

The Final President

by

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FADE IN:

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. (10 YEARS FROM NOW)

REDD FENSTINYARD, a giant of a man in a plaid suit, storms through a crowded hallway, pushing people out of his way.

Redd ignores two D.C. security guards, shoves open a door marked 'No Admittance', enters and slams it shut.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING OFFICE

President BOYD LAMM, slim, in his mid-50s, with beady eyes and abundant blonde hair, sits at an ornate desk. He is transfixed on the tablet computer before him.

REDD
You gonna give it to 'em straight,
Boyd?

Redd charges the desk, picks it up and thumps it back onto the floor.

REDD (CONT'D)
I said, are you gonna give it to
'em straight?

Boyd glances at Redd, then returns his gaze to the tablet.

BOYD
Owning the Atlantic Ocean doesn't
give you the right to barge in
here, Redd.

REDD
Maybe, but bankrolling your
presidential campaign with a blank
check does.

Boyd waves off Redd.

BOYD
It's barely noon. How many scotch
and sea waters have you had?

REDD
Not nearly enough!

Boyd stares at the tablet.

BOYD

I'm giving my first inaugural address in ten minutes, Redd. Do you have any idea what the word 'sanguine' means?

REDD

Some kind of I-talian spaghetti, ain't it?

Boyd slams the tablet onto the desktop. Its glass fractures. The screen goes black and a puff of gray-green smoke curls from the wreckage.

The office door creaks open and President Lamm's corpulent, 27-year-old son, CHRIS, enters, with a partially eaten sandwich in hand. Eager onlookers are held back.

CHRIS

Hello, Mr. Fenstinyard. Uh, Dad, you're five minutes late and the crowd is restless. Mom is fuming.

BOYD

She's always fuming. Shit, I'm going to have to wing this speech.

Boyd pounds the table and hurries towards the door.

REDD

Atta boy, Boyd! Give it to 'em straight!

Boyd shoots back an angry look, then notices a garment on the back of his desk chair.

BOYD

Redd, throw that over.

Redd picks up the garment and inspects it.

REDD

What the hell is it?

BOYD

It's my presidential cape, of course. Toss it!

Redd's toss falls a foot short of Boyd. He swipes it off the floor and exits.

CHRIS

(to Redd)

Let the games begin.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING STEPS - MINUTES LATER

On an overcast day, a large group of dignitaries, seated on a platform, restlessly await the new president's arrival.

KATHRYN LAMM, the aged First Lady, is among them. She is thin and sickly. LUELLA, her young Hispanic attendant, sits on one side of her. Vice President WES POINTE sits on the other.

Boyd, stepping lively, stops next to his wife.

BOYD

Here I am, dear. Hope I haven't kept you waiting long. Wes Pointe, how does it feel to be Vice President?

Boyd twirls in front of Kathryn, holding out the sides of his ornate cape, decorated with the presidential seal.

BOYD (CONT'D)

How do you like it? Hand stitched in Guatemala.

KATHRYN

You look like you should be attending Wrestlemania.

Kathryn turns her attention to her purse and rummages through myriad prescription vials.

Unfazed, Boyd solemnly approaches the podium, raises his arms above his head and looks up at the threatening sky.

A hush falls over the crowd.

BOYD(V.O.)

What does sanguine mean?

Boyd lowers his arms, grasps the sides of the podium and defiantly spits at the audience.

The CROWD recoils, horrified.

CROWD

How dare you! You monster!

Boyd feels something wet hit the back of his neck -- spit! Looking over his shoulder, Kathryn laughs, points to Vice President Wes Pointe. Wes, wide-eyed, silently denies it and points to Luella.

KATHRYN

He did it!

Boyd feels two more wet blobs hit him.

BOYD

You're all missing the point!

KATHRYN

Wrong, Boyd! West Pointe didn't miss you!

Boyd regains his composure and returns to the mic. His voice is now even and soothing, in contrast to the crowd's angry rumbling.

It starts to rain.

BOYD

What I did was admittedly disgusting, but I felt it was the best way to stir you from the torpor that is paralyzing this once great nation.

The rain intensifies.

BOYD (CONT'D)

We are at a crossroad. Who would have ever dreamt that America would one day sell the drilling rights to Yellowstone National Park to a Brazilian oil company? Who could have imagined that Russian hackers would crack into the IRS's computers and change every taxpayer's last name to Dostoevsky?

The rain is now a downpour. The audience is soaked and miserable.

BOYD (CONT'D)

These are troubling times and, sadly, Americans are not up to improving them. Where are the go-getters? Where are the risk takers? We have become a nation of lethargic cattle, who expect everything, by some ill-defined 'right' to be magically provided, without working for it.

Soggy, rolled-up inaugural programs bombard the podium. The audience is now sparse. Two hot dog vending cart owners challenge each other to a race.

Security sweeps in to disperse those who remain.

The rain is now a deluge.

BOYD (CONT'D)
Shame! Shame and disgrace upon
you, America! I am embarrassed to
stand before you --

The large, black hand of CHIEF JUSTICE PHIL DINWELL clamps down on Boyd's shoulder.

BOYD (CONT'D)
Phil, what the hell? For Christ's
sake, you're the Chief Justice. If
you haven't noticed, your
president is giving a speech.

DINWELL
You've said enough.

President Lamm relents, looks to Kathryn for support. He sees she has left. Luella, her nurse, remains, but fearing Boyd, she attempts to run up the platform stairs. When she stumbles, Boyd helps her to her feet.

BOYD
Luella, can I count on you, if I
overlook what happened here today?

LUELLA
Certainly, Your Hi --

BOYD
Mr. President, Luella. That's the
proper form of address, at
present.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - TWO HOURS LATER

President Lamm leisurely spins in his Oval Office desk chair. He stops, pulls a metal figurine from his pocket and holds it close to his face.

BOYD
King Edward I, how nice of you to
attend my inauguration. We're off
to a splendid start, but for now I
must return you to your generals.

Boyd opens a desk drawer filled with Medieval soldiers and gingerly places the king among them. The door to the Oval Office opens as Boyd closes the drawer.

Chris; Chief of Staff, former General HUGH MARLOWE; one-armed Press Secretary BEATRICE COLDTEETH and Vice President Wes Pointe enter.

CHRIS

Dad, the inaugural balls have all been canceled!

BEATRICE

Mr. President, the media are in a frenzy and there are anti-Lamm riots reported from coast to coast.

Chris unwraps a candy bar and devours it.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

The major news networks are all demanding one-on-one interviews and an immediate press conference.

