nancy escorts journalist JOAN DIDION into the back yard.

NANCY

My life began when I met Ronnie...It really did...He is my hero.

She looks up, and sees Ron appear in the back door.

NANCY

Skipper, you're home! Come on down here, honey, I want you to meet somebody!

Ron was sneaking away. He lamely turns, and comes out.

NANCY

This is Joan Didion. She's writing an article about us. Can you say hello?

RON

'Lo.

Nancy smiles as hard as she can, painfully aware of Didion's critical stare, and continues:

NANCY
How's Chuck's cold?

RON
Chuck doesn't have a cold.

NANCY
(trying)
Chuck doesn't have a cold?

RON
No. Bruce has braces.

NANCY
Bruce has braces?

RON
Bye.

With that, Ron runs back into the house. Nancy resumes walking, steering Didion toward the garden:

NANCY
I don't believe in being an absentee mother. I just don't.

INT. RON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUING

CLASSICAL MUSIC playing loud. Ron is dancing around his room with joyous enthusiasm. Leaping, pirouetting, etc.

INT. SACRAMENTO HOUSE - DAY -
CAMERA TRACKING THRU MASTER BEDROOM TOWARD AN OPEN DOOR

NANCY: OC
You lying, cheating, nasty little bitch. Worming your way into my house...Smiling at me...pretending everything's oh-so-nice...Such a nice house...Such beautiful children...So nice to meet you, Mrs. Reagan...and your movies"...Blah Blah Blah...Talk about me having a phony smile, what about you? You're not a writer, you're an untalented liar. Hack! That's what you are, a hack!

REAGAN POKES HIS HEAD INTO THE BATHROOM AND SEES Nancy in the tub, up to her neck in bubbles. She startles.

NANCY
Ronnie!

Reagan sniffs the air suspiciously:

REAGAN

Mmm. Bath-oil. And lots of it. You must be pretty upset.

NANCY

Oh Ronnie...the article by that bitch Joan Didion came out today...she hates me. She positively hates me. She said I'm "living in some daydream circa 1948"! And you know what else she said? She said the way I mother the children, it's positively scary. She even made fun of the way I look at you! She called it "the Gaze"!

REAGAN

Oh, she's probably jealous.

NANCY

That's what I said! I told her, she's probably jealous!

(lamely)

I mean, here. In the tub. I told her.

He laughs, goes out.

REAGAN'S VOICE

That's what I always liked about you, Nancy-pants! You've got guts!

MOVIE - BLACK AND WHITE - "KNUTE ROCKNE; ALL AMERICAN"

MUSIC: VIOLINS as Reagan (George Gipp), lies in a hospital bed, dying. His coach, Pat O'Brien ("Rock") stands nearby.

REAGAN/GIPP

Rock...someday when the team's up against it...when the breaks are beating the boys...ask them to go in there with all they've got...win just one for the Gipper...

INT. REAGANS' DEN - CONTINUING

AS MUSIC SOARS...SUPER: "1968"

Nancy and Reagan are watching the movie on a screen, eating Popcorn, tears in their eyes. Reagan whispers...like Gipp:

REAGAN

I've got to do it, Mommy.

NANCY

Do what?

REAGAN

Just once. I've got to run for the
Presidency at least once.

Pause. Nancy turns to him in disbelief.

NANCY

What?

REAGAN

Some of the boys think I should run. They
did a poll, they think I can get more than
60% of the conservative vote.

NANCY

Ronnie...you can't run for the Presidency.
You just got elected Governor.

REAGAN

Do you think it's too soon?

NANCY

Yes, I think it's too soon. It's way too
soon. Ronnie.

(he's not listening)

Ronnie.

INT. DEEVER'S OFFICE - REAGAN HOUSE - SACRAMENTO - DAY

Nancy corners Mike Deaver in his office. She's mad.

NANCY

Who told Ronnie he could win the
nomination in '68?

DEEVER

(hastily)

It wasn't me. It was the polls.

NANCY

Mike, it's too early. He doesn't have
enough experience. Not only that, he can't
possibly win. Nixon has it sewn up.

DEEVER

But you've got to admit, he's got a lot of
people excited.

Nancy looks out the door to make sure no one's around.

NANCY

It's more than that. My friend...my friend says it's not going to work. He'll lose by an enormous margin.

DEAVER

Well, if it doesn't happen, so what? He'll still be the Governor of California. He can run again in '72.

It's a joke. Nancy ignores it.

NANCY

Mike, you don't get it. He'll have lost. Lost. Don't you see?
(intensely)
*Ronald Reagan does not lose elections.
Ronald Reagan is not a loser.*

Her vehemence drives Deaver into silence.

EXT. ORME CAMPUS - NIGHT

INT. PATTI'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUING

Patti and her boyfriend, GARY (18), making out in her room. She comes up for air long enough to say:

PATTI

If we're going to do it, Gary, we've got to do it now.

GARY

But Patti, what if they come after us?

PATTI

I've got it all figured out. My brother Mike's working in Phoenix. I'll get him to sign me out for a weekend visit. By the time they know I'm gone, we'll be in Canada.

EXT. BOAT REPAIR SHOP (PHOENIX) - DAY

Speedboats are being fixed in the background, as Mike, in mechanic's overalls, talks to Patti on the phone:

MICHAEL

(into the phone)
Patti, this is crazy.

INTERCUT Patti at school, on a payphone:

PATTI

I love him. He loves me. He'll go straight to Vietnam unless you help me.

MICHAEL

But you're asking me to lie for you...

PATTI

I'm asking you to be my brother. Please, Mike. Please. Help me.

MICHAEL

Okay, okay...

He hangs up. Worried.

EXT. THE ORME SCHOOL - DAY

A DELEGATION—the Headmaster and his wife, faculty members, students—are waiting as two cars drive in through the gate. The Secret Service gets out of the first car.

Reagan gets out of the back seat of the second car, leaving Nancy and the DRIVER inside.

PATTI SITTING UNDER A TREE NEARBY in classic hippie drag. She gets up and crosses to Reagan, longing to hug him.

REAGAN

(grinning)

Hi, Shorty. We just happened to be in the neighborhood...

PATTI

Oh Daddy. I'm so sorry.

REAGAN

It's alright. All's well that ends well. Thanks to Mike. Now get in the car. I've got to talk to the Headmaster, and see if I can keep him from throwing you out.

INT. REAGAN'S CAR - CONTINUING

Nancy is in the back seat, privacy window separating her from the driver, a.c. running. Patti opens the door, and climbs in. Pause.

NANCY

Just tell me...are you pregnant?

PATTI

(a harsh laugh)

You know what, Mom? We never even did it.

(off Nancy's reaction)

I'm still a virgin. Cross my lying little heart.

Nancy struggles not to lose it.

NANCY

Go change your clothes. Your father's taking us to dinner.

PATTI

I'm not changing. If he wants to take me out, then I'm going like this.

NANCY

Don't argue. Go.

PATTI

No. This is it. Take it or leave it.

NANCY

Why do you do this to me? Why do you have to fight me?

PATTI

Why do you hate me?

NANCY

I don't hate you.

PATTI

You've always hated me. You've hated me since I was a little girl. Go on, hit me. You can't hurt me, anymore.

Nancy slaps her. Patti reels, comes back up defiant.

OUTSIDE THE CAR -

The Secret Service Agents heard the slap, and exchange a glance. In the b.g., Reagan approaches.

INT. REAGANS' CAR - CONTINUING

As Reagan climbs into the car, he turns to Patti:

REAGAN

So, did Mommy tell you the news?

PATTI

No.

Nancy obliges:

NANCY

They want your father to run for President.

PATTI

Daddy, are you serious? You just started being Governor.

REAGAN

(smiles)

That's what Mommy said. At least you two agree on something.

The two cars drive away, vanishing in a SWIRLING CLOUD OF DUST which becomes...

BOILING SMOKE IN THE STREETS OF SAIGON

SUPER: "1968"

More images of smoke and fire: a bonfire at an anti-war rally...tear gas swirling in Detroit as blacks riot...RFK dying in a hotel kitchen...Martin Luther King lying on a motel balcony in Memphis...Smoke shrouds the Capitol Building...

And A BATTERY OF CAMERAS FLASH as Reagan announces:

REAGAN

I seek the nomination for the highest office in our land because I have no choice. Everything we hold dear—the American ideals that have made us the envy of the world—is under attack. It's time to fight back.

He's standing amid a crowd on THE CAPITOL STEPS (SACRAMENTO). Nancy murmurs to Deaver and Welden, stonily:

NANCY

It's not his time. He's got Saturn in his tenth house. He's going to lose. And it's you people who pushed him into it.

Welden steps back, mutters to Deaver, sarcastically:

WELDEN

Alas.. Who knows what's in the stars?

Nancy doesn't hear: she's watching Reagan with a look of utter doom on her face.

INT. REPUBLICAN CONVENTION (1968) - ON THE PODIUM

MC'S VOICE

Ladies and gentlemen, the next President of the United States, Richard Milhouse Nixon.

RICHARD AND PAT NIXON, TRICIA AND JULIE enter, smiling broadly. Nixon thrusts his arms into the air in victory.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE: Watergate hearings. Nixon and Pat leaving the White House. Gerry Ford and Betty waving goodbye to their helicopter.

INT. REAGAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: "1973".

Reagan in pjs, lying on the sofa, eating cookies. Ron (15) sits up, holding a school notebook, being "official":

RON

Are you ready?

REAGAN

Shoot.

Ron switches on a tape-recorder. The reel begins to turn.

RON

So, Dad. I mean Governor Reagan. As you prepare to leave office, what do you think is the biggest achievement of your administration?

REAGAN

Are you speaking as a reporter, or as my son?

RON

Dad. Come on. It's the school paper.

REAGAN

Okay, let's see...Well, I know people hate to hear this...but the state of California has finally been forced to become fiscally responsible...which meant that, like it or not, we had to end the free lunch that a lot of our citizens had come to expect.

RON

Yeah, but you closed down two-thirds of the state mental hospitals, and all those people ended up on the street.

(off Reagan's look of surprise)

Dad, I'm not stupid.

REAGAN

(smiles)

No, you're not. But I have much more faith in the resilience of the American people than you do. They always pull themselves up by their own bootstraps.

RON

But you raised taxes more than any other Governor in United States history. I mean, you're a Republican, you're supposed to be against raising taxes.

REAGAN

Well, I've got a theory about economics. If the rich have more money to spend on buying things and building businesses, it will naturally end up helping the poor people. It's called "trickle-down".

Pause. Ron is turning cautious.

RON

You want to run for President again, don't you?

REAGAN

Now, Ron...You know me better than that.

Reagan laughs. Ron doesn't. He's worried.

RON

What if you turn into another Richard Nixon?

Reagan is surprised. Silent for several moments.

REAGAN

Listen, Ron. I go to bed at night with the knowledge that I've done my best to see and hope that these people...that I've directly appointed...meet the standards that I want them to meet. But there can be someone...while I'm sleeping...doing something he shouldn't do, and it will break over my head.

Silence, as Ron tries to figure this one out.

RON

So are you saying, you are or you aren't going to run for President in '76?

Reagan's eyes twinkle, as he answers:

REAGAN

Ron, I tell you from the bottom of my heart...I have utterly and absolutely no ambitions to be President in 1976.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nancy sitting on her bed in her dressing gown. She swallows a Valium as she talks into the phone.

NANCY

It's the strangest thing...In the midst of all this packing and leaving...and not knowing what's going to happen to us, once Ronnie leaves office...I keep thinking about my real father. Isn't that funny? I haven't thought about him in so long.

INTERCUT WITH CAROL RYDER ON THE PHONE:

CAROL RYDER

Sometimes, as we get older, our childhood doesn't fade away. It gets stronger.

NANCY

Yes. Yes. That's it...I can't stop thinking about him...wondering why he left...Why? Why did he leave?

PAN TO A FADED PHOTO OF A MAN (1920's) on the desk.

INT. GYMNASIUM - CLASSICAL MUSIC/LIVE PIANO

It's a dance class. Ron is one guy out of two in a class full of girls, but he's dancing harder than anybody else. He's dancing so hard, it's as if he's trying to work something out--some unresolved anger. The TEACHER stops him:

DANCE TEACHER

Ron. Ron. Slow down. You're pushing too hard.

Ron tries to slow down, but he keeps dancing and pushing.

DANCER TEACHER

Do you hear me? You're going to hurt yourself. Stop. Everybody stop. Ron, I want to talk to you.

Everybody stops. Ron follows the teacher to the corner.

DANCE TEACHER

You tell your folks you want to dance?
(Ron shakes his head)
Why not, are you ashamed?

RON

(aggressively)
What do you think?

DANCE TEACHER

You've got talent, Ron. Tell them, before you hurt yourself so badly that you can't dance.

(then)

Okay, kids. Start over. Positions. Music.

The music begins again. The dancing resumes.

INT. PATTI'S HOUSE (TOPANGA CANYON) - AFTERNOON

MUSIC: SOMEONE COMPOSING ON AN ELECTRIC GUITAR. All around, anti-war posters, mood lamps, incense, etc.

Patti (22) is lying on the sofa, smoking a joint as she stares at the front page of the paper, which features a photograph of Gerry Ford.

PATTI

Gerry Ford is a real argument for birth control. Gerry Ford...Richard Nixon...Not to mention my father. The pigs have taken over, you know? Bernie? Bernie?

She goes into the kitchen, where BERNIE (24) is sitting on the kitchen counter, playing an electric guitar as he watches soup boil on the stove.

PATTI

Jesus, Bernie. You're supposed to be watching the soup.

BERNIE

I am.

Patti turns off the stove, and puts her hand on Bernie's strings to stop the music. Pause.

PATTI

The political machine is bent on destroying us. The only thing we can do is lay down our bodies in front of it.

Sacrifice ourselves, if we have to.

(pause)

Even if nobody else will stand up for their conscience, I will.

UNDERWATER

Reagan swimming down, down through dark water. Panicky, searching. HIS HEART POUNDING.

He sees a child's hand emerging from the black. He grabs it, and pulls--it's a CHILD'S BODY, EYES OPEN, DROWNED.

Reagan SCREAMS UNDERWATER.

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - TWILIGHT

Reagan sits bolt upright in bed, in a terror. Nancy reaches out to him:

NANCY

Bad dream?

REAGAN

Somebody was drowning...

She pulls him down again, stroking his hair, consoling him as she has, a hundred times:

NANCY

It's okay. Nobody's drowning. We're all here.

EXT. RANCHO DEL CIELO - SANTA BARBARA MOUNTAINS - DAY

Reagan, shirtless, chopping wood. He's strong. He can split a log with one chop. He pauses, wipes the sweat from his brow, looks out over the mountains. It's so beautiful.

Nancy sits on a log nearby, drinking a cup of coffee.

REAGAN

Sometimes I think, screw politics. I was made for chopping trees...and dredging ponds...and fixing the roof...

NANCY

There'll be plenty of time for that,
later. After you're done being President,
and we're lying around, eating bonbons and
building Presidential libraries.

REAGAN

You're a troublemaker, you know that?

NANCY

Me? I'm the one who's kept you from
messing your life up.

REAGAN

Hey. Watch your mouth.

He starts toward her. She runs away, laughing.

INT. REAGANS' HOUSE - REAGANS' OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "1975"

Reagan is on head-set, talking into the mic, finishing his
weekly radio address.

REAGAN

...Status quo. That's Latin for the mess
we're in.

(beat)

Well, that's it for this week, folks. Just
remember: to err is human-it takes a
government computer to really louse things
up. See you next week.

He turns off the mic and looks up, as Nancy sticks her head
into the room.

NANCY

Guess who's here?

Mike Deaver sticks his head in, behind her.

REAGAN

Mike! What are you doing here?

DEAVER

Hi, Governor.

NANCY

Never mind asking him to stay for lunch. I
already did.

Reagan gets up, follows them out.

FOLLOW NANCY, DEEVER, AND REAGAN DOWN THE HALL - passing bedrooms, heading outside towards the pool.

REAGAN

I'm telling you, this radio-thing is the most fun I've had in years.

DEEVER

More fun than running for President?

REAGAN

Anything's more fun than that.

They pass the kitchen, where the COOK and maid are working.

NANCY

Gilda, get Mr. Deever a beer, would you? And add an extra place at the table.

DEEVER

Well, I got a letter from the Young Americans for Freedom, yesterday. They want to endorse you against Gerry Ford.

REAGAN

I can't run against Gerry Ford, Mike. I'd be splitting the party.

DEEVER

He's the incumbent, but that's about all.

NANCY

Did you see him this weekend? He tripped, coming down the steps of Air Force One. I thought he was going to land face-first on the tarmac.

Everyone winces, laughs.

DEEVER

If Nixon hadn't resigned, he'd never have gotten near the office.

NANCY

That's not the point. If Ronnie runs now, he'll be seen as a spoiler. It'll ruin his political career.

DEAVER

I disagree. I do. I think this could be the Governor's year, if he wants it.

As they emerge OUTSIDE, BY THE POOL:

DEAVER

What's worse? Challenging Ford for the White House, or letting him sink the party?

INT. REAGAN DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Reagan sitting at the head. Nancy's next to him, hands folded, looking unbelievably tense.

REAGAN

...My political advisors say the grassroots support is there, and it's time I put myself on the line again. If I don't, I'll always feel like the guy who sat on the bench and never got into the game. So...I'm announcing my entrance into the presidential race.

Michael nods happily. Maureen, stunned. Ron, silent. Patti is conspicuously absent.

MICHAEL

That's good, Dad. That's great. You know I'll support you.

MAUREEN

Dad, no. If you lose again, it'll be the 2nd time. People will remember you as a loser.

The sting of her words hangs in the air. Pause.

NANCY

Ron? You're being quiet.

RON

So are you.

(to his father)

You don't need to know what I think. I'm sure your so-called political advisors have given you every angle.

NANCY

Ron. Say it.

Ron and his mother exchange a look. Then:

RON

Okay, Dad. As far as I can tell, your advisors have done nothing but get you into trouble. They're just a bunch of nicotine-stained, wheezing, gray-toned amoral-

(he breaks off)

I think you lower yourself by listening to them.

REAGAN

You don't think I'd make a good President.

Pause. Ron twists, uncomfortably.

RON

Do you really need to be President, Dad? Really? Can't you be happy doing...something else?

Reagan is taken aback. His words sound hollow.

REAGAN

I can do a lot of things for America.

Ron looks at him, disappointed.

EXT. MIAMI AIRPORT - DAY

A cheering crowd is gathered, Reagan waving from a podium. As he moves to his right to join Nancy, there is an upsurge of movement behind him. Somebody shouts "Dutch!" and TWO SECRET SERVICE AGENTS dive onto a dark-haired man behind him.

Nancy stares in horror at a gun waving above the wrestling trio.

NANCY

Ronnie!

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Reagan is shaken, accepting a glass of water from one of the Secret Service agents, who are even more shaken.

RONNIE

I don't understand what all the fuss is about, I'm okay.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT 1

Sir, we asked you to leave the podium to your left...

REAGAN

Yes, but I heard somebody call me "Dutch" and I thought it was someone I knew back in Iowa...

Nancy slams down her glass of water and comes off her chair, furious:

NANCY

Well, don't forget! From now on, if they say "Go left", go left! Do you hear me, Ronnie?!

Reagan does that self-deprecating head shake, and his mouth crinkles, as he says:

REAGAN

Aw, Mommy...Don't be so upset. It was just a toy gun!

Nancy stands there, unsure whether to shoot herself or die where she's standing.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA - NIGHT

BARRY GOLDWATER ON TV:

BARRY GOLDWATER

"As far as the Panama Canal goes...Governor Reagan's views spring from a surprisingly dangerous state of mind that could needlessly lead this country into open military conflict..."

REAGAN

Dangerous? Barry Goldwater thinks I'm dangerous? He used to be my friend...

Nancy turns down the tv.

NANCY

He's betrayed you. You stumped for him, back in '64. You knocked yourself out to get him elected President- and now look how he treats you. Oh, Ronnie...I'm tired. This isn't working out the way we hoped.

She moves to him, holds him, rests her chin on top of his head.

REAGAN

The campaign is broke. Though John Sears has some idea about a fundraiser.

NANCY

We can always quit and go home.

Pause.

REAGAN

No. No. I'm taking this campaign all the way to the convention in Kansas City. Even if we lose every damn primary along the way.

THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION - KANSAS CITY - NIGHT - 1976

A floor demonstration: Reagan supporters chanting heavily, and waving signs ("Reagan in '76"):

REAGAN SUPPORTERS

WE WANT RON! WE WANT RON! WE WANT RON!

