THE DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

written

by

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FADE IN:

A FLASH OF LIGHT

A radiant shiny something dazzling in EXTREME CLOSEUP.

BEGIN TITLES.

CAMERA very slowly PULLS BACK. The sparkling surface turns out to be a lot of carats. WE SEE the stone, then the ring, then suddenly, in b.g., something HUGE SWEEPS by. REVEAL a mechanical claw above the ring, hanging from a crane. The ring sits in a sea of tiny dolls, joke eyeballs, and other carnival junk.

The claw descends on the ring again and again, sometimes catching it for a moment then tragically dropping it -- accompanied by OOHS and AAHS (O.S.) of hope and disappointment. INTERCUT with the HANDS of a young black man working the controls. The EYES of a young black woman watching him work. Another guy's HANDS digging in his pocket for change. QUARTERS going into the slot.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
This'll never work, Tommy.

TOMMY (O.S.)
Be positive, Armando. Course it will.

The claw inadvertently snags a rabbit's foot.

TOMMY (O.S.)
Look. See what a lucky fuck I am?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
He don't mean the ring, hon, he means the whole plan.

TOMMY (O.S.)
So do I.

The claw catches the ring and closes on it. QUICK CUTS of their FACES as the crane rises. A very pretty lady. A beefy Latino with a two-day beard. Their apprehension. Tommy's confidence. Then his exceptional smile. He gets the ring.

INT. PENNY ARCADE - DAY

TOMMY
Okay -- one down, one to go.
(returning to the claw)
You got quarters, Loretta?

END TITLES.
EXT. FLORIDA LUXURY HOTEL - DAY

Palm trees. The smell of money. Valets in Foreign Legion khakis greeting arriving luxury cars.

INT. HOTEL FUNCTION ROOM - DAY

A big crowd of GUESTS at a cocktail reception. A lot of lime jackets, cherry trousers, and blue hair. People wear name tags.

ON Tommy, in pastel bow tie and full waiter drag, confirming orders for a group of guests. He speaks in a PRISSY, OVER-SOLICITOUS VOICE:

TOMMY
That's a diet ginger ale, an extra-spicy virgin mary no salt, a club soda -- good choice -- a lime rickey, and a bourbon and a planter's punch. Five people, five drinks... it's Kismet!

Tommy turns away, looking toward the entrance to the room.

INT. LOBBY - DAY - CLOSE SHOT - THE RING

glittering on Loretta's finger. LORETTA, stunning in designer clothing and accessories, enters. Her looks attract looks.

INT. FUNCTION ROOM - DAY

Tommy, maintaining his vantage point, repeats another order, this time in a heavy CARRIBBEAN ACCENT:

TOMMY
That's a vodka tonic, a Pellegrino, lime and no ice, a gin Gibson straight up with ex-tra onions -- I am also fond of de onions -- and a Chardonnary spritzer...also with extra onions -- no, no, do not worry, that is just a little joke. There will be no onions whatsoever in your spritzer!

He LAUGHS HUGELY, rather amused with himself. The guests aren't.

GUEST
You don't need to write it down?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
Mr. Memory? Do not make me laugh!

He LAUGHS HUGELY, turns, takes two steps away and makes absolutely no effort to get their drinks. He looks toward the door.

INT. HALLWAY/ENTRANCE TO FUNCTION ROOM - DAY

Loretta approaches the function room, where pert DEBBIE, wearing a JOHNSON FOR CONGRESS button, staffs a felt-covered table. On a nearby easel, a photo of a silver-haired Man with a legend in blue and gold: JEFF JOHNSON. THE NAME YOU KNOW.

LORETTA
(Eurotrash accent)
I'm not too late, am I, dear?
(extending a hand)
Hello, darling, Alma Preston, how are you today?

DEBBIE
Thanks for coming, Ms. Preston, I'm Debbie Bartle.
(consulting a list)
Do we have your check yet?

Loretta pulls a Mont Blanc pen and a checkbook from her bag.

LORETTA
No, honey, I don't think you do, we just got in last night from our place in Barbados -- how much is it?

DEBBIE
Five hundred a person. Barbados?

LORETTA
(writing)
Yes, we're just down the beach from Mick Jagger and Jerry.
(looking up)
You wouldn't turn down a couple of thousand, would you?

A pleased smile from Debbie. Loretta opens the checkbook, flashing the immense RING in front of Debbie.

DEBBIE
Um, that's a lovely ring.

(CONTINUED)
LORETTA
Oh, thank you. I thought it might be a little gaudy...who should I make this out to?

DEBBIE
Johnson for Congress. It's not gaudy, it's just...nice and big.

LORETTA
That's my Carlos...I can't even look in a store window. We're walking down this street in Rio, we pass a jewelry store...I didn't even turn my head and he's in the shop...

(holds up ring)
...$250,000. I said it's crazy...
but you know Carlos.

DEBBIE
I wish I did.

ON Tommy watching Loretta. A Guest standing just behind Tommy -- wearing MRS. ZEKE BRIDGES name tag -- watches JEFF JOHNSON gladhand the room robustly.

MRS. BRIDGES
I hear they had him open for six hours.

ZEKE, a very fat cigar-smoker, marvels at Johnson's appearance.

ZEKE
(chuckling)
The sum' bitch looks terrific.

Tommy, eavesdropping, joins Zeke's chuckle, which unfortunately turns into a wheeze and then a cough. Zeke turns to Tommy.

ZEKE
How about taking our orders, son?

TOMMY
Absolutely my friend! How can I pleasure you?

ZEKE
Bourbon straight up and a Perrier rocks for the lady.

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
Ah! Fire and ice! Wonderful!
But may I suggest you make that a
double sir? After all, so many
guests, so few of me -- who knows
when I may be back?

ZEKE
Sure, why not.

AT THE ENTRANCE LORETTA pauses before going into the room.

LORETTA
You know where the powder room is, hon?
I should freshen my face before I go in.

DEBBIE
It's just over there.

ON JEFF JOHNSON with his well-groomed wife, VERA, and a
barrel-chested Man in full resort wear, wearing an OLAF
ANDERSEN name tag.

JOHNSON
So how the heck are you, Olaf?

ANDERSEN
I should be asking how you are, congressman.

Johnson pats his chest and smiles at Vera.

JOHNSON
This old ticker never felt better.

ANDERSEN
It's good to see you back on your
feet, Jeff. We need you in Washington.

Inconspicuously, a pretty young redhead whispers to Vera.
This is JENNIFER, Johnson's Administrative Assistant
(his AA).

VERA JOHNSON
How's that granddaughter of yours,
Olaf? Ready for the Olympics?

ANDERSEN
She'll be thrilled you asked after her.

IN THE HALLWAY Loretta emerges from the Ladies' Room... catches a spike heel... recovers her balance... then
frantically searches her hands and clothes, SCREAMS, and gets down on hands and knees.

(CONTINUED)
LORETTA
My God!  My God!  Oh my God!

Debbie rushes over to her.

DEBBIE
What's the matter?

LORETTA
(hyperventilating)
My -- my ring.  My diamond.  I took it off in the ladies' room to wash my hands.  I was just putting it on -- I must have dropped it.

DEBBIE
(getting down)
Let me help you, we'll find it.

LORETTA
Call Security!

IN THE FUNCTION ROOM Tommy maintains his watch on Loretta.  Zeke Bridges taps Tommy on the shoulder.

ZEKE
Hey, what about our drinks?

Tommy instantly assumes an ANGRY YOUNG STREET BLACK VOICE:

TOMMY
Yeah?  What you want?

ZEKE
What?  You already took our order.

TOMMY
That wasn't me!  You must be thinking of Jamal.  I'm Karim.  What you want?

ZEKE
Bourbon straight up and a Perrier rocks.

TOMMY
(snorts derisively)
Hunh.

He walks two steps...and once again makes no attempt to get the drinks.  Zeke returns to Jeff Johnson.

(CONTINUED)
ZEKE
Don't get me wrong, Jeff. Pyramid Insurance doesn't want special breaks. I just think we ought to be able to set our own rates without Uncle Sam sticking his nose in our business.

Johnson signals Jennifer to come over.

JOHNSON
Do you know my AA? Zeke Bridges, this is Jennifer, my Administrative Assistant. Zeke's been a tremendous help to us. I'd like you to listen to his view on health insurance.

JENNIFER
I'd be very happy to.

ZEKE
At Pyramid Insurance, we call our approach the Patient's Bill of Rights.

IN THE HALLWAY Loretta and Debbie are on hands and knees, still looking. A pair of shoes comes INTO FRAME. They LOOK up at a bullet-headed man.

BRUNO
Ms. Preston? Bruno Handler, hotel security.

LORETTA
My ring! My ring! Oh my god...!

BRUNO
Now just calm down, Ma'am... can you describe the ring?

LORETTA
It's a diamond ring! A big diamond ring! Oh my Christ!

She's frantic. Debbie takes Bruno aside.

DEBBIE
I saw it. It's huge... it must be like eight carats. She says it was a quarter of a million dollars!

Bruno turns back to Loretta, trying to calm her.
CONTINUED:

BRUNO
Ma'am... calm down. Now, is the ring insured?

LORETTA
Of course it's insured! But you know how it works -- if I report it, they'll cancel me. And I don't want another ring! I need this ring! The ring Carlos gave me.

Bruno turns, speaks into the walkie-talkie he's carrying.

BRUNO
Where the fuck is housekeeping? I called for those dickheads ninety seconds ago.

IN THE FUNCTION ROOM the Guests have gathered to hear Johnson speak. As Andersen introduces him, Tommy continues eyeing Loretta.

ANDERSEN
Now I won't run through Jeff's record -- he's been in Congress twenty years, and I've only got two minutes. I'll just say this: When those of us in pharmaceuticals, or agribusiness, or insurance, or (indicating himself) utilities, or you name it -- when we've needed him, Jeff's been there for us. And we've been there for Jeff, too -- we raised a hundred thousand dollars today!

(APPLAUSE)
Without further ado, our man in Washington, Jefferson Davis Johnson.

IN THE HALLWAY Debbie hears the APPLAUSE (O.S.). She gets up.

DEBBIE
I should be in there. Good luck, Ms. Preston. I hope you find it.

She leaves. Loretta, mascara smeared, gets up, as does Bruno.

LORETTA
I can't go in there like this. God! Please... listen... I'll pay a ten thousand dollar reward for anybody who finds my ring. Just don't tell Carlos!

(suddenly grim)
He'll kill me.
IN THE FUNCTION ROOM, as Johnson takes questions, Tommy slips out.

QUESTIONER
What do you make of all this campaign reform business, Jeff?

JOHNSON
Well, y'know Ernie... these days, everyone's down on the political action committees and so-called special interests. But, heck, I think you and Fran have a right to participate in our democracy in exactly the way you're doing today. I'm in Congress to represent you. I don't want any so-called reform to take that power away from you.

APPLAUSE (O.S.). IN THE HALLWAY Bruno issues orders to two Maintenance Men.

BRUNO
I want every heating grate opened and inspected. I want every air conditioning duct vacuumed. Do you understand what I'm saying?

As he speaks, Bruno SEES Tommy pass through the hallway... spot something on the floor... pick it up... furtively put it in his pocket... and walk rapidly toward the door to the kitchens.

BRUNO
(running after him)
Hey, you! Waiter! Hold it right there!

Bruno puts an arm on Tommy. Tommy instantly assumes a frantic, wimpy, craven persona, along with his CARRIBBEAN ACCENT.

TOMMY
No! Please! Do not report me! I will be deported!

BRUNO
Calm down. What've you got in your pocket?

TOMMY
I told the CIA everything! I agreed to poison the pineapples! My green card is in the mail!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BRUNO
Stow it! I'm not Immigration, I'm hotel security. Now, what did you just put in your pocket?

TOMMY
Nothing.

BRUNO
I'm warning you, flathead, get cute with me and I will tear you a second asshole. Now a valuable diamond ring is missing...

TOMMY
Valuable?

We can almost see the light bulb click on above Bruno's head.

BRUNO
Very valuable. All right, I'll give you a hunnert bucks for it.

TOMMY
A hundred and five?

Bruno snorts agreement, goes for his wallet... Tommy goes for the ring... then suddenly leaps back in a cringe!

TOMMY
No! It's a trick! You will call me a thief and send me back and the Security Police will make me stand on my head in the guano pit! I have seen such things on CNN!

Bruno snaps and GRABS TOMMY BY THE COLLAR.

BRUNO
Jesus, I'm not trying to trick you...

TOMMY
No, no... it is a trap! I must turn this over to police.

He starts to leave. Bruno grabs him.

(CONTINUED)
BRUNO
Listen, dipshit... a valuable ring is missing and there's thousands of dollars in reward money waiting. So you'd better fork over...

TOMMY
How big is this... reward?

Another lightbulb.

BRUNO
Um, five hundred dollars.

TOMMY
You said 'thousands.'

BRUNO
Yeah. Right. A thousand dollars.

TOMMY
No, no, no... you said thousands. With an 's'. This is plural. This means "two or more thousands."

BRUNO
(deep sigh)
Okay, you win. Two thousand.

TOMMY
Or more. Two or more.

Bruno's had enough -- his grip tightens around Tommy's neck.

TOMMY
Just making a point.

IN HOTEL LOBBY AT THE CASHIER'S DESK Bruno slides a check to the Cashier, who counts a stack of bills. Bruno picks up a house phone, dials.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

ARMANDO, still unshaven, answers the RINGING phone.

ARMANDO
Hello?

INTERCUT with Bruno in the lobby.

BRUNO
Hello, may I speak with Ms. Preston?

(CONTINUED)
ARMANDO
She's in the bathroom. This is Carlos. Can I take a message?

BRUNO
(smiling to himself)
No, thanks, I'll call back.

ARMANDO hangs up the phone and exits the hotel room.

BRUNO crosses to the far side of the lobby, where Tommy waits inconspicuously. He gives him the money. Tommy gives him ring.

BRUNO
Now get back to work!

As Tommy heads back to the function room, Bruno picks up a house phone, dials, listens. He dials again, listens. No answer. He dials the operator.

BRUNO
This is Bruno in Security. Put me through to 502 -- there must be something wrong with the line, I can't get an answer... What do you mean, there's no one in 502? I just spoke to them!... No one's registered in 502? Are you sure?... Well, check again!... Shit!

He hangs up, looks at the ring, and realizes he's been taken. His face twisting with rage, he hurries after Tommy.

ON TOMMY MOVING swiftly through the function room toward 17 an exit. Zeke Bridges grabs him.

ZEKE
Hey! Where the hell are our drinks.

Surprised, Tommy opts for an EAST INDIAN ACCENT.

TOMMY
I remember... you were the sloe gin fizz and the mango daquiri? With perhaps a small umbrella for the lady?

ZEKE
Bourbon neat and a Perrier, dammit!

TOMMY
And would you still be wanting the umbrella then?
17 CONTINUED:

As Zeke's face flushes in anger, Tommy SEES Bruno come into the room, blood in his eye. Tommy turns sharply and heads out the terrace doors to the --

18 EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Tommy conceals himself behind a pillar, across the courtyard, away from the Guests. But from another direction, Johnson and Andersen approach, arm in arm, and sit on a bench by the pillar.

JOHNSON
Olaf, there's something I wanted to sound you out on. As a special friend.

ANDERSEN
Shoot.

Tommy moves away from the pillar, sees Bruno roaming the terrace, and retreats.

JOHNSON
I'm thinking of retiring from Congress.

Andersen's eyes widen in astonishment.

ANDERSEN
You're what?

JOHNSON
I'm thinking maybe I won't run. Maybe I should listen more (indicating his heart) to this. Really appreciate these years. Sail around the world. Climb mountains. Enjoy the finer things of life.

ANDERSEN
Jeff. Listen to me. You can't retire. Florida needs you. I need you. I need you on rates. I need you on regulations. I need you on those environmental nutcases --

JOHNSON
Olaf, if I retire this year, I get to keep all the money left over in my campaign treasury. Comes to a very tidy nest-egg.

ANDERSEN
How tidy?

(CONTINUED)
JOHNSON

One-point-three million.
(chuckles)

It's called the grandfather loophole.

Bruno has gone. But Tommy stays. His eyes light up at the money.

ANDERSEN

Come on, Jeff. Look at what you'd be giving up. Going to the best resorts in the world and calling it "official business." Golfing and skiing and fishing, and never picking up a tab. And, Jeff -- there's no aphrodisiac like power. You can have some of the most intelligent, attractive women in the country. You've got it made!

JOHNSON

Oh, I suppose that one-point-three may seem like spare change to the head of Gulf Coast Power, but to a country boy like me --

ANDERSEN

Okay, Jeff. I get it. Look. There's a little software company that's about to go through the roof.

Johnson smiles at the direction the conversation is taking.

ON Tommy also smiling, in admiration at the transaction going down.

ANDERSEN

A few thousand worth of stock options would stand to make you quite a pile. As long as your blind trust buys them, you're clean -- the SEC can't shake a stick at you. Half a million, easy -- and that's just a start.

JOHNSON

Well, if you put it like that... I now see I have a duty to continue my career in public service.

Johnson stands, puts his arm on Andersen.

Tommy emerges, shakes his head, and laughs.

TOMMY

I'm in the wrong business.
EXT. BAIT SHACK - DAY

A ramshackle bait shack, paint peeling, on the inland waterway. At the rear of the shack, Armando shoots hoops into a tattered net. Loretta, back in jeans, looks at her watch.

A bondo-patched Econoline van pulls up. Tommy jumps out, big smile. He gives Loretta an energetic round of APPLAUSE.

TOMMY
The best li'l roper in America!

But she doesn't want the charm.

LORETTA
You took your time.

ARMANDO
Cops bust you, Tommy?

TOMMY

He pulls out the wad of bills. Their faces brighten considerably.

TOMMY
That look like busted?

EXT. CAPITOL - NIGHT

Washington, D.C. The illuminated dome of the Capitol.

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE - NIGHT

CAMERA ROAMS the well-hung walls. From the photos and memorabilia, we realize that we are in the office of Rep. Jeff Johnson.

In the reflections on the frames, we GLIMPSE some MOVEMENT on the desk explaining the considerable BREATHING and MOANING (O.S.).

JOHNSON (O.S.)
Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my...

But then a strange GURGLING sound (O.S.) escapes from Johnson.