Boyd raises his hand to calm and silence the group.

MARLOWE

Mr. President, if you don't issue a formal apology, you're going to be the first American president to be impeached before he gets his desk chair warm.

Boyd spins in his chair one more time.

BOYD

Listen, I don't know what inauguration you all attended, but the one I was at could not have gone better.

Chris answers the phone.

CHRIS

Dad, there's a call from Redd Fenstinyard.

BOYD

Tell him to go to Hell. I'm the president now; I don't need him anymore.

WES

Boyd, don't you think it's time you took off that stupid cape and started looking like the President of the United States, instead of Evil Knievel?

BOYD

FDR wore one, so can I.

A brick smashes through an Oval Office window and blasts a porcelain bust of George Washington to bits. Imperturbed, Boyd stands and motions for everyone to join him in the center of the room.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Gather 'round, all. There is something I need to make known, before my administration starts day-to-day business.

Wes Pointe reluctantly joins the group.

BOYD (CONT'D)

I'm going to make you all aware of my philosophy of government, via a little story.

Another brick smashes through a second window, demolishing a bust of Abraham Lincoln.

A Secret Service agent enters the Oval Office, fires shots through the broken pane and departs.

WES

This is hardly the time for a fairy tale!

BOYD

Patience, please. Picture a giant, maybe 40 feet tall, living in the Middle Ages, in an English hamlet. His name is Guvvy. Now Guvvy isn't the brightest chap, but he is well meaning. It's his job to protect the hamlet from marauders and foreign armies. He does an adequate job of it and, in return, the villagers supply him with food and drink.

CHRIS

You're making me hungry.

Chris unwraps and devours another candy bar.

BOYD

Guvvy does make mistakes. He occasionally steps on and crushes a villager, or two. He may accidentally burn down part of the village. Sometimes he misidentifies approaching strangers and slaughters them. And, from time to time, he steals and peeks in open windows.

MARLOWE

Sounds like Guvvy is out of control.

Boyd picks up one of the bricks and tosses it back out the broken window.

BOYD

Guvvy's mistakes result in a great deal of griping by the villagers -- but it ends quickly, because deep down they fear Guvvy.

BEATRICE

General Marlowe, can you put out that cigar? It reeks.

MARLOWE

I can, but I won't.

BEATRICE

So you're saying, Mr. President, that government can be bad and get away with it.

BOYD

Not just bad, atrocious. The public's hearts will continue to swell with a sense of patriotism at the sound of the national anthem, and they'll continue to pay their taxes, even in the face of ineptitude and the squandering of countless billions of dollars, God bless 'em.

WES

Those taxpayers threw debris at the podium, just a few hours ago. And they're rioting in a dozen major cities. Do you seriously believe this threat of insurrection will simply evaporate?

Boyd picks up a chunk of the Lincoln bust, inspects it, and drops into the trash.

BOYD

If you were listening, Wes, you'd understand that I can get myself back into everyone's good graces with one good speech.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE WITHIN WRECK OF THE ANDREA DORIA -- DAY

The immense eye of a giant squid emerges from the ocean's darkness and fills the picture window Redd Fenstinyard stand before, 200 feet below sea level. Redd's back faces his business partner, GUS HIGHLANDS, who sits behind his desk. Redd calmly takes a step closer to the window.

REDD

How could he stab me in the back like that?

Gus nervously chews on a toothpick. He is tall and trim, for a man in his 50s, with a full head of salt-and-pepper hair.

GUS

He needs to distance himself a bit from you, Redd, that's all. He doesn't want to hear, for the next four years, that he's your boy. He'll come around.

REDD

How many mobile desalination plants we got now, Gus, including the one under construction in Norway?

GUS

That'll make fifty-two.

REDD

And we have nearly 1,200 ships in our fleet -- everything from cargo vessels to fire boats; from floating fish canneries, to a working full-size replica of the USS Arizona.

GUS

Yeah, pretty amazing what we've amassed over 35 years, partner.

REDD
I'd hate to lose it... I won't
lose it. Gus, you have any idea
what 'sanguine' means?

GUS
Some kind of sea bird, ain't it?

Redd sits behind his desk, assembled from timbers retrieved
from the wreck of the Santa Maria, and drums his fingers on
the blotter.

REDD
Tell Sally to set up an
appointment with that lunatic,
Kaysov Duiperasch.

GUS
You sure you want to go ahead with
this?

REDD
Gus, we have no choice.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE, THREE MONTHS LATER - DAY

General Marlowe hiccups repeatedly.

BOYD
Jesus, Hugh, can't you control
that?

Marlowe jams the stub of a cigar in his mouth and bites
down hard.

MARY TOOD, the president's secretary, sticks her head in
the office door, to announce the arrival of THE FOUR.
Behind her is her robotic assistant, an ASI-9, one of many
thousands working for the federal government.

MARY
Mr. President, The Four have
arrived for their scheduled,
monthly briefing. Shall I let them
in?

ASI-9
Four here now... here now, by
order of Congress, to get
information and --

Mary bumps the ASI-9 back with her ample rear.

BOYD

Against, my better judgment, yes,
please show them in.

Four, nearly identical, thirty-ish men, similarly and conservatively attired, enter and take seats opposite each other, on two couches in the center of the Oval Office.

The Four are represented by MACK MARKY, MARK MacLATCHY, CLARK McGEORGE and GEORGE McCLARKY.

Boyd sighs and approaches The Four, but remains standing.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Okay, which one of you clones wants to get this truckload of horseshit rolling downhill?

MACK

The, I will, Mr. President, and, frankly, we don't need your anger. The, these meetings are mandated and nothing will change that.

BOYD

Christ! Are you Mark? the one that starts every sentence with the word 'the.' What the hell is that about?

MACK

The, no, I'm Mack Marky, not Mark, and my verbal idiosyncrasy is not relevant. The, it's months since you've taken office and you have yet to deliver the speech you repeatedly claim will revive the economy. The, Congress demands a firm date.

BOYD

Listen, Mr. The, if they're yearning for a firm date, they should register with Match.com. What else is on your collective minds?

Marlowe hiccups and nearly swallows his cigar.

BOYD (CONT'D)

And before you answer, do me favor and get your names tattooed on your foreheads, before the next visit.

(MORE)

BOYD (CONT'D)

It will make life much simpler.
It's easier to tell four Twinkies
apart than the four of you.

CLARK

Four Cabinet posts remain
unfilled: Agriculture, Labor, EPA
and Fear. Your failure to fill
them is unprecedented, Mr.
President.