IN THE REAGAN SKY-BOX

Reagan motions for the demonstration to stop, smiling gamely. Nancy—in a white dress with black diamonds—looks around the convention, with a doomed smile on her face...

ANNOUNCER: OC

Ladies and gentlemen, the current and next President of the United States...Gerald R. Ford!

THE PODIUM - THE FORD FAMILY

JERRY, BETTY, SUSAN, STEVE arriving on the podium, and hugging each other in happy triumph. Gerry takes the mic:

GERRY FORD

Ron, will you come down...and bring Nancy!

The whole convention goes insane. As the Reagans make their way out of the skybox...the Convention Band launches into "California, Here I Come!"...

INT. PATTI'S HOUSE (TOPANGA CANYON) - NIGHT

Patti and Bernie are watching the tv...where Nancy and Reagan arrive at the podium, shaking hands with the Fords. Michael, Ron and Maureen are behind them.

BERNIE

Well, he lost. Now you don't have to go to Canada.

PATTI

(dismally)

He'll run again in '80. My mother will see to it.

TV SCREEN - CLOSER

Reagan and Nancy, arms around each other, waving to the crowd. He's smiling, happily—ever the actor on center stage. She's smiling, her heart breaking.

REAGAN

(moving to the mic)

Mr. President, Mrs. Ford..

(looking out across the sea of faces)

Someone asked me to write a letter for a time capsule that is going to be opened in Los Angeles a hundred years from now, on our Tricentennial. They suggested I write something about the problems and issues of the day...

ANGLE - Gerry Ford realizing that his own speech has become nothing but a warm-up speech for Reagan's.

REAGAN

We live in a world in which the great powers have poised and aimed at each other horrible missiles of destruction, nuclear weapons, that can in a matter of minutes destroy, virtually, the civilized world we live in...

THE CONVENTION FLOOR - Under every red, white and blue straw hat is a face transfixed.

REAGAN

And suddenly it dawned on me, those who read this letter a hundred years from now will know whether those missiles were fired. Will they look back with appreciation and say, "Thank God for those people in 1976 who headed off that loss of

freedom, who kept our world from nuclear
destruction?

By now, many faces across the floor are wet with tears.

REAGAN

This is our challenge; and this is why...we
must go forth from here united, determined
that what a great general said a few years
ago is true: there is no substitute for
victory, Mr. President.

Reagan glides offstage. The audience breaks into a ROAR.
POLITICIANS hurry to him, pumping his hand with respect.

Mike Deaver's on the floor, turns to the Aide next to him:

DEAVER

See how smart the old man is? He gave the
best speech of the entire Convention, and
never even mentioned Gerry Ford.

AS THE CROWD CONTINUES TO GO WILD...

END OF ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE - Jimmy Carter talking about the energy crisis as a national catastrophe...Gas lines...In Iran, crowds storm U.S. embassy and take almost 100 hostages...

SUPER: "1979".

EXT. REAGANS' PALISADES HOUSE - NIGHT

A cluster of cars parked outside. SOUND: MENS' LAUGHTER.

INT. REAGAN'S DEN - NIGHT

Reagan sitting in his den, holding court with Mike Deaver, Ben Welden, Arthur Bloomingdale, Holmes Tuttle, and a new man, JOHN SEARS.

REAGAN

So President Carter's working late one night when old Teddy Roosevelt's ghost drifts into the Oval Office. Jimmy turns down *Das Rheingold*, jumps up and offers him his chair. "No," says TR, "you're the president now, I'm just haunting the place. How's it going?" "Not too good," says Jimmy, "th'Iranians have imprisoned 52 of our diplomatic personnel, and having been holding them for a year." "So you sent in the Marines, right?" says TR. "Uh no, but Ah registered a strong protest at th'United Nations." TR says in a cold voice, "Anything else?" "Well, uh, th'Russians just invaded Afghanistan." TR says, "And of course you retaliated with every weapon in our arsenal." Jimmy says, "No, but Ah've withdrawn our athletes from th'Olympic Games." At this, TR blows his top and shouts, "The next thing you're going to tell me is you've given back the Panama Canal!"

MORE LAUGHTER. Nancy speaks from the doorway, where she's been listening:

NANCY

It's getting late. I'm sorry, but you'd all better go, before the Governor turns into a pumpkin.

Everybody stands up, stub out their cigars. John Sears comes up to Reagan and Nancy, positioning himself for an

introduction. Sears is young (30's), charismatic, good-looking.

REAGAN

Nancy, you remember John Sears? He tells me he worked for us back in 1976, during the second presidential campaign.

NANCY

Yes, certainly. Hello, John. Nice to see you again.

JOHN SEARS

Thank you, Mrs. Reagan.

REAGAN

He's going to be our new campaign manager.

NANCY

(wryly)

Really? So if my husband loses again, I'll have you to blame?

MORE LAUGHTER.

EXT. REAGAN'S RANCHO DEL CIELO - DAY

Reagan stands at a bank of microphones. He and Nancy are dressed in fancy embroidered cowboy outfits.

REAGAN

(nodding to the land around him)
America was born in country like this—a big dream for a big land. Mr. Carter tells us we live in an America of "diminished expectations"—well, those are big words for a very small dream.

One of the reporters—BILL SHELBY—interrupts:

BILL SHELBY

Governor Reagan—

DEAVER

No questions. No questions.

REAGAN

Go ahead.

Deaver rolls his eyes, as Shelby continues:

BILL SHELBY

Your love of the land is obvious. But President Carter says your environmental policy would turn land like yours over to the polluters.

REAGAN

If he'll check the facts, he'll find that more pollution is caused by rotting vegetation than by any so-called polluters—his name for big business, by the way.

BILL SHELBY

By "rotting vegetation", sir, do you mean trees?

REPORTERS 1 AND 2

Sir! Sir! Are you saying trees cause pollution??

Deaver winces as the reporters take it down. Nancy steps forward to Reagan, and murmurs in his ear:

NANCY

(whisper)

I think it's time to show you around this place.

REAGAN

(to the crowd, smiling)

I think it's time to show you around this place.

The reporters heard Nancy's murmur, and write that down, too. Mike Deaver is dying, as Reagan and Nancy cross to their horses and climb up.

BILL SHELBY

(singing quietly to his buddies)

"Happy trails to you..."

SNICKERS AMONG THE REPORTERS.

INT. PALISADES HOUSE - NIGHT

It's late. A knock at the front door. Nancy opens it, and admits Mike Deaver.

NANCY

Thanks for coming so late.

DEAVER

It's okay. What's the pow-wow?

Nancy walks him toward the living room, where Reagan is talking to John Sears. She whispers to him:

NANCY

It's John. He's saying things about you.

DEAVER

I should have known.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUING

As Nancy and Mike enter the living room, Reagan looks nervous, avoids Mike's gaze.

Deaver crosses to the bar, fills his glass with whiskey. While there, he notices a poster on the counter: a photo of a tree with the caption "CUT ME DOWN BEFORE I KILL MORE". He crumples it, and puts it in the wastebasket.

DEAVER

Jesus, this poster is everywhere.

SEARS

It happened on your watch.

DEAVER

I can't control every goddam thing, John.

SEARS

It's not only the poster. It's the money. We have serious money problems.

DEAVER

I know we're behind on fund-raising, but it's still early-

SEARS

It's not early. It's late. We've only got 6 months until the elections. We need more money, and we need it now. You've been campaign manager until now, and you're just not cutting it.

DEAVER

Is that what you think, Governor? Do you think I'm not cutting it?

Reagan is examining his fingernails. Sears takes control.

SEARS

Look. A campaign is like a symphony orchestra. Everybody's got to stay in their seat, and play the same music.

DEAVER

(getting mad)
What the hell?

SEARS

Mike, I've told the Governor it's got to be either you or me. I can't run a campaign when I'm being continually undermined.

REAGAN

But John, Mike's been with me for more than 15 years...

SEARS

I know, Governor. I appreciate his loyalty. But I can't stand by, and watch you lose again. I love my country too much.

Reagan turns to Nancy, who slowly nods. Mike sees it.

DEAVER

No, Governor. You don't have to make that choice. I'll resign.

Deaver walks out of the living room. Reagan follows him.

REAGAN

Mike. Mike. Please don't. Don't go.

Nancy and John Sears stand alone in silence, looking at each other. Finally, she speaks, quietly:

NANCY

You love this, don't you, John?

SEARS

I'm a patriot, Mrs. Reagan.

NANCY

Yes, of course. That's what they all say.

OC: SOUND OF THE FRONT DOOR CLOSING. Reagan comes back in.

REAGAN

The biggest man here just left the room.

Sears doesn't even seem to hear Reagan. He picks up his calendar, and starts flipping through it.

SEARS

Now, let's talk about schedule. I'm going to send you to New Hampshire on Friday. Mrs. Reagan, if you don't mind, I think you should let the Governor go alone.

Nancy's eyes harden.

NANCY

Alone? But all the other candidates' wives—

SEARS

I'm sorry. At this stage of the game, you're just a distraction. The focus needs to be on the Governor, himself.

Nancy turns to Reagan, curiously. He looks away.

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reagan and Nancy lying in bed together. Moonlight on their faces

NANCY

John Sears is the Devil.

REAGAN

He's not the Devil. But why won't he look me in the eye. He always looks me in the tie.

NANCY

Though, if anyone can get you elected, he can.

NANCY

So we're going to do what he says, no matter what?

REAGAN

(sigh)

I'm 68. If I don't do it now, next time I'll be 72. Please, honey. Stick with me, for just one more round. Please.

She puts her arms around him. He puts his arms around her.

NANCY

But what are we going to do without each other?

REAGAN

Damned if I know.

EXT. PALISADES HOUSE - DAY

The Secret Service men in the driveway, standing around a red Toyota, which is covered with anti-nuke stickers.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Patti is doubled up on the sofa, in obvious pain. She's pale, trembling.

PATTI

I read in the paper, Dad fired Mike Deaver.

NANCY

He didn't fire him. Mike quit. He has personal problems he has to work out.

PATTI

Personal problems? What kind of personal problems?

NANCY

Patti, you didn't drive all the way here from San Francisco to talk about Mike Deaver.

PATTI

Bernie said to me, Why did they fire him? I said, Bernie you have to understand something about my parents. This is the beginning of the biggest movie my parents will ever star in, and all of us are bit players. We don't matter. No we don't. The movie's more important than anything else. If I ever leave, all they'll do is call Central Casting and a new girl will be brought in to take my place. Isn't that right, Mom?

NANCY

I don't know what you've been smoking, Patti, but you'd better get off it.

PATTI

No, Mom, you see that's the problem. I haven't been smoking anything. Oh God, I wish I were stoned right now. You don't have any dope, do you?

NANCY

Patti.

PATTI

I'll take anything. Darvon. Valium. Quaaludes. Anything at all. I'm hurting so much, Mom.

Nancy is beginning to get scared.

NANCY

Patti...what have you done to yourself?

Patti sees the look on Nancy's face, and almost laughs.

PATTI

You mean, did I get an abortion? Hardly. Hardly, Mom. No, I got my tubes tied.

Stunned silence.

NANCY

You what?

PATTI

I'll be damned if I'll bring any kids into this world...the world you and your kind have created. I won't. I just won't, you hear?

(starting to cry)

Because it all sucks, see? All of it. The world is one big polluted mess, and all the good guys are dead. JFK. RFK. Martin Luther King. Even Elvis. Elvis is dead. He would have made a better president than Daddy.

(breaks off)

Mommy, help me, please! Please!

Patti sobs. Nancy is at her side in a second, putting her arms around her, holding her, consoling her...

NANCY

Oh baby...baby, what have you done?

PATTI

I'm so scared, Mommy...I'm scared. I asked the doctor, I said, Is it supposed to hurt this much? I mean it hurts so much, Mommy, I feel like someone stuck a knife into me...

Patti is a terrified 5-year-old. Nancy holds her, rocking her back and forth, stroking her hair.

NANCY

It's okay...really, baby...We'll get you another doctor, and you'll stay here, until you get better. Everything's going to be alright, it really will...

EXT. FACTORY - NEW HAMPSHIRE - DAY

New Hampshire is cold. Forbidding. No fun at all. Reagan stands outside a factory, looking for hands to shake.

EXT. PALISADES HOUSE - POOL - DAY

Patti lies on a chaise beside the pool, reading. SOUND: LAUGHTER. Patti looks up from her book at Nancy on the other side of the pool, in an expensive new dress, parading back and forth in front of Betsy Bloomingdale, who claps.

Patti scowls, hides in her book.

INT. REAGAN'S HOTEL ROOM - NEW HAMPSHIRE

Reagan talking to Sears. In the b.g., Ben Welden and SEARS' ASSISTANT.

SEARS

I'm not saying Ed Meese is a bad person, Governor, but look at him—he's completely out of the loop, and his briefcase is full of position papers which nobody's even interested in! I don't know what he's doing here!

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE - CONTINUING

TWO SECRET SERVICEMEN lounging in the hallway, cupping their ears to the door, eavesdropping:

REAGAN: OC

(muffled)

You dirty rotten bastard! This is the same speech you made when I agreed to let Mike Deaver go! I'll be goddamned if I'll stand by and see Ed Meese run out of this campaign, too!

The other Secret Service agent starts clapping his hands, in obvious support of Reagan.

INT. REAGAN'S ROOM - CONTINUING

John Sears is furious, tight-lipped:

SEARS

Governor, this is your campaign. You have to do what you need to do. But I can't stay under these conditions.

REAGAN

Why don't you look me in the eye, you son of a bitch? You can't even do that!

SEARS

(looking at his watch)

I've got another meeting to get to. We'll have to finish this conversation later.

Sears nods to Reagan and Welden, and leaves. His assistant hurries after him. Reagan turns to Welden as soon as they're gone.

REAGAN

Get. Me. My. Wife. Back.

WELDEN

(smile)

You said it, sir.

INT. MIKE DEEVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Deaver is on the phone. Happy, sleepy. But happy.

DEEVER

What about Sears?

INTERCUT WITH NANCY ON THE PHONE IN HER BEDROOM -

NANCY

We want you to come back. Will you?

DEAVER

Hell, you won't be able to keep me away.

EXT. NEW HAMPSHIRE AIRPORT - DAY

Nancy disembarking from a small plane. As she steps onto the tarmac, she runs to Reagan. They throw their arms around each other.

INT. REAGAN'S CAR - DAY

Nancy and Reagan in the back seat. She hands him a letter.

NANCY

Here. This is John Sears' letter of resignation. Hand it to him, and tell him to sign it. Give it to him this afternoon, while people are still voting. That way, if we lose, he won't think that's why he's being fired. And if we win, we won't seem ungrateful.

They smile at each other. He takes her hand.

INT. HALLWAY - REAGAN'S HOTEL - NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Secret Servicemen are standing there, as Sears comes out of Reagan's room with his briefcase. He's pissed off.

SEARS

I'm not surprised. To hell with this. I quit.

Sears' assistant follows him, more pissed. Nancy appears, following them all the way down the hall to the elevator.

The elevator opens. Sears and his aide step onto it. The last thing they see is Nancy's face, smiling:

NANCY

I'm so sorry things turned out this way, John. I do hope we won't be enemies.

ON TV - THE DEBATE

Jimmy Carter and Reagan. (ARCHIVAL TAPE)

CARTER

You have no experience in world affairs. You would negate treaties limiting nuclear weapons. You would bring us to the brink of war by plunging us into a dangerous

arms race...You would increase defense spending while eliminating medicare and social security. Can you deny any of that, Mr. Reagan?

INT. PATTI'S MODEST (LA) APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Patti and Bernie are watching the debates on tv. She's talking to Ron on the phone.

PATTI

Ron. Are you watching this farce?

INTERCUT WITH RON'S TINY NYC APARTMENT - EVENING

The walls are decorated with dance posters. Ron's on his way out, holding his dance bag labelled Joffrey Dance Co.

RON

(into the phone)

Can't. Got rehearsal. Doria's watching it, though.

He turns to DORIA PALMIERI, 29, a very attractive dancer, who is waiting at the door, gives her a kiss.

PATTI

Oooh, look out. I'll tell Mom you guys are living together.

RON

(laughs)

You're too late, she already read about it in the tabloids. So what? I think she'd rather have me living with a woman than being gay. So you still living with them?

PATTI

I had to move out. It was great being with Mom...for about 3 days. Then we got into a screaming match about Dad. How can you love somebody so much, and hate everything he stands for?

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE (L.A.) - NIGHT

Mike, 35, is glued to the tv: A CLOSEUP OF REAGAN, TIGHT-LIPPED LISTENING TO CARTER.

MICHAEL

I should have called Dad before it started. I could have wished him good luck-

A woman with a baby appears behind him, his wife COLLEEN.

COLLEEN

Why would you call him, Mike, when he never calls you?

MICHAEL

(rooting at the tv)
Don't let him get away with that, Dad! Let him have it!

INTERCUT REAGAN WITH DEBATE TAPE OF CARTER.

REGAN

Mr. Carter seems to want to depict me as some sort of warmonger. I'm a father of sons, and a grandson. I don't want to see another generation of American boys sent to die on some foreign shore.

INT. DEBATE THEATRE - AUDIENCE - CONTINUING

Maureen, 41, is watching intensely from the audience. Nancy and Deaver sit nearby.

CARTER

To put this in perspective, I had a discussion with my daughter Amy a few days ago. I asked her what the most important issue was, and she said nuclear weaponry, and the control of nuclear arms...

The audience TITTERS. Nancy leans over to Deaver, murmurs:

NANCY

Amy is what, 12 years old?

CARTER

The fact is, Mr. Reagan has a long-standing inclination toward the use of military power...

Reagan looks at him, shaking his head in pity.

REAGAN

Well, there you go again.

The audience bursts into laughter and applause. Deaver and Nancy smile at each other.

MODERATOR

Order, order!

MAUREEN

(jumping to her feet)
Go get him, Dad!

Reagan turns to the camera, to the people:

REAGAN

Just ask yourself this: are you better off than you were 4 years ago? Is our economy better than it was 4 years ago? Is America as strong and respected as it was 4 years ago? If your answer to these questions is yes, then it's obvious who you should vote for.

INT. PATTI'S APARTMENT -

She watches as Reagan concludes:

REAGAN: TV

But if you don't think the course we've been on for the last 4 years is the one we should follow for the next 4...then I could suggest another choice that you have.

The audience applauds.

PATTI

(in horror)
It's going to happen. It's really going to happen...

EXT. POLLING PLACE (SANTA MONICA) - DAU

It's in someone's garage. In the driveway, a LOCAL CAMERA CREW is taping, as Patti emerges from a curtained booth.

LOCAL REPORTER

Patti! Did you vote for your father?

PATTI

(thin smile)
I can't. I'm a registered Democrat.

INT. SAN ONOFRE HOUSE - BATHROOM/BEDROOM - DAY

Nancy comes out of the bathroom, a towel wrapped around her.

NANCY

I can't stand it any longer, I'm going to turn on the TV.

INTERCUT REAGAN stepping into the shower.

REAGAN

It's too early, the polls haven't even closed.

NANCY

They have, in the East.

The phone rings; she answers.

NANCY

Hello.

ANGLE - Ronnie showering, as Nancy raps on the glass.

NANCY

Honey? President Carter is on the phone...

REAGAN

Tell him I'm in the shower.

Nancy raps on the glass again, harder.

REAGAN

I'm joking, I'm joking.

He turns off the water, wraps a towel around himself, and goes to the phone in the bedroom.

REAGAN

(carefully)

Hello, Mr. President.

Nancy stares at him, as he listens.

REAGAN

You too, Mr. President. Thank you.

He hangs up. Nancy waits.

REAGAN

(stunned)

He's conceded. He wanted to congratulate me.

They stare at each other, frozen. On tv, JOHN CHANCELLOR IS REPORTING IT'S REAGAN IN A LANDSLIDE. Slowly, she crosses to him, and takes his hand. They turn to the tv, in their towels...

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTABLISHING - WHITE HOUSE - A WINTRY NIGHT

INT. ELEVATOR - EAST WING - WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUING

SUPER: "1987"

Deaver and SENATOR JOHN TOWER, riding up in the elevator.

DEAVER

I told the President that he could be impeached. He's scared. But he's not too scared to listen.

(pause)

Senator Tower...I don't know if he's innocent. But all he wanted was to free the hostages. That's all he wanted.

Tower shakes his head, looks front.

TOWER

I'd like to believe that. I really would.

The elevator doors pop open.