JOHNSON (O.S.)
... God.

A silent beat. Then a horrified CRY. Jennifer rises INTO FRAME.

JENNIFER
Oh my god!
INT. CHURCH - FLORIDA - DAY

The congregation is SINGING. We SEE the widow Johnson. At her side, in the aisle seat, a powerful man with bushy eyebrows, about 60, in a three-piece suit and watch chain: congressman DICK DODGE. The HYMN ends. Dodge steps up to the pulpit.

DODGE
It was my honor to serve in Congress with Jeff Johnson for a generation. No one could have been a better legislator. No one could have been a finer husband and father. And now --

He presses the tips of his fingers together and looks skyward, as if communing with his memory of the deceased.

DODGE
And now God has called his servant home.

ANGLE ON Jennifer, in black.

DODGE (O.S.)
We will miss him. But we are grateful that his passing was so peaceful -- and so like him -- working late into the night at his desk, the consummate public servant.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Vera sneaks a look at Jennifer, who is poker-faced.

EXT./INT. VERANDA/JOHNSON HOME - DAY

On the veranda of the gracious home, mourners pay respects to the family. Dodge puts a gentle hand on the widow's shoulder and draws her aside. He throws a look at Jennifer, who joins them.

DODGE
Vera, I know you're still in shock from Jeff's... passing. But we have to talk about his seat.

Vera stares at Jennifer. She knows the score.

JENNIFER
Mrs. Johnson, if you'd like to discuss this in private --

VERA
You can stay -- what's the difference?

DODGE
Vera, I'd like you to announce that you're going to run for Congress. Let a few days pass to show proper respect. But next week, I want to stand next to you at a press conference where you declare for Jeff's seat in the House.

VERA JOHNSON
No, Dick -- no.

DODGE
There's nothing to be afraid of, Vera. With your name, you can't lose. People around these parts are so used to voting for Jeff Johnson -- why, Mrs. Jeff Johnson would win in a walk.

VERA JOHNSON
Dick, I was a Washington wife for twenty years. Twenty years of Potomac bullshit is plenty for one lifetime.

DODGE
Vera, we're talking about becoming a Member of Congress. We're talking about a sure thing.
CONTINUED:

JENNIFER
Don't worry about running the office -- I'll be there night and day.

VERA JOHNSON
I'm sure you would, dear. But I couldn't give you the same job satisfaction Jeff gave you.

Jennifer, embarrassed, didn't know Vera knew. Nor did Dodge.

OMITTED

EXT. CONDOMINUM COMPLEX - DAY
A retirement community in the Florida sunshine.

INT. CONDO ELEVATOR/HALLWAY - DAY - THE ELEVATOR DOORS open. A supermarket shopping cart full of groceries, tied with a big bow, rolls out, pushed by Tommy. Loretta accompanies him.

Tommy BUZZES at a door. It's answered by Tommy's GRANDMA, a limber lady in leggings and a bright top. She sees the groceries, kisses him.

GRANDMA
This is very sweet of you, darling. But you shouldn't have done it. Where did you get the money?

TOMMY
You don't want to know.

INT. GRANDMA'S CONDO - DAY
Tommy and Loretta are watching the track results on the local tv news. Tommy, playing solitaire, shuffles brilliantly. Grandma comes in from the kitchen, shaking her head.

GRANDMA
How did I end up with a thief for a grandson?

TOMMY
Grandma -- I told you. I'm not a thief. I'm a con man. An artist.

GRANDMA
But also a crook.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
But I only con crooks, Grandma. You can't con an honest man. Only somebody who wants something for nothing.
(pause)
But the good Lord must have been fond of pigeons, because he made so many of them.

GRANDMA
Sometimes I just wish you were more like your Daddy...

TOMMY
You mean, dead?

GRANDMA
No, smartmouth... I mean someone who made something of himself.

LORETTA
(pointing at TV)
LOOK... it's the ad!

VIDEO... a cheap TV spot -- a busty blonde in a skimpy outfit tossing her hair and pouting.

LORETTA (V.O.)
(fake Swedish accent)
I am Inga. I'm here from Sweden and I'm s-o-o lonely. I need a man... and so do my girlfriends.

VIDEO... Scantily-clad babes to match the names. Loretta speaks along with the V.O.

LORETTA (AND V.O.)
... Maria, my hotblooded Spanish friend... Babette, the Parisian pussycat... and many others. So call the "Girls of Many Nations," at 1-900-555-NATO.

SUPER: CALL 1-900-555-NATO.

LORETTA
(Swedish accent)
So what do you think of my accent, Grandma?

GRANDMA
Compared to what? Loretta, why don't you go baste the turkey?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

Loretta gets up and goes for the kitchen. We hear a high-pitched ELECTRONIC WARBLE. Tommy reaches into Loretta’s purse and pulls out a cellular phone.

TOMMY
(calls to Loretta)
See? I told you TV advertising works.

He opens the phone and speaks in a toneless, recording-like voice.

TOMMY
Hello...you have reached Girls of Many Nations. For Hot Blooded Italian Wildcats, press "one" now. (nothing)
For Perky American Cheerleaders, press "two" now. (nothing)
For a Sultry Swedish Love Goddess, press "three" now... ("BEEP")

He covers the mouthpiece and calls to Loretta.

TOMMY
Bingo! Loretta...guy wants to speak to Inga.

LORETTA
(o.c.)
Tell him to call back. I'm basting.

TOMMY grins mischievously and speaks into the phone in the husky voice of a SWEDISH WOMAN.

TOMMY
Ja, this is Inga. Hello Paul... how are you tonight? You are feeling naughty? That's all right...you have your what in a bowl of oatmeal? Yes, that is very naughty, and maybe a little sick.

GRANDMA
Disgusting.

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
Oh NO! It's my husband Lars.
He's home early, I must go before
...you want to talk to Lars too?
So you like to talk dirty out of
both sides of your mouth.
(normal voice)
Man, you are one twisted bastard!

Laughing, he hangs up.

GRANDMA
Tommy, please!

TOMMY
Sorry, grandma, just getting a
third minute out of him.

He clicks off the phone and slams it back into Loretta's
purse. Loretta, meanwhile, has reappeared.

LORETTA
You hung up on Paul? He's one of
my best customers.

GRANDMA
I can't believe any relative of
mine does that for a living.

LORETTA
C'mon Gramma...it's only my voice.
They never actually meet me.

GRANDMA
So my granddaughter talks dirty
for a living and my grandson's a
thief.

TOMMY
What's up, Grandma? Are you
embarrassed to show my picture
around the pool?

GRANDMA
Of course I'm not. Look.

She goes to her sewing basket and pulls something from
it. She unfolds it: a long piece of needlepoint she's
been working on.

INSERT

It spells out Tommy's full name: Thomas Jefferson
Johnson.

(CONTINUED)
GRANDMA (O.S.)
Look what these arthritic hands been doing.

BACK TO SCENE

GRANDMA
Make me proud of you, Tommy. Make me proud of the name you carry.

In the silence between them that follows, we HEAR the tv.

GENERAL MANAGER
I'm Ned Grable, vice president and general manager of WFLA. We think Mrs. Jeff Johnson did the right thing in not running for the congressional seat left vacant by her husband's death.

The editorial catches Grandma's attention.

GENERAL MANAGER
Jeff Johnson's name may still be magic. But it'll take more than the magic of name recognition to solve our region's problems. I'm Ned Grable.

GRANDMA
Name recognition. Lordy, what a notion. People have to be some boobs just to vote for someone because their name is Johnson.

Tommy's eyes widen.

GRANDMA
I remember once back in Georgia, they even elected a dead man. His name was still on the ballot -- people were just used to voting for him.

TOMMY
What did you say, Grandma?

EXT. BAIT SHACK - DAY

HOMER, the proprietor of Homer's Pit Stop, wearing fuel-smeared overalls, is dieseling a Customer's boat down by the water.

TOMMY (O.S.)
Homer! Get your ass over here!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Up by the racks of junk food and beer, and pails of fish slop, Tommy and Armando await Homer. In b.g., an older black gentleman plays checkers, solo. This is VAN DYKE.

ARMANDO
What's this about, jefe?

TOMMY
(calling)
Loretta! Get off the damn phone!

ARMANDO
This better be good.

TOMMY
(sarcastic mimic)
"This better be good." Loretta!

ON LORETTA on the pay phone, moaning in Swedish ecstasy.

LORETTA
Oh, ya, ya, God, you're so big!
(waving at Tommy)
Uh-oh, I have to go now, my husband Sven is home early...

Tommy grabs the phone. He pushes aside a protesting Loretta...

TOMMY
Goddammit, Inga, is it that pervert again! Damn!

He smacks the receiver with his hand.

TOMMY
(into receiver)
Listen, you little shit -- I just spent eight years in the joint, nobody talks to my woman like that! I got your adress, I got a machete, I got two Rotweilers... I'm gonna come to your house and tear your ass up!
(hangs up, laughing)

LORETTA
Okay, Tommy, what's so damn important?

HOMER
Yeah, I got work to do.

(CONTINUED)
They all look at him expectantly. He takes a dramatic pause, then launches into a "Come to Jesus" speech.

**TOMMY**
My friends, I want to tell you about a town where the streets are paved with gold. This is a town where the marks give you money before you ask. A town where they take you to dinner after you fuck ‘em. A town where when they need money, they just print more. This is a town where a guy bounced nine hundred checks and he didn't even have to skip town!!!

**ARMANDO**
Ain't no town like that.

**LORETTA**
You mean Vegas?

**TOMMY**
No.

(beat)
Washington, D.C. I'm going to run for Congress.

His big smile meets their blank surprise. Their faces fall.

**LORETTA**
What is this, a joke?

**HOMER**
I don't get it.

**ARMANDO**
What's the con, Tommy?

**TOMMY**
Van Dyke. You remember Willie Sutton?

**VAN DYKE**
Of blessed memory.

**TOMMY**
You remember what he said? They asked him, Why do you rob banks? And he said, That's where the money is. I tell you, people -- Washington. That's where the money is.
Tommy produces a sheaf of Xeroxes and pamphlets.

TOMMY
I found this shit in the library. You know how much a congressman makes? A hundred and thirty a year -- and that's just base pay for getting your ass elected. Then there are these things called PACs, and these lobbyists, whose whole point in life is to buy you off. It's the con of a lifetime -- and the damn thing is, it's legal! This is hot, people, we can do this!

ARMANDO
Who "we," white man?

TOMMY
You never heard of staff, Armando? I get in, I get a staff allowance of five hundred and thirty-seven grand a year --

Loretta wolf-WHISTLES.

TOMMY
-- which I will generously share with you.

LORETTA
And how exactly were you going to get your butt to Congress?

HOMER
Yeah -- why would anyone vote for you?

TOMMY
Not for me, Homer. For Jeff Johnson. Name recognition -- that's what it's all about. You think folks know their congressman died? I get on the ballot as Jeff Johnson, I guarantee they'll vote for me. Now all's I have to do is get on the ballot.

LORETTA
Which is how?
TOMMY
Which is where you folks come in.
(picking up a ream of forms)
All's we have to do is collect five thousand six hundred twenty five signatures.

ARMANDO
You shittin' us?

HOMER
In your dreams, Tommy.

TOMMY
You people got a better idea?

VAN DYKE
I do.

INT. SILVER FOXES CHAPTER - DAY
Senior citizens fold brochures, stuff envelopes, make phone calls. Van Dyke and Tommy enter.

TOMMY
Okay... gimme the four-one-one on these Silver Foxes Again. It's a bunch of old folks who like to vote?

VAN DYKE
Don't laugh, they get an enormous turnout. But the big thing is, they have their own line on the ballot. They already got the signatures.

TOMMY
Ah.

VAN DYKE
The lady we're meeting, Hattie Rifkin, they call her the condo queen.

TOMMY
So all I have to do is snow one old lady. Don't sound like major surgery.
INT. INNER OFFICE - SILVER FOXES - DAY

Tommy and Van Dyke are seated opposite HATTIE RIFKIN, a high-energy woman, 70s, with a frizz of white curls.

HATTIE
So, what brings you here? You want to talk politics... talk!

VAN DYKE
We were wondering who you were going to run for Congress this year.

HATTIE
Oh, the usual sacrificial lamb. Probably Sylvia Roland. She just lost her husband, she needs to meet new people. Why?

TOMMY
Mrs. Rifkin... I want to run.

HATTIE
Well, I want to run too -- but with this plastic hip, it's not gonna happen.

Tommy breaks up. In spite of himself, he's charmed by the salty old babe.

TOMMY
What I mean is... I'd like to run for Congress on the Silver Fox ticket. I care about you and your issues.

HATTIE
Yeah, that's what my son says. But does he call? Anyway, what makes you think a group of alter cockers are gonna support a man who hasn't clipped his first nose hair yet?

TOMMY
Because I can win.

HATTIE
No, no... a Democrat can win. A Republican can win. A Silver Fox can only make a symbolic point.

TOMMY
Mrs. Rifkin, if you give me a ballot line, and if I can get support from... (CONTINUED)
HATTIE
If... if. Ven die bubbah halla
tsehen qulishkes, het gehaya zadeh.

TOMMY
Sure, but... besser die viller ein
der kenner.

Hattie cracks up. Tommy leans over and translates for Van Dyke:

TOMMY
She said, 'If my grandmother had
balls, she'd be my grandfather.'

HATTIE
(recovering)
Where the Hell did you learn to
speak Yiddish?

TOMMY
The same place I learned to hustle
shtrarkers at gin rummy. From Morris
Elfbein... the Gin King of Miami
Beach.

HATTIE
No kidding... you knew the Rudolf
Valentino of Dade County?

TOMMY
He taught me a great deal. He
taught me you don't always need the
best cards to win.

HATTIE
Maybe not in gin, but in politics,
young man, you need money to win,
you need a name to win, you...

TOMMY
Oh, I have a name.

HATTIE
What, you're an athlete, a movie
star? I don't get out as much as
I used to. You're not on MTV, are
you?

TOMMY
No ma'am. My name is Johnson. Jeff
Johnson. The Name You Know.

(CONTINUED)
She ponders for a minute. And then she gets it. A wicked smile.

HATTIE
Jeff Johnson. Well, that's a name even our Alzheimer's Group will remember.
(beat; shakes her head)
Still, for a full-up campaign, we'd need materials, we'd need ads...

TOMMY
You leave that to me, Mrs. R.

INT. JOHNSON HOME - DAY

The widow Johnson is pouring tea for Tommy, now in super-nerd drag -- wire-rim glasses and tweed sport jacket.

VERA JOHNSON
I'm not sure I understand, Professor Franklin -- you wrote your doctoral thesis on my husband?

TOMMY
He was a great man, Mrs. Johnson. He did so much for my people.

VERA JOHNSON
He... did?

TOMMY
Oh, yes. I'll never forget when he said 'Welfare is a drug -- and you gotta kick it cold turkey.' It was... inspirational.

VERA JOHNSON
Really... well, I'm sure...

TOMMY
And I was actually in the audience when he said, 'If you people would just get off your dead asses and look for work, this country might be fit to live in again.' Powerful stuff.

VERA JOHNSON
It's very kind of you to say so. And you're very kind to come all the way from... where was it?

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
Wilson-Pickett State Teachers College. But I didn't just come to pay respects, ma'am. I came because your husband deserves an archive. A place where scholars can study his legacy. A storehouse for the record of his remarkable career.

VERA JOHNSON
I see. So you want... his papers?

TOMMY
Oh, not just his papers, Mrs. Johnson. Everything. Buttons, posters, bumper stickers. All the paraphernalia of his campaigns -- proof of his political genius. Now I realize that you may have a sentimental attachment to a few items...

VERA JOHNSON
Take 'em.

TOMMY
I beg your pardon.

VERA JOHNSON
Take 'em all. Would you like the wedding photos, too?

TOMMY
Well, I don't think that's necess...

VERA JOHNSON
Good -- that way you won't have to go rooting around in the garbage. Is there anything else?

TOMMY
Well, um... no.

VERA JOHNSON
More tea? Or something stronger? I know it's only ten-thirty, but, hell, sun's over the yardarm somewhere, right?

TOMMY
Actually, ma'am, I should be getting back.

(CONTINUED)
VERA JOHNSON
You're in pretty good shape for a professor. D'you work out?

Tommy rises and packs his briefcase hastily.

TOMMY
Look, I, um, have a class to teach. You know how blind students are... they're so dependent.
(edges toward door)
Don't worry ma'am... your materials will be in good hands.

EXT. WHARF - DAY - CLOSE ANGLE - A SCISSORS

cuts the RE- off a RE-ELECT JEFF JOHNSON bumper sticker in familiar blue and gold.

Van Dyke, Armando, and Homer have a production line going, doctoring the old Johnson campaign materials, slicing off and painting out the RE-'s and the years.

VAN DYKE
Are you sure you don't want to come to Washington with us, Homer?

HOMER
You bums got time on your hands.
(indicating bait shack)
I got a business to run.

ON LORETTA working the RINGING pay phone.

LORETTA
Hello? Who? The League of Women Voters? Sorry, Mr. Johnson won't be attending the debate. No -- no, Betty, I'm sorry, I can't tie up this line.
(hangs up; it RINGS)
Hello? The Sarasota Star-Ledger? I'm sorry, we're out of photographs. No, you can't, Mr. Johnson has just had surgery for a deviated septum.
(hangs up; it RINGS)
Hello?
(brightening)
Ya, this is Inga.

PAN TO TOMMY training a home video camera on a poster that reads JEFF JOHNSON FOR CONGRESS.
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
(very white)
We're not going to show you Jeff Johnson waving a flag. We're not going to show you Jeff Johnson kissing babies. We're not going to show you Jeff Johnson doing anything, because you already know what Jeff Johnson can do.

INT. JOHNSON HOME - NIGHT - ON TV SCREEN

The poster fills the screen.

TOMMY (V.O.)
Tomorrow, vote for Jeff Johnson.
The name you know.

A very puzzled Vera Johnson watches the ad on tv.

SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT (MOS)

The congressional district sleeps. But in the darkness, a kind of D-Day onslaught is under way. QUICK SUPER-IMPOSED CUTS of Tommy's secret army of Silver Foxes, opening crates, fanning through parking lots, swarming over lawns, driving in stakes, tacking up posters everywhere.