MARLOWE

The search is on to find one
qualified person to fill all four
posts. Doing so will streamline
the Cabinet and lead to
significant savings.

GEORGE

Congress' patience is finite. In
90 days you've accomplished
little, outside of lavishly
entertaining your royal friend,
COUNT what's-his-name, uh, BZDAK.

MARK

Communist Chinese troops stationed
in Canada and Mexico may not be
keeping you up at night, Mr.
President, but for 400 million
other Americans, it is.

Beatrice knocks and enters the Oval Office.

BEATRICE

My sincere apology, Mr. President,
but have you checked Phone-1
today?

Boyd, annoyed, walks to his desk and disgustedly picks up
the secure presidential smartphone, with two fingers.

BOYD

Beatrice, if I knew beforehand
that I would have to become a
slave to this goddamned thing, I
never would have run for
president. How about summarizing
for me what is so pressing? I
believe that's part of your job
description.

BEATRICE
 Certainly, if you'd prefer. A
 Romanian telecom satellite has
 crashed into downtown Cincinnati.

Boyd motions to Beatrice to step into a quiet corner of the
 office.

BOYD
 How did Cincinnati vote in the
 election?

BEATRICE
 You only got 13%.

BOYD
 Well, then I will be getting back
 to my terrible meeting.

BEATRICE
 What should I say your message is,
 to the people and civic leaders of
 Cincinnati?

BOYD
 Tell them to buy a couple thousand
 Swiffers and send the bill to
 Romania.

Beatrice exits, pushing an ASI-9 out of her way.

A brick smashes through an Oval Office window, shattering a
 new plaster bust of George Washington. It goes unnoticed.

MARK
 If I may continue, Mr. President.
 Walmart is down to twelve stores;
 IBM now sells lemonade in the
 lobby of their world headquarters
 and --

BOYD
 Enough! This is the last meeting
 I'm having with The Four, mandate
 or not.

MACK
 The, this is an outrage.

Marlowe hiccups nonstop.

BOYD
 General Marlowe, kindly escort The
 Four Twits the hell out of my
 office.

Marlowe has them gather their belongings and motions for them to leave.

As The Four depart, Mary Tood, ASI-9 in tow, worms her way through the crowd and approaches the president.

MARY

It's Kathryn, sir, you better head to the residence.

ASI-9

Head to residence... Kathryn near death.

Mary turns to the robot.

MARY

Resume organizing the contents of my waste paper basket.

MARLOWE

Would you mind if I join you, Mr. President? Kathryn is my first cousin.

BOYD

Of course, Hugh; I'd be disappointed if you didn't.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE CORRIDOR -- MINUTES LATER

Boyd and Marlowe hurry down a lengthy hallway lined with portraits of former presidents, on the way to the residence. They pass through numerous security checkpoints.

BOYD

Those damned ASI-9s scare the hell out of me. How many are there and who builds them?

MARLOWE

A head count a few months back put the number at over 275,000. As for their construction, it's no one company -- more of a consortium. I know that Boeing-Pepsico constructs the outer shell, while Microsoft-Hershey developed the software and candy dispenser.

BOYD

And they all work as clerical assistants?

MARLOWE

That's true. The federal Clerical Workers Union wasn't happy about it, so concessions were made.

BOYD

Such as...

MARLOWE

The ASI-9s are unpaid and they're kept, well, stupid.

BOYD

What do you mean?

MARLOWE

Their IQs are kept below 70.

BOYD

How does that stack up against the members of the union?

MARLOWE

Oh, our people have the edge.

BOYD

You don't sound too sure of yourself.

MARLOWE

It's been rumored that the ASI-9s are smarter than we believe. They are experience networked.

BOYD

Meaning?

MARLOWE

When one learns something new, they all learn it. Adding that feature may have been a mistake.

BOYD

Are they a threat?

Both men stop outside Kathryn's bedroom door.

MARLOWE

They've formed an informal union of their own.

(MORE)

MARLOWE (CONT'D)

It's not that they want wages and benefits. It's more social than anything else.

BOYD

Who organized it?

MARLOWE

Ever hear of Kaysov Duiperasch?

BOYD

That exiled bastard who founded the Organization for the Prevention of Cruelty to Inanimate Objects?

MARLOWE

The one and only.

They enter the First Lady's bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

The large bedroom is dimly lit and crowded with medical personnel, their equipment and security guards.

KATHRYN

Is that your voice, cousin Hugh?
Are you here?

MARLOWE

We're all here for you, Kathryn.
We're all praying.

DR. MAFFEI, Chief Physician, approaches the president and Marlowe, his head lowered.

BOYD

Is this the end?

Boyd grasps the King Edward figurine in his pocket.

DR. MAFFEI

It's very close, I'm afraid.

BOYD

This has been going on for months and you still don't have a diagnosis.

KATHRYN

Hugh, remember Little Pee-Pee's?

Marlowe blushes and hiccups. Dr. Maffei returns to his duties.

MARLOWE

That was a long time ago, Kathryn,
and best forgotten.

Phone-1 rings. The president checks the urgent message.

Phone-1's screen reads: U.S. arugula crop will be 10% below estimates.

BOYD

Sounds like a job for the vice
president.

Boyd puts the phone away.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Hugh, what was, or is, Little
Pee-Pee's?

MARLOWE

My family owned a chain of baby --
I'm sorry, I'm too embarrassed.

BOYD

Out with it.

MARLOWE

It was a chain of baby supply
stores. I wanted nothing to do
with it, but my father was
insistent. When I was twenty, I
was told I would be put in charge
of one for the summer.

BOYD

And you refused?

MARLOWE

Worse, I burned it down the night
before I was due to start and ran
off, to join the Air Force.

BOYD

Well, we've all done that sort of
thing, Hugh. Just don't do it with
the White House, if you decide on
a career change, okay?

Both men laugh, as Dr. Maffei approaches.

DR. MAFFEI

Pardon me for interrupting your
schoolyard chuckling, but, Mr.
President, if you have any final
words for the First Lady, you
should say them now.

The bedroom door opens and Chris, slice of pizza in hand
and followed by his beloved drone, enters. Quietly, he
heads for a dim corner of the bedroom. Boyd gives him a
withering look.

Boyd approaches Kathryn's bed.

KATHRYN

Boyd Lamm, you're a schmuck.
You've always been a schmuck and
you will always be a schmuck.

Boyd exchanges a furtive look with Luella, who feigns
sorrow.

Boyd puts his lips to Kathryn's ear.

BOYD

You're doing a great job, my dear
-- keep it up.