INT. CORRIDOR - EAST WING - WHITE HOUSE -

Deaver and Tower walk down the hall to Reagans' door. The White House Guard knocks on the door with a gloved hand.

WHITE HOUSE GUARD

Mr. President...It's Mr. Deaver and Senator Tower, sir.

SUPER: "TO BE CONTINUED"

END OF ACT SEVEN
END OF NIGHT ONE

NIGHT TWO:
ACT EIGHT

INT. WHITE HOUSE - REAGAN SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: "1987"

Reagan in his chair, wearing his pajamas and bathrobe. He looks old. Michael Deaver sits next to him.

Facing Reagan is SENATOR JOHN TOWER, head of the Tower Commission. Tower is leaning forward, intensely.

JOHN TOWER

Mr. President...as head of the Presidential Commission to investigate Iran-Contra...I'm here to tell you our findings. One year ago, you personally approved the sale of antitank missiles to Iran for the purpose of exchanging arms for hostages. You knew that Iran was on the United States' list of terrorist nations, and you knew that Congress had enacted an embargo against Iran. Nevertheless, you defied the United States Congress, and you defied the law.

Reagan's left hand twitches. Tower sees it, but continues:

JOHN TOWER

The money from the arms sales...38 million dollars...was channeled through a covert network of dummy corporations...4 million was diverted to the Nicaraguan Contras. Of the remaining 34 million, a majority wound up in private pockets. In conclusion, Mr. President, the action that you ordered has not only destroyed this country's foreign policy...it turned us into the laughing-stock of the Middle East, and the world.

Reagan looks even more shaken. He glances at Nancy, who is in the doorway, terrified.

REAGAN

I'm sorry, Senator Tower...but I just...I can't believe that anyone under me would do the things you described...

JOHN TOWER

No, sir. Not "anybody". You, sir. You. You did it. You approved it.

REAGAN

No, no, that's not true. I...I don't remember anything about this...

JOHN TOWER

(grimly determined)

Mr. President, I'm a Republican. You're the leader of my party. I believe in you, and I respect you. I hope you respect me, too, which is why you hired me to carry out this investigation.

REAGAN

I do respect you, Senator Tower...but-

JOHN TOWER

(overriding)

I came here tonight to suggest...to urge you, sir...to hire a criminal attorney. Because what we're talking about here is impeachment. Impeachment.

Nancy interrupts, breaking:

NANCY

Stop. Stop. You can't treat him like this.

Reagan's imploding—he's lost and frightened. Tower modifies his tone, talking to him gently, as if to a child:

JOHN TOWER

I know you don't remember, Mr. President... but the Commission has ample evidence. We have memos, we have testimony...Whether or not you remember it now, there was a time when you knew everything.

Silence. Deaver rubs his face, on the verge of tears:

DEAVER

Jesus Christ...Jesus Christ...

Reagan pulls together the shreds of his dignity.

REAGAN

Senator Tower...I want to thank you for running the investigation the way you have...for your services to this country.

TOWER

Please sir, you've got to take responsibility for what you did. You've got to stand up and say it to the American people...or else you'll be impeached.

Deaver leans forward to Reagan. Quietly, gently:

MIKE DEAVER

Your speechwriter can write it for you, sir...whatever you want to say...You can say it in your own way.

TOWER

I'm sorry, sir. I'm so sorry.

Reagan turns to Nancy. They hold each other in their gaze, across a gulf of desperation.

DISSOLVE TO:

INAUGURAL PARADE -

SUPER: "1981", over ARMY BAND MUSIC ("YANKEE DOODLE").

Reagan and Nancy walking down Pennsylvania Avenue, smiling, waving to the CROWDS...Everywhere, POLICE...SECRET SERVICE AGENTS on the rooftops...Reagan is beaming, playing the role of President. Nancy is smiling, too, but glancing at the crowd nervously.

INT. NANCY'S DRESSING ROOM - EAST WING/WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Nancy is being zipped into her dress, by ADOLFO'S TWO ASSISTANTS, as ADOLFO himself supervises. She looks fabulous. Strong, glamorous.

ADOLFO

Something's wrong with the hem. Peter, I want you to measure it again.

TONY THE HAIRDRESSER and HIS ASSISTANT MARTY are blow-drying her.

TONY THE HAIRDRESSER

Perfect. Perfect. Like goddam Marie Antoinette, if you ask me.

NANCY

Please, Tony. Can you compare me to

somebody else?

TONY

There was nothing wrong with Marie Antoinette, Mrs. Reagan. And she never said that thing, let 'em eat cake, either. Her only problem was, she wasn't French.

He runs a finger dramatically across his throat.

NANCY

Tony, stop.

The SOCIAL SECRETARY and the PERSONAL SECRETARY arrive:

PERSONAL SECRETARY

Can we hurry this along, please? We have a photography session in 5 minutes.

SOCIAL SECRETARY

Mrs. Reagan, I've made up your schedule for each of the ten inaugural balls...

NANCY

Is somebody going to wake up Ronnie?

PERSONAL SECRETARY

They're doing it now.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL BEDROOM - EAST WING - DAY

Reagan, still in his inauguration suit, lying on top of his bed. Dead to the world. Deaver and the VALET are standing over him in the dark, trying gently to wake him up.

DEAVER

Sir...Sir...Sir...Mr. President.

Reagan opens his eyes, groggy.

REAGAN

Do I have to get up?

The valet pulls him to his feet, starts adjusting his tie...

REAGAN

I dreamed I was back in Illinois...I was talking to my mother...she was saying something important...but I can't remember what it was...

INT. PARLOR - EAST WING OF THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The Reagan children have gathered for the Inaugural portrait: MAUREEN (40), tight, controlling; MICHAEL (35) playful and needy; his wife, COLLEEN, and their baby boy, CAMERON; PATTI (28) resentful; and RON (22) sweet and irreverent. As they banter, the WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER AND HIS ASSISTANT are nearby, setting up.

Maureen is all over the room, collecting match-boxes. She shows them to everybody:

MAUREEN

"The President's House". I've collected 18 of them, so far.

RON

Maureen, that's stealing.

MAUREEN

It's not stealing. It's Dad's house, now. Besides, we pay for them with our taxes.

Michael turns to Colleen, hurt:

MICHAEL

I've been here for 24 hours, and he hasn't even spoken to me. Neither has she.

PATTI

Michael, you're a glutton for punishment,

RON

Shut up, Patti. It's only their inauguration. They're a little bit busy.

MAUREEN

Please, everybody. Don't fight. Not today.

PATTI

You call this a fight? This is nothing. Wait till you see the seating chart.

MAUREEN

You're stoned, aren't you? My God, you came to Dad's inauguration stoned.

PATTI

I'm not stoned. How dare you say that?

MICHAEL

I need a drink.

PATTI

Dig it. Let's all get drunk.

RON

(singing, low)

"Y'say you want a rev-o-lu-tion..."

Nancy arrives, followed by ADOLFO (the designer), ADOLFO'S
2 ASSISTANTS, and TONY, THE HAIRDRESSER.

NANCY

(tense, smiling)

Maureen, aren't you wearing any make-up?
Michael, that tie is horrendous. The only
one who looks nice is Ron. Tony.

She nods to Patti's hair, and he descends on her with a
blow-dryer.

NANCY

Patti, I'm telling you--there will be no
more blue jeans permitted in this White
House. Women will not wear pants of any
kind. We do not wear clogs. We represent
our country.

PATTI

Stop. I like my hair the way it is--

INT. HALLWAY - APPROACHING THE PARLOR -

Reagan and Michael Deaver hurry down the hall, along with
Reagan's secretary, HELENE VAN DAMME (30's, pretty):

REAGAN

As soon as the hostages land, we have to
bring them over to the White House. And
we'll give them a party. A big
celebration. With medals.

DEAVER

Medals, sir?

REAGAN

Alright, forget the medals. But they're American heroes. We need heroes.

DEAVER

Yes, sir.

REAGAN

Especially after the last 4 years. Poor Jimmy Carter. No President deserves to be humiliated like that. It's a lesson to us all, Mike. A lesson to us all.

As DEAVER FOLLOWS REAGAN INTO THE PARLOR -

Michael comes over, grinning, hugs Reagan.

MICHAEL

Dad...Dad, I'm so proud of you-

PHOTOGRAPHER

Mr. President, Mrs. Reagan, could you sit down please...Could I have all the children behind you and Mrs. Reagan? What's the grandchild's name? Who's going to hold him?

COLLEEN

Cameron, come here.

The others take their places. As Nancy and Reagan make their way to theirs seat, she murmurs to him, happily:

NANCY

Ten inaugural balls, Ronnie. Ten. How can we possibly go to them all?

MUSIC: "HAIL TO THE CHIEF"

FLASH - INAUGURAL FAMILY PORTRAIT - COLOR

Everyone is smiling, civilized. An image of the perfect American family.

DISSOLVE TO:

MUSIC: "HAIL TO THE CHIEF" as Reagan and Nancy slowly descend the stairs to the first Inaugural ball...to the white-gloved applause of the crowd...Edith and Loyal Davis...POLITICOS AND SOCIALITES, each one more magnificently dressed than the last...The entire effect is utterly regal. Versailles.

REAGAN: VO

Good evening. I'm speaking to you tonight to give you a report on the state of the nation's economy. I regret to say that we're in the worst economic mess since the Great Depression...

DISSOLVE TO: ANOTHER INAUGURAL BALL...This one in a downtown ballroom, but just as regal, just as opulent...WAITERS cruising with trays of caviar and champagne...WOMEN DRIPPING WITH JEWELS...

REAGAN: VO

But make no mistake about it—we're going to go to work and turn this around.

DISSOLVE TO: YET ANOTHER INAUGURAL BALL...As Reagan and Nancy waltz (STRAUSS) to the soft applause of the CROWD...They dance so beautifully together...Then, they're joined by DOZENS OF OTHER DANCING COUPLES...

REAGAN: VO

...We are special among the nations of the earth. Our government has no power except that granted by we, the people. It must work with us, not over us; stand by our side, not ride on our back...

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

Flanked by American flags, Reagan's at his desk, looking directly at the camera...at us.

REAGAN

We can lecture our children about extravagance, or we can simply cut their allowance. We've let spending get out of control. It's time for Judgement Day.

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy and Reagan lying on top of their bed, in their Inaugural ball clothes...holding hands...fast asleep. Exhausted.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

A wintry day. Snow on the White House lawn.

INT. CORRIDOR APPROACHING THE OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUING

Mike Deaver coming down the hall, talking to JIM BAKER (50's), Chief of Staff, and Ed Meese (50's), Special Counsel. The three of them are known as "the Troika".

DEAVER

(to Baker)

One more thing, Jim. He's hard of hearing. If you want him to hear you, stand right in front of him, and raise your voice.

MEESE

And if you want him to get something in particular, dress it up, give it a little sex appeal. Metaphors, analogies. Compare it to a movie he's seen. He's an actor. Never forget he's an actor.

DEAVER

He's an actor, but he's deceptively smart.

They stop at Helene Van Damme's desk. She looks up.

HELENE VON DAMM

Good morning, Mr. Deaver. Mr. Baker. Mr. Meese.

(in a whisper)

They've already started. It was General Haig. He insisted.

Deaver, Baker, and Meese look at each other. Sigh.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUING

Deaver, Baker, and Meese enter, and stand by the door, waiting for their eyes to adjust to the darkness.

AL HAIG, (50s), Secretary of State, is standing with a pointer beside a grainy, black-and-white documentary, pointing to the figures of 2 men, as they move in and out of the frame.

HAIG

(in a loud voice)

...This is Brezhnev. And this is Libyan leader Moammar Qadaffi.

BAKER

(to Meese, muttering)

Jesus, what is this? "Sesame Street"?

AL HAIG

The Soviets are funding the Libyan regime. Selling them jets, missiles, tanks, etc. At the same time, Brezhnev has recently approached us about resuming talks on a nuclear freeze.

Reagan is doodling on a note-pad, as he watches.

REAGAN

A freeze, huh?

Haig peers into the dark, sees Deaver, Baker, Meese:

HAIG

(sarcastically)

Ah. I see the "troika" has finally arrived. Are you going to just stand there, or are you going to sit down?

Deaver, Baker, and Meese feel their way to the sofa.

REAGAN

It's like Armageddon, isn't it, Al? The Bible says Russia will be defeated by a leader from the West, who will be revealed as the Antichrist. He, too, will fall, and then Jesus Christ will triumph in the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

HAIG

(joking)

Well, sir—if it's Armageddon you want, give me the word, and I'll pave over the USSR, Libya, and Cuba, too.

REAGAN

Oh yeah? Can you pave them over, put parking stripes on them, and be back in time for the Fourth of July?

Haig and Reagan laugh. Deaver, Baker, and Meese look at each other nervously. Haig sees their nervousness, and tries to stop laughing.

HAIG

Yes, sir. But far as the public is concerned, we've got to tone down the rhetoric. With all due respect.

REAGAN

I don't give a damn about rhetoric. I want those Reds to know, this place is under new management.

The film comes to an end. As the PROJECTIONIST turns off the equipment, and hits the lights, Haig pulls a letter out of his briefcase:

HAIG

Yes, sir. In light of that, I've written an exploratory letter to Brezhnev. You just need to sign it.

He hands it to Reagan. Reagan hands it back.

REAGAN

That's great, Al. But I write my own letters.

Haig is thrown.

HAIG

Excuse me sir, but I'm the Secretary of State, so it's my job to-

REAGAN

You're a great Secretary of State, Al. But I'm going to write to Brezhnev personally. I think we need a summit, to talk about all this. But I don't want to freeze nuclear weapons, I want to eliminate them.

Haig lurches.

HAIG

What the hell--? We can't eliminate nuclear weapons!

REAGAN

We can, if we build a new weapon that scares the hell out of them.

HAIG

(irritated)

And what exactly would that be?

Reagan holds up the drawing he's doodled: a missile marked "USA" zooming out of space to hit another missile marked with the hammer and sickle of the USSR.

REAGAN

I call it "mutual assured survival". It's going to change the course of human history.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Haig exits the Oval Office, hurries off, looking stricken, followed by Deaver, Baker, and Meese who look almost as stricken.

BAKER

Great. A summit to talk about weapons in outer space.

DEAVER

Has he talked to you guys about this missile-thing before?

BAKER

Never.

MEESE

I'd better go get Haig, and catch him before he takes a heart attack.

INT. EAST WING - KITCHEN

Nancy's at the China Closet with a dignified WHITE HOUSE BUTLER (70). She's examining a plate, chipped and stained.

BUTLER

...These are the plates Bess Truman bought...and Lady Bird...and Rosalyn Carter. There's been a bit of breakage over the years, as you might expect.

NANCY

But they're all different. Didn't anybody think of trying to match them? How am I going to serve a State dinner? We might as well use paper plates. Mike, thank God you're here.

She's just noticed Mike Deaver sticking his head in.

DEAVER

Can I speak to you a minute?

INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY

Nancy and Deaver stand looking at all the rich furnishings as they arrive: ornate tables, sofas, artwork, etc.

NANCY

I can't redecorate the entire White House for 50 thousand. Forget it. I'm going to need a million, at least.

DEAVER

But do you see how it looks? The President is talking about cut-backs—

NANCY

(overriding)

I know how it looks, but it won't cost the tax-payers a penny. It will all come from Betsy and her friends.

DEAVER

(grimly)

And they'll all take a nice big fat tax write-off, I suppose.

NANCY

What's wrong with that?

DEAVER

Nothing. Nothing's wrong with it.

(pause)

Times hard hard, Nancy. We've cut back a lot of sacred cows...after school programs, school lunches, welfare. And it doesn't help when one of our own people tries to re-classify catsup as a vegetable in school cafeterias.

Nancy gives him a look.

NANCY

This is the *White House*, Mike. In the next 4 years, at least 80,000 dignitaries, politicians, and ambassadors are going to come here.

(pause)

Anyway, who cares what the press says? They're going to criticize me, no matter what I do. I no longer give a damn.

An AIDE interrupts:

AIDE

Mrs. Reagan. I have a phone call from your son.

NANCY

Excuse me, Mike.

She starts to leave, turns back.

NANCY

And you know what else? Marie Antoinette never said, let them eat cake.

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - EAST WING/WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Nancy lying in bed, as Reagan undresses. She sneezes. Sneezes again.

NANCY

I can't believe he got married without us. Why would he do that to us? God, it's dusty in here.

REAGAN

Well, he probably didn't want it to turn it a circus. That's what it would have been, if we'd gone.

NANCY

But Ronnie, he's your only son. Don't you care?

REAGAN

Sure, I do, but we're going to go see him in New York next week. We'll get to spend time with him, then.

Nancy's still miffed.

NANCY

Think of it. Our son marrying the daughter of an Italian house-painter.

He steps over the torn rug, and climbs into bed.

REAGAN

Well, I don't know whether we're any better. A couple of ham actors...worse, movie-actors...living in the White House.

He tickles her. She laughs, pushes him away. He tickles her again.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUING

The White House Guard is sitting, watching tv. He hears the REAGANS' LAUGHTER. Smiles. Settles back into his show.

MOVIE - BLACK AND WHITE ("MURDER IN THE AIR")

Vintage 1940: a large shiny ray-gun; an Admiral speaking to someone OS:

ADMIRAL

The Inertia Projector is the most potent weapon ever invented. It can paralyze electrical current, thus destroying all enemy planes in the air.

INT. BILL SHELBY'S APT. - DAY

Shelby is watching the movie on a VCR, as he dials the phone:

ADMIRAL

It not only makes the United States invincible in war, but in doing so, promises to become the greatest force for world peace ever discovered.

The film cuts to Young Reagan, listening intently.

Shelby picks up the video cover: *Murder in the Air*, starring Ronald Reagan.

SHELBY

Hey, Deaver—I got something for comment. Think I know where Ronnie got the idea for *Star Wars*. Ever seen *Murder in the Air*?

INT. DEAVER'S OFFICE (INTERCUT SHELBY)

Deaver feels sick.

DEAVER

Yeah, great flick. Is this the old, "He can't movies from reality" thing? No comment.

INT. THEATRE (NEW YORK CITY) - MUSIC

A performance of the Joffrey Ballet. Ron in a graceful pas-de-deux, as...

IN A BALCONY BOX

Reagan and Nancy watch the dancing, riveted. Ron's wife, Doria, beside them. In the b.g., one Secret Service agent turns to another, and makes a limp-wrist gesture.

ON THE STAGE

Ron does a perfect leap, lifting his partner, whirling her...

IN THE BALCONY BOX

Doria checks the Reagans' for a reaction—he's shaking his head, in wonder. Nancy is shining with pride.

INT. BACKSTAGE - THEATRE - NIGHT

The Secret Service move Nancy and Reagan THRU A CRUSH OF DANCERS, MEDIA, WELL-WISHERS toward the men's dressing room...

INT. MEN'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUING

It's backstage at the Moulin Rouge. Mirrors, shadowy lights...MALE DANCERS in various states of undress, showering, getting dressed for a night of parties, as the Secret Service explodes into the room to check it over.

DANCER 1

Hey! What's this? Get out of here!

DANCER 2

Don't touch my stuff!

ANGLE - Ron, still in tights and full stage make-up, peeling his shirt off, suddenly realizes:

RON

Oh Christ. Sorry, everybody—it's my parents.

Suddenly the door opens, and the Reagans are whooshed into the room. The dancers freeze, in genuine awe. Reagan tries to cover his discomfort:

REAGAN

It's okay, boys. It's only us, and God knows, we've seen plenty of dressing rooms. Don't be embarrassed.

But the dancers are embarrassed, especially as the room fills with PHOTOGRAPHERS AND REPORTERS, catching Nancy as

she runs over to Ron, and plants a big kiss right on his lips:

NANCY

Oh, Ron! You were so wonderful!

RON

Thanks, Mom.

Reagan stares uncomfortably at Ron's make-up (reds, greens, yellows, a la Nureyev) and sticks out his hand, man-to-man.

REAGAN

Yes, sir. You were always a natural athlete. Football, basketball.

(loudly)

You're all boy.

NANCY

(gushing)

Ron, we had no idea--did we, Ronnie--we had no idea how great you were!

RON

No, I'm not great. I started too late. But I love it. Mom. I do.

REAGAN

Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly. There was nothing wrong with them, either. Strong. Stronger than most fullbacks. Did I ever tell you about the time I had dinner with Gene?

RON

Doria! Come in!

Ron's talking to Doria, who has appeared in the doorway. She smiles, shyly.

NEWSPAPER HEADLINES -

Newspaper photo of Reagan, Nancy, Dora, and Ron all smiling broadly, arms around each other. The headline blares: "He's Not Gay, Says Proud Papa".