INCLUDE Tommy climbing a telephone pole... Armando shinnying up a light pole across the street... Loretta and Van Dyke pulling on a rope... which hoists a huge bundle to Tommy... who opens and unfolds it... and gets an end through the air to Armando. They unfurl the biggest banner imaginable.

JEFF JOHNSON: THE NAME YOU KNOW

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET - DAWN

CAMERA TILTS DOWN. Every square inch of town seems to have been plastered with JOHNSON FOR CONGRESS material. It's on billboards, bumpers, bus shelters, balloons, banners, utility poles... all in the late congressman's signature design.

QUICK SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

The Econoline, now a JOHNSON ad on wheels, ghetto-blasters mounted front and back on the roof, rolls by a Jewish deli... a soul food joint... a whitebread country club... a Chinese restaurant... At each, Tommy's amplified VOICE says:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
Jeff Johnson. The name you know.

In a different appropriate accent.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

In front of a polling place, Van Dyke pulls up in a hearse with an ELECT JOHNSON banner. So, driving muscle cars, do Armando, Homer, and Loretta -- Tommy's get-out-the-vote fleet. Exhilarated senior citizens pile out, led by Hattie.

INT. POLLING PLACE - DAY

An ordinary Couple, 40s, sign the registration book, then enter adjacent voting carrels. After a moment, the HUSBAND leans out.

HUSBAND
Who are we voting for Congress?

WIFE
Don't we always vote for Johnson?

HUSBAND
That's it -- Johnson.

HIS HAND punches the hole in the ballot next to Johnson.

VIDEO

A NETWORK ANCHOR at an election-night news set.

NETWORK ANCHOR
If you're just joining us, our exit polls project that in Florida, an unknown, independent candidate whose sole asset appears to be his name may just possibly win a slim victory.

EXT. BAIT SHACK - NIGHT

Blinding lights. Media circus. TV power cords, a huge tangle snaking back toward mobile generators. Cameramen narrowly miss knocking each other into the water. A STEEL DRUM BAND plays "Happy Days Are Here Again."

(CONTINUED)
The small crowd -- Tommy's cronies, their pals, and a jubilant contingent of Panthers led by Hattie -- lets out a great WHOOP.

**FLORIDA REPORTER #1**

Is that him? Tricia, I believe Congressman-elect Johnson is coming this way.

For the first time, we see Tommy wearing a beautifully-cut suit. He's instantly engulfed by lights, cameras, and Supporters.

An amazed CAMERAMAN, watching Tommy, whispers to a Producer.

**CAMERAMAN**

Jesus -- he's not... white. I actually voted for the guy. I thought he was Jeff Johnson.

Tommy jumps onto a bench. APPLAUSE from his Supporters.

**TOMMY**

Thank you, thank you, all of you, for your help. Give yourself a round of applause.

They do. As APPLAUSE continues (O.S.), CAMERA PANS from Reporter to Reporter to Reporter, their mikes bearing the call-letters of different channels.

ON GRANDMA being interviewed. She wears a JOHNSON FOR CONGRESS button and speaks with manifest pride.

**GRANDMA**

I've never been so proud in all my life. He was always such a good boy...well, I think he meant well. Sometimes -- well he was a clean child. That's important, I think...

PAN TO FLORIDA REPORTER #2 doing a stand-up.

**FLORIDA REPORTER #2**

Then in Massachusetts, there was a guy named Kennedy who got elected, but he wasn't really a Kennedy.

PAN TO --

(CONTINUED)
A lot of dead incumbents get re-elected, actually. It's an American tradition.

ON Tommy. Speaking meaningfully, with great sincerity, he shows a gift for political discourse.

TOMMY
We ran a positive campaign. We campaigned on the issues. The issue is leadership. Leadership for the future. Ask not what you can do for your country. The people have spoken. The only thing we have to fear is fear itself. If you can't stand the heat stay out of the kitchen. Live Free or Die. And in conclusion...read my lips!
(APPLAUSE and CHEERS)

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Tommy looking out the window at the city below.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - AERIAL VIEW - DAY - (STOCK)

The approach to National Airport gives a good view of Washington and its landmarks.

TOMMY
The promised land.

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

The plane touches down.

INT. NATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Through the airport move our Floridians. They look like they're going to opening day at the track.

VOICE (O.S.)
Congressman Johnson! Congressman Johnson!

Tommy looks. It's REINHHARDT, a young straight-arrow bearing two huge document briefcases, which he puts down to shake hands.

(CONTINUED)
Arthur Reinhardt. You remember me -- I Fed-Exed that material to you in Key West?

Reinhardt, my man! Of course! You look just like I pictured you. Nice wing tips.

Thank you. Congressman, I hope you don't think I'm out of line for meeting you here -- I thought you might want some help with logistics, settling in at your hotel -- (indicating the briefcases) Since you didn't make it to the Harvard seminar, I put together a set of their papers for you.

I like your initiative, Reinhardt, but to tell you the truth, I've never been much of a student. Maybe you can brief my staff sometime.

Reinhardt looks Tommy's cronies over. Not your classic Hill types.

But thank you, I will take you up on those logistics. Hey! Entourage! What hotel we at?

They look at one another, puzzled.

Reinhardt, it appears that the staff has neglected to nail down some details.

Oh, Jesus, the IMF's in town. Where are we going to find a room?

Four rooms.
INT. AIRPORT BAR - DAY

The entourage is enjoying a round of libations. Reinhardt runs up.

REINHARDT
I got lucky at the Madison. Thank god there's been a coup in Uruguay. Their delegation just checked out.

TOMMY
You're a wizard, Reinhardt. I knew you could handle it.

EXT. AIRPORT TAXI RANK - DAY

Tommy's entourage and their luggage are being packed into a cab. Tommy turns to Reinhardt.

TOMMY
So when does the House open for business?

Reinhardt hasn't heard it put quite that way before.

Reinhardt gets his courage up.

REINHARDT
Say, Congressman, you got my resume, didn't you?

TOMMY
(hasn't a clue)
I'm sure I did.

REINHARDT
There's something I wanted to ask you. I know it's a big step, but -- I'd like you to consider me to be your AA.

TOMMY
That's quite an offer, Reinhardt, very decent of you, but I'm just a social drinker.

REINHARDT
No. AA. Your Administrative Assistant. I worked for Congressman Johnson. I'd like to work for you, Congressman Johnson.

TOMMY
Really.

Tommy looks at his own troops, then back to Reinhardt.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
You mean like an affirmative action thing?

Tommy opens the cab door.

TOMMY
Tell you what -- I'll think about it, okay?

Tommy gets in and closes the door.

TOMMY
(through the open window)
Thanks for getting us settled, really appreciate it.
(to driver)
Madison Hotel.

OMITTED

EXT. MEMORIAL BRIDGE - MAGIC HOUR

The bridge over the Potomac has a classic view of the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. Their taxi drives by.

OMITTED
&

EXT. CANNON BUILDING - DAY

Morning. Tommy and cronies get out of a cab and bound up the grand flight of stairs. In b.g., the Capitol dome.

INT. CANNON GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR/ELEVATOR - DAY

They walk the superb ground floor corridor of Cannon, salivating. Marble columns... chandeliers... grand offices. Real class.

AT AN ELEVATOR with a sign above it -- MEMBERS ONLY -- they stop. Tommy presses the button. The door opens. The seated ATTENDANT gets a load of this group. Especially Loretta.

ATTENDANT
Sorry, folks, this elevator's for Members only.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
That's okay, they're with me.
Sixth floor please. Cannon 609.
I'm going to my office.

ATTENDANT
I said Members only.

TOMMY
I am a Member. Now take us to six
before I haul your ass in front of
the committee on disrespectful
behavior.

ATTENDANT
Elevator don't go to six. You
have to get off at five and walk.

INT. CANNON STAIRWELL - DAY
Looking puzzled, they make their way up a drab stairwell.

INT. CANNON TOP FLOOR - DAY
Not classy. On one side of the hallway, the windows give
out on a brutally ugly courtyard. On the other side of
the hall are cages: windowless storage bins behind metal
fences crammed with junk -- and an occasional xerox
machine, Mr. Coffee, and pitiful staffer at a tiny desk.
Tommy opens the door to 609.

INT. TOMMY'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY
Tommy's office is a small, dark garret, with dirty car-
peting, bare shelves, and a pile of bulging canvas U.S.
Mail bags.

TOMMY
Wait here.
He heads further into the office.

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY
Equally unattractive. Perched on the desk: Reinhardt.

TOMMY
You again!

REINHARDT
Good morning, congressman.

TOMMY
What is this shithole?

(CONTINUED)
REINHARDT

Excuse me?

TOMMY

(gesturing, peeved)
This.

REINHARDT

(casual)
Oh -- you missed the freshman lottery
for offices. They assign them by
draw. You didn't show for the draw,
so you got the worst office in Congress.

TOMMY

I missed what lottery?

REINHARDT

It was all in the briefing books I
mailed you.

TOMMY

What else did I miss, Reinhardt?

REINHARDT

Are you hiring me, congressman?

Tommy gives Reinhardt a good once-over, seeing him anew.

TOMMY

You're shaking me down, aren't you?

Tommy laughs, then clasps Reinhardt's shoulders.

TOMMY

This is fantastic, Reinhardt. I
haven't been here five minutes,
and you're shaking me down. God,
I'm gonna love this town. You're
hired, man. Just tell me what to
do next. I don't want to miss out
on any of the good shit.

REINHARDT

The dinner for new Members is
tonight, at Union Station. Do you
have black tie?

BEGIN elegant, spirited classical MUSIC.

INT. UNION STATION - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

With its hundred-foot barrel-vaulted ceiling and grand
windows, the magnificent Beaux-Arts station has been
beautifully restored.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

A big crowd slowly makes its way along a red carpet to the party.

Tommy was born to wear a tux. In his lapel, a red-and-gold eagle pin. On his arm, Loretta, in a dramatic shoulderless and nearly backless gown, with three-quarter gloves. The other Women in sight are far more conservatively dressed.

INT. UNION STATION - ADIRONDACKS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A STRING QUARTET provides the music. Tommy and Loretta linger uncertainly near the entrance. Then:

TOMMY
Let's meet some natives.

Tommy leads her over to two Men, 30s, excellent haircuts. Both wear pins. He extends a hand.

TOMMY
Tommy Johnson, how'd you do, nice party, heck of a railroad station, isn't it?

RAFE
Rafe Simon, freshman from Tulsa. And this is Bo Chandler --

BO
-- from Lufkin, Texas. You must be the one who didn't come to Harvard.

TOMMY
No, I couldn't, it was my Princeton reunion....

RAFE
Jeff Johnson? You're Jeff Johnson? The guy from Florida?

TOMMY
That's right.

RAFE
(to Bo)
The rest of us are out there on the campaign trail, raising money, kissing ass, making speeches, dragging our butts from place to place -- and he slides in on pure name recognition!

(CONTINUED)
He puts his face close to Tommy.

RAFE
Let me tell you something, Jeff.

A tense beat. Then Rafe breaks into a smile.

RAFE
Fuckin' brilliant.

Bo winks at Tommy.

Tommy
Thank you. Thank you both very much.
(to Loretta)
Isn't that nice, now, don't you think?
(to Rafe and Bo)
This is Miss Loretta, boys.

She extends a regal hand to each, Liza Doolittle at the ball.

LORETTA
How do yo do. How do you do.

TOMMY
And it's Tommy. My friends call me Tommy. "Jeff" is my... professional name. So what line of work were you boys in before you got elected? You lawyers or something?

RAFE
Oh, no, I did morning weather and traffic for KTOK in Tulsa.

BO
You don't remember me? I was a tight end for the Oilers -- my knee gimped out.

The origins of the gentlemen's political success is not lost on Tommy.

BO
Hey, stop by my reception after the swearing in tomorrow, okay?

RAFE
Yeah, but don't you go to his reception before you go to my reception.

(CONTINUED)
Fine, but I'm gonna be real offended if either of you miss my reception.

They leave.

I think we have to have a reception.

AT THE BUFFET, as Tommy and Loretta help themselves generously to oysters and champagne, they overhear TWO MEMBERS passing by.

So then I ran an ad calling him a draft dodger, but then he ran an ad calling me a plagiarist.

What did you do?

Oh, leaked a rumor that his father-in-law was a Nazi. I went up ten points in a weekend.

We're in the majors, doll.

THE BALCONY is full of people working one another. As Tommy and Loretta pass some large stone statues, a man extends his hand -- liquor lobbyist KEN KORNGOLD.


Tommy Johnson. Distilled Spirits, is that right?

It's super that you won, congressman. Any way we can help, please don't hesitate.

Pleasure's all mine, Ken, hope you can make it to my reception. Do you happen to have a card?
KORNGOLD
(giving him one)
I sure do.

INT. UNION STATION - MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy is along a wall where other guests are similarly occupied.

TOMMY
You now what I love about this place?
The way everyone calls you a Member. Every time I hear that, it makes me think of Mr. Happy here.

The Member next to him bursts out laughing.

TOMMY
Don't you be peeing on my shoe.

They go to the sinks. The Member introduces himself.

IOWA
Mike Strangland. Iowa -- first CD.

TOMMY
You got a CD? Shit, I missed that, too.

IOWA
First Congressional district.

TOMMY
Ohhh. Tommy Johnson. Florida. So Iowa -- how'd you get to Washington? You do the crop report on tv?

IOWA has a big open face and a flat Midwestern voice.

IOWA
No -- I owe it all to the Vietnamese.

TOMMY
War hero?

IOWA
P.O.W. When I got back to Cedar Rapids, I spent so many years telling the Rotary Club what was wrong in Washington, they finally told me to put up or shut up -- so I put up. And here I am.
TOMMY
Wait a minute. What's wrong in
Washington?

IOWA
C'mon -- there's acid rain killing
fish, and no one's stopping it...
there's topsoil washing away, and no
erosion program... there's chemicals
in our livestock -- God, I sound like
a Boy Scout.

TOMMY
That's alright, Iowa -- this place
could use a few geeks like you.

INT. UNION STATION - ADIRONDACKS - TOMMY'S DINNER
TABLE - NIGHT

Tommy shakes hands around the table, taking business
cards as he goes.

FIRST LOBBYIST
Pete Slocum. Asbestos Information
Institute.

SECOND LOBBYIST
Mike Gustofson. Freedom to
Advertise Coalition.

THIRD LOBBYIST
Paul Zeckhauser. American Tobacco
Council.

TOMMY
Hey... thank you... nice to see
you... hope you can make it to my
reception. Have y'all met Miss
Loretta?

TOMMY'S TABLEMATE is lawyer-lobbyist TOMMY O'CONNOR, 40s.
As Waiters serve lobster bisque, he hands TJ a business
card.

O'CONNOR
Tommy O'Connor. Soon as I saw how
you got elected, I knew you were a
real comer. Hell, I bet old Olaf
Andersen voted for you.

TOMMY
Who's Olaf Andersen?
CONTINUED:

O'Connor points. ON THE DAIS, Andersen is engrossed with Dodge.

O'CONNOR (O.S.)
I won't tell him you asked.
Chairman of Gulf Coast Power.
Constituent of yours, client of mine.

BACK TO SCENE

O'CONNOR
Pays the rent, know what I mean?
Say, could I host a little welcome-to-Washington thing for you down at
my law firm? Meet some of my clients,
five hundred a head -- you could
pick up twenty, twenty-five grand
to get you started.

TOMMY
(cautious)
And how much of that do you get?

O'CONNOR
(amused)
Oh, it doesn't come off the top.
Down the road, I'll bill 'em each
five hundred an hour whenever I
take you to lunch.

TOMMY
Tommy, I think this is the beginning
of a beautiful relationship.

INT. UNION STATION - ADIRONDACKS - NIGHT - ON DODGE

making a speech from the dais.

DODGE
Tonight we unite the two great
pillars of our system -- political
and financial. To the forty-four
newly-elected Members of Congress,
I say, Look around you tonight.
Look around, and be thankful for
the generosity.

Tommy inspects the sea of barracudas.

(CONTINUED)
DODGE
The people you see not only provided tonight's hospitality. They are the people you serve. That's our system of checks and balances at its best. Their support helped get you elected... your work will help them... and their support will help you in your next campaign, which I remind you is already less than two years away.

INT./EXT. ADIRONDACKS - LARGE DOORS - NIGHT
In b.g., the Capitol dome. As Tommy and Loretta leave, they pass Dick Dodge, who is saying goodnight to guests. He stops them.

DODGE
You know, Mr. Johnson, it's customary for new Members to pay a courtesy call on the old fogies in the leadership. Especially from their HOME STATE.

TOMMY
Well, I would have, but I just got to town. It's an honor to meet you, sir. A real privilege. This is Miss Loretta.

LORETTA
Public liaison.

She pronounces the word so carefully, it sounds lewd.

DODGE
How do you do?
(to Tommy)
You could make up for it by having a nightcap with me.
(to Loretta)
May I have my car take you home?

EXT. CAPITOL HILL - NIGHT
Tommy and Dodge walk up steps toward the Capitol.

INT. HALLWAY - CAPITOL - NIGHT
A darkened hallway. A hand-lettered sign by a door reads COMMITTEE ON POWER AND INDUSTRY. THE CHAIRMAN. MR. DODGE. Tommy and Dodge approach. As Dodge unlocks the door:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, but this ain't no homo shit we up to, is it?

DODGE
No. No, it's not. But --
(amused)
Good thinking, Johnson. I'm impressed by your instincts.

INT. DODGE'S OFFICE - CAPITOL - NIGHT

A single table lamp lights Dick Dodge's office, reflecting off the velvet drapes, sculpted ceiling, and crystal chandeliers. Tommy and Dodge are in leather armchairs, ties undone. On the table between them, a bottle of Jim Beam. Dodge casts a cool eye on Tommy.

DODGE
Tell me, Johnson. Why did you come to Washington?

TOMMY
Well... of course... it's a chance to do something for my country. I mean, there's the topsoil thing, and acid rain is killing the cattle --

DODGE
Cut the bullshit, Johnson. I saw how you got elected. Flukes like you are either nutcases or troublemakers. I just want to know which one I have on my hands. Who sent you here?

TOMMY
No one sent me.

DODGE
You pulled off that upset on your own?