CUT TO:

INT. REDD & GUS'S UNDERWATER OFFICE -- DAY

WITHIN THE WRECK OF THE ANDREA DORIA

Redd and Gus eagerly await the arrival of KAYSOV
DUIPERASCH, founder of OPCIO, the Organization for the
Prevention of Cruelty to Inanimate Objects.

The double doors of their office fling open and in storms
what looks like a moving mass of garbage.

Gus grabs a flagpole and lowers its point in self defense.
Redd bolts for safety under his desk.

KAYSOV

Do not fear, gentlemen, I, Kaysov
Duiperasch, have safely arrived
with my friends.

GUS

Friends? We made it clear months
ago -- visit alone.

Kaysov jiggles the assorted debris, with which he is adorned.

KAYSOV

My friends, my friends! These are
my friends!

Redd and Gus exchange looks of disbelief. Kaysov removes his garbage-encrusted hood. He is younger than they imagined and has an impish face.

REDD

You should socialize more.

KAYSOV

I did not descend 200 feet below
sea level to make small talk,
gentlemen. Why was I summoned?

REDD

We're not interested in makin'
small talk, either.

The massive fin of a whale shark rubs against the viewing window. It makes an unnerving squeaking sound.

KAYSOV

How strong is glass?

REDD

Plenty. Listen, Kaysov, you're an
ambitious guy and we admire that.
You put together that robot union
and your 'be nice to garbage'
organization has 35 million
dues-payin' members. You got room
on that plate of yours for
somethin' else?

KAYSOV

It depends.

GUS

How about the four remaining
Cabinet positions?

KAYSOV

Not unappealing.

REDD

Why don't we continue this
discussion aboard The Wave? You
and your friends will be more
comfortable there.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALONGSIDE THE WAVE -- DAY

Redd, Gus and Kaysov step onto a titanium and glass elevator/platform that rises along the exterior of The Wave, Redd and Gus's private, combination ocean liner and nautical museum. The lengthy ascent begins.

GUS

She took four years to build, Mr. Duiperasch, and \$3 billion.

REDD

Look way up there at that fancy, white crest, Kaysov. NASA developed that material just for us. Makes it look like a tidal wave is breaking above the ship.

Kaysov is overwhelmed.

GUS

Now, quick! Look at the light show on The Wave's hull!

A spectacular light show commences on the midnight blue metal. Embedded lights take on the forms of a variety of sea life. They conclude by forming the logo for Diet Pepsi.

REDD

They're payin' us a shitload for that!

Redd spikes his glass of scotch and sea water over the side of the rising platform, into the ocean.

INT. NINE-STORY ATRIUM INSIDE THE WAVE

GUS

You an art fan, Kaysov?

KAYSOV

Not in the traditional sense.

The three men walk along a corridor lined with famous works of nautical art.

KAYSOV (CONT'D)

My appreciation for art stems from the rights it has against senseless acts of violence perpetrated upon it. Beyond that, objects of art are no different, to me, than spent batteries or used, foam coffee cups.

REDD

Sir, you were made for government work! You'll make a worthy addition to the president's Cabinet.

When they stop to admire a large painting, a rusted potato peeler falls from Kaysov's sleeve and hits the marble floor. Kaysov breaks into tears.

KAYSOV

Carl David! Forgive me! Are you all right?

Kaysov cradles the peeler in his arms, then gently reattaches it.

Redd and Gus guide Kaysov into a conference room.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

A large, elliptical table dominates the richly decorated room. Upon it is a pitcher of water, glasses and bags of snacks. Kaysov sits opposite Redd and Gus, who pours Kaysov a glass of water.

REDD

We're on good terms with Vice President Wes Pointe, so the job is yours, if you want it.

KAYSOV

Just like that?

Kaysov opens a bag of potato chips and nibbles on one.

REDD

Don't underestimate us. And, while you're at it, think of the possibilities for your robot union, once you're the Secretary of Labor. You can turn its unpaid members into wage-earnin', dues-payin' members.

Kaysov eats another chip.

GUS

And as the head of the EPA, think of the rules and regulations you can put into place, to protect all your beloved 'friends.'

REDD

Plus, as the Secretary of Fear, you get to start and spread terrifying rumors that'll keep your enemies at bay.

KAYSOV

And what about Secretary of Agriculture?

GUS

That one's pretty much a throw-away. Three out of four ain't bad, though.

KAYSOV

And what about you two? You don't do all this for Kaysov out of the goodness of your hearts.

REDD

It's about access. We're a couple of pariahs with the current administration. Through you and those ASI-9s, we'll know what's goin' on in every nook, cranny and broom closet of D.C.

Kaysov picks up a chip, then puts it back in the bag, which he inspects.

KAYSOV

These chips, Ocean Maestro brand; they're made by one of your subsidiaries, I see. Salty, very salty... I do not like.

Gus bites his toothpick in two and throws the pieces at Kaysov.

REDD

You insultin' our chips, you goddamned walking landfill!

Redd pounds the table hard enough to lift and tip the pitcher of water.

KAYSOV

I wish to leave -- now!

GUS

Listen, jackass. You don't come here, listen to our plans and then blow us off.

REDD

You're ours now, Duiperasch.

KAYSOV

I am leaving.

GUS

Really, without one of your friends?

Gus holds up and tauntingly swings a damaged umbrella handle.

KAYSOV

Wendy Bancroft! A hostage? You barbarians!

GUS

That's right. I plucked it off your back while you coddled that potato peeler, Carl David.

REDD

Now, you playin' ball, Mr. Kaysov?

Kaysov tearfully nods.

CUT TO:

INT. GUFFAWS COMEDY CLUB, WASHINGTON D.C. - 2 A.M.

Guffaws is a dingy comedy club in a rundown section of Washington, D.C. Its sparse crowds are entertained by aspiring hopefuls of the lowest caliber. The final performer, at 2 a.m., is the worst of the lot.

MALIBU GREENBERG, thirty-ish, paunchy, wearing a drab, cheap suit and a dirty baseball cap, steps to the mic.

MALIBU

Thanks for staying --

The remnants of a cocktail are thrown in the comedian's face by a barely conscious, front row patron. The few others in attendance laugh.

MALIBU (CONT'D)

Seems the drinks are on me,
literally. Tonight's a big night
for me, folks. It's a 20th
anniversary, I'm proud to say.
Yes, 20 years of using Rogaine,
the miracle hair-restoring drug.

Malibu lifts his hat and shows his nearly bald head.

The audience is silent.