The newspaper spins, and becomes another front page: Headline: "Reagan Passes Largest Tax Cut in History!"

The newspaper spins, and becomes another front page..A photo of Reagan's drawing of the missile. The headline screams, "Countdown to Star Wars!"

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. STREET - DAY

The Presidential motorcade—3 limos—moving through traffic.

INT. SECOND LIMO - CONTINUING

Reagan rides alone, looking over a speech.

INT. THIRD LIMO (CONTROL CAR) - CONTINUING

Deaver rides with JAMES BRADY (40's) Press Secretary, REAGAN'S DOCTOR, and an ARMY COLONEL holding "the Football": a briefcase which contains orders in case of nuclear attack.

DEAVER

We're tight today, Jim, he's got 2 appointments this afternoon, so let's keep him moving. Don't let him stop for any questions.

EXT. WASHINGTON HILTON - DAY

Police and Secret Service have cordoned off a CROWD OF MEDIA AND ONLOOKERS as the motorcade pulls up and unloads.

As Reagan gets out, onlookers applaud—except for a group of boisterous TEAMSTERS DEMONSTRATING, chanting:

TEAMSTERS

We want job! We want jobs! We want jobs!

Cameras click and whirr, reporters shout questions, as Reagan cups his ear and keeps moving, smiling at one and all.

INT. WASHINGTON HILTON - LOBBY

A sign by the door says "ANNUAL LUNCHEON: AFL-CIO"...and a CONTINGENT OF UNION LEADERS are standing nearby to greet Reagan as he arrives.

AFL-CIO LEADER

Welcome, Mr. President.

REAGAN

Always glad to see union men. I was president of the Screen Actors Guild for 6 terms, you know. We fought off the Communist take-over of Hollywood.

AFL-CIO LEADER
We're still fighting, sir.

Reagan whispers irritably, to Deaver as they head in:

REAGAN
Why didn't somebody tell me this was
lunch? I've already eaten.

DEAVER
I thought I did. Sorry, sir-

REAGAN
(an angry sigh)
Well, it won't be the first time I've
pushed chicken around on a plate, but
somebody needs to tell me these things!

Deaver falls back to Brady:

DEAVER
I told him.

BRADY
He's forgetting a lot of things nowadays.

EXT. EXCLUSIVE RESTAURANT (WASHINGTON) - DAY

A limo pulled up beside the door; a detail of Secret Service, waiting. One of them, AGENT GEORGE OPFER (30's) is on a walkie-talkie, using Nancy's code-name:

GEORGE OPFER
(to the others)
Zephyr's coming out.

The others spring into action, blocking pedestrian traffic, opening the limo door. Nancy hurries out of the restaurant, nervous, on edge.

OPFER
That was a short lunch, Mrs. Reagan

NANCY
Something's wrong. Take me back to the
White House.

OPFER
What's wrong?

NANCY

I don't know. But something's wrong.
Quick.

She gets into the limo, and it speeds away.

EXT. WASHINGTON HILTON - DAY

The demonstrators have gone. The media is still here though, as Secret Service Agent TIM MCCARTHY (30) gets on his walkie-talkie, using Reagan's code-name:

MCCARTHY

Rawhide's on his way.

The agents go into alert mode: the 3 limos start their engines. TV cameras start rolling. Reporters get ready.

Agent JERRY PARR (50) emerges from the hotel with Reagan, followed by Deaver, Brady, more Secret Service.

REPORTERS

Mr. President! Mr. President!

Reagan continues to his limo, smiling, cupping his hand to his ear, as if not hearing them.

DEAVER

(to Brady)

Tell them there's no statement. Go!

He shoves Brady toward the reporters as...

A SERIES OF POPPING SOUNDS—6 of them. Brady crumples, and falls. Deaver dives to the pavement, as...

Reagan looks toward the sound, hand raised in a wave, his smile frozen...

Agent McCarthy jumps in front of him. McCarthy goes down, shot in the stomach.

Agent Jerry Parr grabs Reagan, shoving him into the limo, diving on top of him...As Reagan hits the floor:

REAGAN

Ow.

A voice is shouting in his ear:

PARR
(to the driver)
Haul ass! Let's get out of here!

He feels the car lurch forward...hears the TIRES SQUEAL...
POLICE SIRENS SCREAMING...

EXT. WASHINGTON HILTON - SIDEWALK - CONTINUING

Deaver jumping into the Control Car, looking back to see...

McCarthy and a WASHINGTON COP writhing on the sidewalk. Jim Brady lies motionless, bleeding from a severe head wound.

Nearby, a KNOT OF POLICE AND SECRET SERVICE wrestle someone to the ground—a blond young man with a cherubic face (JOHN HINCKLEY, JR.)

INT. REAGAN'S LIMO/MOVING FAST - CONTINUING

Agent Parr is lying on top of Reagan on the rear floor. Reagan is coughing and choking with pain.

REAGAN
Get off, you sonofabitch...I think you broke my ribs...

PARR
Sorry, Mr. President. Let me check to see if you were hit.

Parr climbs off, helps him onto the seat, begins to examine him, feeling him all over.

Suddenly he sees thin, watery blood dribbling from Reagan's mouth. He stares at it.

PARR
(to the driver)
Go to Washington Hospital. Seventeenth Street.

DRIVER
(rattled)
Where? We're going to the White House—

PARR
Washington University Hospital, dammit!
Go! Go! Go!

The driver makes a screeching turn.

INT. NANCY'S OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUING

Nancy's paging anxiously through her calendar. She comes to March. Certain days have been crossed out in red--today, March 30th, has been crossed out, too.

NANCY

Oh God. No. No.

She looks up, as a Secret Service agent appears in the door.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Mrs. Reagan--

NANCY

Something's happened to Ronnie.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

There's been a shooting. Other people were wounded, but the President wasn't hit--

NANCY

Where is he.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

He's fine, he's been taken to the hospital for observation--

Closing her calendar, grabbing her purse:

NANCY

Which hospital! Take me there. Now.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

I'm sorry, ma'am. My orders are to keep you here. There could be more than one shooter, out there--

NANCY

Take me to my husband! Now! If you won't take me, I'll walk, do you hear? I'll walk!

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON HOSPITAL - ER ENTRANCE - DAY

EMERGENCY PERSONNEL are waiting as President's limo arrives.

INT. REAGAN'S LIMO - CONTINUING

Reagan is pale, and having severe difficulty breathing.

PARR

We're here, sir.

REAGAN

Don't help me. I'm going to get out by myself, okay?

Reagan wipes the blood from his mouth, and as the door is opened by EMERGENCY PERSONNEL, climbs out.

EXT. CONTROL CAR - CONTINUING

Deaver is getting out of the control car, and sees...Reagan walking into the ER, smiling and waving, as if nothing has happened. Deaver hurries after him.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - CONTINUING

Instantly, as Reagan's through the door, his knees buckle, and his eyes roll up. The doctors lunge to catch him.

END OF ACT EIGHT

ACT NINE

EXT. WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - ER ENTRANCE - DAY

CHAOS: D.C. police, Secret Service, Media roaring up in mobile vans and cars. Deaver's waiting on the sidewalk as...

Nancy's limo pulls up, unescorted. She jumps out to a barrage of shouted questions:

MEDIA

Mrs. Reagan! Mrs. Reagan! Is the President alright? Is he wounded?

She almost runs to Deaver, who quickly takes her into...

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM -

Even greater chaos, here: a frightening cacophony of loud voices, shouts; scurrying doctors; dazed patients; panicky policemen. Deaver raises his voice over the noise:

DEAVER

Nancy, he took a bullet--but he's okay, he's going to be fine--

NANCY

They told me he wasn't hurt--

DEAVER

They didn't know. But he's okay, he's going to be fine--

NANCY

I've got to see him, Mike--they don't know how it is, with us. He's got to know I'm here.

DEAVER

Come on.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM

Deaver escorts Nancy through the chaos. They see a stricken woman being helped through the entrance.

DEAVER

Sarah Brady's here.

NANCY

Oh my God...Is Jim alright?

Deaver shakes his head. The trauma room doors open--Nancy goes through them alone. He stays outside.

INT. TRAUMA ROOM

Nancy enters a scene of horror: bloody bandages, tubes scattered on the floor, empty blood bags, the remains of Reagan's suit tossed in a corner, and..

...on a bed, Reagan's naked body, hooked to machines--4 IVs pumping blood into him--surrounded by DOCTORS AND NURSES. For several moments, they talk, unaware that she's standing there.

One of the doctors is DR. AARON (48):

DOCTOR AARON

How much blood has he taken?

NURSE 2

Almost 2 and a half quarts. He's losing 300 cc's every 15 minutes.

NURSE 3

Blood pressure still falling--52 over 40.

Nurse 3 looks up, sees Nancy. They all fall silent, and make room for her to approach.

Nancy looks down at Reagan's pale face, his dazed, frightened eyes, his lips caked with dried blood under a clear plastic oxygen mask. She reaches for his hand. He tries to speak. She leans closer to hear:

REAGAN

(muffled, under the mask)

Honey...I forgot to duck.

Fighting tears, she leans down and kisses him. Dr. Aaron gently leads her away.

DR. AARON

The bullet is very close to his heart. We need your permission to operate immediately.

She can only stare at him.

INT. CORRIDOR - MINUTES LATER

Reagan is being wheeled to the OR. Nancy beside him, clutching his hand. A phalanx of doctors, nurses, and

Secret Service pulling on surgical gowns moves with them.
As they move down the hall, Nancy sees...

...another man on a blood-soaked gurney. His head seems to
have exploded. It's Jim Brady.

Nancy fighting for control, continues with Reagan until the
doors of the OR open. She bends down and kisses Reagan on
the forehead, looks into his dazed eyes.

NANCY

I love you more than anything in the whole
wide world.

He's wheeled inside. The Secret Service follows them in.
Nancy stares at the doors, as they close after him.

INT. OPERATING ROOM

The Secret Service, CIA and FBI are jockeying for
positions, as the doctors prepare to operate.

FBI AGENT

FBI.

SECRET SERVICE

Fat lot of good you guys did.

CIA AGENT

Hey, come on. I'm CIA, move over.

DR. AARON

Come on, you guys. Back off, we've got to
work here.

Aaron leans in to Reagan.

DR. AARON

We're going to put you to sleep now.

Reagan looks up at the green figures leaning over him.

REAGAN

(faintly)

Please tell me you're Republicans.

The doctors chuckle.

DR. AARON

Today we're all Republicans, Mr.
President.

TV - COLOR

Footage of the shooting: Reagan smiling and waving; then being pushed into the limo; bodies on the sidewalk; the melee as Hinckley is mobbed.

NANCY STARES AT THE TV

hypnotized, unable to look away. Deaver is beside her, watching *Brady on the pavement*. He changes the channel.

TV - COLOR

A White House press conference, live: Deputy Press Secretary LARRY SPEAKES taking questions from REPORTERS:

REPORTER 1 (OS)

Have the Armed Forces been put on alert?

SPEAKES

Not that I'm aware of.

REPORTER 2 (OS)

What about Vice President Bush? Has he assumed the Presidency?

SPEAKES

The Vice President is flying to Washington as we speak. There is no plan at this time--

Suddenly a man shoves in beside him--Al Haig, flushed, panicky.

HAIG: ON TV

Gentlemen, I have to clarify that. No military alert has been ordered. I repeat--we are not on alert.

REPORTER 3

But who's running the Government?

HAIG: TV

Constitutionally, gentlemen, you have the Presidency, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State, in that order--

DEAVER

For God's sake! He's got it wrong, wrong! It's the Speaker of the House!

HAIG: TV

As of now, I am in control here--pending
the return of the Vice President--

DEAVER

Jesus, Haig's gone nuts! I've got to find
a phone!

He hurries out the door. Nancy keeps staring at Haig's
crazed face.

UNDERWATER -

Reagan swimming underwater, wearing his lifeguard uniform.
Swimming frantically, looking this way and that. Searching.
Searching. Suddenly, something grabs his leg. A HAND.

He explodes with fright, SCREAMING. Starts clawing his way
toward the surface. But the surface is too far up. He can't
get there. His lungs are about to explode.

OVERHEAD -

Reagan jerking away in his Recovery Room bed, gasping,
trying to rise up, pulling at the respirator tube in his
throat. Nancy's beside him, panics:

NANCY

Oh my God, he can't breathe! Nurse, he
can't breathe! Help him!

TWO RECOVERY NURSES are here, too.

RECOVERY NURSE

It's okay, the machine is breathing for
him.

(to Reagan)

Let it breathe for you. You're okay, Mr.
President. Trust me.

He looks around, realizing he's in the Recovery Room,
surrounded by machines. An EKG monitor, a respirator, lines
and tubes connected to his body. Beyond the equipment,
Agent Parr, as well as the CIA and FBI agents. He tries to
settle down.

Nancy stays close to him, stroking his hand, anxiously:

NANCY

They took out the bullet...the doctor said
you're strong...strong as a man half your
age, that's what he said...but I wasn't

surprised, we knew it all along, didn't we, my darling...

Agent Parr approaches:

AGENT PARR

Mrs. Reagan. We need to think about getting you back to the White House.

NANCY

No. I'm going to stay here. I can sleep in one of these beds.

Dr. Aaron steps in.

DR. AARON

Mrs. Reagan, if you stay all night, it will look like he's worse than he is. You need to go home.

NANCY

No. I'm staying with my husband.

DR. AARON

I'm sorry, but I'm not going to allow that. You will leave this hospital now.

Nancy looks at him, ready to explode.

AGENT PARR

He's right. You can come back in the morning. Please, Mrs. Reagan.

TV - COLOR

A yearbook photo of John Hinckley, Jr. So innocent.

INT. SITTING ROOM - EAST WING - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Patti, Maureen, Michael, Ron and Doria having breakfast, as they watch tv. In the b.g., Michael's wife, Colleen, is feeding their 2 small children. Ron is surfing via the remote:

PATTI

Stop changing the channels, Ron.

RON

(imitation of Al Haig:)
As of now, I am in control here.

PATTI

(laughs)

Give me that thing.

Patti wrestles the remote away from him. Michael turns to Maureen, muttering:

MICHAEL

Jody Foster? He shot Dad in order to impress Jody Foster?

RON

Wait till Dad hears he was shot by a deranged movie fan. He'll love it.

MAUREEN

That's not funny, Ron.

PATTI

I think it's funny.

DORIA

Maybe now he'll change his mind about gun control.

MAUREEN

Gun control? You think gun control would have stopped this guy?

MICHAEL

Oh great. Blame the victim.

RON

Back off, you guys. Doria's right.

MICHAEL

You guys ought to read the newspaper once in a while. Maybe then you'd wake up, and ditch this hippie crap.

As her family continues to argue, Patti buries her head in her hands.

PATTI

What kind of family is this? Even a bullet can't bring us together.

INT. NANCY'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME TIME

Tony the hairdresser is doing Nancy's hair. She's on the phone:

NANCY

(into the phone)

It's my fault he was shot, Carol. You told me it was going to be a bad day, and I wrote it down in my calendar, but I forgot to tell Mike Deaver, and so they scheduled him to go out...it's all because of me.

Nancy listens, reaching for her purse, pulling out her calendar, as she speaks:

NANCY

Oh thank you, thank you, Carol...If I didn't have you, I don't know what...Yes, tell me. I'll write them down.

She searches for a pen—has to empty the entire contents of her purse on the counter: comb, tiny make-up pouch, etc., and finally, that essential part of any woman's wardrobe...

A SMALL SILVER PISTOL.

TONY STARES AT THE PISTOL, as Nancy starts crossing out days on her calendar, in red ink:

NANCY

(into the phone)

The 3rd...the 5th and 6th...11th...18th...22nd...28th...
thank you, Carol. Thank you so much. Yes, I'll call you tomorrow. Same time.

Nancy hangs up, and sees Tony staring at the pistol.

NANCY

Ronnie made me take it. Honestly, I don't even know how to shoot it—

She picks the pistol up, points it at Tony. He backs off.

TONY

Hey. Watch it.

NANCY

It's alright, the little thing, the thing that keeps you from shooting it is on. I think. Is that on, or off?

TONY

Put it down. Put it down.

NANCY

Okay, I'll put it down. Here, I'll put it back in my bag. Does that make you feel better? You're so sweet, Tony. I wish all my children were as sweet as you.

INT. HOSPITAL - INTENSIVE CARE

Reagan still hooked to machines, unable to speak. He's shadow of his former self. He scrawls slowly on a note-pad, as Nancy, Patti, Ron, Maureen, and Michael sit nearby.

MAUREEN

You look good, Dad. Don't you think he looks good, Michael? I mean, considering?

MICHAEL

(trying)

Yeah. You look really good, Dad.

RON

How are the nurses? Are they pretty?

Reagan hands Nancy his note-pad. She reads:

NANCY

"All in all, I'd rather be in Philadelphia."

They all laugh, feebly. Reagan tries to laugh, fumbles with his respirator.

PATTI

He's scared, Mom...

NANCY

It's fine, Ronnie. The respirator's working just fine.

RON

It's like when you taught me how to scuba-dive, Dad. When you put that mask on me, I thought I was going to suffocate. You've just got to let the machine do its job.

INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE INTENSIVE CARE

The ever-present Secret Service guards the door, including Opfer and Parr. Nearby, sitting in chairs, Troika-Deaver, Baker, and Meese are waiting, briefcases in their laps.

DEAVER

I'm telling you, if he lives through this, we've got to keep Al Haig away from him for the rest of his term. He's out of his mind, talking about paving over Moscow and Libya.

BAKER

He only talks like that, for effect.

DEAVER

Well, it had an effect on me. It scared the crap out of me. Because he brings out the dark side in the old man. He does.

They're interrupted by Patti and Ron coming out, whispering to each other. As soon as Patti and Ron see them, they fall silent.

Deaver, Baker, and Meese stand up, and smile.

DEAVER

Hi, kids. We've got some paperwork for your dad to sign.

RON

Now? In *Intensive Care*?

BAKER

The country needs to know that he's still in charge.

MEESE

Besides, it's good for him. He needs to know that he's still in charge, too, don't you think?

FOLLOW PATTI AND RON down the hall, looking back over their shoulders, as the Troika go into Reagan's room:

RON

Those guys scare me.

INT. REAGAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nancy is putting some last minute rouge on Reagan's cheeks, as the PHOTOGRAPHER gets set up, and Deaver, Baker, and Meese position the papers for Reagan to sign.

NANCY

Ronnie, I'm just going to give you a little color...

BAKER

(to the photographer)

See? The President's fine. Fine.

Nancy puts the pen in Reagan's hand, and holds it, slowly writing his name. Reagan smiles for the camera. FLASH.

EXT. WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - 10 DAYS LATER

A MOB OF MEDIA outside. The Presidential limos.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - CONTINUING

The usual phalanx of Secret Service clears a path through Hospital Personnel, who break into cheers, as...

Reagan appears, walking with difficulty, leaning on Nancy and Agent Parr's arms. Reagan's wearing a bright red cardigan. They're all smiling.

As he approaches the exit door, Dr. Aaron and the medical team are waiting to say goodbye.

DR. AARON

Take it easy, now. Try not to overwork. You sure you don't want a wheelchair?

NANCY

He refuses. He absolutely refuses.

REAGAN

Every KGB agent in the Kremlin is going to be watching, to see if America has an invalid for a President. Well, they're in for a disappointment.

Laughter.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE -

As Reagan emerges, smiling cheerfully, like a man in perfect health, the reporters start shouting questions:

REPORTERS

How are you, Mr. President? How are you feeling? (etc.)

REAGAN

Ready to go back to work, and give you fellows something to write about!

As he and Nancy head for their limousine, the Media starts to applaud. Among them is Bill Shelby, looking critically at his colleagues, as they continue to cheer.

END OF ACT NINE

ACT TEN

TWO US AIRFORCE JETS shooting down two Libyan Jets. They burst into flames, and crash into a calm blue sea (the Gulf of Sidra).

FADE UP: THE TICKING OF A CLOCK.

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

The clock on the bedside table is ticking: 4:24 a.m. Reagan and Nancy are fast asleep, when the phone rings sharply, and loudly. Reagan sleeps through it. Nancy opens her eyes, reaches over his sleeping body to pick it up:

NANCY

Yes.

INTERCUT BETWEEN REAGANS' BEDROOM AND ED MEESE, IN HIS WHITE HOUSE OFFICE.

ED MEESE

Nancy, it's Ed. I'm sorry to wake you up.
We have a little bit of a crisis.