TOMMY
(acknowledging modestly)
Kid's got his talents.

DODGE
I'm impressed, Johnson, I am. But why did you run for Congress?

TOMMY
No bullshit?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DODGE
No bullshit.

TOMMY
Opportunity knocks. This town is the fuckin' Yukon.

A stunned silence from Dodge -- then deep and generous laughter.

DODGE
What a refreshing answer.

He laughs again, richly amused. Tommy joins in the laughter.

EXT. CANNON - DAY
Shining in the bright sun.

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY - ON TOMMY'S DESK
Hundreds of business cards. An expert riffle, a one-handed cut, and Tommy deals lightning fast, a perfect diamond formation with two cards in the middle. He turns them over one at a time.

TOMMY
Food... drinks.

LORETTA
(reads card)
(to Tommy)
What do you want me to do?

TOMMY
You're on cheese. I'll handle booze.

He reaches for the phone...

EXT. DISTILLER'S BUILDING - DAY
Pan from Capitol Hill to gleaming glass office building.

TOMMY (V.O.)
(taking the phone)
Ken! Ken Korngold! Tommy Johnson here... Right -- last night. How's it going, big guy?

KORNGOLD (V.O.)
Congressman!
73

INT. KORNGOLD'S OFFICE - DAY

Expensive furniture, rugs, and art.

KORNGOLD
How are you on this helluva fine day! I'm looking forward to your reception.

INTERCUT TOMMY AND KORNGOLD

TOMMY
Actually, that's why I'm calling, Ken. You said if I needed some help --

KORNGOLD
You name it, congressman. Issue papers, testimony, floor speeches --

TOMMY
Tell you what I have in mind. I was just thinking, wouldn't it be a plus for old Ken Korngold if I was to -- how should I put this -- showcase some of his distillers' products at my reception? You know, like they put Reese's pieces in E.T.? It's called "product placement." People come in, they have a tremendous time, they see your products, they think well of you -- and they think well of me, too. It's good for both of us, Ken. What do you say?

KORNGOLD
Well, it's a new one on me, but hey, sure, I think we can help you out. Say, while I have you on the line, there was one thing...

74

INT. HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY

The SPEAKER administers the oath of office to the assembled House.

SPEAKER
Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States...

ON GRANDMA next to Tommy, eyes welling with pride. It's the one day a year that non-Members (meaning families) can be on the floor.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SPEAKER
... against all enemies, foreign and
domestic; that you will bear true
faith and allegiance to the same...

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY - VIDEO - WIDE SHOT OF HOUSE
The 435 Members (with family) taking the oath, watched
on C-span by Loretta, Armando, Van Dyke, and Reinhardt.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
... that you take this obligation
freely, without any mental
reservation or purpose of evasion...

INT. HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY
ON IOWA taking the oath, his toddler in his arms. PAN
along faces of other Members... to Tommy.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
... and that you will well and
faithfully discharge the duties
of the office on which you are
about to enter. So help you God?

TOMMY (AND MEMBERS)
I do.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
Congratulations. You are now
Members of Congress.

Sustained APPLAUSE. Tommy kisses Grandma.

INTERCUT Tommy's cronies APPLAUDING.

ON THE FLOOR Tommy dries Grandma's tears with a finger.

GRANDMA
It's just that -- I'm so happy you
straightened out.

Tommy smiles ambiguously. As APPLAUSE continues, his
eyes roam the room and make contact with Dick Dodge,
standing at one of the leadership tables. Tommy winks
conspiratorially at him. There's such diabolical glee in
it, it even takes Dodge aback.

INT. CANNON TOP FLOOR - DAY
A beautiful black woman, 20s, walks briskly down the
busy Cannon corridors. CELIA. There's intelligence in
her eyes, and fire.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She makes her way down the corridor, exchanging AD LIB greetings, glancing in at the sedate receptions, and drawing closer to the source of the REGGAE (O.S.) -- Tommy's office. She looks in.

INT. TOMMY'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

It's packed, mainly with men. Everyone has drinks and talks noisily. It looks like a fraternity smoker for lobbyists. MUSIC comes from a boom box. The bar -- a tablecloth over some desks -- is lavishly stocked. So are the bookcases, which now look like liquor store shelves.

ANGLE ON LORETTA, in a cocktail dress and a HELLO MY NAME IS MISS LORETTA badge, staffing a little table, handing Celia a name-tag.

INSERT

Celia's hands print CELIA KIRBY. PRO BONO.

BACK TO SCENE - ON Tommy and Reinhardt talking with a LOBBYIST.

FOURTH LOBBYIST
It's an informal breakfast. You give us your views, we give you bacon and eggs, plus a couple of thousand dollar honorarium.
(winking)
For your favorite charity.

Tommy looks at Reinhardt, who explains.

REINHARDT
The Tommy Johnson Foundation.

TOMMY
(savoring the word)
Honorarium. I like that.

Loretta appears with a platter of food.

LORETTA
Herring, gentlemen?

FOURTH LOBBYIST
Uh, no thanks.

LORETTA
Really? We've got it in cream sauce and in wine sauce.
REINHARDT
I think I'll pass.

Tommy steers her aside and takes a roll of soggy, toothpick-impaled herring.

TOMMY
What is this? Where's the cheese?

LORETTA
The cheese guy didn't return my call. So I called the guy at the American Smoked Fish Institute.

She points at the food table. There's nothing but a few boxes of crackers and two huge mounds of herring -- one white, one pink. The centerpiece is a large smoked fish, eyes staring accusingly.

TOMMY
Oh, that's just wonderful. Sixty heavy hitters drop in, and I'm feeding 'em cat food.

He breaks off, as Celia comes into view in the doorway behind. Tommy picks her up on his radar.

TOMMY
We'll talk about this later.

We follow Tommy through the crowd until he reaches Celia.

TOMMY
Hi there. Glad you could make it. So you're... Celia Kirby. That's an extremely beautiful name. For an extremely beautiful woman.

CELIA
Wow! That's smooth. After ten straight hours on my feet making small talk and breathing cheap cigar smoke, that's exactly the kind of line I'm ready to fall for.

TOMMY
Whoa, slow down.

CELIA
Sure, sure, forget it. Can you just tell me, which one's Congressman Johnson?

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
What if I said... me?

CELIA
Oh. I see. So tell me, Congressman, just how deep is the shit I'm standing in?

Tommy has to laugh.

TOMMY
Don't worry about it. Why don't we just start over again?

CELIA
Celia Kirby. I'm the legislative director of Pro Bono.

TOMMY
Ah. Pro Bon. That's an extremely beautiful name. For an extremely beautiful organization. Um... what is it?

CELIA
(amused)
We're a public interest research and advocacy group. I'd like to brief you on our priorities this session. Can I call your AA to get on your schedule?

TOMMY
Why don't you brief me over dinner tonight?

CELIA
I want an appointment, Congressman, not a date.

TOMMY
Yeah, sure, we'll type it up on the schedule, it'll be an appointment, except with wine and flowers on the table.

CELIA
No thanks. I really should be going.

TOMMY
Won't you at least stay for a drink and some herring?

(CONTINUED)
CELIA  
I'm afraid I'm busy.

TOMMY  
Well then, can I tempt you with a smelt?

CELIA  
No thanks.  
(extend her hand)  
Nice to meet you. I'll be in touch with your office. I especially look forward to hearing your view on extending the sexual harassment law to include congressmen.

TOMMY  
I love the way you say that.

She slips out through the sea of revelers.

EXT. CAPITOL - DAY  
A fine Washington morning.

OMITTED  

EXT. CAPITOL STEPS - DAY  
Rep. ELIJAH MARSHALL, 50s, black, and a pain in Dodge's ass, is shaking hands and saying goodbye to some Constituents. Dodge approaches.

(CONTINUED)
DODGE
I heard in the steam room you're going to try to screw up my ethics bill.

MARSHALL
Not screw up. Amend.

DODGE
Come on, Eli, your amendments don't have a chance in hell to pass. My bill isn't perfect, I know, but it'll pass. And the President'll sign it.

MARSHALL
"Isn't perfect"? Dick, your bill's the Incumbents Protection Act! How can you even call it an ethics bill?

DODGE
Because the public wants an ethics bill! So that's what we call it.

MARSHALL
But it's got no teeth! It won't change a thing, and you know it.

DODGE
Come on, Eli, you're a politician, too. The less you're going to do about something, the more you have to talk about it. You know that.

They start walking.

MARSHALL
I see. We close the bank, we stop the rubber checks, we raise the prices in the barber shop, we stop fixing parking tickets, and abracadabra! We say we've cleaned up Congress. Well, I don't think the American people want what this place has become.

DODGE
That's the beauty of it! They must, Eli -- they keep re-electing us.

MARSHALL
Not anymore! This new Congress is full of new faces.

(CONTINUED)
DODGE
Oh, I wouldn't read too much into that. A few extra retirements, some redistricting -- nothing more than that. It's still business as usual up here.

Dodge takes his glasses from his pocket and wipes them.

DODGE
I live in the real world, Eli. Do you? What's unemployment up to in your district? Eight percent? Eight-five?

MARSHALL
Eight point six.

DODGE
Power and Enterprise is about to fund a solar demonstration plant, Eli. It could mean a whole lot to a district -- new jobs, new construction -- that interest you?

MARSHALL
You can't bribe me, Dick.

INT. DODGE'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Dodge and Marshall enter.

DODGE
Eli, the people who elected you. They sent you here to help them. Don't you want to?

MARSHALL
Not if it means supporting your bill. All you want is the perfect platform to campaign for Speaker. Dick Dodge. Mr. Clean. What a joke!

DODGE
(undeterred)
Come on board, Eli. (leaning in) You know -- you can't save the world if you can't save your seat.

Tommy enters. Marshall gives him a once-over and extends a hand.

(CONTINUED)
MARSHALL
We haven't met. Eli Marshall.

TOMMY
Tommy Johnson.

MARSHALL
I know. The Florida upset. Well, now that you're here, what are you going to do with it? You gonna feather your own nest, or are you gonna make something of your office?

TOMMY
I plan to be as good a congressman as all the others.

MARSHALL
Exactly what does that mean?

TOMMY
Well, ever since I got back from Nam, I've wanted to do something about the rain forest --

MARSHALL
No, do me a favor, don't tell me. I try not to get depressed until the second week of a new session.

DODGE
(ushering Tommy into his office)
Eli, you'll excuse us -- we have a meeting.

INT. DODGE'S OFFICE - DAY

DODGE
Johnson, I'm the chairman of a committee up here called Power and Industry. We've got an open seat, and I was wondering if you'd consider filling it.

TOMMY
Is this good news?

(CONTINUED)
DODGE
(tongue in cheek)
Well, it is a difficult assignment --
look at what we cover: energy,
health, telecommunications,
environment... the committee is
constantly beset by a swarm of
special interests. These are
powerful people, they've got all the
money in the world, and they're
not shy about using it.

TOMMY
So... this is very good news.

DODGE
Most members would give their right
nut for it.

TOMMY
So what do you want from me, Dick?

DODGE
Congressman... I just want you to
smile for the cameras.

INT. POWER AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE - DAY

The committee members -- all white males, except Tommy --
mill around, awaiting the start of the hearings. As the
TV cameras whir, Dodge shakes Tommy's hand warmly. Big
smiles and an explosion of flashbulbs.

Dodge breaks off and Tommy drifts over to Reinhardt.

REINHARDT
(indicating dais)
So, Congressman, welcome to the
honey pot. You should be one
happy freshman.

TOMMY
Yeah? Well, I'm not. I'm suspicious.
One thing I've learned is, when
somebody gives you something for
nothing, the nothing ain't nothing.
It's something. What is it? Why
me?

Reinhardt puts his hand on Tommy's shoulders.

(CONTINUED)
REINHARDT
Congressman, I don't want you to take this the wrong way, but... you're black. And I mean that in the nicest possible way.

TOMMY
Keep talking.

REINHARDT
Dodge wants to run for Speaker. And he ain't gonna make it without votes from the black caucus.

Suddenly, Dodge reappears. He throws his arm around Tommy's shoulders.

DODGE
Tommy, someone I want you to meet...

Dodge steers TJ to a preppy-looking man at the witness table -- BARCLAY "SKEETER" WARBURTON.

DODGE
Skeeter, do you know Tommy Johnson? Meet the new member of the committee. Tommy, this is Barclay Warburton.

TOMMY
Pleased to meet you, Barclay.

WARBURTON'S voice is aristocratic, a la George Plimpton.

WARBURTON
Skeeter. Please. Been called that since boarding school.

TOMMY
Skeeter.

WARBURTON
Damned fine to meet you.

As Dodge and Tommy head for the dais, Tommy imitates Warburton's lockjaw.

TOMMY
"Tommy. Please. Been called that since reform school."

Dodge chuckles, shakes his head in mock rebuke. Tommy takes his seat at the lower dais, smiles at the Members on his left and right.

(CONTINUED)
ON THE UPPER DAIS, Dodge gavels...

DODGE
This EPA oversight hearing of the Committee on Power and Industry will come to order. I'd like to welcome our first witness, the distinguished Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency...
(Warburton nods)
... but before I do, I note that a new Member is joining us today, the distinguished gentleman from Florida.

THE BIGGEST EXPLOSION OF FLASHES YET... and as the motor drives whir, Tommy flashes his biggest smile yet.

INT. TOMMY'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Tommy's office walls are now richly hung with plaques, awards, and framed photos. We see he has been named the PESTICIDE COALITION'S Man of the Month. The winner of the NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION'S Achievement Award. The MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA'S Outstanding Young Legislator. Etc. The liquor is gone.

Loretta is at the receptionist's desk. A LOBBYIST enters.

FIFTH LOBBYIST
Morning. Ron Yaeger. Snack-PAC -- Snack Foods Political Action Committee. I have a ten o'clock.

LORETTA
Please have a seat. The congressman is running just a little bit late.

He sits and opens his briefcase. Van Dyke approaches him with the dignity of a superb butler.

VAN DYKE
Would you care for some herring?

INT. CAPITOL FUNCTION ROOM - DAY

Tommy rises to speak at a breakfast meeting. The podium bears the seal of the American Poultry Association.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
Let me start with a confession. I
don't know much about poultry.
But I do know something about
people. And let me tell you: I
like you people. So when you have
something to say about poultry,
I listen. Thank you very much.

He sits down to generous APPLAUSE. ON Armando, in
attendance, CLAPPING, marveling at the response TJ gets.

INT. CATACOMBS - MOVING - DAY

Capitol Hill is actually two worlds: the aboveground
buildings that visitors and television cameras see, and
the catacombs, the busy tunnels and corridors connecting
the congressional office buildings and the Capitol.
They're surprisingly unglamorous -- exposed pipes, white-
washed brick walls, dumpsters, pizza carry-outs -- and
through them move the legislators and their staffs.

And here is Tommy, whistling ZIPPEDY DOO DAH. He loves
this place. Passing a snack bar, he greets the Cashier.

TOMMY
My man.

He blows a kiss to a pretty Teller in the credit union.
Passing the barber shop, he calls out to the Shoeshine
Guy. He passes a black TELEPHONE MAN at an open panel of
wires.

TELEPHONE MAN
Tommy! What's up, man?

TOMMY
(whispering)
Sweet Sue. Third race at Santa Anita.

INT. TOMMY'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Several lobbyists are now awaiting Tommy balancing plates
of herring on their knees. Some are enjoying it more
than others. Tommy breezes in.

TOMMY
Hey, how you folks doin', good to see
you, Van Dyke making you comfortable?

Tommy hits a button on a tape deck, turning on some EASY
LISTENING.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
Be with y'all shortly.

BEHIND THE DIVIDER, outside Tommy's office door, Tommy has a word with Reinhardt. Tommy indicates his office.

TOMMY
She in there?

Reinhardt nods. Tommy gives himself a couple of squirts of Binaca.

TOMMY
Stick around for this, Reinhardt. I've finally figured something out about the women in this town.

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Tommy and Reinhardt meeting with Celia and an elfin guy in corduroy.

CELIA
Thank you for seeing us, congressman, we won't take up much of your time. This is Ira Schecter, our research director.

TJ
Hi, good to meet you, you folks know Reinhardt, don't you? Don't rush, Miss Kirby, we can take as long as we want.

CELIA
But you have people waiting, and --

TOMMY
That's all right. They can wait.

CELIA
Well.

She pulls documents from her briefcase and hands them to Tommy.

CELIA
These are issue papers. This session we're targeting auto insurance premiums, child safety, and food additives. As votes come up, we know you'll be hearing plenty from the other side. We'd just like a clean shot at making our case, too.

(MORE)
CELIA (CONT'D)
(rising)
So, we'll follow up with your staff in the next week or...

TOMMY
Wait a minute, you just got here. I clean my calendar, and you're out the door. Let's back up, give this stuff the attention it deserves.
Car insurance... Ira, what do you pay?

IRA
Oh, I've got an '85 Plymouth, about six-fifty a year...

TOMMY
Six-fifty? Highway robbery! A chop shop wouldn't give you more than a hundred forty for a junker like that.
(beat)
Or so I've heard.
(beat)
But I'm flying blind here, I need depth. Could Miss Kirby put together a briefing? Maybe schedule a Saturday or two to really dig into the issues?

IRA
(surprised and pleased)
Oh... we'd be delighted. We've got some figures that will amaze you.

TOMMY
I'm sure you do.

CELIA
(rising)
Well, we won't take up any more...

TOMMY
Whoa, whoa, hold on, what about child safety?

CELIA
Well, we're sponsoring a bill imposing safety standards on imported toys...

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
Great! About time! I hate imported
toys. What about food additives?
How about we block out a few
evenings, you can take me through
the details.

IRA
Celia, if that's what the
Congressman wants... any problem?

CELIA
(to him)
You want to do this in the evening?

IRA
I'm away for the next two weeks.

She gives him a look. Ira turns to Tommy.

IRA
So, when can Celia start your
briefings?

TOMMY
Saturday night?

IRA
Saturday night sounds fine.

CELIA
Fine. Wednesday morning. Nine-
fifteen.

INT. CATACOMBS - NIGHT - CLOSE ANGLE - A SIGN
On a door in the House sub-basement: MEMBERS ONLY.