CUT TO:

INT. MALIBU'S NEARBY APARTMENT - 3:30 A.M.

Malibu sits on a lumpy, patched, living room couch that
doubles as his bed, in a shabby one-bedroom apartment that
he shares with his widowed, chain-smoking mother, who
enjoys watching porn.

MRS. SADIE GREENBERG is focused on the television screen.

MRS. GREENBERG
How was the crowd tonight?

MALIBU
The usual.

MRS. GREENBERG
How many drinks they throw at you?

MALIBU
The usual.

Mrs. Greenberg points at the TV screen.

MRS. GREENBERG
I've seen this one a dozen times.
Watch! The blonde is going to give
the dentist an awesome BJ!

Malibu closes his eyes and pictures hanging himself.

CUT TO:

EXT. ERIE, NEW YORK - DAY

Boyd's limo is parked near the banks of the Erie Canal, in
New York State, where he is due to make the long-awaited
speech that will transform America.

INT. PRESIDENT'S LIMO

Boyd watches a video clip on Phone-1.

BOYD

Ha! Call out the National Guard.
This young man is a veritable
laugh riot. I could listen to that
bit about Rogaine a hundred times.
Malibu Greenberg, you are a
comedic Einstein.

Two quick knocks on the limo's window startle Boyd.

OUTSIDE THE LIMO

Marlowe opens the door for the president, who emerges into harsh daylight and a chaotic scene. The press and an enormous crowd are unruly.

REPORTER

Who you going to spit on today,
Mr. President?

Boyd grabs Marlowe by the lapels.

BOYD

I want you to find a comedian in
the D.C. area by the name of
Malibu Greenberg.

MARLOWE

Why?

BOYD

Just find him!

Boyd is guided to a massive deck, in front of an expansive video screen. He ascends to a chorus of derisive chants, forces a smile and flourishes his cape.

As Boyd approaches the mic, he gives the King Edward figurine, in his pocket, a good luck squeeze.

BOYD (CONT'D)

My fellow Americans, I thank you
for your patience and look forward
to sharing my vision for a bright
future with you.

HECKLER #1

You're a disgrace, Lamm!

HEKCLER #2

Send b-a-a-a-ck the Lamm!

BOYD

I know many of you feel frustrated and bitter, but please hear me out. There is a reason why I chose the banks of the Erie Canal to deliver what has come to be known as the 'Big Speech.' The canal was started in 1812 and was meant to be a transformative project that would foster trade between the Eastern states and the burgeoning Midwest.

The crowd becomes silent and receptive.

BOYD (CONT'D)

It accomplished that, despite taking thirteen years to build and a great sum of money. Upon completion, it benefited America for generations. The project had many setbacks along the way, but its workers did not quit.

HECKLER #2

It only took ten years before the railroads made it obsolete!

Upon a cue from Boyd, Marlowe motions to the security team. They subdue the heckler and remove him from the audience.

BOYD

The point is, a single great project can inspire the entire nation. One project, spectacular and grand, can spur the entire economy.

Boyd presses a button on the podium, activating the video screen behind him.

BOYD (CONT'D)

My fellow Americans, I present to you the Trans-National Canal!

Boyd steps away, into the shadow of the video screen.

KIP VAN STEELE, the world's top-grossing movie action hero appears on-screen, to host the extravagant video. Kip is dressed as Uncle Sam. Explosive rock music blasts in the background.

KIP

America! Prepare yourself for the Trans-National Canal -- the \$10 trillion, coast-to-coast canal that will unite America by cutting it in two! Before the video starts, remember to see my latest movie, Deathstorm 5000 III, in theaters this Friday!

The audience is thunderstruck, as the video fleshes out the details of the 2,700 mile canal.

KIP (CONT'D)

Imagine 5,400 miles of new waterfront real estate, ready for development, stretching from Alexandria, Virginia to Los Angeles! Starbucks alone has committed to 1,000 new locations!

As the video continues, Boyd, visibly shaken, takes out his phone and calls COUNT BZDAK, his European confidante.

BOYD/COUNT BZDAK - SPLIT SCREEN - PHONE CONVERSATION

COUNT

Boyd, how nice to hear from you, old boy. How goes the reception to your magnificent public works project?

BOYD

It's... it's hard to tell. The video is wrapping up. Count, I'm scared shitless -- maybe this was a mistake.

Boyd, sweating profusely, loosens his tie and shirt collar. He hyperventilates.

COUNT

Boyd, pull yourself together. The longest journey starts with the first step. In time, you'll see, your canal project will prove to be a springboard to something far greater.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

A technician completes the installation of a wall-mounted digital display, behind the president's desk, and exits. It continuously updates his approval rating.

BOYD

Nineteen-point-six? Damn it. If it wasn't for the sympathy I'm getting over Kathryn's illness, it would be a single digit.

Wes Pointe and General Marlowe are seated in the center of the room. Wes is tense.

WES

I have one piece of good news. The appropriation you've been seeking for the White House Circular Water Feature is all but signed.

BOYD

Okay, when can we start?

WES

It is conditional.

BOYD

What's the catch?

Marlowe hiccups and lights a cigar.

WES

There are two. First, Congress wants you to resume meeting with The Four.

MARLOWE

Not so bad, we can keep those meetings brief.

BOYD

And the second?

WES

Kaysov Duiperasch is to be named the Secretary of the four remaining Cabinet posts.

Boyd springs from his chair.

BOYD

Bull-shit! Bull-shit to that!

Mary Tood enters.

MARY

Pardon the interruption, but your meeting with Speaker SAM WAINWRIGHT and Senate Majority Leader ILENA KAARDBORD is in five minutes.

Mary exits.

Phone-1, sitting on a nearby table, rings. Boyd picks it up and reads the message aloud.

BOYD

DARPA is requesting \$7 billion to complete its clear peanut butter research project... What?

Boyd, phone in hand, walks to a waste paper basket and drops it in, then angrily approaches Wes.

BOYD (CONT'D)

You selling me out? Duiperasch? That lunatic, the head of four departments? If you want to leave this room with both testicles, you better speak up -- fast!

WES

It's Redd. Redd Fenstinyard.

BOYD

I knew it!

ASI-9

Knew it, he knew it.

Marlowe charges the robot that is concealed behind the drapes, near Boyd's desk.

MARLOWE

How did that piece of shit get in here?

Mary Tood enters.

MARY

Your guests are waiting in the vestibule, Mr. President. Shall I show --

MARLOWE

Mary, is this your ASI-9?

Before Mary replies, Marlowe grabs the robot by its rear service grip and hurls it out of the office, into a file cabinet.