Nancy covers the mouthpiece with her hand, nudges Reagan.

NANCY

Ronnie. It's Ed Meese. Something's happened. Ronnie, wake up.

She puts the phone in his hand. He opens his eyes, bleary:

REAGAN

Hmm?

ED MEESE

Sorry, sir, I would have woken you up earlier, but I knew you were tired, and well...We, um, we were just attacked by two Libyan jets. We fired back, though—shot them down.

Pause.

REAGAN

...Is that it?

ED MEESE

It happened about 5 hours ago. As I say, I would have woken you up, but...Everything's been handled.

REAGAN

Okay. Well...thanks for handling it.

He hangs up, and goes back to sleep. Nancy's wide-awake.

NANCY

Ronnie, what is it?

REAGAN

Nothing. Ed's taken care of it.

He goes back to sleep. Nancy stares at him, alarmed. After a moment, he begins to snore.

DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE: JOHNNY CARSON ON "THE LATE SHOW".

JOHNNY CARSON

There are only two reasons you wake up Ronald Reagan. One is World War III. The other is if "Hellcats of the Navy" is on the late show.

AUDIENCE LAUGHTER.

INT. DEAVER'S OFFICE - DAY

Nancy slams the Washington Post down on Deaver's desk, furious.

NANCY

And it's not just Johnny Carson. Look at what Art Buchwald wrote. And Jack Anderson. Everyone in the entire country is laughing at Ronald Reagan!

Deaver winces. From the corner, Jim Baker admits:

BAKER

It doesn't make Ed Meese look too good, either.

NANCY

It's not just Ed Meese, it's you. One of you should have woken him up when it happened. Not 5 hours later.

BAKER

(to Deaver)

Maybe we should take Ed off foreign policy. It's not his strength.

NANCY

Yes, take him off foreign policy. And from now on, whenever anybody asks if the President has been informed of something, no matter what it is, tell them, "The President is aware of it." "The President is aware of everything." Got it?

Deaver and Baker look at each other, and nod.

Nancy starts out. Pause. Turns back to the men.

NANCY

It's not easy for him. He has so much to do...to think about. It would be too much for any man...

She's about to say something more, but decides not to. She turns, and walks out.

INT. EAST WING/SOLARIUM - DAY

Reagan on a chaise, legal tablet on his lap, pencil in hand, staring out the window at the rain. Nancy looks in.

NANCY

I thought you were taking a nap.

He comes to. Speaking slowly, thoughtfully:

REAGAN

I was thinking about that boy.

NANCY

What boy?

REAGAN

The boy who shot me. He was a nice boy. Just a little mixed-up.

NANCY

Ronnie, he tried to kill you.

REAGAN

He tried to kill me, but God let me live.
God spared me, for a reason. And I think I
know the reason.

Nancy comes in, and sits down beside him. Lays her head
gently on his shoulder. He continues:

REAGAN

God spared me, because he wants me to lead
our country out of the cold war with
Russia.

NANCY

(gently)

Ronnie...You don't need to get shot, in
order to end the cold war.

REAGAN

I know...but I've been praying about it...And
God told me—he wants me to end the cold
war.

Pause. A shadow of worry crosses Nancy's face.

NANCY

And that's why he saved your life?

REAGAN

(nods)

And that's why I've got to forgive that
boy. Because he was part of God's plan.

Nancy nods.

NANCY

Okay. But even if you forgive him...I won't.
I'll never forgive him. Ever.

He takes her hand, kisses it tenderly.

REAGAN

And that's your burden, isn't it, Mommy?
You can't forgive people for being...people.

NANCY

Not when it comes to you.

REAGAN

I thank God I have you. You see people so
much more clearly than I do. If I didn't

have you, I could end up in a lot of trouble, you know that?

She laughs. He pulls her close, and kisses her cheeks, her nose, her lips, as:

REAGAN

When I woke up in the hospital, and saw your face...I said to God, *Please God don't ever make me face a day without her.*

NANCY

I love you, Ronnie.

REAGAN

I love you, too, Mommy. More than anything in the whole wide world.

SURVEILLANCE FILM - LATIN AMERICAN GUERRILLAS

It's silent, crude. Latin American guerrillas in a jungle, unloading crates of ammo and weapons.

CLOSE ON CRATE BEING OPENED, GUNS BEING REMOVED

Reagan in a darkened room, watching the movie, as WILLIAM CASEY, (60's) head of the CIA, mumbles next to him:

WILLIAM CASEY

This is Nicaragua. These are the Contras, they're fighting to overthrow the Nicaraguan dictator. The dictator is supported by the Reds. All we've sent the Contras so far is a bunch of guns.

Reagan nods, grimly.

CASEY

Except for last week, when somebody in California sent the Contras a helicopter. One lousy helicopter.

(pause)

It's the same in Afghanistan. And Cuba. The dictators are supported by Moscow. Moscow sends them everything they need.

Deaver, Baker, and Meese are sitting nearby.

MEESE

Jesus, I can't understand a word Bill Casey is saying.

BAKER

All those CIA guys mumble. I think they learned it from Bill.

Al Haig interrupts from a few seats away, irritably:

HAIG

Why is everybody whispering?

REAGAN

Bill Casey's saying they need more helicopters in Nicaragua.

DEAVER

Christ, it'll be Vietnam all over again.

BAKER

What's wrong with that? Maybe this time we'll win.

The movie ends. The projectionist turns off the film, and raises the shades. Outside, it's raining.

REAGAN

Thanks, Bill. You get those Contras whatever they need.

HAIG

Wait a minute, sir. He can't do that. He can't just—he needs an executive order—

REAGAN

I just gave him an executive order.

HAIG

But I haven't even made up a foreign policy statement—

REAGAN

You make up a statement, then. Write it up, so we can give the Contras anything they need.

Haig is about to have an apoplectic fit.

Reagan doesn't notice, turns to Bill Casey, who is packing his briefcase, and heading out.

REAGAN

Oh, and Bill--tell the State Department, good work on the movie. Though it was a little long.

CASEY

(mumbling)

Yes, sir. I will, sir.

Casey goes. The troika is about to follow him, when Reagan takes a letter from his desk, and hands it to Al Haig.

REAGAN

Al, one more thing. I want you to take a look at this letter I wrote, over the weekend. I'm going to send it to Brezhnev.

Haig emits a thinly-veiled snort of disdain.

HAIG

So you did write a letter?

Haig starts reading it. Reagan explains to the troika:

REAGAN

I told him we should get the ball rolling on arms talks, but I'm still going ahead with the missile defense system.

Haig throws the paper down on Reagan's desk.

HAIG

No, sir. No. No, we're not having any summits--

REAGAN

I'm not saying right away, Al. I'm laying the groundwork--

HAIG

Sir. I'm the Secretary of State, this is my job! And--and--this will never work.

REAGAN

Why not?

Haig is about to explode.

HAIG

Because—because for one, your letter sounds like it was written by a rank amateur.

Deaver, Baker, and Meese glance at each other. Haig sees it:

HAIG

There you go again, you 3, looking at each other. You're always looking at each other.

BAKER

Al, come on—

HAIG

You've been undermining me, ever since I started this job! You won't even let me be alone with the President!

MEESE

That's not true—

Haig turns on Reagan, in a fury.

HAIG

Frankly, Mr. President, I can't put up with this any longer. Either I'm the Secretary of State or you are. And well, if this pattern continues...I will be forced to submit my resignation.

Silence. The troika cock their heads at Reagan: here's your chance. Reagan freezes.

EXT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUING

Nancy comes down the hall, carrying her calendar. She stops at Helene's desk, outside Reagan's office:

NANCY

Helene, what do you know about the Gridiron Club?

HELENE

Oh, that's the Washington press club. Every year they have a roast for the President and the First Lady. It's a little rough, but they don't mean anything by it.

NANCY

Oh, that explains everything.

HELENE

Why?

NANCY

Well, some of the staff suggested I should do a little something of my own.

HELENE

Oh yeah? Really?

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUING

Reagan looks intensely uncomfortable, reaches for his jar of jellybeans.

REAGAN

Gee, Al...I don't want you to resign.

HAIG

I don't want to resign either, but...

REAGAN

Have a jelly bean.

HAIG

Yes, sir.

REAGAN

The purple ones are good. And the black ones.

As Haig puts the jelly beans in his mouth, he seems to relax, slightly.

HAIG

Listen, sir. Why don't we send your letter, along with another letter that I'll draft for your signature.

REAGAN

That sounds good. What do you boys think?

This to Deaver, Baker, and Meese, who try not to look at each other, this time.

BAKER

What's your letter going to say, Al?

HAIG

I don't know. I'll have to think about it.

EXT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUING

Nancy looks up, as Al Haig comes out of the Oval Office eating jelly beans, and muttering angrily.

NANCY

Hello, Al.

He doesn't hear Nancy. He storms off, mumbling to himself. Nancy opens the door, and enters Reagan's office.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUING

As Nancy enters, Reagan's raging to Deaver, Baker, and Meese.

REAGAN

"Rank amateur"! Who does that sonofabitch think he is? I'm the goddam President of the United States, I'm his boss!

DEAVER

Why didn't you say that to him?

MEESE

He keeps putting his head on the block, sir. You've got to chop it off.

BAKER

George Shultz would make a great Secretary of State. Sir. Sir?

Reagan is heading for another door.

REAGAN

If it's alright with you, this administration has to pee.

He slams into the bathroom. Baker, Meese, and Deaver notice Nancy standing there.

BAKER

Has he ever fired anybody face-to-face?

NANCY

Nope.

DEAVER

Only me.

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy sitting in front of her mirror, in her nightgown, brushing her hair. Reagan is in bed, exhausted.

NANCY

Ronnie, Al Haig has got to go.

REAGAN

Al's not such a bad guy. He gets a little worked-up, that's all.

NANCY

No, Ronnie. No. You know what he did, while you were in the hospital?

REAGAN

I heard, he thought he was going to take control, but that's not so bad-

NANCY

That's not so bad? Ronnie, he wants to control everything you do. And you're the President of the United States.

REAGAN

I know, but-

NANCY

He doesn't like your process. He doesn't agree with your agenda. He wants total control over foreign policy. Ronnie, he's not a peacemaker. He's not.

He groans, picks up the remote and switches on the tv. It's Johnny Carson. Nancy sits on the bed, blocking his view of the tv.

NANCY

If you don't get rid of him, it's going to look like you're afraid of him.

REAGAN

I'm not afraid of him-

NANCY

But that's how it looks. To your staff. To everybody in the Cabinet. You can't afford

to be afraid of anyone. They've got to know, you're running the show.

REAGAN

Jesus Christ, Nancy-

NANCY

Jim Baker thinks you should get George Shultz. He told me so. George Shultz is a peace-maker. Get rid of Al, Ronnie, or you're never going to end the cold war.

He suddenly explodes:

REAGAN

Alright, okay, I get the message. I hear you. Now get off my goddam back, okay?

Pause. She gets up from the bed, and heads into the bathroom to brush her teeth.

Reagan stares sullenly at Johnny Carson, as he delivers a big, easy golf swing.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

A hot day. Outside the fence, THREE HOMELESS GUYS lying on a blanket. Their signs read: "Homeless Because of Ronald Reagan"; "Homeless Vet"; and "Will Work for Food".

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - CONTINUING

Reagan getting dressed. Nancy hands him a letter. He glances at it, tucks it into his jacket. They exchange a kiss.

INT. CORRIDOR - WEST WING - CONTINUING

Al Haig steps out of the elevator and heads down the corridor toward the Oval Office...passing Deaver, Meese, and Baker...who stop talking, and stare after him until he disappears into Reagan's office.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUING

Reagan stands, as Al Haig enters.

REAGAN

Hello, Al.

HAIG

(stiffly)

Mr. President, I'm here to deliver 2 letters. The first one concerns the repeated interference that I have endured in my conduct of foreign affairs. The second is a memo concerning my differences with certain Cabinet members, who have made it their business to make my job as Secretary of State impossible.

Reagan passes his hand over his brow—he's sweating.

REAGAN

(uncomfortably)

I see. Well, Al...as it happens, I have a letter for you, too.

HAIG

(surprised)

You do?

Reagan hands him Nancy's letter, and turns away, shuffling through his desk, as if looking for something.

Haig reads the letter. It's short.

HAIG

(stunned)

What...?

REAGAN

I just want you to know, Al...This country will always be grateful to you for your services.

HAIG

But...but I haven't resigned, yet.

REAGAN

(nodding to the letter)

Yes, you have.

HAIG

No, I haven't.

REAGAN

If you want, you can go back to your office, and write your own letter.

HAIG

Wait a minute. Can't we talk about it?

REAGAN

Um...I have a couple phone calls to make..

Haig is suddenly on the verge of tears, whispering:

HAIG

But I don't want to do it, I want to stay.

REAGAN

Sure, Al...but um...would you mind if I asked you to keep working until the Senate can confirm your successor?

A SEQUENCE OF IMAGES -

Hospital after hospital being boarded up. Signs saying "Closed".

A LINE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE in front of a soup kitchen.

A FAMILY living in their car.

A FORMER MENTAL PATIENT sitting in the rain, on the sidewalk, laughing, smiling, talking to the air, catching the rain in her hands, and drinking it.

INT. KITCHEN - EAST WING - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Rain falls against the windows, as MOVERS are crating in large wooden crates. Nancy's unpacking one of them, helped by the Butler and Betsy Bloomingdale.

Tearing through the packing, she pulls out an elegant gold-colored plate, bordered with Imperial Blue.

BETSY

Oh my God...it's beautiful.

NANCY

They'd better be. The set cost more than \$200,000.

BUTLER

What shall I do with the old dishes, Mrs. Reagan?

BETSY

Straight to Goodwill, darling.

NANCY

(laughs)

Don't listen to her. See if we can donate them to the Smithsonian.

Nancy continues pulling out cups, saucers, etc. A woman enters—ANNE ROGERS (34), attractive, ambitious.

ANNE

Good morning, Mrs. Reagan. May I ask what we're doing?

Betsy throws Nancy a curious glance.

NANCY

Anne, this is Betsy Bloomingdale, an old friend of mine. Betsy, this is Anne Rogers—my new PR person.

(wryly)

Her job is to make people like me.

Anne Rogers doesn't think this is so funny, turns to Betsy:

ANNE

Mrs. Bloomingdale, am I to understand that you and your husband donated this new china?

BETSY

Yes, you are, darling. It's our gift to the nation. Anonymous.

ANNE

You'll be wanting a tax write-off.

BETSY

Well...

Anne turns to Nancy.

ANNE

I'll need to know the cost of each item—at your convenience, of course. I'll be back.

She goes. Betsy turns to Nancy:

BETSY

Where'd you get Miss Bitch?

EXT. GRIDIRON CLUB (WASHINGTON) - NIGHT

Secret Service has cordoned off the GLITTERING GUESTS as the Presidential limousines arrive.

Reagan and Nancy emerge—he's in black tie, she's stunning and smiling. They head for the club entrance...passing a SMALL GROUP OF HOMELESS ACTIVISTS who are waving signs:

COORDINATOR

What do we want?

HOMELESS ACTIVISTS

Homes!

COORDINATOR

When do we want 'em?

HOMELESS ACTIVISTS

Now!

ONE OF THE DEMONSTRATORS tries to rush up to Nancy, but is stopped by a POLICEMAN.

HOMELESS ACTIVISTS

Let 'em eat cake, Queen Nancy! Let 'em eat cake!

A LEGLESS MAN ON A CART scoots his way to the front of the crowd, trying to push past the Secret Service:

LEGLASS MAN

Hey, Nancy! The cost of your dress would feed me for a month!

Nancy tries to ignore them. Reagan smiles and waves at them, continues.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL DAIS - GRIDIRON CLUB - NIGHT

Reagan and Nancy are sitting on the dais, flanked by Edith and Loyal Davis, VICE PRESIDENT BUSH AND BARBARA BUSH, AMBASSADORS...Deaver, Baker, Meese, GEORGE SHULTZ, THE NEW SECRETARY OF STATE, AND DON REGAN, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (we'll meet them later).

The EMCEE stands behind a podium, addressing the audience of journalists, politicians, and glitterati.

GRIDIRON EMCEE

The Gridiron Dinner has been an annual event in Washington for more than a hundred years. Tonight, the Washington press corps prepares to roast the most

powerful person in town...and I'm especially happy, because she brought her husband with her...

AUDIENCE LAUGHTER. Nancy smiles uncomfortably. Reagan is laughing.

GRIDIRON EMCEE

Keep in mind, if you would, our motto is
"We may singe, but we never burn."

MORE AUDIENCE LAUGHTER. Reagan puts his hand on Nancy's knee, smiling:

REAGAN

Well, Mommy, I do believe this is going to be the most elegant lynching we've been to in a while.

DISSOLVE TO:

MALE REPORTER DRESSED UP AS NANCY IN A DESIGNER GOWN...He's pushing a rack of dresses onto the stage, singing (badly) to the tune of "Second Hand Rose":

MALE REPORTER/"NANCY"

(singing)

Secondhand clothes
I give my secondhand clothes
To museum collections and traveling shows.
They were oh-so-happy that they got 'em.
Won't notice they were ragged at the
bottom.
Goodbye, you old, worn-out mess,
I never wear a frock more than once.

Nancy stands up, abruptly, and leaves the dais. Reagan sees her go, glances at the audience. Edith leans over to Reagan, whispers:

EDITH

Where the hell's she going?

REAGAN

Don't know. The ladies' room, probably.

Nancy passes behind Deaver, who mutters, smiling:

DEAVER

Go get 'em, tiger.

INT. BACKSTAGE - GRIDIRON CLUB

As Nancy arrives backstage, Tony and his ASSISTANT grab her, and whisk her away.

BACK TO MALE REPORTER ONSTAGE

Doing a strip-tease, as the audience roars with laughter.

MALE REPORTER/"NANCY": OC
Calvin Klein, Adolfo, Ralph Lauren, and
Bill Blass.
Ronald Reagan's mama's going strictly
First Class.

Rodeo Drive, I sure miss Rodeo Drive in
frumpy Washington.
Secondhand rings.
Donate those old, used-up things.
Designers deduct 'em.
We're living like kings.
So what if Ronnie's cutting back on
welfare?
I'll still wear a tiara in my coiffed
hair...

The reporter is down to a ragged corset and torn stockings,
as...

A FIGURE COMES ONSTAGE in a bizarre costume: Donald Duck
boots, a white feather boa, strings of pop-it beads, a
floppy plumed hat, and a red and yellow Hawaiian skirt held
together with safety pins.

For a moment, the entire audience hesitates, confused. Then
they realize it's Nancy, and issue a COLLECTIVE GASP.

People jump to their feet and start to applaud, as Nancy
swings into her lyrics:

NANCY
(singing)
Secondhand clothes
I'm wearing secondhand clothes.
They're all the thing in spring fashion
shows.

IMAGE - A PAIR OF HOMELESS WOMEN OUTSIDE, sitting on the
dark sidewalk, wearing a pair of tin foil antennas. Her
friend is going thru a shopping cart of Goodwill clothes,
trying them on.

NANCY: OC

(singing)

Even my new trench coat with fur collar,
Ronnie bought for ten cents on the dollar.
The china is the only thing that's new.

BACK TO NANCY, strutting her stuff back and forth on the stage, having a laugh-riot:

NANCY

(singing)

Even though they tell me that I'm no
longer queen,
Did Ronnie has to buy me that new sewing
machine?
Secondhand clothes, secondhand clothes,
I sure hope Ed Meese sews.

The laughter is tearing the roof off the place, as Nancy grabs a plate that has been painted to look like her White House china, throws it on the floor, and shatters it.

As she kicks up her yellow rubber boots and takes a bow...A JOURNALIST IN THE AUDIENCE calls to her from the wings:

JOURNALIST IN AUDIENCE

Washington loves you, Nancy!

Nancy smiles, perfectly aware that it's only a "Washington compliment", then looks to the dais, where Reagan is cheering with the others, watching her proudly.

She winks at him.

END OF ACT TEN

ACT ELEVEN

INT. NIGHTCLUB (TV-MOVIE SET) - NIGHT

DRUMS WITH A REALLY LOUD, TRASHY 4-PIECE BAND BANGS OUT A HOT TANGO as incredibly good-looking GREGORY HARRISON (20's), whirls and struts on stage, in nothing but a stockbroker's shirt, tie, and a shiny gold G-string.

The WOMEN IN THE AUDIENCE are screaming with delight, as Harrison whips off his tie, and flings it into one woman's lap...followed by his cuff-links, which land in another woman's lap, and his shirt, which lands in the lap of...