INT. HOUSE GYM - NIGHT
The regular evening pickup basketball game. Even among
these ruthless players, Tommy's street moves are outstand-
ingly down and dirty. His principal accomplice: Elijah

INT. LOCKER ROOM - HOUSE GYM - NIGHT
A standing poker game among the towel- and robe-clad
Members.

It's Tommy's shuffle and deal. He is convincingly awkward.

A BULLDOG of a man examines his hand, tosses two cards in.
He assembles his new hand. Four fives and an ace.

(CONTINUED)
ON Tommy's hand. A pair of threes.

The betting starts, at a couple of chips, and comes round to Tommy. He pushes a stack of chips to the center.

**TOMMY**
Let's get serious, fellas.

---

**INT. CATACOMBS (OR CORRIDOR) - NIGHT**

Tommy, Marshall, and the Bulldog, back in suits, exit the MEMBERS ONLY door and move through the catacombs.

**MARSHALL**
I need your help on the ethics bill, Leon. I want you to co-sponsor my amendments.

**BULLDOG**
You make a persuasive case, Eli.

**MARSHALL**
That wasn't a yes.

**BULLDOG**
(courteously ambiguous)
I promise to give it the attention it deserves.

The Bulldog gives Tommy a friendly squeeze --

**BULLDOG**
Better luck next time, son.

-- and leaves them. Tommy and Marshall continue on.

**MARSHALL**
He took six hundred dollars off you that last hand, didn't he?

**TOMMY**
Yeah, he's taking a real shine to me.

**MARSHALL**
If I didn't know better, I'd say you lost to him on purpose.

**TOMMY**
Nothing wrong with letting the chairman of the ethics committee roll you once in a while.
(shaking his head)
You fit in real well up here. Too well.

TOMMY
So Eli, how come you haven't asked for my help with your amendments?

MARSHALL
Give it a rest, Tommy. You've got a great jump shot. But everyone knows you're Dick Dodge's boy.

TOMMY
(bristling)
I'm nobody's boy, mister.

MARSHALL
(weary)
Don't waste your outrage on me. I know what you are.

TOMMY
I'm no different from anyone else.

MARSHALL
That's not true. Some people here actually try to do something besides save their own ass.

TOMMY
You know, Eli, I like you, I really do. You remind me of my father.

MARSHALL
Oh, really? How so?

TOMMY
He thought I was scum, too.

BELLS begin RINGING and LIGHTS FLASHING on all the clocks and sconces down the corridor. Three RINGS, pause, three RINGS, pause... Marshall does a U-turn. Tommy doesn't follow suit.

MARSHALL
Aren't you going to vote?

TOMMY
(indicating clocks)
Vote? Is that what that is? We got a pool going in the office on when it'll go off next.
INT. LOBBY OUTSIDE HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY

It's called "Gucci Gulch." The lobby just outside the doors to the House chamber is pandemonium -- a sea of lobbyists, lawyers, PACmen, Members, and staffers urgently trying to find their masters and signal them thumbs-up or-down. Tommy enters, sweeps the room with his eyes, looking for Reinhardt, shrugs, then goes through the doors onto the floor.

INT. HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY

Tommy goes to a console on the rear of a seat.

A blue light says OPEN. Tommy inserts a card (it looks like an electronic hotel key). Red, green, and amber lights at buttons labeled NAY, YEA, and PRES. Tommy shrugs, pushes NAY.

INT. LOBBY OUTSIDE HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY

As Tommy heads away, he passes a class trip -- a dozen fifth-graders and their TEACHER, who hails him.

TEACHER
Excuse me -- Congressman? Do you have a moment? We're from the Hawthorne Avenue School, in Union, New Jersey? I'm Mrs. Kozlowski. Social Studies. We were just learning how a bill becomes a law.
(indicating the BELLS)
Was that a vote?

TOMMY
Yes, it was.

TEACHER
And what did you vote?

TOMMY
I voted "Nay." It's a terrible bill. It'd destroy the fabric of American life.

TEACHER
And what was the vote on?

Tommy hasn't a clue. He calls out to Rafe, who is among those leaving the chamber.

TOMMY
Hey, Rafe! Tell these kids what that vote was about.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY (CONT'D)
(to kids)
Guy's got a real knack for explaining things.

RAFE
Well, it was a motion to reconsider the motion to reconsider.

Bo, passing by, intervenes.

BO
No, it was the rule on amending the reauthorization.

TOMMY
Which means?

BO
Clean Air.

RAFE
(overlapping)
School lunches.

TOMMY
You're in excellent hands, kids.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

A NOISY restaurant popular with lobbyists. Power photos on the wall. Table hopping. People SHOUTING greetings across the room. Waiters in long aprons. Tommy is having lunch with Tommy O'Connor.

O'CONNOR
You're a gentleman, Tommy. We can always do bid'ness -- I like that in a Member.

TOMMY
Thank you, Tommy. I love you too.

O'CONNOR
Listen, I'd like to do more money for you -- I just need to know your positions on a few issues.

O'Connor takes out a pen and leather notecard case.

O'CONNOR
For instance, where are you on sugar price supports?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Tommy has no idea, but he's certainly open to suggestions.

**TOMMY**
Sugar price supports. Where do you think I should be, Tommy?

**O'CONNOR**
Shit -- makes no difference to me. If you're for 'em, I got money for you from my sugar producers in Louisiana and Hawaii. If you're against 'em, I got money for you from the candy manufacturers.

**TOMMY**
You pick.

**O'CONNOR**
(writing)
Let's put you down as for. Now what about putting limits on malpractice awards?

**TOMMY**
You tell me.

**O'CONNOR**
Well, if you're for 'em, I got money from the doctors and insurance companies. If you're against 'em, I got money from the trial lawyers. Tell you what, let's say against. Now how about pizza?

**TOMMY**
(indicating his plate)
I'll stick with the salad.

**O'CONNOR**
Not for lunch, shmuck, for PAC money. A lot of the frozen pizzas use phony cheese. There's a law pending requiring them to disclose it on their labels. Where do you stand?

Tommy thinks it through.

**TOMMY**
If I vote for the labels...then I get money from the dairy industry...

(CONTINUED)
O'CONNOR

Good...

TOMMY

And if I vote against the labels, I get money from the frozen food guys.

O'CONNOR

Excellent! And don't forget the ranchers, because they get hurt if pepperoni sales go down!

TOMMY

(laughing in admiration)

A pepperoni lobby. I love this town.

O'CONNOR

So which is it?

TOMMY

Fuck the cheese people. Thanks to them my office smelled like smelt for a week.

O'CONNOR

All right. For.

TOMMY

So Tommy, tell me -- with all this money on every side, how does anything get done?

O'CONNOR

It doesn't! That's the genius of the system!

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

A briefing in progress. Flip charts, ring binders, Celia, Ira, a couple of other Pro Bono types. Tommy is riveted by Celia.

CELIA

It comes down to a question of what is acceptable risk. Are we willing to feed our kids a substance that causes cancer in lab rats? More important, who gets to make the decision? Bureaucrats and big corporations, or the people whose lives depend on it?
INT. TOMMY'S BOILER ROOM - DAY

Tommy's staff shares one small office. Everyone's on the phone.

VAN DYKE
Mr. Willie? Congressman Johnson is calling. Can you take his call?
Thank you. Please hold.

Van Dyke puts him on hold, counts to three, gets back on the line.

VAN DYKE
I'm sorry, Mr. Willie, he just picked up another call. Listen, I know why he was calling -- he hasn't heard from you about his fundraiser...

PAN TO Armando.

ARMANDO
... That's right, Mr. Brown, on the thirtieth... A thousand a couple...A whole table? He'll be so happy to hear it. Thank you so much.

(calming)
Loretta! Put down nuclear power for ten g's.

PAN TO Loretta, who chalks the figure onto a toteboard.

LORETTA
Cool.

(into phone)
Mr. Newburg? It's Miss Loretta, from Congressman Johnson's office, how you doin'?

On Loretta's bulletin board is a map of the United States, with flags, pushpins, and air travel routes.

LORETTA
Say, the congressman's going to be out your way next week... Palm Springs, the Bob Hope Classic -- yes, a celebrity player. As long as he's on the coast, we were wondering whether you aerospace people might want to lay on a lunch so you can hear his views... Uh-huh... Uh-huh... Lovely. Now what kind of contribution to his foundation you folks thinking about?
Celia continues her briefing.

**CELIA**

...And in the 1988 study, it was up to eight per hundred-thousand. Um...am I losing you on these mortality rates?

**TOMMY**

No, I was just wondering how much of this is a statutory problem, and how much is a regulatory one? I mean, didn't the Merton Act cover most of this?

**CELIA**

(surprised)

Hmmm, that's an excellent point. Let me see something...

As she starts rummaging in her briefcase, we TRACK AROUND to a COMPUTER SCREEN on Tommy's desk -- it displays THE EXACT WORDS HE'S JUST SPoken.

**CELIA**

Wow...you're right. Maybe we can get them to amend Merton-Simmons.

RACK FOCUS...reveals REINHARDT in b.g., sitting at another computer terminal. He is typing in Tommy's responses, which appear on Tommy's screen.

**TOMMY**

Well, for Merton to apply you have to show high contagion...sounds to me like your contagion rates are no higher than the common clod.

In b.g., Reinhardt DIVES FORWARD to his keyboard and begins correcting his typo. Celia looks puzzled.

**TOMMY**

Common cold. (beat) Must have picked up a little dyslexia over the weekend.

**CELIA**

I see. Well, I must say I'm pretty impressed.

**TOMMY**

You're also impressively pretty.

(CONTINUED)
Celia is startled. Tommy is embarrassed...the dumb compliment he's just spoken was one Reinhardt typed on the computer screen.

CELIA
Oh come on...

TOMMY
You're right. Sorry. Excuse me a second.
(calls out)
Arthur?

Without explanation, he throws his pencil hard out of frame.

REINHARDT (O.S.)
Ow!

EXT. GULF STREAM JET - AIRBORNE - DAY
A jet flies through the sky.

INT. GULF STREAM JET - DAY
Tommy and handful of other Members listen to their gun lobbyist host.

GUN LOBBYIST
Frankly, we think the semi-automatic has gotten a bad rap. That's why the American Sporting Gun Users PAC put together this trip.

ON TOMMY AND DODGE enjoying champagne and hors d'oeuvres.

EXT. DUCK BLIND - DAY
Tommy, wearing full L.L. Bean drag, wading with the other Members.


We see the flock still flying.

One duck drops at the feet of the hunters.

TOMMY
Must have had a heart attack.
THE DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN - Rev. 4/3/92

101A
EXT. GOLF COURSE - FIRST TEE - DAY

A LARGE SIGN READS:

SCRAP IRON INSTITUTE CELEBRITY PRO-AM.

Tommy tees off. He is wearing a veritable pro shop of custom golf gear, all emblazoned with logos of corporate sponsors and lobbies. He hits the ball about 200 yards...but more or less perpendicular to the hole.

REVEAL BOB HOPE standing nearby, watching.

BOB HOPE
I knew all these congressmen get a slice, but I didn't know it was that big.

101
INT. JET - DAY

Tommy on the phone.

TOMMY
Did you miss me?

102
INT. PRO BONO OFFICES - DAY

Celia at her desk in the somewhat ratty Pro Bono offices.

CELIA
Where did you go?

INTERCUT CELIA AND TOMMY

TOMMY
Oh, a fact-finding mission, some issue conferences, a few speaking engagements, a charity event... the usual.

CELIA
More like the Petroleum Institute Ski Cup, the NRA Open, the --

TOMMY
Hey. Have lunch with me tomorrow.

CELIA
I can't -- we're having a press conference.

TOMMY
What is it -- the ozone layer? No fault? Killer apples?

(CONTINUED)
CELIA
(laughing)
Toy safety. Wait a minute. Tomorrow's Friday. Aren't you back early?

TOMMY
(beaming)
You remembered! That means you missed me.

EXT. JEFFERSON MEMORIAL - NIGHT

Tommy and Celia walk over the bridge to the cherry trees by the Tidal Basin.

TOMMY
So, how'd you end up hustling for Pro Bono instead of pesticides? I mean, you could have been a big-time lawyer, right?

CELIA
Oh, I was for a while. It... depressed me.

TOMMY
At a hundred grand a year, how depressed can you get? Doesn't it depress you to lose all the time?

CELIA
Sometimes. Mostly it gets me angry. And the anger keeps me going. Sure, I wouldn't mind winning a few. And it's not like I'm allergic to money...

TOMMY
So why do you do it?

She skips a stone on the water.

CELIA
God, it's so embarrassing to come out and say it.

TOMMY
Say it.

CELIA
Meaning. I need my life to mean something.

(CONTINUED)
This actually hits Tommy. Celia, embarrassed, changes the subject.

CELIA
My question is, how'd you get named after a Memorial?

TOMMY
Grandma like Jefferson. Y'know, "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It's a lot to live up to, so I specialized in the last part.

CELIA
And how's the pursuit going?

TOMMY
Fine...'til I met you. Now...the better I do, the worse I feel.

They have stopped walking. They are standing close together. They kiss.

TOMMY
So...when can I see you again? How about dinner Saturday night?

She shakes her head.

CELIA
How about Sunday morning?

TOMMY
Brunch?

INT. OLD CHURCH - BALTIMORE - DAY

In the pulpit, Rev. Elijah Marshall thunders:

MARSHALL
The wages of sin is death! And to the man who values Gold over Goodness...the Lord allows no exemptions!

REVEAL TOMMY and Celia in the front pew. Marshall appears to be preaching directly to Tommy, who wears a slightly sick smile.

MARSHALL
To the man who shows no respect for the privilege of walking this Earth, God allows no deductions!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MARSHALL (CONT'D)

(AMEN)
And to the man whose pockets are bulging and whose soul is empty...
the Lord grants no 90-day extension!
(AMEN)
And when the last trump sounds, believe me, you will be audited!

TOMMY
(aside to Celia)
This is one hell of a date.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY
On the steps, Marshall shakes hands with his Congregants. Tommy and Celia exit the church. Marshall takes Celia by the hands and kisses her familiarly. Tommy is taken aback.

MARSHALL
Hello, darling. Glad you could make it.

CELIA
I liked the sermon, Uncle Eli.

TOMMY
Uncle Eli?

MARSHALL
My niece says you're not half as slimy as I thought.

TOMMY
Your niece?

MARSHALL
That would put you somewhere between a lizard and a toad. Quite a step up.

Tommy looks from Marshall to Celia and back again.

TOMMY
How could I have missed the family resemblance?

EXT. CANNON BUILDING - DAY - ESTABLISHING
INT. CANNON TOP FLOOR - DAY
WHISTLING happily, Tommy rounds the corner and heads to his office.

(CONTINUED)
Ahead of him, encamped in the hallway, he sees a phalanx of SENIOR CITIZENS, many carrying placards, and some camera crews. Tommy adjusts his tie, turns on the charm, and approaches.

TOMMY
Ladies! Looking good! How can I help you folks today!

But Hattie Rifkin and her troops will have none of it.

HATTIE
Don't "Ladies!" me, you dick!

The camera lights go on.

INT. DODGE'S OFFICE - DAY

DODGE
Now let me get this straight. You voted to make people on Medicare pay more money to their doctors?

TOMMY
The Medical Association made a persuasive case. Ten grand from their PAC, plus Christmas in Aspen.

DODGE
(shaking his head)
Tommy -- if I'm not mistaken, you wouldn't be here without the good senior citizens of your district. You got to dance with the girl that brung you, son. If you have a bit of business to do, do it quietly... in the corridors... in the subcommittees... with little amendments. You mess around on the big ones like Medicare, you'll be dead meat on election day.

TOMMY
Yeah, well, then it's thanks for the memories, and on to the next gig.

DODGE
Do you know what your problem is, son? You don't think big enough. You have a real knack for this town, but you have the soul of a two-bit hustler. Listen to me, Tommy.

(MORE)
DODGE (CONT'D)
Five hundred thirty-five Members of Congress. Some are smart, and some stupid. Some good, some not. But all of them, son, all of them consumed by the single overriding imperative that defines the very Washington way of life.

TOMMY
Which is?

DODGE
Getting re-elected.

TOMMY
Wait a minute. You're talkin' 'bout my re-election?

DODGE
You don't know what percent of the incumbents who ran last time got re-elected, do you?

TOMMY
Fifty? Sixty?

DODGE
Ninety-six. And ninety-eight before that. It's like that election after election. If you don't fuck up, you can be here, raking it in, for life. Life, Johnson.

Tommy considers this. Then a big smile.

TOMMY
I can think of worse places to get life.

DODGE
(smiles)
I knew you had it in you.

TOMMY
So how do I get the Silver Foxes off my ass?

DODGE
Oh, throw them a bone... why don't you co-sponsor a bill for mandatory universal health insurance?

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
What's that mean?

DODGE
Nothing. It'll never pass.

INT. TOMMY'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

A couple of Lobbyists await Tommy. Van Dyke mans the desk. In come ELLEN JUBA, 40s, and her 13-year-old daughter, MICKEY, whose pony tail sticks out from her Florida Marlins baseball cap.

VAN DYKE
May I help you?

MRS. JUBA
Yes, I'm Ellen Juba. This is my daughter, Mickey. We'd like to see our congressman. We live in the district.

VAN DYKE
Just a moment, please.
(dials; into phone)
Could you come out? Thank you.
(hanging up)
Be right with you.
(to Mickey)
I like your hat.

Loretta comes out and extends a hand.

LORETTA
How do you do, I'm Miss Loretta, public liaison for the congressman.

MRS. JUBA
Ellen Juba. My daughter Mickey. We'd like to see him.

LORETTA
Y'all from the district? Up here seein' the sights? How'd you folks like some gallery passes? Go on over and listen to the great debates of our day?

She reaches into Van Dyke's desk drawer to get some passes.

MICKEY
We don't want to go to the gallery. We want to see Congressman Johnson.

(CONTINUED)
How 'bout a House key ring for each of you? Here -- see that? Isn't that something? Turns into a pen.

You don't understand. We're not tourists. We're constituents.

(helpfully)
You aren't with some organization, are you, honey?

I'm a goddam citizen! Isn't that enough!

We're not leaving here till we see him!

Loretta exchanges a look with the Lobbyists, who get the picture. She picks up the phone and speaks nonchalantly.

Oh, Armando? Could you come out front, please?