The ASI-9's candy compartment pops open and dozens of Hershey Kisses eject across the room.

BOYD

Wes, you can tell them back on The Hill, and that prick Fenstinyard, that I accept. Now get the fuck out of the Oval Office!

Wes exits.

As Marlowe approaches the president, he glances inside the waste paper basket that contained Phone-1. It's empty.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Have you located Malibu Greenberg?

MARLOWE

Uh, yes. Boyd, that ASI-9 that was in here... I think it stole Phone-1.

BOYD

Good, that worthless piece of crap didn't even have a decent selection of ring tones. Look, we really have to stay focused on the meeting with Wainwright and Kaardbord.

MARLOWE

Perhaps you can excuse me from the meeting. I forgot; I, uh, am supposed to contact the lead contractor for the canal.

BOYD

Sure, I can handle it. I'll let you know how it goes.

OUTSIDE THE OVAL OFFICE

MARLOWE

Mary, where is that ASI-9?

MARY

You mean what's left of it. ASI-9 maintenance carted it off, immediately. Since when do they do anything that fast?

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE OF DR. VARIUS SNELLS - SECONDS LATER

Dr. VARIUS SNELLS is the head of DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Programs Agency).

Seated at his desk, Dr. Snells lazily stirs a large bowl of not-quite-clear peanut butter.

DR. SNELLS

Nine years and \$18 billion later, we're so close. A mere \$7 billion more should be all I need, but those stingy bastards in Congress won't budge. Talk about screwed-up priorities.

Snell's desk phone rings.

DR. SNELLS (CONT'D)

Dr. Snells here. Who is calling and wasting my valuable time?

MARLOWE (V.O.)

This is General Marlowe, the president's Chief of Staff -- hic!

DR. SNELLS

And?

MARLOWE (V.O.)

I need to speak with you about the possible implications of an unfortunate incident.

DR. SNELLS

Does this have anything to do with that idiotic canal project?

Dr. Snells continues to stir as he speaks.

MARLOWE (V.O.)

No, I wish it did. The president has lost Phone-1.

DR. SNELLS

That's not particularly serious, General.

MARLOWE (V.O.)

It was stolen by an ASI-9 whose whereabouts is unknown.

Dr. Snells passes out, face first, into the bowl of peanut butter.

MARLOWE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Dr. Snells, are you there? Dr.
 Snells?

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - MINUTES AFTER MARLOWE'S DEPARTURE

Fashionable Ilena Kaardbord, Senate Majority Leader, and Sam Wainwright, a true Southern gentleman and House Speaker, sit opposite the president, gloating. They sip coffee from elegant White House china.

Boyd holds up a copy of the morning edition of the Post and points to the headline.

BOYD
 "Will Lamm's Trans-National Ditch
 also be his grave?" So, are you
 two here to start digging?

SAM
 Ilena, I'll defer to you.

ILENA
 Mr. President, I see by your
 approval rating monitor that your
 numbers are at a new low.

Boyd clenches his fists, but maintains his poker face.

ILENA (CONT'D)
 You expected the TNC announcement
 to boost your numbers, but it
 hasn't. Why should Congress back
 the biggest boondoggle of all
 time? If you want to dig a grave,
 don't expect us to jump in with
 you.

BOYD
 Sam, your constituents in
 Tennessee have suffered terribly
 during the economic collapse.
 Aren't you willing to back a
 project that will get the blood
 flowing in the Volunteer State?

SAM

An enormous project like the TNC, with no prior congressional consultation? Honestly, you let your ambition get way ahead of protocol, Mr. President.

Boyd stands and stretches.

BOYD

If you two have your government-issued tablets, I suggest you take them out, lick their saliva security analyzers and go to the TNC's home page.

Sam and Ilena comply.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Tell me what you see.

ILENA

Arizona, the state I represent, and Sam's have a flashing, dotted line for the TNC's route. Yesterday it was solid.

Boyd smiles and straightens his cape.

BOYD

Th-a-a-at's right. And flashing means those parts of the route are now tentative, along with the hundreds of billions of dollars they represent. When the advertising for the TNC starts and the unions and the contractors get behind it, nothing will stop it.

Boyd walks to the window. Heavy equipment can be seen and heard outside, working on the White House Circular Water Feature. Boyd, looking out, points to the activity.

BOYD (CONT'D)

You two hear that beautiful sound? That's the sound of the Progress Train -- and it's leaving the station.

Boyd hears the Oval Office door close behind him.

He turns and sees the room is empty and takes out his King Edward I figurine. Boyd kisses it.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENBERG APARTMENT - 7 P.M.

Mrs. Greenberg slaps Malibu in the face.

MRS. GREENBERG
Cancel? Idiot! Who blows a chance
to meet the president?, even if he
is a horse's ass! Don't even think
of it!

Cheesy music from a porn movie plays in the background.

Mrs. Greenberg inspects her son.

MRS. GREENBERG (CONT'D)
Did you cut yourself shaving? That
suit! It's got pit rings. And
don't tell me you're going to wear
that stinking baseball cap!

MALIBU
In order, yes, I cut myself
shaving. I am wearing my only
suit, and the stinking hat -- it's
good luck. The world won't end if
everything isn't perfect. Now go
watch your dirty movie. I'll let
you know how it went, when I get
back. I gotta go.

MRS. GREENBERG
That's it?

Malibu slouches and sighs.

MALIBU
Thanks for your peculiar form of
encouragement, Mom.

Malibu kisses her on the cheek and exits.

EXT. GREENBERG APARTMENT BUILDING - SECONDS LATER

A black, stretch limo is waiting, as Malibu exits the front door. The limo's rear, passenger side window silently lowers, revealing Press Secretary Beatrice Coldteeth. She's holding a photo.

BEATRICE
I'm Beatrice Coldteeth. Looks like
you're Greenberg -- get in.

INT. LIMO

Malibu sits too close to Beatrice.

BEATRICE

My god! Whew! You steal that suit
off a corpse?

She pushes him away with the stump of her left arm, which ends at the elbow.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

What did the president see in you?
Can you speak? You a comedian, or
a mime?

MALIBU

Sorry, I was just kind of startled
by your... uh...

BEATRICE

Stump. Don't get all sympathetic.
I can do anything a two-armed
person can, only better.

MALIBU

How did you lose it? In the
military?

BEATRICE

It happened in a crazy elevator
accident, while I was on
assignment for the anti-war
magazine, *A Farewell to Arms*.

Beatrice notices Malibu slyly checking his phone for messages.