...shy, demure Patti, who's sitting at a stage-side table with her GIRLFRIENDS.

As Harrison steps off the stage, heading towards Patti, her girlfriends fall into hysterics. Patti freezes like a deer in the headlights of...

HARRISON'S BULGING G-STRING AS IT COMES CLOSER AND CLOSER...

Harrison arrives at Patti, and yanks her to her feet, and starts dancing with her. Patti freezes with mortification, as he vibrates against her.

Then she melts, and starting dancing with him. THE CROWD SCREAMS LOUDER. Patti and Harrison are moving as one—it's so tacky, it's almost pornographic.

INT. RON AND DORIA'S WEST VILLAGE APT. - NIGHT

Ron and Doria transfixed, watching Patti and Harrison on their tiny tv...

INT. MAUREEN'S TEXAS APT. - TWILIGHT

Maureen watches Patti's movie as she eats dinner with her new husband DENNIS. She nearly chokes on her taco.

INT. MICHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - TWILIGHT

Michael, Colleen, and their two young kids watching Patti's movie, in their suburban living room. As *Harrison starts to bend Patti backwards and stick his tongue down her throat*...Michael grabs the remote, and changes the channel.

REAGANS' COLOR TV -

Harrison frenching Patti as the CROWD SCREAMS.

NANCY

Oh. My. God...

Reagan and Nancy are sitting in chairs, in front of their tv dinners, staring at the tv--their forks frozen, halfway to their mouths. As Reagan slowly puts his fork down:

REAGAN

Well, you've got to admit...she's talented..

NANCY

Talented? You call this talent? This is pornography! And you're the President of the United States! How can she do this to you?

REAGAN

(laughs)

Oh now. She's just doing it for attention. And who knows? Maybe it'll help get her a start in show-business...

Nancy SCREAMS WITH FURY. Reagan LAUGHS EVEN HARDER.

INT. PATTI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Patti lying in bed with her boyfriend, PAUL GRILLEY. He's a yoga instructor. Spacey, but sweet. They're watching Patti's move on tv.

PAUL GRILLEY

So what are your parents going to say, when they see this?

PATTI

I don't care. I only see them on tv and in magazines. As far as I know, they don't even exist, anymore.

PAUL GRILLEY

(laughs)

Well, one of these days I'll have to meet them...if only to ask their permission.

PATTI

Oh, Paul...We don't need their permission to get married.

PAUL GRILLEY

Sure we do. I want them to like me. After all, they're going to be the grandparents of our children.

He's nuzzling her neck and ear. She turns skittish.

PATTI

Children?

PAUL GRILLEY

I'm real sentimental, that way. I want a little house with a picket fence, and at least 5 screaming brats.

Patti laughs a little. Her face filling with guilt.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Patti and Nancy, in Nancy's bedroom.

NANCY

So you want to marry this man...who grew up in a trailer park...and have children by him.

PATTI

God, Mom. I love him.

NANCY

But he's a yoga instructor. What are you two going to live on?

PATTI

I work, you know. I have my career.

NANCY

You mean, the movies?

PATTI

Yes.

Nancy tries to sweeten her voice.

NANCY

Have you told him you can't have children?

PATTI

..No. I just...I don't want to put him through that. I want to...

She comes over to Nancy, and kneels beside her:

PATTI

Please, Mom. Please try to understand this—I want to be perfect for him. I want to give him the kids that he wants and...and I want to be the woman he wants...isn't that pathetic?

Nancy strokes Patti's brow resignedly, with a trace of bitterness:

NANCY

No, my darling. It's not pathetic. We all want to be perfect for our husbands.

PATTI

I...I talked to a doctor, he said I could probably get my operation reversed...it's major surgery...it's very expensive...but I could have children again.

(reluctantly)

Only I'd have to come clean with Paul...

NANCY

No, I don't think so. Tell him something else is wrong. There are other reasons women have surgery.

Patti stares at her mother, incredulously.

PATTI

You mean, you want me to go through a major operation, and not tell him why?

NANCY

If you want your father to pay for it.

PATTI

Mom, would you do that? Would you keep such a big secret from the man you were going to marry?

Nancy changes the subject.

NANCY

Patti, you hate everything your father stands for—but now, when you need his money, you come back and ask him to rescue you.

PATTI

I never asked to be rescued. I only asked to be loved-

NANCY

And we do love you.

(pause)

If you want us to pay for your operation, it will be our doctors...our way. You will tell no one. Not the press. Not your friends. Not even Paul. Those are our terms.

Patti stares at her.

PATTI

Why do I do this? Why do I come back to you, over and over, when it always turns out the same way?

NANCY

Should I assume you're going to wear white to the wedding?

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

The lights are dark, and the shades are pulled. Reagan, Baker, Deaver, Meese, and George Shultz are watching a State Dept. documentary on Iran. The room is thick with tension.

MOVIE -

It's a grainy, hand-held picture...Khomeini standing on a balcony over a crowd of CHANTING IRANIANS. An American flag burning. A dummy of Reagan being hung, from a street-lamp... Bill Casey stands in the picture, narrating, as Iranian rioters flicker across his face:

BILL CASEY

This is Beirut...There's Khomeini...

BAKER

(from the dark)

When is that guy going to die? He must be 90 years old.

George Shultz leans over, whispers to Deaver:

GEORGE SHULTZ

Since when did we start showing movies in the Oval Office?

DEAVER

Not bad, huh? State Department makes 'em.

(nod to Reagan)

He doesn't like to read, and he gets bored listening. Anyway, State love making them, and he loves watching them.

The documentary ends with a projection: the face of a white American male (WILLIAM BUCKLEY, 50), pale. Scared. He holds the front page of a Lebanese newspaper against his chest.

BILL CASEY

This is William Buckley, our CIA station chief in Beirut.

BAKER

Louder.

BILL CASEY

(mumbling louder)

This is William Buckley, our CIA station chief in Beirut. He was kidnapped 3 days ago by Lebanese terrorists who are being supported by Iran. We don't think they want to kill him. But we are extremely concerned that he will be forced to reveal the names of other CIA agents in the area.

Reagan stares at Buckley's photograph, stricken. Nearby, George Shultz, Jim Baker, and Mike Deaver.

BILL CASEY

We've been flooded with calls from Iranians and Iranian exiles offering to provide us with intelligence...Very fancy intelligence...internal political information...in return for weapons.

Reagan has stopped listening.

REAGAN

What about Buckley's family? Have we talked to them?

DEAVER

They know he's been kidnapped, sir.

REAGAN

I'll have to call them. They must be out of their minds with worry.

Jim Baker leans over to Deaver:

BAKER

Don't let him call the family. If he talks to them, this whole thing will become about liberating a hostage.

Reagan continues to stare at Bill Buckley's photograph, as the voices around him rise to a level of near-panic:

BAKER

Maybe we could set up some kind of prisoner exchange—we give them one of their terrorists, in return for Buckley—

SHULTZ

No. No prisoner exchange. This administration does not negotiate with terrorists.

BAKER

But the Iranians want stuff from us. They want weapons, anything, for their war on Iraq—

SHULTZ

No. Iran is a terrorist nation. We do not negotiate with terrorist nations.

CASEY

But if Buckley gives them the names of other CIA agents, we're all screwed—

SHULTZ

You negotiate over Buckley, you know what will happen? We'll get more kidnappings. More Americans, more CIA agents.

REAGAN

But what about Buckley? What are we going to do—screw him? We're just going to leave him there? And what the hell are we going to say to his family?

UNDERWATER

An explosion of bubbles, as Reagan dives into the water, in his lifeguard suit. He swims down...down...searching...HIS HEART THUMPING...

Suddenly Bill Buckley's face looms up in front of him, like a white ghost. Eyes wide open. Drowning.

Reagan grabs Buckley under the arms, and starts swimming toward the surface...but Buckley's body is heavy, awkward...

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Reagan is moaning in his sleep. Nancy leans over him:

NANCY

Ronnie, honey...Ronnie wake up...you're having a bad dream...Ronnie.

She touches his arm. He jumps, opens his eyes. In a panic.

REAGAN

Where am I? Where am I? *Bill!*

NANCY

You're here, honey...you're with me...it's okay...It's okay...

REAGAN

I've got to get him out...But he's so heavy...I can't lift him...

NANCY

Shhh...It's okay, honey...Lie down...Lie down...

She coaxes him into lying down, snuggles close, using the warmth of her body to comfort him:

NANCY

There, there...Everything's going to be okay...Everything's going to be just fine...

EXT. GARDEN, BEL-AIR HOTEL - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

MUSIC: A STRING QUARTET LOST IN THE FLOWERS, PLAYING MENDELSSOHN'S WEDDING MARCH...Doria in a matron-of-honor dress, coming down the grassy aisle...flanked by DOZENS OF WEALTHY SMILING FACES...Everything is covered in flowers...From behind trees and flowered trellises, the bland, sun-glassed faces of Secret Service agents are peering, watching...

Patti appears, resplendent, in a gorgeous white bridal gown, orange blossoms in her hair. Trying to smile, trembling on her father's arm.

She passes the Betsy and Arthur Bloomingdale, the Tuttles, all her parents' California friends. They're all smiling benevolently. So is Mike Deaver.

She passes Nancy, who's in the front row wearing a glamorous suit, smiling broadly. Next to her, Ron is smiling even more broadly.

RON

(whispering to Nancy)

Mom...Where's Michael and Maureen?

NANCY

(shakes her head, murmurs)

They didn't get their invitations until too late.

A frown flickers across Ron's face.

ANGLE - Patti and Reagan arrive at Paul, who is dressed in all white, wearing love beads. He's a smiling flower-child of love.

Together they all turn and look up at the Reverend Donn Moomaw, who is enormous in his celebrant's robes, holding a Bible, and beaming down at them like God, Himself.

EXT. GARDEN RECEPTION - DAY

The reception is underway. On one side of the garden, a group of INDIAN MUSICIANS are playing traditional music on sitars, as Paul and Patti (now in yoga clothes) lead THEIR FRIENDS through a series of yoga exercises and meditations.

PATTI'S FRIENDS

Shanti, shanti, shanti...Ommmmmm...

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GARDEN, the string quartet is playing some light Bach. WAITERS cruise with trays of hors d'oeuvres and champagne.

Nancy and Betsy Bloomingdale are heading indoors.

NANCY

Well, at least she's not living in sin, anymore.

INT. LADIES ROOM - BEL AIR HOTEL - AFTERNOON

Nancy and Betsy are in the ladies room, fixing their make-up.

BETSY

Look at you. "Her daughter got married today in a yoga ceremony, but tonight, her hair still looks fantastic."

Nancy laughs.

NANCY

It's Tony's assistant. We brought him out for the wedding. He's not Tony, but he's good enough.

Betsy smacks her lips in the mirror, as:

BETSY

Yes, well. Nobody's Tony. Not even Tony's Tony, anymore.

NANCY

What do you mean?

BETSY

Oh, Nance. Didn't you know? He's dead.
(lowers her voice)
Died last week...of you-know-what.

NANCY

(stunned)
AIDS?

BETSY

Come on, honey. You knew he was gay.

NANCY

Yes, but...I didn't...He didn't tell me...

BETSY

Everybody on earth knew. I mean, we've all been having a bad hair day for months.

NANCY

My God. My God...Tony is dead...When is the funeral?

Betsy sighs, with a flicker of genuine sadness.

BETSY

You don't think there's actually going to be a funeral, do you?

(pause)

His parents are burying him. Nobody knows where. Come on. You need a nice, big glass of champagne.

Betsy drags Nancy out.

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL LIMO/MOVING - BEVERLY HILLS - NIGHT

The Presidential limo moving slowly down the palm-tree studded boulevard..

INT. PRESIDENTIAL LIMO/MOVING - CONTINUING

Nancy and Reagan sitting in back. She's staring out the window.

NANCY

He was sick for *months*, but I never knew. Nobody ever told me.

Reagan pats her hand, consolingly.

REAGAN

Try to remember what the Bible says.

NANCY

What's that?

REAGAN

They that live in sin shall die in sin.

Nancy looks at him. He reaches over to the bar, unscrews a bottle of water, and pours himself a glass.

NANCY

Ronnie...I want you to do something. Anything. All these young boys, all these children, drug addicts, they're dying of AIDS, but nobody's...nobody's doing anything about it. Nobody even wants to talk about it.

Reagan takes a sip of his water, and looks out the window. Impenetrable.

NANCY

Say something.

She waits...and waits...no response. She's dying inside.

TIGHT SHOT - A 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL. She has the pimples of a teenager, but she talks like an old woman. Flat, dead:

17-YEAR-OLD GIRL

I didn't start out a drug addict. My mother was a single mom, she worked in a mental hospital. When the hospital was closed down, we went on unemployment, but unemployment only lasts so long. So when my mom ended up on welfare, and gave me to my aunt and uncle. I didn't see her for like 6 years. But my cousin was into crack. She gave me some. Sometimes we'd turn tricks—not a lot, just enough to buy stuff. But then I started doing it more and more. I got so I was doing crack in the daytime, and wetting my bed at night. Finally my aunt and uncle found out, and they were going to put me in rehab, so I ran away. Man. Living on the street... you'd better be doing drugs, or you'll lose your mind.

The girl laughs, bitterly. The others laugh, too.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL A CIRCLE OF RECOVERING DRUG ADDICTS. Nancy, her assistant KATHY OSBORNE, and the DIRECTOR OF THE REHAB PROGRAM. In the b.g., several Secret Service agents.

NANCY

(visibly moved)

I don't understand...Wasn't there anyone else you could talk to? Your relatives? Your teachers? Your minister? Your doctor? Somebody?

The kids laugh. Nancy flushes, embarrassed.

DIRECTOR OF THE CLINIC

There used to be hospitals. Clinics. After-school programs. That's all gone, now. Government cut-backs.

Nancy is speechless. The director stands up:

DIRECTOR OF THE CLINIC

Thanks, guys. Let's take a break and have something to eat. Can we thank Mrs. Reagan for coming today?

Everyone claps.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE BALCONY AND LAWN - DAY

Nancy standing on the balcony overlooking a crowd of cheering, healthy TEENAGERS—not one of these kids has a problem in the world. They're all wearing "Just Say No" buttons. Tons of media. Tons of Secret Service.

NANCY

(calling down to the kids)

What do we do, when someone offers us drugs?

The crowd yells back, as one, along with her:

NANCY WITH KIDS

Just! Say! No!

She's laughing happily, as she fires the next question:

NANCY

What do we do, when someone asks us to help them sell or carry drugs?

NANCY WITH KIDS

Just! Say! No!

NANCY

What do we tell our friends to say, if one of them is offered drugs?

NANCY AND KIDS

(louder than ever)

Just! Say! Noooooooooooo!

A flurry of multi-colored balloons saying "Just Say No" is released into the air. Nancy clasps her hands together, so proud, as she watches them fly up into the blue sky.

ANGLE - Bill Shelby on the ground, turning to one of his FELLOW-JOURNALISTS, with a cynical grin:

BILL SHELBY

Gee. Why didn't I ever think of that?

END OF ACT ELEVEN

ACT TWELVE

NANCY'S FACE AGAINST THE BLUE ARIZONA SKY -

Nancy, wearing sunglasses and a solicitous smile:

NANCY

Mother? It's me. It's so nice to see you,
Mother...You're looking wonderful...

EXT. NURSING HOME - PHOENIX, ARIZONA - DAY

Nancy settles into a chair next to her mother Edith,
who is hunched over in a wheelchair, her eyes fixed on
the brightly-colored blanket that covers her lap.

NANCY

(brightly, trying)

Ronnie and I are in Tucson for the re-
election campaign, so I thought I'd just
drop by.

She reaches out, and smooths Edith's blanket.

NANCY

You like your blanket? I picked it out
just for you, back in New Hampshire...It's
more than 150 years old. Oh, and look what
else I brought. Pictures.

Nancy digs into her purse, pulls out photographs:

NANCY

This one's of Ronnie and me in the White
Mountains. What a godawful place. I was
covered with mosquito bites. Covered.

(more pictures)

Here we are, at Gettysburg...And here's us
the Grand Ol' Opry, that was fun...Oh, and
here's Ron and his wife, Doria. You've met
Doria, she's not so bad. They're the only
ones campaigning with us, this time.

Michael's got the grandkids, and Maureen's
working. Oh God, Patti's writing a book,
did I tell you?

From somewhere deep inside Edith, comes a low groan. Nancy
laughs.

NANCY

You can say that again. Ronnie and I
always said to each other, *Someday she's*

going to write a book. We just hoped it wouldn't be until after we were dead.

Edith's index finger is slowly twitching its way around the circumference of a blue flower. Nancy falters.

NANCY

Ronnie would have come with me to see you today...but the campaign is keeping him so busy...and, and...

She picks up Edith's hand, and begins stroking it, confidentially, whispering:

NANCY

He's not well, Mother. He's tired, but it's more than that. I'm going to talk to his doctor. I think this job is killing him, I really do. All the tension about Nicaragua, and Soviet Union, and this poor man who's been kidnapped in Lebanon...Every night, when he's sleeping, I whisper in his ear, "Peace...Peace." But it's too much for him. It would be too much for anyone. And some of those men in his Cabinet... Vipers, Mother. Vipers. I just pray to God I can get him out of the White House in one piece.

She notices her assistant, Kathy, signaling to her from the lawn, and pointing to her watch. SEVERAL SECRET SERVICE AGENTS get up from the grass.

With a great effort, Edith swings her gaze up to Nancy's face, searching in it for something recognizable:

EDITH

Who are you?

Nancy gasps, but this isn't the first time this has happened.

NANCY

I'm Nancy, Mother. Nancy. Your daughter.

EDITH

(shaking her head)
No. I haven't got any daughter...

NANCY

Yes, you do...Me. Right here, in living color.

A shadow falls across the two of them. It's the ATTENDANT.

NURSING HOME ATTENDANT

We're taking her in for lunch, Mrs. Reagan. Would you like to come?

Nancy glances at her assistant, then looks at her mother.

NANCY

I guess not. I should get back to Tucson.

She stands up, and plants a kiss on her mother's brow.

NANCY

Goodbye, Mother. I love you.

NURSING HOME ATTENDANT

Mrs. Reagan...is there any chance your husband could send us an autographed picture? The staff would be so thrilled. We show "Bedtime for Bonzo" at least 3 times a year around here...

NANCY

I'll speak to the President.

NURSING HOME ATTENDANT

That would be super. Good luck in the election. This is Reagan country, you know.

NANCY

Yes...thank you...Goodbye, Mother...

Nancy watches the nurse wheel her mother away.

DISSOLVE TO:

DOCUMENTARY MONTAGE: the 1984 campaign: the "Morning in America" ads...Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferrarro, hands joined and raised in triumph...

DISSOLVE TO Reagan speaking in a CROWDED HALL...

REAGAN

"My friends, we live in a world that's lit by lightning..."

In back, COPS are wrestling PROTESTORS out as they sing:

PROTESTORS

(singing)

"All we are saying
Is give peace a chance..."

SHOUTS. PROTESTS. EVERYONE BOOING EACH OTHER.

DISSOLVE TO: Reagan speaking to a crowd of aerospace engineers on the tarmac at NASA...

REAGAN

"American has always been greatest when she dared to be great. I'm convinced we will be leaders, because the American people would rather reach for the stars than reach for excuses why we shouldn't..."

PURE, UNADULTERATED CHEERS.

DISSOLVE TO Reagan addressing a crowd of FARMERS in Iowa...The farmers are hardbitten, cynical. One sobs.

REAGAN

"My friends, ours is the land of the free because it is the home of the brave. America's future will always be great because our people will be free, united, one people under God, with liberty and justice for all..."

He certainly is the Great Communicator.

EXT. STAGE - REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION -

SUPER: "1984"

Nancy at the podium:

NANCY

Ladies and Gentlemen, I want you to meet my husband, the next President of the United States...Ronald Wilson Reagan!

She turns to a huge, huge projection screen, which covers the entire back of the stage. A enormous live-image of Reagan appears on it, smiling. Nancy is a speck in front of it, waving to him, blowing a kiss...AS THE CROWD GOES WILD.

TV - COLOR

Walter Cronkite:

WALTER CRONKITE

"And we have President Ronald Reagan, carrying 49 states, receiving 525 electoral votes...to Walter Mondale's 10...President Ronald Reagan has won 59 percent of the popular vote..."

EXT. INAUGURAL PLATFORM - A WINTER'S DAY

Reagan standing with Nancy, being sworn in, his hand on his mother's old, taped Bible...