Tommy enters, carrying an enormous tennis trophy.

Look what I won! Must be that new racket.

Armando has come out to hear this.

There a problem, congressman?

Congressman? You?

Armando tries to escort her out.

Get your hands off me!

Mickey tries to block Armando.

Let go of her, you creep!

(CONTINUED)
SIXTH LOBBYIST
Careful, she may be armed!

MICKEY
Stop it! Get away from her!

Armando, defending himself from Mickey, manages to knock her hat off. With the hat comes her (apparently false) pony tail.

ON MICKEY. She's bald. Her skull bears the mark of surgery.

Everyone stops. It's quiet.

Mickey's eyes burn into Tommy's. Then she picks up her hat.

MICKEY
Come on, Ma. It's okay. Let's go.

TOMMY
Wait. What happened to you?

MICKEY
Not just me.

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Tommy and his staff listen to the Jubas.

MICKEY
I was lucky. They said they got it all. I'm going to be okay. But what about the others?

TOMMY
The others?

MRS. JUBA
They call it a "cancer cluster." Oh, at first, none of us in the neighborhood wanted to believe it, but then we all saw it -- for me, it was when the two-year-old across the street developed a brain tumor, same as Mickey. We looked at everything -- the water, the air, dump sites, insects, you name it. But we didn't have to look that far. It was staring us in the face.

TOMMY
What?

(CONTINUED)
Power lines.

MRS. JUBA
High-voltage power lines. The wires cause magnetic fields -- and the magnetic fields cause cancer. Especially in children.

TOMMY
I never heard of that.

Mickey pulls a stack of journals and xeroxes from her book bag and gives it to her mother, who in turn gives the materials to Tommy.

MRS. JUBA
The studies, the numbers -- it's all there.

MICKEY
(to Tommy, skeptical)
You're not actually going to read those, are you?

TOMMY
(caught)
Oh, they'll be read...

MICKEY
Why don't you come see for yourself?

Tommy has no quick answer.

EXT. PARK/SCHOOL - FLORIDA - DAY

Children playing on swings and seesaws in a small public park. TILT UP. A pair of electric power derricks carrying 225,000-volt lines almost directly overhead. The derricks cast shadows across a nearby school.

We SEE the neighborhood. Quite a few FOR SALE signs. A house with a moving sale in progress on the front lawn.

ON Tommy taking it all in. With him are Celia and the Jubas.

MRS. JUBA
Five children in the neighborhood have cancer. One more has precancerous lesions. Pregnant women around here are scared to death.

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
This is Mickey's school?

MRS. JUBA
Turns out a lot of schools are near power lines. The land's cheap, so the schools tend to buy it from the power companies in the first place.

TOMMY
But isn't the school district responsible?

MRS. JUBA
We asked the superintendent to measure the magnetic field inside the school. He said, Okay, only it'll cost forty thousand dollars, and what program did we want him to cut that from?

TOMMY
Nice.

MRS. JUBA
We're nobody, congressman. You're somebody. We need your help.

Tommy takes Celia aside.

TOMMY
Do you believe it?

CELIA
It's impossible to know. No one's really looked into it hard enough.

TOMMY
But why isn't it being investigated?

CELIA
Why didn't they investigate breast implants all those years? What about those side-effects of that sleeping pill, Halcion? Why isn't anything being investigated? It's always the same.

TOMMY
Money talks.

CELIA
You got it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
There must be something I can do for those people.

CELIA
Don't tell me you're actually developing a conscience.

TOMMY
Shit, I hope not -- it'd be a fucking nuisance in Congress.

CELIA
No, that's not fair. Some people on the Hill actually believe in things, and try to do a decent job, and don't forget why they went to Washington, and who sent them.

TOMMY
(amazed)
No shit.
(remembering)
Oh, yeah, I met one of those geeks. So what can I do?

CELIA
Make a stink. Round up some Members and hold a press conference. Get that committee of yours to hold hearings. Haul in in the Environmental Protection Agency, the Surgeon General, the National Academy of Sciences. Get the issue on every breakfast table in America.

OMITTED

INT. POWER AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE - DAY

A press conference. Half a dozen congressmen, Tommy among them. Iowa is speaking to the few Cameras and Reporters. Beside him, Mickey Juba and her mother. Reinhardt and Ceila among the handful of staff and onlookers.

IOWA
This goes beyond personal tragedy. It goes to a public health hazard of unknown proportions. It goes to the right of ordinary people to know all the facts --

(CONTINUED)
Yeah, right -- people ought to know if their neighborhoods are killing them.

DODGE (O.S.)
Amen, gentleman. Amen.

They turn, somewhat surprised to see Dick Dodge, who joins Iowa at the microphones, a natural leader.

DODGE
What a fine effort this is. I am totally sympathetic. Congressional hearings should be scheduled as soon as possible. The American people deserve no less.

He puts an arm around Mickey.

DODGE
Message: we care.

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tommy and Celia are watching the press conference on TV.

CELIA
Well, congratulations. You've found yourself your own hopeless cause.

TOMMY
Speaking of hopeless causes...

They kiss, and slide OUT OF FRAME.

OMITTED

INT. DODGE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

An impressive THUNDERSTORM pounds on Dodge's windows.

DODGE
(pouring)
On the rocks, or neat?

TOMMY
Whatever you're having.

(Continued)
DODGE
Well, why ruin good bourbon with
the taste of some shitty Sears
icemaker, that's what I always say.
(handing Tommy a glass)
Cheers.

TOMMY
Cheers.

Dodge downs his drink. Tommy follows suit.

DODGE
Son, you're a real comer. I
wouldn't be surprised if you ended
up in the leadership. I'll say
this: if I were Speaker, I'd
sleep better with you as a
lieutenant.

TOMMY
Why, thank you, Mr. Chairman. You
know, to tell you the truth, I
didn't know you'd be on my side on
those power lines.

DODGE
But I'm not.

TOMMY
But you said you were sympathetic --

DODGE
Of course I did. We're all
sympathetic to little girls with
cancer. But I'm not sympathetic
to holding an inquiry.

TOMMY
But you said --

DODGE
I know what I said. But that was
just a press conference, son. I
wasn't under oath.

The intercom BUZZES.

DODGE
(into phone)
Yes?... Bring them right in!
(hanging up)
Look. Son. It's great to get
your name in the paper.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
DODGE (CONT'D)
I bet the gentleman from Iowa was all over the evening news in Des Moines tonight. Getting good press -- letting them know you care -- that's what it's all about. Smart move, Tommy. But that's as far as I'd go with this, if I were you.

The door opens. Dodge turns to see Olaf Anderson, Tommy O'Connor, and Zeke Bridges enter.

DODGE
What a surprise!

ANDERSEN
Mr. Chairman!

DODGE
Mr. Chairman! Hello, Tommy. Zeke you're looking well, good to see you.

ZEKE
(wheezing)
Good to see you, you old sum' bitch.

O'CONNOR
Evening, Mr. Chairman, thanks for taking the -- Tommy, you s.o.b., they let you in here?
(indicating Andersen and Bridges)
You folks finally get to press flesh! Olaf, meet Tommy Johnson. Tommy, Olaf Andersen. Chairman of Gulf Coast Power.

TOMMY
The boys here have told me a lot about you.

O'CONNOR
Yeah -- I told him you voted for him!

They all share a laugh. Except for Bridges, who squints at Tommy.

ANDERSEN
Glad to meet you, son. They tell me you've got a real talent for the game.

(CONTINUED)
O'CONNOR
And this is Zeke Bridges, CEO of Pyramid Insurance.

ZEKE
(still puzzling)
Congressman.

TOMMY
Good to meet you.

DODGE
Help me with these, would you, Tommy?

He hands Tommy a couple of drinks.

TOMMY
(to Zeke)
Chivas on the rocks?

ZEKE
(taking the drink)
You look awfully familiar.

Tommy just smiles.

DODGE
Tommy and I were just talking about power lines.

TOMMY
Yeah, what a coincidence. I thought this little party might be for me.
(to Anderson)
You may not like this.
(to Dodge)
I think we should hold those hearings.

DODGE
You really fell for the line that parents group fed you, didn't you?

Tommy is struck by Dodge's intelligence.

TOMMY
How'd you know I met the parents group?

(CONTINUED)
DODGE
Oh, I keep my ear to the ground,
that's what a good politician does.
Listen, Tommy, why don't we just get
Olaf's take on this.

ANDERSEN
It's tragic, cancer's a terrible
thing, but there's no way you can
link it to power lines. Truth is,
there's a bigger electromagnetic
field given off by an electric
blanket, or a microwave oven, than
by those derricks.

TOMMY
But there are studies that say --

ZEKE
For every study that says one thing,
I'll show you a study saying another.
We've studied it ourselves. Nada.

ANDERSEN
There's not a single state health
official anywhere in this country
who says power lines cause cancer.

TOMMY
But what if you're wrong?

As Tommy persists, Andersen looks increasingly angry.

TOMMY
People didn't use to say smoking
causes cancer, either. What if the
evidence is just building, and some
day we wake up and discover that
your power lines are killing us?

ANDERSEN
(exploding)
"Kill us"? "Kill us"? You calling
me a murderer? You're saying there's
blood on these hands? How dare you
talk to me like that, you --

O'Connor puts a restraining arm on Andersen.

O'CONNOR
Calm down, Olaf, calm down, he
didn't mean it that way, did you,
son? Alright, gentlemen. Easy.
Andersen backs off, regains his composure. The outburst makes an impression on Tommy.

Tommy
I'm just saying, it's worth looking into.

ANDERSEN
Tommy -- do you want to move the power lines? Do you know how much it would cost to bury them? Millions. Tens of millions. I don't have that money. The state doesn't have that money. You people up here sure don't have that money. You know who'd end up paying for it? Folks who sent you here, that's who.

O'CONNOR
Now how'd you like the people in your district to think of you as the putz who tripled their electric bill? You think they'd thank you for that on election day?

TOMMY
All I'm saying is, maybe we should hold hearings to look at --

O'CONNOR
Think for a minute, boychik. You hold your hearings. Overnight, everyone who lives near a substation finds the value of his home in the toilet. You kill the real estate market.

ZEKE
You kill the insurance companies.

O'CONNOR
You kill the school district.

ANDERSON
You kill the local economy.

DODGE
For a smart boy, you're not thinking very politically.

Tommy watches the LIGHTNING.

TOMMY
Maybe I should think about it.

(CONTINUED)
Yeah, the system ain't perfect, but the fleas come with the dawg.

Oh, by the way, Tommy, on a completely different subject -- You don't have a state PAC yet, do you? I'd like to give you a hundred thousand dollar corporate contribution to start one up.

My company would be honored to do the same.

Can you do that? I thought there were limits --

Oh, it's all aboveboard, we all believe deeply in the rules. It's just that the state rules are often more flexible about these things.

Are you interested?

I'm always interested in the happiness of my constituents.

I'll drink to that.

Dodge and Andersen shoot each other a look.

Tommy pulls up in a Corvette with Florida congressional plates in front of his Capitol Hill row house.

Tommy slips into bed next to Celia, who's half asleep.

Mmmm...
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
Mmmm...

CELIA
So what did he say?

TOMMY
Who?

CELIA
Dodge. The hearings.

TOMMY
Oh -- I, uh, haven't asked him yet.

Celia suddenly looks quite awake.

TOMMY
(casual)
It wasn't the right moment.
Besides, I was thinking, maybe I ought to line up some other Members first -- you know, get my ducks in a row.

CELIA
Oh.

INT. HOUSE STEAM ROOM - DAY

Dick Dodge and several other towel-clad MEMBERS.

DODGE
You see that ABC poll?

THIRD MEMBER
Free fall.

DODGE
President in trouble like that, he's liable to do something desperate. Some damn fool stunt.

FOURTH MEMBER
Invade Japan.

FIFTH MEMBER
Declare war on Congress, more like it.

(CONTINUED)
The door opens. Eli Marshall, fully dressed, comes in.

MARSHALL
You shafted me on the ethics bill.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DODGE
Hello, Eli, good to see you. Why don't you loosen your tie?

MARSHALL
It's a closed rule. I can't get my amendments on the floor. I can't get a recorded vote. I can't get squat.

DODGE
Last time I looked, it was the Rules Committee in charge of that. This isn't the Rules Committee, Eli. This is the steam room.

MARSHALL
This is the U.S. Congress! The American people deserve better than --

DODGE
You know what your problem is, Eli? You've got sermonitis.

The other Members chuckle.

DODGE
Can't open your mouth without climbing into the pulpit, can you? Why don't you just calm down, have a massage --

MARSHALL
I've got news for you, Dick. I'm going to run against you for Speaker. I may not have a rat's ass of a chance to beat you. But I sure as hell can tell the world the kind of sleaze you stand for.

EXT. CAPITOL TERRACE - DAY - TOMMY AND DODGE

DODGE
I went too far with him, I know it. You know him pretty well, don't you?

TOMMY
Oh, I don't know...

DODGE
Come on, you play basketball together, you're seeing his niece, you've been to his church --

TOMMY
How did you know that?

(CONTINUED)
Dodge indicates his bloodhound nose.

DODGE
He'll listen to you, Tommy. I want you to go make peace between us. Tell him we'll work something out on his amendments -- not a vote, I won't go that far, but at least he'll get to say his piece on the floor. Just get him off my back. Can you do that for me?

TOMMY
That's not a question, is it?

DODGE
That's right. Is there a problem?

TOMMY
No, no -- I've still got my right nut, I can work with that.

INT. CRAB HOUSE - NIGHT

A WAITER removes an empty pitcher of beer.

WAITER
Another?

TOMMY
Sure, why not.

Marshall takes a boiled crab from the platter between them, places it on the butcher paper in front of him, christens it --

MARSHALL
The honorable Dick Dodge.

-- raises a big wooden mallet, and SMASHES it on the crab, smiling.

TOMMY
You know, Eli, sometimes people do things they regret. Everyone makes mistakes. Fact is, Dick's been under a lot of pressure lately --

MARSHALL
That man's a walking quid quo pro -- prid quo -- quid pro quo, and you know it. He put you up to this, didn't he?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
What do you mean?

MARSHALL
Don't shit me, Tommy. You're Dick Dodge's yes-man. I know what you're up to. This is damage control.

TOMMY
I'm not a yes-man. When Dick says no, I say no.

Marshall SMASHES down again with the mallet. Crab carnage.

MARSHALL
You know why no one on the Hill drops a dime on anyone else? Mutual assured destruction. Our little gentleman's agreement. Everybody has something on somebody, so nobody has anything on anybody, because everybody wants to save his own ass.

TOMMY
(interested)
Oh, yeah? What do they have on you?

MARSHALL
They think I'm a pompous ass.

TOMMY
Shit, that ain't no secret.

EXT. CRAB HOUSE - NIGHT

Reinhardt and Loretta about to go in.

LORETTA
You sure they don't want to be alone, Reinhardt?

REINHARDT
No, no -- I bet they've been talking about the ethics bill all night. Come on, Loretta, you'll know how to get Marshall's mind off business.

INT. CRAB HOUSE - NIGHT - ON MARSHALL AND TOMMY

MARSHALL
Shit, this place isn't about passing laws any more. It isn't about doing good any more. All it's about is... being here.

(CONTINUED)
Loretta and Reinhardt approach their table.

LORETTA
Well, as I live and breathe. Tommy!

Tommy is surprised to see them. She flashes a smile at Marshall.

TOMMY
Eli, this is Loretta Hicks, from my staff. Loretta, Congressman Marshall.

LORETTA
Pleasure to meet you.

MARSHALL
Entirely mine.

TOMMY
You know Reinhardt, my AA?

Marshall nods. Reinhardt turns to Tommy.

REINHARDT
Excuse me, congressman, could I just do a couple of quick calendar things with you?

MARSHALL
(to Loretta)
Would you care for a drink?

LORETTA
Tell you the truth, nothing for me.

MARSHALL
Well, when a pretty lady shoots him down, an old man knows it's time to go home.

Marshall rises, pulling out his car keys.

MARSHALL
You kids have a good time.

REINHARDT
(indicating pitcher)
Listen, you gentlemen look like you've had a few -- Loretta, why don't you be a designated driver?

Loretta stands and takes Marshall's keys from him.

(Continued)
LORETTA
Excellent idea.

MARSHALL
Ah. The good Samaritan.

LORETTA
Good night, y'all.

They leave.

REINHARDT
Now we've already got the Bankruptcy Institute breakfast tomorrow, but if you don't mind we could wedge in the Prune Board --

This isn't what Tommy wants to be doing now. He gets up.

TOMMY
I'm packing it in.

REINHARDT
(also rising)
Can we talk while I drive you?

TOMMY
Thanks, I'll walk. I could use the air.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT
Marshall and Loretta are singing.

MARSHALL and LORETTA
"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me -- "

EXT. CAPITOL HILL STREET - NIGHT
Tommy is on foot. Marshall's car, with its Maryland congressional plates, pulls over.

LORETTA
Come on, honey, no use you getting mugged.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT
"I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see... "

Tommy, in the back, cradles his head. As Loretta heads into a traffic circle, she SEES
EXT. TRAFFIC CIRCLE - NIGHT - A HOOKER

in high sling-back heels.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - NIGHT

LORETTA
(turning to look)
Check out the fuck-me pumps on that.
Mm-mm. I gotta get me some shoes
like that.

TOMMY
Loretta! Please! Your mouth!

With a SCREECH of brakes and a CRUNCH of metal, a TAXI
rear-ends them, SLAMMING Marshall's car into a lamppost.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

The Taxi Driver looks at the wreck for a moment. Then
he lays rubber and SQUEALS away.

INT./EXT. MARSHALL'S CAR - NIGHT

On the back floor, Tommy stirs. Seems to be okay.
Lifts himself to see up front. The windshield is
smashed. Loretta and Marshall are both unconscious.
Tommy climbs into the front but can't get the door open.
He kicks out a broken window and climbs through.

He runs to a phone on the corner and dials 911.

TOMMY
I need an ambulance right away.

IN THE CAR no motion from Loretta or Marshall.

AT THE PHONE he dials another number.

TOMMY
Evening, Mrs. Dodge, Tommy Johnson
here, sorry to call at this hour,
is Dick back from the Gridiron
dinner yet? Could I speak with him
for just a moment?