She lunges at Malibu, pinning his head against the window with her stub.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

Am I boring you, shithead?

LIMO DRIVER (O.S.)

Everything okay back there?

BEATRICE

We're just getting acquainted,
Ralph. Keep driving.

MALIBU

Sorry, just checking. My mom's not
well.

(MORE)

MALIBU (CONT'D)

How did the president find out about me? Has he been to Guffaws?

BEATRICE

He wouldn't let his dandruff spend time there. He saw you on the web, thought you were funny, and wants to meet you.

MALIBU

I've never met a president before, Beatrice.

BEATRICE

It's Ms. Coldteeth to you. Now keep your trap shut. It'll keep me from strangling you and give you time to rehearse your performance.

MALIBU

My what?

Beatrice breaks into a broad smile.

BEATRICE

Oh, this is going to be good.

She barely suppresses laughter, doubles up and holds her sides.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

Jesus, I hope I don't crack a rib! You had no idea! You thought it's a meet-and-greet.

She wipes a tear from her cheek.

MALIBU

I'm not... You're kidding, right? Tonight?

BEATRICE

It's called a command performance, numskull. About 30 minutes from now.

Malibu, pale, rigidly sits back in his seat.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE SECURITY BOOTH

The limo approaches the booth and stops. A tablet computer is handed to the driver. He dutifully licks it and returns it.

SECURITY GUARD

Proceed.

An ASI-9 is visible inside the booth.

ASI-9

To proceed, okay, to proceed.

Limo drives onto White House grounds.

INT. LIMO

BEATRICE

You'll also be performing for the
First Lady.

MALIBU

Isn't she sick, or something?

BEATRICE

Near death. She's been that way
for months. Break a leg, kiddo.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE ENTRANCE

Limo stops beneath White House portico. Six Secret Service
agents descend on the vehicle and assertively remove
Malibu.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE SECURITY ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Malibu licks a security tablet computer pushed into his
face. He is fingerprinted, strip searched, tested for
microbes and radiation, and sprayed with an unidentified
aerosol.

A framed copy of the Bill of Rights is visible during the
process.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY - OUTSIDE KATHRYN'S ROOM

Boyd, his back to the approaching entourage, turns to greet
Malibu.

BOYD

At last! Malibu Greenberg, let me
shake your hand.

MALIBU
It's an honor, sir.

BOYD
I love your bit about... is it Rogaine? or Viagra?

Malibu's flop sweat is in full bloom.

MALIBU
It's Rogaine, sir -- 15th anniversary and so forth.

BOYD
Yes -- yes, yes. I hope you'll be doing that bit this evening for myself and Mrs. Lamm. I'm counting on you to lift her spirits, Malibu.

Boyd chucks Malibu on the chin.

BOYD (CONT'D)
She's near death, you know.

MALIBU
Well, I hope she's not in the living room when it happens. If she dies during the performance, that would be quite ironic -- to die, in a living... room.

Boyd frowns.

BOYD
What did you say?

Malibu is tongue tied. His eyes flutter; he feels faint.

BOYD (CONT'D)
Oh, I get it. I get it! Good one, Greenberg. Let's go in.

INT. KATHRYN'S BEDROOM.

Kathryn, coughing, is attended to by her exhausted medical team.

Chris, with his drone, sulks in a dark corner.

KATHRYN
Is he here, Boyd? That cosmetician you spoke of. Malibu Barbie, is it?

BOYD

It's Malibu Greenberg, a comedian.
He's here to entertain us.

Malibu closes his eyes and says a silent prayer. Boyd taps him on the shoulder.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Go to it, lad.

Malibu approaches the bed.

MALIBU

This situation is unusual for me.
People usually get sick after they
hear my monologue.

The crowd breaks into laughter, except for scowling Chris.

EXT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE KATHRYN'S DOOR - ONE HOUR LATER

The door opens. Applause is heard. Boyd and Malibu step into the hall, along with Chris' drone, which is unseen by the two men. Chris, inside, is able to see and hear everything.

BOYD

That was splendid, Malibu. I could
not be more pleased.

MALIBU

I'm sorry Ms. Coldteeth wasn't
there. She got the wrong
impression of me, on the way over.
She's very nice.

BOYD

I'll let her know. Perhaps she'll
have an opportunity the next time.

MALIBU

I don't understand.

Boyd puts his arm around Malibu, in a fatherly way.

BOYD

I'd like you to be on call, to
entertain in the Oval Office. It
can get pretty grim in there, at
times. Your humor is a tonic that
restores the spirit.

Malibu, perplexed, nods.

BOYD (CONT'D)
 Best of all, you'll be paid \$5,000
 for each visit. That should pay
 for your Rogaine.

They both laugh.

INT. BEDROOM

Chris seethes.

INT. LIMO - MINUTES LATER

Elated and relieved, Malibu, on his way home, calls his mother. She answers. Soft moaning from the TV is heard in the background.

MRS. GREENBERG (V.O.)
 Is that you calling, Lundberg?! I
 will not turn down the sound! I'll
 watch what I want, when I want,
 and as loud as I want!

MALIBU
 Ma, it's me, your son.

MRS. GREENBERG (V.O.)
 You drunk? Call that number I
 sewed inside your suit jacket.

MALIBU
 I performed for the president and
 First Lady! I killed! They loved
 it. He wants me to perform
 regularly -- for \$5,000 a gig!

MRS. GREENBERG (V.O.)
 Good, good. Listen, we're low on
 half-and-half. Stop and pick some
 up on your way home.

Mrs. Greenberg hangs up.

CUT TO:

EXT. GUANABARA BAY, RIO DE JANEIRO - DAY

Situated at the bay's center, on calm, azure water, rests The Wave. It is surrounded by a flotilla of yachts, this cloudless, warm day. All are engulfed by pulsating Latin music and sounds of revelry. It is Captains Day, the

bi-annual event, when Redd and Gus lavishly entertain their myriad sea captains.

INT. HALLWAY ON THE WAVE

Gus tries to make himself heard to an exquisite Latina model. They face the famous shipwreck painting, *The Raft of the Medusa*.

GUS

Look here. This poor guy is hangin' on to the edge of the raft, for dear life. You can see his wiener.

Redd, scotch and sea water in hand, approaches Gus.

REDD

Is that poor guy's putz the only thing you know to describe, about an \$80 million painting?

GUS

It's more than you know. Listen, you're interrupting at a bad time, Redd. I'm the first guy she's spent more than 30 seconds talking to.

REDD

That's too bad, partner. We've got bigger fish to fry, so say adios.