THRU THE WINDOWS OF THE WHITE HOUSE BALLROOM - NIGHT

The windows burn brightly in the dark. Hundreds of dancing couples moving smoothly around the floor...a swirl of colors...candle-light and burnished silver...

EXT. SIDEWALK - IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUING

Two cardboard boxes on the sidewalk house the same three homeless guys, shivering in the icy cold. The headlights of the passing traffic sweep over them...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - BITBURG (GERMANY) - DAY

Deaver standing in the snow, surveying a small cemetery in the woods. All the graves are under a recent blanket of snow. His TRANSLATOR is talking to CHANCELLOR KOHL'S ASSISTANT. Deaver interrupts them:

DEAVER

(shivering)

What's he saying?

TRANSLATOR

(German accent)

He says the Chancellor Kohl thinks this is the prettiest of the cemeteries. It will look good on the television.

DEAVER

I agree. Tell him if Kohl likes it, then the President likes it. We can set up a stand right here...the President can make a little speech about World War Two...lay a

wreath...It'll be very touching. Jesus, it's freezing. Come on, let's get a drink.

They all laugh, and hurry towards the car.

INT. ELEVATOR - WEST WING/WHITE HOUSE - DAY

George Shultz, Jim Baker, and Mike Deaver are riding up in the elevator, along with DON REGAN (50), THE NEW SECRETARY OF STATE, and his cohort ROBERT (BUD) MCFARLANE (late 40's), NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. Regan is cocky:

DON REGAN

I'm telling you, Jim—you're going to wish you never switched jobs with me. Being Secretary of the Treasury is a whole lot harder than being Secretary of State.

JIM BAKER

Yeah, right, Don. Life in the Oval Office is one big bowl of cherries.

DON REGAN

All you've got to do is manage the economy. I'm going to be CEO of the entire White House. Everybody in this building is responsible to me.

GEORGE SHULTZ

Including the President?

Regan and McFarlane laugh. The others smile, exchange a glance.

The elevator doors bang open. Jim Baker heads right. Everyone else heads left toward the Oval Office. Regan sidles up to Deaver, whispering:

REGAN

So, Deaver—tell me. You've known Madame Fuhrer a lot longer than I have. How the hell do you manage to put up with her?

Mike Deaver looks at him, stunned. Before he can think of an answer, the journalist Bill Shelby appears out of nowhere, catches his sleeve.

SHELBY

Hey, Mike. Read the German papers today?

DEAVER

Come on, Shelby, I got no time for this-

SHELBY

Der Spiegel's saying that the graveyard the President's gonna visit in Bitburg has 20 SS buried in it. You know, the guys who gave us Auschwitz?

Deaver feels sick.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Reagan, George Shultz, Don Regan and Robert McFarlane are sitting in chairs, listening as Deaver explains:

DEAVER

(humiliated)

It had snowed, I couldn't see what was on the tombstones. I screwed up, I take full responsibility.

Don Regan interrupts, scornfully:

REGAN

That's no excuse. We're trying to unify Europe, and you've got the President laying flowers on Nazi-graves. And you learned this from the media?

DEAVER

It'll break tonight. Six o'clock news.

REGAN

Okay, damage control. We call the Germans, find a new site for the ceremony-

DEAVER

I've already called them. Chancellor Kohl won't change the site. He says every graveyard in Germany has a few bad apples. We have to put that behind us.

(to Reagan)

I'm sorry, Mr. President. I blew it. I'll resign as soon as I can write the letter.

REAGAN

What for? I agree with Kohl. The war's over. More important, I think I'm meant to go.

Deaver is silent. Regan turns on the President, dumfounded:

REGAN

Why? Every Jewish organization in the country will be at our throats-

REAGAN

Because God wants me to bring peace to Europe. If he didn't, he'd have left me dead on the street with a bullet in my chest.

INT. ROOSEVELT ROOM - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

A portrait of FDR looks down on a JEWISH DELEGATION, led by ELIE WIESEL, 70, Holocaust survivor and Jewish leader.

ELIE WIESEL

I have seen the SS at work, Mr. President. I have seen their victims. They were my friends, my parents. They were children.
(pause)

I tell you, Mr. President. You should not go to that place. That place is not your place. Your place is with the victims of the SS.

Nancy, Don Regan, and Deaver watch from nearby, as the President frowns very seriously:

REAGAN

Well, as you know, Mr. Wiesel, I've added a visit to a concentration camp, Bergen-Belsen...

The Delegation winces. Nancy listens, helpless.

REAGAN

The Holocaust was the greatest tragedy in human history. I saw some of it, first hand, as an Army photographer during the war, when I filmed one of the camps. I'll never forget those horrible images-

Nancy gasps-what's he saying? Regan whispers to Deaver.

REGAN

I thought he stayed in Hollywood during the war.

DEAVER

He did.

REAGAN

(overriding)

The war made victims of everybody, Mr. Wiesel. Even though they wore Nazi uniforms, the young men buried in that cemetery are victims of Nazism just as surely as the victims in the concentration camps.

END ON WIESEL'S INCREDULOUS REACTION:

EXT. BITBURG CEMETERY (GERMANY) - DAY

A GERMAN HONOR GUARD snaps to attention; a drum rolls as Reagan and a U.S. GENERAL step slowly to the monument, together, carrying a wreath, accompanied by two US MARINES.

As Reagan and the General lay the wreath and stand at attention, a BUGLER plays the German version of "Taps".

A GROUP OF DIGNITARIES watches: CHANCELLOR KOHL, GERMAN POLITICIANS, AMERICAN GENERALS, Don Regan, and Robert McFarlane. Nancy stands with Deaver. As they whisper, they keep their eyes focused on Reagan.

DEAVER

Nancy...I've decided to resign.
(she glances at him, alarmed)
I offered before, and he turned me down.
But I'm doing it, anyway.

NANCY

(whispering)
Mike, you can't...he needs your protection...

DEAVER

He'll be fine. He's the Teflon man. This will slide off him. But me...I don't think so. I don't think I can live with this.
(she looks at him, concerned)
This job is taking it out of me. My health is shot. I barely know who my wife and daughter are, anymore. I need...a life.

She looks at him sadly. The Honor Guard raises its rifles and FIRES a salute, as Reagan snaps a crisp salute, in return.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Deaver hands Reagan his letter of resignation. A sadness hangs over them both.

DEAVER

You'll see me around. I've gotten a job as a lobbyist. I can't believe the number of people who want to be friends with me, now that I've worked with you.

They both laugh. Silence. Neither of them can say goodbye. Suddenly Reagan pulls him in, and gives him a big hug.

ANGLE - The look of surprise on Deaver's face.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - A SUMMER'S DAY

Establishing.

INT. REAGAN'S SUITE - OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM - CONTINUING

DR. HUTTON, the White House physician, comes out of the bedroom to talk to Nancy.

DR. HUTTON

(quietly)

He's getting dressed. I want to talk to you, first...Has the President been having any abdominal pain, that you know of?

NANCY

No...No, I don't think so...

DR. HUTTON

I'm going to recommend a series of tests. He has a mass in his lower abdomen, and I want to check it out.

NANCY

(turning pale)

What do you mean, "Check it out"? What is it?

EXT. BETHESDA NAVY HOSPITAL - DAY

The media is camped out on the sidewalk.

INT. REAGAN'S ROOM - CONTINUING

Reagan is in bed, looking pale and a bit groggy, but clearly glad to see Michael, his wife Colleen, AND THEIR SON, CAMERON (5). The room is full of flowers. On the bedside table, several jars of jellybeans...and Patti's new book, *Home Front*. It has a picture of Patti on the cover.

The jar of jellybeans is being passed around, as everyone talks and laughs:

MICHAEL

I think Patti's book is more therapy than anything else. You'll see. Three months on the circuit, and it'll disappear into oblivion.

REAGAN

It's okay by me. She was always an argumentative kid. Hell, she should have been a politician.

Michael and Colleen laugh. Colleen can see how tired Reagan is.

COLLEEN

It's late, Michael, we should go. Cameron. Pick up your toys.

Michael stands up, reluctantly. Cameron starts to gather his toys.

MICHAEL

It was good to see you, Dad. We don't see each other enough, y'know?

Michael leans over, and they embrace.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -

Nancy talking to Dr. Hutton:

DR. HUTTON

The good news is, we caught it at an early stage. Now all he needs is a little radiation, and he should be fine.

Pause.

NANCY

Doctor...do you think this could explain why Ronnie...I mean, some of his behavior...

DR. HUTTON

What behavior?

NANCY

His...his forgetfulness...and he's...he's tired, all the time...

DR. HUTTON

You'd be forgetful and tired, if you were President of the United States.

NANCY

Yes...but he's not the same...something's wrong.

DR. HUTTON

Don't worry, Mrs. Reagan. If something were wrong, we'd know about it. Say, that "Just Say No" program of yours is getting a lot of play, isn't it?

NANCY

Doctor, I'm trying to tell you, Ronnie's not well...

DR. HUTTON

Of course he's not well, he's just had surgery for cancer. Once he gets back on his feet--maybe a little vacation--you'll see. He'll be fine. He's a warhorse.

NANCY

(trying to believe him)
Thank you, Doctor.

He gives her arm a squeeze, and heads down the hall. Nancy stands there, trying to collect herself. Kathy Osborne comes up to her with a cup of tea.

NANCY'S ASSISTANT

Here's your tea. It's a little strong, but you can add some more milk to it, and it will be fine.

Nancy turns to her, bitterly:

NANCY

Everybody keeps saying that. *It's fine. Everything's fine*, they tell me.

(pause)

Well, everything is *not* fine. It's not fine. It's not.

Kathy stands there, looking confused.

Nancy heads down the corridor to Reagan's room. As she arrives, Michael, Colleen, and Cameron are emerging.

MICHAEL

We're leaving now.

They're interrupted by Don Regan and Robert McFarlane, standing up from their seats, nearby. They're holding briefcases.

DON REGAN

(ingratiatingly)

Mrs. Reagan, I just want to thank you for letting Bud and me come to the hospital today...

NANCY

(curtly)

I'll be back in 15 minutes. Make it short.

She walks Michael and his family to the elevator.

EXT. LOBBY - BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Nancy, Michael, Colleen and Cameron are visible in the lobby, talking. She stoops, and gives a hug to Cameron.

PANNING UP THE SIDE OF THE HOSPITAL...

ARRIVING AT REAGAN'S WINDOW...

...which is open a few inches...Reagan is visible in bed, talking to Don Regan and Bud McFarlane.

SLOWLY ENTERING THRU THE WINDOW...their voices become audible:

DON REGAN

His name's Father Jenco. He was a Catholic aid worker in Beirut, they kidnapped him last week. He's still alive. Or at least he was, as of yesterday.

Reagan's head comes off the pillow.

REAGAN

For God's sake, another kidnapping? What the hell's happening? Bill Buckley, what about him? Is he still alive?

Regan turns to McFarlane, who clears his throat:

MCFARLANE

We don't know, sir. There's a rumor--

REAGAN

What's your name?

MCFARLANE

(flustered)

McFarlane, sir. Robert McFarlane. I'm one of your National Security Advisors, sir. You've already met me. Several times.

REAGAN

Really?

McFarlane and Regan look at each other, uncomfortably.

REGAN

Apparently Buckley had a lung infection of some kind...But we can't get any hard information...I mean, Beirut, you know. It's a country, it's a state of mind--

REAGAN

(alarmed)

He's dead? Is that what you're telling me? Bill Buckley is dead?

MCFARLANE

It's only a rumor, sir--

REAGAN

Oh Jesus, Jesus...Bill Buckley is dead..

REGAN

We don't know if he's dead. Right now, all we have is rumors. But Bud here has a proposal, we want you to listen to it--

REAGAN

I couldn't save him...He was an American citizen, and I couldn't save him..

MCFARLANE

The Iranians need weapons for their war against Iraq--

MCFARLANE

They want missiles--

REGAN

If we give them 100 TOW missiles, it could open up communication with the kidnappers--

MCFARLANE

We wouldn't be negotiating--

REGAN

Talking, that's all we'd be doing. We'd be talking--

REAGAN

(almost desperate)

Will it save Father Jenco?

Regan and McFarlane stop.

MCFARLANE

(carefully)

These people...the people we give the missiles to...they might have an *influence* on the kidnappers.

REGAN

We're not negotiating. All we're doing is opening up communications...

MCFARLANE

We have a Marine, Colonel Oliver North...he and I can go to Tehran, and set the whole thing up...

REAGAN

You're going to go to Tehran?

MCFARLANE

It's 100 measly antitank missiles.

REAGAN

But we can't...We can't sell weapons to Iran, they're a terrorist nation...and we're supporting Iraq..

REGAN

Iran's not going to win the war with that. All they'll do is raise a little a little dust.

Regan is so groggy, he's having difficulty absorbing the information.

REGAN

Believe me, sir. All we're doing is opening up communications.

Reagan looks from Regan to McFarlane, and back to Regan.
His voice has the slightest tinge of dread:

REAGAN

Open 'em up.

END OF ACT TWELVE

ACT THIRTEEN

MUSIC: Band Aid's Christmas recording ("DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS?") in aid of Ethiopian famine relief...OVER:

DOCUMENTARY MONTAGE: NEWSPAPER HEADLINES AND TV REPORTS RE: the death of CIA station chief Bill Buckley in Beirut...A TWA airliner is hijacked by Iranian terrorists...newspaper photos of the pilot talking to negotiators on the ground...a body on the tarmac...The Achille Lauro adrift in the Mediterranean, terrorists visible on deck... The world seems to be tearing itself apart. MUSIC FADES...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKE GENEVA (SWITZERLAND) - DAY

SUPER: "1985"

It's freezing. Reagan is walking slowly around the lake with GENERAL SECRETARY MIKHAELE GORBACHEV. They're both bundled up. Talks are going badly:

GORBACHEV

(Russian accent)

This missile defense system of yours—
weapons in space—who can control it? It
opens up an arms race in space—

REAGAN

How do we know you won't use your weapons
against us?

GORBACHEV

Because we won't. I'm saying to you, we
won't. Why don't you believe me?

REAGAN

Why don't you believe me, when I say that
all I want is a shield?

GORBACHEV

(irritably)

Please answer me—what is your answer?

REAGAN

(just as irritably)

I am answering, Secretary Gorbachev—with a
question for you.

The vein in Gorbachev's forehead is throbbing with fury.

GORBACHEV

I am too heated and emotional not to show you my sincerity. I beg you...Stop this arms race before it gets started.

INT. FLEUR D'EAU (CHATEAU) - DAY

Nancy and Raisa sit, having tea. Raisa speaks in Russian. Her TRANSLATOR sits beside her:

RAISA/TRANSLATOR

I read books by your American women. They say American women are downtrodden...They are paid less than American men...and they have no rights in work-place.

Nancy glances uneasily at the SMALL ARMY OF ASSISTANTS AND MEDIA scattered around the room. Cameras FLASHING.

NANCY

That's not completely true, Mrs. Gorbachev-

RAISA

(overriding)

And Malcolm X. He says American blacks can not get work. They are treated like slaves.

NANCY

They're not slaves-

RAISA

(overriding)

In Soviet Union, everyone has job. Everyone is treated same-

Nancy interrupts with a steely smile:

NANCY

Please, Mrs. Gorbachev. Would you like some more tea?

EXT. FLEUR D'EAU (CHATEAU) - NIGHT

The place is ablaze with lights. A fairy castle.

INT. BATHROOM SUITE - CONTINUING

The bathroom door is slightly ajar. From behind it, Nancy's voice:

NANCY: OC

"In the Soviet Union, everyone has job. Everyone is treated same." Oh yeah?

MOVING CLOSER AND CLOSER - TOWARD THE DOOR

NANCY: OC

Is that why you have the gulag? So you can make sure everybody's working? Is that why Andrei Sakharov can't get his wife any medical treatment?

COMING AROUND THE CORNER OF THE DOOR -

Nancy is visible in the tub, blowing off steam:

NANCY

...God help me if I come down with a cold when I'm in Moscow, I'll be damned before I'll see any of your so-called doctors! And no wonder your husband always looks so bored--because he's married to you, you Stalinist--

She's interrupted by a WOMAN'S VOICE, outside the door:

CHATEAU MAID: OC

(French accent, timidly)

Madame Reagan? I'm just turning down the bed. Is there anything you need?

NANCY

No. No, thank you. That will be all.

Nancy shrinks down into the water, mortified.

INT. LIBRARY - FLEUR D'EAU - CONTINUING

In front of a blazing fire, Reagan and Gorbachev are sharing cigars, and brandy. They're laughing and talking:

GORBACHEV

(Russian accent)

So tell me, is Olivia de Havilland as beautiful as she looks in the movies?

REAGAN

More. Much more. We were on a committee together for the Screen Actors Guild. One night we were all standing around after a meeting, and I said, "You know, Olivia, I

always thought you might be a Communist." She said, "Me? I thought you were one of them!"

Gorbachev laughs and laughs.

GORBACHEV

Okay, I've got a joke for you. This is a story of a commissar who visited a collective farm. He stopped the first farmer he met, and asked about life on the farm. And the man said, "It's wonderful. I've never heard anyone complain about anything since I've been here." And the commissar said, "Well, what about the crops?" "Oh," said the farmer, "the crops are wonderful." "What about the potatoes?" "Oh, sir," he said, "the potatoes, there are so many that if we put them in one pile they would touch the foot of God." And the commissar said, "Just a minute. In the Soviet Union, there is no God." And the farmer said, "Well, there are no potatoes, either."

They both break up, laughing.

NEWSPAPER PHOTO: Reagan, Gorbachev, Raisa, and Nancy standing together at the end of the summit. Everyone's smiling. Headline: "USA and USSR pledge to seek 50% Reduction in Nuclear Arms".

ANGLE - Reagan and Nancy back in their White House bedroom, looking at the paper.

REAGAN

(bitterly)

It means nothing. Nothing.

NANCY

It's a pledge. You'll meet again next year, in Washington. You'll make peace then. You must. You've got to.

(pause)

If only so that I don't have to have tea with her, ever again...!

He laughs, pulls her close for a hug and a kiss.

POV - AIR FORCE BOMBER - DAY (1986)

Bombs dropping on Tripoli...It's a huge air attack, as dozens of US planes drop more than 90 2,000 pound bombs...

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

Reagan reads from the tele-prompter. He's tired. Not well. But he still projects utter optimism and ease:

REAGAN

Today, Americans can stand tall. American forces have bombed the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya, and the terrorist dictatorship of General Omar Qaddafi has been punished for its terrorist attacks in Europe, as well as its assault on two US Air Force planes in 1981-

INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE THE OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUING

Don Regan and McFarlane are talking to a young Marine, COL. OLIVER NORTH.

REGAN

(low, deadly)

So, Colonel North—why do I feel like you're not telling me the whole story?

OLIVER NORTH

(a mask of Marine obedience)

Sorry, sir?

REGAN

(fuming)

We sent 40 missiles to Iran, and we got Father Jenco out. Then we had another kidnapping. We sent over another 100 missiles, and we got 3 more kidnappings, and a killing.

NORTH

Yes, sir.

REGAN

And now Bud, here, tells me the Iranians want another pallet of missile parts and what?

Pause. North's cheeks begin to redden.

NORTH

A chocolate cake.

McFarlane and Regan turn to each other, sarcastically:

REGAN

A chocolate cake. A chocolate cake.

(pause)

Well, that's fine. That's fantastic. That just blows my little mind.

Regan turns back to North, pushing his index finger into North's chest.

REGAN

Let me tell you something, Colonel North. When this thing blows up in our faces--which it will--I'm not going to be the scapegoat. I'm not, not! You hear me?

INT. PRESS OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUING

Bill Shelby watching Reagan on a small office TV, along with a FEW OTHER REPORTERS:

REAGAN ON TV

...Now, every nickel-and-dime dictator the world over knows that if he tangles with the United States of America, he will pay a price...

SHELBY

You can't stop terrorism by killing 150 innocent Libyan civilians.

REPORTER 1

So what? The President's numbers have never been higher.

REPORTER 2

Yeah. The Iranians walked all over Jimmy Carter. Now we're finally getting some of our own back.

SHELBY

You're all a bunch of goddam idiots.

Shelby kicks his desk, and walks out.

ESTABLISHING - BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

INT. NANCY'S ONCOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Nancy sitting in Dr. Hutton's office. This time, it's about her. Dr. Hutton is reviewing Nancy's x-rays.

DR. HUTTON

It's a small calcification in your left breast. It's not large. It's small. You could go for a lumpectomy, and follow it up with chemo and radiation. You'd be out of the action maybe 6 months.

NANCY

Six months?