INT. DODGE BEDROOM - NIGHT

MRS. DODGE is in bed. She hands the phone to Dodge,
who's in white tie and tails, looking more sinister
than splendid.

MRS. DODGE
Tommy Johnson.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DODGE
(into phone)
What's wrong?

INTERCUT Tommy and Dodge.

TOMMY
How did you know?

DODGE
Good news doesn't come at this hour.

TOMMY
I went out with Marshall. We got into an accident. He's out cold. I'm okay.

Dodge looks off balance.

DODGE
Were you driving?

TOMMY
No. Someone else. Loretta.

Dodge recovers his equilibrium.

DODGE
The girl from your office?

TOMMY
Yeah. She's out, too. I don't like the way it looks. For anybody. Look. You said you wanted to get back into Marshall's good graces. Well, here's an opportunity.

DODGE
Listen carefully. Tell the ambulance to take you to Walter Reed. It's a privilege they give congressmen. It's also the only hospital without a bunch of goddam reporters sh tupp ing the nurses in exchange for leaks. They'll keep it quiet. I'll handle the police. You go home and keep your mouth shut.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Two figures approach one another in the shadows: Reinhardt, and the Taxi Driver who rear-ended Marshall's car. The cabbie nods. Reinhardt hands him an envelope. The Driver inspects the cash.
INT. TOMMY'S BATHROOM/BEDROOM - MORNING

Tommy is shaving. He HEARS the local tv news from the bedroom.

WASHINGTON ANCHOR (V.O.)
... and the Beltway is bumper-to bumper, so you might as well take a
day of annual leave and enjoy yourself. At the top of the news,
Maryland Congressman Elijah Marshall
is in satisfactory condition at
Walter Reed Hospital after an
overnight accident in the District.

Tommy bolts into the bedroom. On the television he sees

VIDEO - EXT. WALTER REED HOSPITAL - GATES - DAY

A CORRESPONDENT doing a stand-up.

CORRESPONDENT
That's right, Tom. Marshall
reportedly had alcohol in his blood.
Also slightly injured was an
unidentified woman whom police say
has a record in several states for
prostitution.

Tommy looks sick.

TOMMY
Oh sweet Jesus.

WASHINGTON ANCHOR
Linda, Congressman Marshall --
that's Reverend Marshall, isn't it?

CORRESPONDENT
Right you are, Tom. How this plays
into his longstanding campaign to
reform congressional ethics is now
anyone's guess.

WASHINGTON ANCHOR
Thank you. In other news...

Tommy leaps for his clothes.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Tommy races down the corridor. Ahead of him, Celia,
coming out of Marshall's room. She freezes at the sight
of him.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CELIA
Get away from him.

He approaches her.

CELIA
And get away from me.

TOMMY
I have to talk to you.

CELIA
Go away!

TOMMY
I was set up!

CELIA
You were set up? You were in the car! I didn't hear your name on the news!

TOMMY
No, someone screwed him --

CELIA
"Someone"?

TOMMY
Celia, something stinks here --

CELIA
Yeah -- it's you! You don't give a damn about anything! And to think, the other night, I actually thought you cared about someone else.

He puts his hand to her face. She brushes it off.

CELIA
Not me, you jerk -- Mickey Juba! You caved on those power lines, didn't you? I knew it. Damn it, I knew it! What did you get for it? Tommy O'Connor's box at the Redskins? Someone slip you a condo in the Virgin Islands?

TOMMY
If you'd give me a chance to --

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

CElia
God, I hate this town -- the only reason I stay is because I hate it so much.

TOMMY
Celia --

CElia
Get the hell out of here.

EXT. FLORIDA PARK - DAY - LONG SHOT - TOMMY AND MICKEY JUBA

sitting on the ground, backs to us, beneath the power lines. A quiet moment.

REVERSE ANGLE - TWO SHOT. Mickey is shuffling a deck of cards.

MICKEY
Is it thumb over, or thumb under?

TOMMY
Under.

She tries her hand at a false shuffle.

TOMMY
Not bad, kid. You've got potential.

MICKEY
So what's happening? I thought you were going to kick some ass on --

She indicates the derricks. Tommy looks at her, comes to a decision.

TOMMY
I am.

He takes the deck from her, fans it face up, pulls all the kings and aces, stacks them on top, and squares the deck.

TOMMY
This is one's called the double duke. How many players?

MICKEY
Six.

TOMMY
Who's the mark?

(CONTINUED)
She points to an imaginary poker player.

MICKEY
Number two -- over there.

Tommy, smiling, calculates something for a moment, then gives the deck four shuffles. He hands Mickey the cards.

TOMMY
Your deal.

She deals out six hands in a circle on the ground.

TOMMY
Look at the sucker's hand.

She turns over the hand at number two. It has the four kings. Mickey WHISTLES at the hand.

TOMMY
Look at your hand.

She turns over her own hand. It has the four aces. Mickey looks at the power lines, at the hands, at TJ. Then, understanding:

MICKEY
That's what you're going to do?

Tommy nods. Her face opens into a big smile.

MICKEY
Let's kick some ass. What do I do?

TOMMY
Something very important.

INT. TOMMY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tommy pow-wows with Loretta Van Dyke, and Armando. Aside from a sling, Loretta looks okay.

VAN DYKE
Why are we meeting here, Tommy? There trouble at the office?

TOMMY
(impersonating Dodge)
"I keep my ear close to the ground."
His ear my ass. He had an inside man.

ARMANDO
That little fuck Reinhardt?

(CONTINUED)
LORETTA
Hot damn -- I knew my driving wasn't that bad. Speaking of which -- you think I should wear one of those whiplash things, Tommy? There some insurance angle I should be working here?

TOMMY
We got bigger fish to fry, darlin'.

VAN DYKE
What do we do?

TOMMY
(beat)
The big con.

LORETTA
We gonna git that sucker.

TOMMY
Dick always said I should think big.

ARMANDO
Whoa! Aren't we gettin' out of our league, man? That Dodge is a pro!

VAN DYKE
You can't con a con, Congressman.

LORETTA
Shit, that's right, Tommy -- these politicians are serious slick fish.

TOMMY
You people gone soft on me? Bunch of fuckin' incumbents I got here. Now listen up. Thursday morning Dodge has a breakfast with the Arts Caucus in the Longworth Room. Armando -- find out how fast I can get from Longworth to my office. Loretta -- we need some scoop from the EPA for the roper, I'll give you a list. Van Dyke -- call Hattie at the Silver Foxes, and --

LORETTA
Wait a minute -- we need a new roper, don't we? Everyone around here knows our faces.

Outside a HORN sounds (O.S.). Tommy looks at his watch.

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
Right on the nose.

He throws open the bay window of the narrow house. Just below is a pickup truck with "Homer's Pit Stop" lettered on the side. Homer gets out.

TOMMY
My man!

The others come to the window to see Homer, still wearing his fuel-smeared overalls, and SHOUT greetings.

TOMMY
Now let's get to work.

INT. POWER AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE - DAY

The Members are being seated for a hearing. At the dais, Tommy approaches Dodge. A beat as Dodge studies Tommy's face.

TOMMY
Eli Marshall caught his tail in a crack, didn't he?

DODGE
He did.

TOMMY
You kept my name out of it.

DODGE
I did.

TOMMY
I owe you one.

DODGE
(pleased)
You learn fast.

TOMMY
Do me one favor, Dick. Next time you pull some heavy shit involving my ass, tip me off, okay?

DODGE
(indulgent chuckle)
Alright, son.

(BANGS gavel)
This hearing of the Power and Enterprise Committee is now in order. The health of America's securities industry --

(CONTINUED)
Reinhardt approaches Tommy and slips him a packet of materials.

TOMMY
(whispering)
Thanks. Listen, Reinhardt, something's come up, and I don't quite know how to handle it. There's a guy from the EPA -- I don't know him -- says he wants to see me. Tonight. Out of the office. Alone, he says. Sound of it makes me nervous. I'd feel better if you were there.

REINHARDT
You got it, jefe.

EXT. GRANT'S STATUE - NIGHT
A man waits, alone, in the shadow of a large statue. It's Homer. In a jacket and tie, his stubble shaved off, he looks like a plausible government worker. Tommy and Reinhardt approach.

TOMMY
Mr. Yancey?

HOMER
(cold)
I thought you'd be alone.

TOMMY
He's my AA. He goes where I go. If you can trust me, you can trust him.

Homer eyes Reinhardt a moment, then continues.

HOMER
Congressman, I have information I think you may want. It's about something going on at the EPA.

TOMMY
What have you got?

HOMER
I got a wife and three kids, and a note on my house, that's what I got.

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
(laughs)
Nothin' comes for nothin' in this town, do it?
(to Reinhardt)
You got any cash on you? I'm kind of light.

REINHARDT
(whispering)
You can't do that!

TOMMY
(to Homer)
This stuff's pretty good?

HOMER
In the right hands, it could mean a great deal.

TOMMY
Okay. Sunday. Fifth race at Del Mar. Blueboy is running twenty to one. I'd take a major position.

HOMER
You have to be shitting me.

TOMMY
No, not at all -- my Cousin Henry spends his days pumping water into horses' stomachs and stuffing Percodan up their butts. Trust me.

Reinhardt is interested in this. And he admires Tommy's m.o.

HOMER
(after a moment)
Alright. The White House is putting heat on the EPA. They want us to announce a major investigation of the relation between power lines and cancer clusters.

REINHARDT
But didn't the EPA already do a study?

HOMER
Yeah, but when the draft got to the White House, they didn't like it. So they brought their own scientists in to kill it.

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY
Why did the White House change its mind?

HOMER
Who knows?

TOMMY
Is there new evidence?

HOMER
Yeah -- their polls have dropped like a rock. They need an issue. This one makes them look good on the environment, and they don't have to spend a penny.

TOMMY
And what good is this to me?

HOMER
Come on, congressman, in this town, information is currency. And advance information is gold.

Reinhardt nods in agreement.

HOMER
But you've got to move fast. Once the White House goes public with this, they can't turn back. If your friends at the power company want to kill this investigation, they'd better do it now. Evening, gentlemen.

After Homer leaves:

REINHARDT
Blueboy. Twenty to one. Is your Cousin Henry always right?

TOMMY
I ain't got no Cousin Henry.

EXT. PAY PHONE - BY REFLECTING POOL - NIGHT

Reinhardt dials.

MRS. DODGE'S VOICE (V.O.)
Hello?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

REINHARDT
Mrs. Dodge, it's Arthur Reinhardt. May I speak to the Chairman, please?

DODGE (V.O.)
Hello?

REINHARDT
Are you sitting down?

INT. ART CAUCUS ROOM - DAY

The Longworth Room, a small circular committee room with an ornate rotunda. The Arts Caucus breakfast is ending.

THIRD MEMBER
Unless there is further business, our caucus stands adjourned.

Dodge gets up. As he makes to leave, Tommy comes in.

TOMMY
Got a minute, Dick?

Tommy takes him aside. The room empties except for them.

TOMMY
Listen, Dick, I heard something. There's got to be some bid'ness in it.

Tommy very discreetly gestures with his thumb and palm: money.

TOMMY
Maybe we can go in on it together.

DODGE
I'm listening.

TOMMY
The EPA is going to make a stink about power lines. The White House is pushing them to do a big study.

DODGE
That's very interesting, my friend. I've heard that, too.

TOMMY
(acting surprised)
Nothing gets by, do it?

Tommy touches his nose, in tribute to the master.

(CONTINUED)
DODGE
But thank you, son -- I'm glad you chose to share it with me. We do make quite a team, don't we?

TOMMY
I -- I hope it wasn't my press conference that started this.

DODGE
No, this is a stunt for the polls.

TOMMY
So do you think there's something in it for us?

DODGE
(musing)
If we got the EPA off Olaf Andersen's back, he'd be extremely appreciative.

TOMMY
And how do we do that?

DODGE
My committee writes the EPA's programs. We audit their funds. We confirm their appointees. I've got them by the balls.

TOMMY
And you're going to -- ?

Tommy makes a squeezing gesture, grins.

DODGE
Oh, no, not at all -- just... persuasion. Strenuous persuasion.

TOMMY
That's allowed?

DODGE
Persuasion, yes. Intimidation, no. But it's a gray area. Who's to say which is which?

TOMMY
Dick, wait a minute -- shouldn't we check out the tip? Make sure the EPA's really going through with this investigation?

(CONTINUED)
143 CONTINUED: (2)

DODGE
Of course.
(looks at watch)
He should be in by now.

TOMMY
Who?

DODGE
Skeeter Warburton, of course.
Always go right to the top, son.

144 INT. DODGE'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Dodge passes his Secretary's desk on the way into his office.

DODGE
Get me the EPA Administrator, please.

145 INT. CORRIDOR/STAIRWELL - CANNON - DAY

Tommy jogs along the corridor. A tourist Family stares at him. He explains his haste with a smile --

TOMMY
There's a vote on the floor.

-- and ducks into the stairwell.

146 INT. CATACOMBS - PHONE CABLE ROOM - DAY

In a chamber crammed with cables, the Telephone Man listens to a handset. He now sports a gold Rolex on his wrist -- his horse must have come in. Van Dyke, also there, looks at any array of dials and meters, whose hands all suddenly move. Some electronic phone CHIRPS, then the filtered RINGING of a call.

VAN DYKE
Here he comes.

The Telephone Man nods, adjusts some wiring, smiles satisfiedly.

TELEPHONE MAN
And there he goes.

147 INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE

Loretta wears a beaded sling, which adds to her look. She is at Tommy's desk, watching his phone as it RINGS. Tommy comes in.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

TOMMY
The Administrator.

Loretta picks up the phone.

LORETTA
Office of the Administrator.
(listens)
Thank you, I'll put you right through.

She hands the phone to Tommy, who mimics the George Plimpton voice.

TOMMY
Warbuton here.
(listens)
Thank you.
(waits)
Mr. Chairman! I do hope there's something I can help you with today.

INT. DODGE’S OFFICE – DAY

DODGE
I need a straight answer from you, Skeeter. Is the White House on your ass about power lines?

TOMMY
Off the record?

DODGE
Of course.

TOMMY
I was looking forward to some serious sailing this week -- Tish and I have a lovely spot right by Kennebunkport. Instead, here I am at three in the morning, writing testimony to your committee about cancer clusters.

DODGE
Thanks for your candor, Warburton.

TOMMY

Tommy passes the phone back to Loretta.

TOMMY
Next.
INT. ANDERSEN'S OFFICE - DAY

ANDERSEN
Yes?

SECRETARY (V.O.)
Zeke Bridges on line two.

Andersen punches the button to connect the call.

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

LORETTA
I'll just put you through to him.

She passes the phone to Tommy.

TOMMY
Olaf?
(coughs)
Olaf, Zeke Bridges. Listen, you sum' bitch, I'm so mad, I can't sit down to shit. Have you heard what I heard?
(wheezes)

INTERCUT with Andersen.

ANDERSEN
What's that.

TOMMY
The EPA's fixing to make a big stink about power lines and cancer. They're going to serve us up for breakfast.

ANDERSEN
Wait a minute. There's no scientific proof --

TOMMY
Proof don't mean shit. We're talking politics. They make a federal case out of power lines, I'm screwed. Whole insurance business is screwed. You know how much cash I'd have to pay out in settlements? Even if I stiffed everybody on claims, the legal fees'd be enough to kill me.

ANDERSEN
I can't believe it.

(CONTINUED)
150 CONTINUED:

TOMMY
You better believe it. You're screwed, too. Every hot dog trial lawyer in America soon be lining up to sue both our asses. We got to move on this, Olaf. If I wasn't tied up here, I'd go to Washington myself. Shouldn't you be getting on a plane? Just between us -- you find a way to stop this, I'll find a million bucks if I have to.

151 INT. CORPORATE JET - DAY
A very worried Andersen.

152 INT. HILL CORRIDOR - DAY
Tommy and Dodge walking along a Capitol hallway.

DODGE
Olaf will be at my office at five o'clock.

TOMMY
How do we play it?

DODGE
Cool. Real cool. You just follow my lead.

153 INT. DODGE'S OFFICE - DAY - DODGE, TOMMY, ANDERSEN, O'CONNOR

DODGE
I don't know how I can help you on this one, Olaf. This is the EPA. This is the President.

ANDERSEN
This is my lifeblood!

DODGE
I see that, Olaf, I see that. But in this town, you pick your fights.

ANDERSEN
This could mean six figures, Dick.

Dodge says nothing, but makes his eyebrows fly.

ANDERSEN
High six figures.

Dodge flicks his eyebrows again: More.

(CONTINUED)
ANDERSEN
Seven figures?

TOMMY
Between us. It's not that much -- what can you get for half a million these days?

ANDERSEN
How the hell can I funnel that kind of money to you?

O'CONNOR
If that's what you want, we can always find a loophole. No one will see your fingerprints.

ANDERSEN
No one will know?

DODGE
No one will know.

O'CONNOR
You're only in trouble if someone can prove a connection.

DODGE
Of course there's no connection. Olaf's just making a contribution as a patriotic citizen. And in return for it, he's getting --

TOMMY
Good government.

DODGE
Exactly. A little access, that's all.

154

INT. ORNATE CAPITOL HALLWAY - DAY

Dodge, Andersen, Tommy, and O'Connor walking along. Up ahead, a cocktail reception. On an easel by the door: HAZARDOUS WASTE ASSOCIATION MEET YOUR REPRESENTATIVE NIGHT.

DODGE
I've got to do a drop-by. You gentlemen like to join me for a drink?

155

INT. ORNATE FUNCTION ROOM - DAY

Dodge and Tommy work the room genially. Tommy spots Celia talking to some Guests and goes over to her.

(CONTINUED)
TOMMY

Hi.

CELIA
(to Guests, smiling)
Excuse me.

She turns, starts to walk away. Tommy stops her.

TOMMY
Look. Whatever you think of me, just promise me one thing.

She glares at him angrily. But then she's surprised to hear:

TOMMY
Come to the Clean Air hearing tomorrow.

CELIA
(baffled)
What?

TOMMY
Power and Enterprise. Noon.

CELIA
But why?

He gives her an enigmatic smile and slips away.

As he rejoins Dodge, Tommy SEES WARBURTON enter the room. Alarmed, Tommy moves in on Dodge, steering him to avoid the EPA Administrator.