DR. HUTTON

It's better than a radical mastectomy.

Nancy shakes her head. She's mortified, talking about this.

NANCY

No. You don't understand, Doctor Hutton. I can't be sick for *six months*.

DR. HUTTON

Sometimes we don't have any choice about these things...

NANCY

I do. I have a choice. I can be sick, or not sick. I will not be sick. *My husband needs me.*

(pause)

I'll take the mastectomy.

Hutton stares at her.

DR. HUTTON

Mrs. Reagan--you don't need a mastectomy. With a lumpectomy there are no guarantees, but the chances are overwhelming that you'd be fine--

NANCY

No. No. I need to be with my husband. I'll take the mastectomy.

EXT. BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUING

Deaver steps out of the elevator, and starts toward Nancy's room.

INT. NANCY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUING

Nancy lying in bed, full of IVs, unconscious. Her chest a mass of bandages and tubing.

Reagan sits next to her, holding her hand. NURSES come and go, checking Nancy's signs, IVs, etc., but Reagan never notices them--his eyes stay on her face, watching her. Hurting almost as much as she is.

Deaver stands in the doorway, watching.

EXT. HOSPITAL GARDEN - DAY

Reagan with Mike Deaver, talking:

REAGAN

In some ways, Nancy and I are one human being...When one of us is happy, the other is happy. When one of us hurts, the other hurts...

He breaks off. Deaver searches for words but can't find them. They stand together, in silence.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Establishing.

INT. CORRIDOR - WEST WING - DAY

Reagan is heading down the corridor to his office, when George Shultz catches up to him, elated, waving a letter.

SHULTZ

Mr. President...Mr. President...wait...

Reagan is so far inside his sadness, that he can hardly register Shultz's elation:

SHULTZ

I got a letter from Gorbachev. The Soviets have blinked. They've *blinked*.

REAGAN

...What?

SHULTZ

They're willing to sign a treaty...Gorbachev wants to *discuss dismantling the Soviet nuclear missile-system!*

Suddenly they're surrounded by Staff...the secretaries... Everyone is laughing, shouting, shaking hands, patting each other on the back. Reagan is in the middle of it all, scratching his head, grinning like an 18-year-old kid.

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Nancy sitting up in a chair, beside the window. Reagan bursts into the room:

REAGAN

It's done. Gorbachev wants to sign.

NANCY

Oh Ronnie...

He goes to her, kneels in front of her, they hold each other.

NANCY

You did it. You did it.

REAGAN

God did it. It's why God saved me.

INT. EAST ROOM - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

MUSIC: HAIL TO THE CHIEF as Reagan and Gorbachev are sitting at Lincoln's desk, which is covered with velvet. They're signing the INF treaty. Nancy and Raisa are in the front row. Behind, the ENTIRE U.S. CONGRESS.

WALTER CRONKITE: VO

(quietly narrating)

...first General Secretary Gorbachev will sign...and then President Reagan...This is truly a historic moment. This is the first U.S.-Soviet treaty of any kind to provide for the destruction of nuclear weapons...

As Reagan and Gorbachev stand up, APPLAUSE.

REAGAN

We have listened to the wisdom of an old Russian maxim. *Doverey, no proverey*—trust but verify.

GORBACHEV

You repeat that at every meeting.

LAUGHTER.

REAGAN

I like it.

MORE LAUGHTER. Everyone is shaking hands. Nancy beams.

INT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS OFFICE - DAY

Bill Shelby alone in the White House Press Office, typing on his computer. The UPI printer starts to hum. It's printing out a story. He goes over to it, and reads. Stares at it, unable to believe his eyes. He tears the story off the printer.

INT. WHITE HOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

Bill Shelby catches up with Deaver in the hall, urgently:

BILL SHELBY

Hey, Deaver! Deaver!

(Deaver stops)

What's with Bud McFarlane going to Iran to negotiate for the hostages?

Deaver is blind-sided, stares at him:

DEAVER

What?

BILL SHELBY

The story just came out on the wire. Some magazine in Lebanon says that Bud McFarlane has been negotiating with Iran, selling them weapons in return for the hostages-

Deaver feels sick, instinctively tries to stonewall him:

DEAVER

No-what? No...That's impossible-

BILL SHELBY

And the Iranian prime minister says it, too-he says that secret negotiations have been going on for more than a year-

Deaver turns, hurries away. Shelby stares after him.

SHELBY

Deaver? Deaver!

INT. ANOTHER WHITE HOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

Don Regan coming off the elevator, being confronted by a
CROWD OF REPORTERS:

REPORTER 1

Mr. Regan, doesn't the United States still
have an embargo against Iran?

REGAN

No comment.

REPORTER 2

Do we have a deal going with Iran of some
sort?

REPORTER 3

How can we be selling weapons to Iran?
Aren't we supposed to be supporting Iraq?

Regan pushes his way through the crowd:

REAGAN

No comment. This is nothing but wild
speculation. We have not been negotiating
with anybody to free the hostages, we have
no communications with Iran whatsoever--

REAGAN ON TV -

No longer the Great Communicator. He's angry, defensive.

REAGAN (ON TV)

...Our government has a firm policy not to
capitulate to terrorist demands. That no-
concessions policy remains in force, in
spite of the wildly speculative and false
stories about arms-for-hostages, and
alleged ransom payments. We did not,
repeat, not trade weapons or anything else
for hostages, nor will we.

INT. DEAVER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike Deaver with his WIFE and DAUGHTER, watching Reagan on
tv. Deaver shakes his head, stunned.

DEAVER

He's just lost all credibility. He's
finished. He's finished.

INT. WHITE HOUSE ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Ed Meese, Attorney General, looking grim, riding up in the elevator.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

Reagan and Regan sit nervously, as Ed Meese confronts them with the bad news:

ED MEESE

The Iranians were charged 30 million dollars for 12 million dollars worth of missiles. There's 18 million missing.

The blood drains from Reagan's face. He croaks:

REAGAN

Missing? What do you mean?

ED MEESE

It's been siphoned off.

REAGAN

I don't understand...By whom? How?

MEESE

The money was collected by a Marine, Colonel Oliver North. It was funneled through a Swiss bank account, and from there, some of it went to the Nicaraguan Contras. Of course, that only accounts for 4 million dollars. The books were...well, they were cooked.

Reagan can only stammer. Regan looks shocked, too.

REAGAN

I...I...I can't believe it.

DON REGAN

But that's impossible. You don't screw around with federal funds. This is government money.

Meese gives Regan an incredulous look, turns to Reagan.

MEESE

I think, sir...we need an investigation.

DON REGAN

(echoing)

That's right. That's what we need. An investigation. We've got to tell Congress.

We can't hide important information like this--right, Mr. President?

Reagan is still too stunned to speak. Reagan continues:

DON REGAN

Maybe we should set up a board of inquiry--make it bipartisan, yes, that's what we'll do--get all the information out. Everything has to be above board, don't you think, Mr. President?

Reagan has grabbed the arm of the sofa, as if to keep himself from falling over.

MEESE

Mr. President...what we need is an independent counsel...somebody separate from me...because my involvement with you could be seen as a conflict of interest.

REAGAN

(faintly)
Okay. Well. Okay.

REGAN

Yes, yes. That's good.

Pause. Meese stands up.

MEESE

Senator John Tower is possible. He's a Republican, he's always been loyal to you.

REAGAN

Thank you, Ed. Thank you.

Meese leaves.

REAGAN

I thought we were trying to save the hostages. I really did.

REGAN

Yes, sir. Of course sir. That's what we were all trying to do.

END OF ACT THIRTEEN

ACT FOURTEEN

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Reagan sits behind his desk, looking tired and worn, but doing his best to appear confident. TWO LAWYERS sit on either side of him (DAVID ABSHIRE and PETER WALLISON).

Opposite sits Senator John Tower and 3 others (RHETT DAWSON, BRENT SCOWCROFT, and SENATOR ED MUSKIE)—the Tower Commission.

JOHN TOWER

Mr. President...this Commission wants to thank you for meeting with us today. We're going to ask you a series of questions concerning the shipment of arms to Iran.

(pause)

First. Do you remember Robert McFarlane ever telling you anything about money being diverted to the Contras?

Reagan pauses.

REAGAN

..No.

JOHN TOWER

Never?

Pause. Reagan speaks slowly, searching his memory:

REAGAN

Well, it seems to me that maybe I do...

JOHN TOWER

If you'd like, you can check your diaries... and your memory...more carefully...

Reagan's brow furrows. He's really trying to remember.

REAGAN

No, I don't remember Robert McFarlane telling me anything.

INT. REAGANS' LIVING ROOM - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Nancy is having tea with Mike Deaver.

DEAVER

His approval ratings dropped again. Only 17% of the people believe his story about the Iran Initiative.

She winces. It's as if he's stuck a knife into her.

NANCY

I talked to my special friend, this morning..."Dire events in the first few months of 1987..." That's what she said.

DEAVER

Nancy, you've got to get rid of Don Regan.

NANCY

I've talked to Ronnie until I'm blue in the face.

DEAVER

Do something. Make it happen. Or else he'll drag the President and the whole Administration down with him.

Nancy hears him. She nods.

EXT. CAMP DAVID - LATE NOVEMBER 1986 - DAY

The leaves are falling, as Nancy and Reagan leave their residence, walking slowly into the woods, hand-in-hand.

A few Secret Service follow, at a respectful distance.

EXT. WOODS - CAMP DAVID - DAY

Nancy and Reagan walk slowly. It's a beautiful afternoon. But they're tired, tense.

NANCY

I used to think he could be a good Chief of Staff, that he could grow into the job. But he's not Chief of Staff, anymore—he doesn't care about protecting you, all he cares about is himself...And he doesn't watch the shop. He surrounds himself with yes-men...

(pleading)

He's weak, Ronnie. He's weak.

Reagan shoves his hands deep into his pockets.

REAGAN

I'll be goddamned if I'll throw somebody to the wolves, just to save my own butt.

He resumes walking. She hurries after him, still tired and in pain from her mastectomy.

NANCY

You're in a crisis. This is a crisis. If it's not handled well, everything you've done for the last 6 years will be gone. The Geneva summit...destroying nuclear weapons...de-militarizing Europe...ending the cold war...it will all be gone. What happened to Richard Nixon will happen to you--

Reagan turns on her, hotly:

REAGAN

I never, never traded arms for hostages.

NANCY

Is that true?

(off his look)

That's not what I mean, Ronnie. I believe you, but are you right? Lying is bad enough. But when you tell what you believe is the truth, and it's not...then you're really in trouble.

He stares at her, knowing she's right.

REAGAN

This whole thing is blown up out of proportion, it will blow over, you'll see--

NANCY

It's not going to blow over. Ronnie, John Tower is investigating you--

REAGAN

There's nothing to investigate! I didn't break the law--I didn't--

She grabs his arm, desperate.

NANCY

Ronnie, stop it. Stop it. You don't know everything that's been done...People have been doing things behind your back. Don

Regan has been doing things behind your back.

(then)

If you don't fire Don Regan, he'll drag you down with him. He will.

They're standing, staring at each other—angry, desperate.

DISSOLVE TO:

THRU WINDOW - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Reagan talking to Don Regan, uncomfortable, avoiding...Regan listens, stunned, then suddenly explodes, stands up, puts his hands on Reagan's desk, snarling at him. Reagan sits back, himself stunned.

INT. MCFARLANE'S BEDROOM - MARYLAND - NIGHT

McFarlane in his pajamas, in front of his computer, holding the phone to his ear. AN ANONYMOUS MAN'S VOICE IS TALKING:

MAN'S VOICE (TELEPHONE)

It's bad, Bud. It's really bad. A lot of heads are going to roll.

MCFARLANE

(faintly, into phone)

Yes...thank you...thank you for telling me. I'll take care of it.

MAN'S VOICE (TELEPHONE)

No, Bud...you don't understand...Once Tower gets hold of you, you're going to be screwed.

MCFARLANE

(again)

I understand. Really. I do.

McFarlane slowly hangs up. In the b.g., MCFARLANE'S WIFE is visible in the next room, watching tv.

McFarlane goes to the bed, and sits down. He sits there a moment, shaking. Opens the drawer in his bedside table and takes out a bottle of prescription pills. Slowly shakes all the pills into his hand. He throws half of them into his mouth, swallows them with water. He throws the other half into his mouth, swallows them, too.

Then he crawls under the covers, and prepares to die.

INT. BILL CASEY'S OUTER OFFICE - CIA HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

CASEY'S office looks like it's been hit by a hurricane. Papers everywhere. HIS ASSISTANT is packing papers, in a panic.

CASEY'S ASSISTANT

Mr. Casey, sir, what about these files on the Iranian Parliament, sir...and Rafsanjani...

He hears a cry coming from Casey's office, turns:

CASEY'S ASSISTANT

Sir?

Through the open door, he can see Casey falling to the floor. He rushes in:

CASEY'S ASSISTANT

Mr. Casey! Mr. Casey!

Casey on the floor, going into convulsions.

INT. REAGANS' BREAKFAST ROOM - WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

Reagan and Nancy sit in front of their breakfast. They can't eat. Can't drink. They're numb.

REAGAN

It's Armageddon...that's what it is. Armageddon. The Leader from the West will be revealed as the anti-Christ, and then God will strike him down. That's me. I am the anti-Christ.

NANCY

No, Ronnie...

REAGAN

(overriding)

And the Lord will strike down all of civilization, in order to make way for the new order...a new Heaven and a new Earth...

Nancy reaches out, grabs his hand, strongly.

NANCY

Hold on. You've got to hold on, Ronnie.

Reagan's eyes are filling with tears. He can't help it. He's crumbling.

REAGAN

I saved 77 lives in 7 years, Nancy...But I couldn't save those people in Lebanon.

Nancy gets up, puts her arms around him. She rocks him slowly, silently, back and forth.

INT. MCFARLANE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUING

McFarlane in bed, with IVs in his arms, crying. He cries and cries. His wife sits beside him, holding his hand.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - BETHESDA NAVY HOSPITAL - DAY

INT. BILL CASEY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUING

Bill Casey lying in bed, with his head bandaged, and IVs in his arms. He's dying. John Tower stands beside him, looking down at him. He pats Casey's hand, sadly. They all leave.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

INT. REAGAN SITTING ROOM - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

A REPEAT OF THE OPENING OF NIGHT TWO: Reagan in his chair, wearing his pajamas and bathrobe. He looks old. Mike Deaver sits next to him.

Tower is opposite, leaning forward, intensely.

JOHN TOWER

Mr. President, as head of the Presidential Commission to investigate Iran-Contra...I'm here to tell you our findings. One year ago, you personally approved the sale of 2,004 antitank missiles to Iran for the express purpose of exchanging arms for hostages...

HIS VOICE FADES AS WE DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Reagan is sitting behind his desk, as the MAKE-UP WOMAN works on him. His speech lies before him. The room is crawling with TECHNICIANS, as they set up for broadcast.

Nancy is on the other side of the room, with young Ron. He holds her hand. She looks utterly desperate.

PRODUCER

One minute to the President.

Somebody comes up to Reagan with a glass of water, holds it to his lips. He sips. The glass is whisked away.

REAGAN

Nobody noticed this desk is darker. It's been restored.

Silence envelopes the room. The silence seems to spread across the entire country.

Reagan suddenly pulls a handkerchief out of his pocket, and blows his nose. It's a huge blast. A wave of laughter goes around the room—he grins—he did it to deflate the tension.

PRODUCER

Thirty seconds.

REAGAN

Do I have time to make a phone call?

More laughter. Reagan shrinks into himself, bows his head and stares into the surface of the desk.

RON

(alarmed)

What's the matter? What's he doing?

NANCY

He's concentrating.

PRODUCER

Five...4...3...2...1...

Reagan has come out of his shell, he's now performing as "himself"...grim, but honest...utterly well-meaning:

REAGAN

(to the camera)

A few months ago I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages... My heart and my best intentions still tell me that's true, but the facts and the evidence tell me it is not...

INT. MICHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUING

Michael and Colleen watching, as the kids wrestle.

REAGAN (ON TV)
...As the Tower Board reported...

COLLEEN
Quiet.

REAGAN (ON TV)
...what began as a strategic opening to Iran
deteriorated, in its implementation, into
trading arms for hostages...

INT. MAUREEN'S KITCHENETTE - CONTINUING

Maureen with her husband, Dennis...watching TV:

REAGAN (ON TV)
...This runs counter to my own beliefs, to
administration policy, and to the original
strategy we had in mind...

INT. PATTI'S LIVING ROOM - LOS ANGELES - CONTINUING

Patti's so close to the tv, she can touch her father's face
with her fingers. Paul watches from across the room.

REAGAN (ON TV)
...There are reasons why it happened, but no
excuses. It was a mistake...

PATTI
(whispering, over)
Oh, Daddy, Daddy...I'm so sorry...I'm so
sorry, sorry, sorry...

INT. REAGAN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reagan is asleep. Nancy is on the phone with Mike Deaver,
who's in HIS KITCHEN:

DEAVER: (FILTERED)
The figures just came in, Nancy...His
approval rating just jumped 9 points. *Nine
points.*

Nancy wants to be relieved...but she's not.

NANCY
Thanks, Mike...Thank you so much...

DEAVER

All he's got to do is keep his chin up,
and stick it out...he's going to be okay.
And you're going to be okay, too.

She's too drained to answer.

DEAVER

You get some sleep, now.

NANCY

You, too, Mike.

She hangs up, looks over at Reagan. In his sleep, he
reaches out for her. She crawls into his arms.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

A wintry day in Washington D.C.

INT. BALLROOM - EAST WING - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: "LAST DAY IN THE WHITE HOUSE: JANUARY, 1989"

APPLAUSE from the staffers who fill the room. Reagan is
smiling, sad. The Presidency has taken its toll.

REAGAN

There are no words that can properly tell
you how bittersweet these days are...

He glances at Nancy, a few feet away.

REAGAN

I think both of us have been aware, every
minute we're here...that we're surrounded by
you, by others who may not be here today...
and it couldn't have been done without
you. And I like to think maybe it's kind
of close to what happened 200 years ago...We
were all revolutionaries, and the
revolution has been a success...but there
just aren't any...aren't enough words to
thank you for all that you've meant to us...
and how hard it is to say goodbye...to all
of you. The only thing that makes it
bearable at all, is to remember all that
you did, and how...how much of a team we did
become. Thank you...and God bless you all.

Applause. As he motions to Nancy to come forward, in the back of the room, the ARMY BAND starts to play "AULD LANG SYNE". Confusion, laughter. The music stops.

NANCY

My husband said I should say something,
but I'll never get through it...see?

Tears are running down her face. All she can say is:

NANCY

Thank you.

Applause. The band starts again: "AULD LANG SYNE".
Everybody is holding hands, beginning to sing:

REAGAN, NANCY, STAFFERS

(singing)

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to mind...
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And days of auld lang syne..."

AS THE SINGING CONTINUES...SOUND OF A HELICOPTER LANDING...

INT. REAGANS' SITTING ROOM - EAST WING - DAY

Reagan stands in the sitting room, beside the window,
watching the helicopter land outside. The song echoes:

REAGAN, NANCY, STAFFERS: VO

"For auld lang syne, my dear
For auld lang syne...
We'll drink a cup of kindness yet
And days of auld lang syne..."

The room is devoid of all personal possessions. It looks
like a museum, which is what it is.

NANCY: OC

Are you ready? I'm almost finished in
here...just checking a few things...

INT. REAGANS' BEDROOM/BATHROOM - CONTINUING

Everything has been packed. Nancy's kneeling beside the
bed, looking under it. Nothing here.

She goes into the bathroom. Checks the medicine cabinet.
Nothing here.

NANCY

We've got to hurry. The Bushes and the Quayles will be downstairs, waiting for us...

FOLLOW NANCY THRU THE BEDROOM OUT TO THE SITTING ROOM

She stops, sees Reagan still standing beside the window...a million miles away. As she goes to him, he whispers:

REAGAN

How in the ever-loving world did we get here?

NANCY

...It doesn't matter. We're going home.

She takes him in her arms. He turns to her, and begins to dance—slowly, awkwardly, stumbles, stops.

REAGAN

What kind of dance is this? I can't remember...

NANCY

It doesn't matter, darling. You lead. I'll follow.

He begins again. Moving in silence. She steps neatly into him with every turn, following his every move. MUSIC FADES UP. MAYBE IT'S SOMETHING FROM CIRO'S...THE FIRST TIME THEY DANCED TOGETHER.

Piece by piece, he puts the dance together in his mind, and she follows. She was always a good dancer. She still is.

THE END