TOMMY
Shouldn't we be heading off, Dick?

DODGE
Let's work the room just a bit more.

REINHARDT (O.S.)
Congressman! Mr. Chairman!

As Dodge turns to see him --

DODGE
Evening, Reinhardt.

-- he SEES Warburton.

(CONTINUED)
REINHARDT (O.S.)
Good to see you, sir. By the way,
I thought your opening statement in
committee yesterday was brilliant.

Dodge points out Warburton to Tommy.

DODGE
Well. Look who's over there --
Skeeter Warburton from the EPA.
The very man we want to see.

TOMMY
(trying to turn him)
Have you tried the oysters, Dick?

DODGE
At a hazardous waste event?
(shakes head)
I think we'll go talk to him.

TOMMY
No, he's the wrong man --

DODGE
(bemused by Tommy)
You don't understand -- he's the
perfect man.

TOMMY
But -- but you don't want to bother
him with this. Talk to one of his
underlings --

Dodge looks at Tommy with curiosity, not understanding his
reluctance.

DODGE
Nothing beats man-to-man.

TOMMY
Here? Not here!

DODGE
A public place. What could be better?

TOMMY
But it's the wrong time!

DODGE
While the iron is hot, son.

(CONTINUED)
REINHARDT
(chiming in
helpfully)
No time like the present.

TOMMY
Shut up, Reinhardt, I'm talking to
the Chairman. Beat it, okay?

REINHARDT
(smiling to Dodge)
I'll go get him.

Reinhardt heads for Warburton.

TOMMY
(puts hand on abdomen)
You heard about this stomach thing
going around?

DODGE
Come on, son, we've got the
people's business to do.

He leads Tommy off to one side. Reinhardt brings
Warburton to them.

WARBURTON
Mr. Chairman. Congressman.

DODGE
I've got a big problem, Skeeter.

WARBURTON
What's that?

DODGE
Your power lines investigation.

WARBURTON
What power lines investigation?

Tommy is sweating bullets.

DODGE
We're off the record, Skeeter.
This witch-hunt for cancer clusters
is bad news for everyone.

WARBURTON
I don't know what you're talking
about, Dick.

(CONTINUED)
DODGE
Alright, I know you're being a good soldier --

WARBURTON
No, I'm being straight with you --

DODGE
Then let me be straight with you. You announce this study -- I'm not talking about the results down the road, mind you, I'm just talking about the announcement -- and there's broken crockery everywhere. Real estate. Utilities. Insurance. Schools. Local governments. It'll cost jobs. Uproot families.

WARBURTON
I agree with you completely. There isn't going to be an investigation, old chap, I promise you.

DODGE
(beat)
I'm glad we understand each other.

WARBURTON
(beat)
Yes, I think we do.

Tommy silently rejoices in his good fortune.

DODGE
And we'll just forget about that phone call this morning?

WARBURTON
We didn't speak on the phone.

DODGE
(vastly impressed)
Excellent.

Dodge claps him on the shoulder, then heads off with Tommy, who is delighted to have dodged a bullet.

TOMMY
(imitating Warburton)
"There isn't going to be an investigation, old chap."

DODGE
(chuckling)
You're bad.

(CONTINUED)
They join up with Andersen and O'Connor.

DODGE  
(sotto voce)  
Worked like a charm. We scared him shitless. The investigation's dead.

ANDERSEN  
Waiter! Champagne!  
(to Dodge)  
See you at the Clear Air hearings.

INT. TOMMY'S RECEPTION AREA/CORRIDOR - DAY  
As Reinhardt comes into the office, Tommy intercepts him.

TOMMY  
Morning, Reinhardt! Got a minute?  
I need your advice on something.

REINHARDT  
Sure.

Tommy leads him back into the corridor.

INT. TOMMY'S BOILER ROOM - DAY  
Van Dyke, Armando, and Loretta work the phones.

VAN DYKE  
Is this the assignment desk? Yes, I'm calling from Chairman Dodge's office, on the Hill. We wanted to be sure CNN was sending a crew to the Clean Air hearing today.

ARMANDO (OVERLAPPING)  
No, not the new emission standards. We're breaking news. This is the biggest thing since Watergate.

LORETTA (OVERLAPPING)  
This is Cynthia Leeson in the White House Press Office. My boss wanted me to let you folks know -- we're making a major announcement at the Clean Air hearings today.  
(listens)  
No, I can't tell you, but it's hot.  
(listens)  
Well, if the New York Times wants to be the only paper in town to miss the story of the year, that's up to y'all.
INT. TOMMY'S CAGE/CORRIDOR - DAY

Tommy has drawn Reinhardt into the cage.

TOMMY
I want to do a little something nice for Dodge. That EPA thing -- he's been good to me, Reinhardt. Is there some way I can, like, throw a bouquet to him at the hearing today without having to sit through that boring testimony shit?

REINHARDT
Why don't you ask him to give you the floor at the start?

TOMMY
He's do that?

REINHARDT
For some flattery? In a New York minute. Just tip him ahead of time.

TOMMY
Good thinking.

They return to the corridor. Tommy looks at his watch.

TOMMY
Say, Reinhardt, my Grandma's plane comes in at ten. You wouldn't mind picking her up and driving Miss Daisy around, would you?

REINHARDT
Can't one of the others do it?

TOMMY
No, I don't trust them the way I trust you.

TOMMY pats him on the back and sends him on his way.

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Tommy, joined by his cronies and the Jubas.

TOMMY
This is it, people. Game time. Let's get it right.

ARMANDO
Tell me one thing, jefe. How do you know Andersen is going to bite?

TOMMY
I don't. You run a con, you run a risk.
A hundred or so members of the public -- trade groups, Hill staffers, lawyers, tourists -- settle into their seats.

VAN DYKE escorts Hattie Rifkin and a busload of Silver Foxes.

Loretta comes in with Ellen and Mickey Juba.

GRANDMA comes in, on Reinhardt's arm. She is dressed up as a biddy, down to a hat with fruit on it.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS head for their seats at the dais.

OLAF ANDERSEN is at the witness table, along with a couple of other businessmen. In a seat behind Andersen, Tommy O'Connor.

THE PRESS. A good turnout, with several camera crews.

WASHINGTON REPORTER #1
You know what this is?

WASHINGTON REPORTER #2
(confidential)
It's very hot. Electric cars.

CELIA is seated with Ira, her Pro Bono associate.

CELIA
I'm cutting out early.

IRA
(indicating TJ)
Don't want to run into him?

CELIA
You got that right.

AT THE DAIS Tommy has a private word with Dodge.

TOMMY
Dick, I thought it might be a nice way to open if I congratulated you on the fine work you been doin' on this committee. Really express our appreciation. Especially on behalf of the minority community.

DODGE
Why, thank you, son.
(indicating cameras)
Wouldn't hurt to have tape like that
in the bank, would it, Mr. Speaker?

HOMER slips in next to Reinhardt, who is surprised to see him.

REINHARDT
Mr. Yancey? Arthur Reinhardt. Are
you testifying for the agency?

GRANDMA
(leaning over)
Hello, Homer, dear.

REINHARDT
No, Mrs. Johnson, you must be
mistaken -- let me introduce you.
This is Mr. Yancey of the EPA.

GRANDMA
(to Reinhardt)
Don't be silly, child.

HOMER
Homer Norton. Homer's Pit Stop,
Axahatchee, Florida.

GRANDMA
Homer's known Tommy since they were
in diapers.

REINHARDT
(getting up)
What the -- ?

From the row behind Reinhardt, Armando clamps Reinhardt
down.

ARMANDO
Move and you're history.

DODGE GAVERLS the meeting to order.

DODGE
This meeting of the Power and
Enterprise Committee to consider
the reauthorization of the Clean
Air Act is now in session. Today's
first business is a panel of
national leaders in the field of
utilities.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
DODGE (CONT'D)
Before I welcome them, Chair would like to yield to the gentleman from Florida for a word. If there is no objection from the Committee -- ? The gentleman may proceed.

TOMMY
Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the other members of this committee, and on behalf of myself, I have a very personal statement to make. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you -- thank you for your leadership, for your insight, for your boldness...

Dodge preens for the cameras, until:

TOMMY
... and for your courage. Especially your courage.

DODGE
(surprised)
My courage?

TOMMY
Your courage in exposing the corruption that eats away at this institution. Your courage in taking on the special interests. Your courage in taking a major new step --

DODGE
But I've... I've... I've done nothing new, nothing at all -- what are you talking about?

TOMMY
You're right -- integrity isn't new to you, Mr. Chairman, it's second nature to you. Still it's a rare public servant who'll take on the special interest money, take on the PACs --

ANDERSEN, wary, senses danger.

TOMMY (O.S.)
take on the lobbyists and fat cats --

CELIA is fascinated.
TOMMY (O.S.)
... and who'll stand up instead for ordinary American citizens...

ON ELLEN AND MICKEY JUBA

TOMMY (O.S.)
... the plain people who just want peace of mind -- who just want to know they're raising their kids in safe neighborhoods and sending them to safe schools.

ON THE DAIS Dodge wants to wrap this up.

TOMMY
Yes, courage, Mr. Chairman, is a quality that you have in abundance --

DODGE
Well, yes, thank you, but we have to move along, if the gentleman would --

TOMMY
(undeterred)
Ladies and gentlemen, yesterday, the Chairman and I had a meeting in his office with Olaf Andersen of Gulf Coast Power, and his lobbyist, Mr. Tommy O'Connor --
(indicating)
these gentlemen here. Chairman Dodge and I listened in astonishment as Olaf Andersen offered us seven figures -- that's one million dollars, ladies and gentlemen.

A BUZZ in the room. O'CONNOR leans forward to Andersen.

O'CONNOR
Dodge double-crossed us.

ANDERSEN
You're fired.

ON TOMMY

TOMMY
One million dollars, if we would stop the EPA from investigating the connection between power lines and cancer clusters.

(CONTINUED)
Shocked MURMURS sweep the room. REINHARDT is aghast. HOMER and ARMANDO are delighted.

TOMMY
Isn't that right, Mr. Andersen?

Tommy flicks his eyebrows at Andersen, provocatively, imitating Dodge.

ANDERSEN
That's a vicious lie.

Dodge GAVELS sharply, turns to Tommy.

DODGE
Will the gentleman yield?

ANDERSEN
That's not possible! You can't give anyone that kind of money!

Dodge continues GAVELING.

TOMMY
Oh, yes, you can. As Mr. O'Connor said to you, quote: "If that's what you want, we can always find a loophole. No one will know." Remember saying that, Tommy?

O'CONNOR
I do not!

DODGE (standing)
I insist that the gentlemen yield!

Tommy also stands, and produces a video tape.

TOMMY
You can't deny it, Mr. Andersen! We have the whole thing on this tape!

The room erupts. THE PRESS loves it. Still cameras CLICK and WHIR. DODGE despairs. REINHARDT puts his hand over his face.

TOMMY
Yesterday, at Chairman Dodge's courageous suggestion, I taped the whole conversation. It's all there. Mr. Chairman, I thank you. The people thank you. America thanks you.

(CONTINUED)
AUDIENCE APPLAUDS DODGE. The clapping is considerably sweetened by the Panthers and the rest of Tommy's claque.

DODGE gauges their reaction, gets an inspiration. The storm leaves his face, and becomes a smile, which he beams on Tommy.

DODGE
I thank the distinguished gentleman.
And I thank my fellow citizens. Our methods in this investigation may have been unorthodox, but together --
(indignant, at Andersen)
we have exposed a canker at the very heart of democracy.

APPLAUSE. Tommy is amazed at Dodge's survival skills.
REINHARDT, delighted at the turn, claps heartily.

ANDERSEN, livid, leaps up and shouts at Dodge.

ANDERSEN
You bastard! You set me up!

DODGE
Witness is out of order!

ANDERSEN
You stood to make a million bucks off of me! Who offered you more? I want to know!

A new BUZZ sweeps the room. O'Connor tries to restrain Andersen, who sloughs him off.

ANDERSEN
You're as big a whore as he is!

MICKEY JUBA catches Tommy's eye and mouths a question.

MICKEY
Now?

Tommy shakes his head: no.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The phone by Eli Marshall's bed RINGS. He answers.

MARSHALL
Hello? No. You're joking.
(to Man in next bed)
You mind if I put on C-span?
ANDERSEN
There's no loyalty any more, is there, Dick? What about the three hundred grand you squeezed from me for that goddam voter registration front of yours -- that just water under the bridge?

O'Connor tries again to restrain him.

ANDERSEN
Don't touch me, you scum!

MICKEY JUBA mouths:

MICKEY
Now?

Tommy shakes his head again. No.

ANDERSEN
What about the two hundred k for your phony foundation, Dick? How about the ten thousand copies if your goddam autobiography you muscled me to buy -- what's all that, ancient history?

Andersen advances toward the dais, pointing now to six or seven other Members of the Committee among the total of 28.

ANDERSEN
And you -- what about those bundled checks from my executives? I gave you my condo in Vail! I gave you my corporate jet to fly all over the world! I gave your kids summer jobs! I put up scholarships to put your kids through college! I hired your goddam wife to redecorate my office! You telling me none of that counts for anything?

Andersen grabs Dodge by the throat.

ANDERSEN
I thought you people were for sale! I was wrong -- you're just for rent!

Dodge struggles free of Andersen, who is dragged away from Dodge by Capitol Police.

(CONTINUED)
DODGE

How dare you impugn my integrity!
Everything I've done has been
completely legal!

TOMMY

(acting astonished)
Mr. Chairman! You mean to say you
did all that stuff? You took all
that money?

Shock in the room. Some BOOS. IOWA does a nice HOG
CALL. TJ sends a little wave and smile to Celia.

DODGE

There's nothing I've done that --
(indicating other Members)
-- that these gentlemen haven't done!

Committee Members rush to dissociate themselves from
Dodge.

MEMBERS

No!... Not me!... Just him!... I
never!... He crossed the line!

ANDERSEN

They're whores! All of them!

MICKEY JUBA tries again.

MICKEY

Now?

TJ nods yes.

MICKEY

Throw the bums out!

LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE. She's touched a nerve. TJ leaps
into the moment.

TJ

Damn straight! Throw the bums out!
This place is an outhouse!

ON THE PUBLIC. GASPS, WHOOPS, and APPLAUSE. Reinhardt
sinks lower and lower into his seat.

VOICES

(calling)
Throw the bums out! Throw the bums
out!

(CONTINUED)
Tommy, enjoying the triumph, can't help rubbing Dodge's nose in it.

TOMMY
I owed you one.

Dodge wheels on Tommy, exploding.

DODGE
You lowlife hustler! Who are you to talk? You got into this House through fraud. You think I didn't check up on you?

He pulls a piece of paper from the pile at his place.

DODGE
Ladies and gentlemen, I have here some rather startling revelations about this Mr. Johnson before you. This man is nothing but a con man!

A fresh BUZZ from the room.

DODGE
A common grifter!
(consulting paper)
He's wanted in three counties for bunco! He's a convicted swindler!

Some BOOS. REINHARDT emerges from his hole, encouraged.

DODGE (O.S.)
A fugitive from justice for card sharping, bookmaking, confidence games --

ON DODGE AND TOMMY

DODGE
-- and other charges the FBI has only begun to investigate! I dare you to respond!

A hush in the room.

TOMMY
You know what? He's right! But let me tell you something -- all that's nothing, compared to what I pulled here in Washington... and this shit's all legit!

(CONTINUED)
LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE. Dodge BANGS the gavel repeatedly.

DODGE

The gentleman is out of order! The gentleman is out of order! This committee is adjourned!

GRANDMA leaps to her feet.

GRANDMA

Stop banging! Stop banging! That man has something to say!

Massive APPLAUSE. Dodge is stunned by the enormity of the sentiment against him.

TOMMY


(indicating cameras)

Turn your backs on the whole country. That what you want to do, gentlemen?

The Members remain in place, paralyzed.

TOMMY

(to the room)

I'm a con man. A small-time con man. Do you know what it was like for me to come to Congress? It was for like dying and going to heaven. If I did back home the kind of scams I've run in Congress, my ass would be in Sing Sing. But no, I'm not a crook -- up here, I'm a distinguished gentleman!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Eli, watching on television.

TOMMY (ON TV)

Now don't get me wrong. They're not all bums. But boy, do the rotten fish stink up the barrel.

Marshall APPLAUDS. The Man in the next bed joins in.

INT. POWER AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE - DAY

TOMMY

Now tell me, people -- while these guys are buying and selling each other, who's standing up for you?

(MORE)
TOMMY (CONT'D)
I'll tell you who. Nobody! Nobody gets five hundred bucks an hour to lobby for the average Joe! There's no Shnook PAC! There's no National Association for Ordinary Assholes! Sure, everyone's against cancer, but "everyone" doesn't have an office on K Street!

(to committee Members)
Don't you folks get it? We're supposed to be the people's lobbyists. Congress is supposed to be America's political action committee.

APPLAUSE and SHOUTS of support. Several Members on the dais join the applause, seeing a winning issue.

CELIA shakes her head in wonder.

Tommy goes to Mickey and stands her up on a chair.

TOMMY
She's right. Throw the bums out -- starting with me! I'm gonna found me a new party. The Don't Vote For Me Party. Any of y'all want to join up?

APPLAUSE and CALLS of enthusiasm.

TOMMY
Well, come on, then! C'mon, get up, we got work to do!

The room erupts, electrified, chanting.

VOICES
Throw the bums out! Throw the bums out!

Tommy is engulfed by people and lights.

Dodge, Andersen, and O'Connor -- desperate, snarling -- are pinned to the wall by the SHOUTING Press Corps.

Loretta AND GRANDMA watch Tommy bask in his new notoriety.

LORETTA
That Miss Oprah's gonna love his ass.

(CONTINUED)
CELIA arrives where Tommy is standing. She looks at him a beat. Then a big smile. They kiss.

    CELIA
    Tommy Johnson. Kamikaze congressman.

Tommy and Celia walk down the steps, arm in arm.

    CELIA
    I can't wait to see that tape you made.

Tommy pulls it from his pocket, glances at it, and tosses it away.

    TOMMY
    Why? I bought it this morning. It's blank.

As they continue down the steps, CAMERA CRANES UP to WIDE SHOT of the Capitol and the town beyond.

    FADE OUT.

    THE END