Gus turns and sees she's already gone.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM ABOARD THE WAVE

Dr. Snells sits at the same table Kaysov sat at weeks earlier. Today it bears a partially disassembled ASI-9 robot and Phone-1.

Redd and Gus enter.

REDD

Welcome aboard, Dr. Snells.

Dr. Snells grimaces and fusses with his ill-fitting suit.

GUS

You don't look very happy for a man who's about to land \$7 billion.

DR. SNELLS

That's because I'm selling my soul to get it. Clear peanut butter will be the crowning achievement of my career and you two devils are, sadly, the only source of completion funds.

REDD

Clear peanut butter, frankly, is the stupidest thing I've ever heard of, and I've heard plenty.

Snells takes off his glasses and nonchalantly twirls them.

DR. SNELLS

You private sector types don't understand how DARPA works.

GUS

I do. It's a wasteful black hole that squanders billions and justifies it, by claiming it's for national defense.

Snells chuckles.

DR. SNELLS

And you and your partner only think about short-term profits, to keep Wall Street analysts happy. At DARPA we think for the long-term and know that serendipity can justify our ungodly budget. It's happened many
--

The conference room door bursts open. In staggers an inebriated GUEST CAPTAIN, holding an exotic cocktail and an overflowing plate of seafood.

GUEST CAPTAIN

Gus, you and Redd are the...
(belch) best! The best! The food,
the booze... (belch) are the best!

The guest belches again, swoons, throws up on a potted plant and collapses, unconscious, in a corner.

Gus gets up, locks the door, and returns to his seat.

REDD

You were sayin', Doc?

DR. SNELLS

As an example of serendipity, years ago, DARPA spent \$12 billion on clothespin research that led to the switching technology used in virtually every electronic device in use today. It's value is immeasurable.

GUS

And you really believe that'll happen with clear peanut butter?

DR. SNELLS

Eventually. In the short-term, it just might mean more interesting sandwiches.

REDD

That's a crap-shoot. We're interested in the here and now. What we want, presently, deals with this here robot and Phone-1.

DR. SNELLS

Spell it out.

REDD

We want access to Phone-1, so we can send misinformation that can't be traced.

GUS

And we want to be able to override and redirect ASI-9s at a moment's notice.

DR. SNELLS

Just one?

REDD

As many as we want.

DR. SNELLS

That's a pretty tall order. What do you two have in mind?

Redd pulls Snells' seat away from the table, grabs hold of his suit sleeve, and guides him to the room's picture window, overlooking the bay.

REDD

Doc, you strike me as a man who is so good with numbers, you don't even need a calculator.

Snells nods.

REDD (CONT'D)

Now what would you estimate the odds to be that you could swim from here, all the way back to Washington?

Snells is dumbfounded.

REDD (CONT'D)

Okay then, you're on board. Get to work, but before you do, grab yourself a plate of food -- it's the best.

CUT TO:

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE, EAST SITTING HALL - DAY

Boyd wearily enters this quiet, high-ceilinged room, leans his back against the closed door and closes his eyes. It is his sanctuary in stressful times.

BOYD

Wes is a back-stabbing ingrate.
TNC funding is slow in coming.
What will happen to my approval rating if Kathryn gets better?

Boyd sits in one of a row of embroidered chairs, by the window, and runs his fingers through his hair.

The president is startled when Chris enters, pizza slice in hand, along with his drone.

BOYD (CONT'D)

This room has become something of a hideaway for me. What brings you here?

Chris tosses his pizza crust behind the same china cabinet he lands his drone atop and sits next to his father.

CHRIS

It's a good place to practice drone maneuvers, not too many breakables.

BOYD

The drone, the drone, the drone.
What would your life be without it, Chris?

CHRIS

Oh, are you going to start ragging on me, about the damn drone. If you are --

BOYD

Sorry, I've gotten off to a bad start. I know you enjoy playing with it. I certainly couldn't do it; I'd probably kill someone.

CHRIS

Really? Who?

BOYD

Not literally, I meant ineptitude.

Chris stands and wipes his greasy hands on the gold, silk drapery.

CHRIS

You're disappointed in me, aren't you?

Boyd diverts his gaze.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I flunked out of college. I'm not married. At 27, I don't even have a girlfriend. I'm not handsome and I'm overweight. I wish someone had confidence in me.

BOYD

You have good qualities, too. Remember that summer you worked in Granddad's art gallery? You sold Redd Fenstinyard a dozen canvases and you didn't let that bastard grind you down on the price of any of them.

CHRIS

That was a long time ago. Dad, why did you accept all that campaign money from Mr. Fenstinyard and then kick him in the balls?

Boyd places his hand on Chris' knee.

BOYD

You don't know that man. He's the devil with irritable bowel syndrome.

(MORE)

BOYD (CONT'D)

When he started buying the art collection for The Wave, he bought exclusively from Granddad. But Redd beat him up so badly on the price of every piece... the stress put him in an early grave.

Chris resumes maneuvering the drone, as Boyd speaks. It circles the room's chandelier at a quickening pace.

BOYD (CONT'D)

I swore that if the opportunity arose, I'd get even. So, I took his donations with both hands and then slammed the Oval Office door in his face.

Chris maneuvers the drone so that it hovers a foot above Boyd's head.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Chris, please, that's too close.

CHRIS

You probably didn't notice, but that night the crappy comedian performed for you and Mom, I maneuvered the drone into the hallway, after the show.

BOYD

You eavesdropped? Oh, Chris... that's disappointing.

CHRIS

So, is the affection you showed towards him. You put your arm around him, like he was your son. I shouldn't be jealous of the world's worst comedian, but I am.

The door opens and a White House butler enters, holding a pizza box. He hands it to Chris, who grabs a slice, takes a healthy bite, and sets the greasy box on an upholstered chair.

BOYD

I'm a believer that actions speak louder than words, and I want to prove to you how much faith I have in you, son.

Chris gobbles down one slice and grabs a second.

BOYD (CONT'D)

As you may know, the canal project will consist of two teams: Team West, which will start in L.A. and work east, and Team East, which will start in Alexandria, Virginia and work west.

CHRIS

Shouldn't the team in L.A. be called Team East, since that's the direction they're headed? It makes more sense.

As Boyd's face reddens, he massages his temples.

BOYD

Chris, I would like you to... head up Team West.

Chris spikes his pizza crust into a nearby potted plant.

CHRIS

Cool. Now when you say Team West, which one do you mean?

BOYD

I mean... the one in L.A. working east.

CHRIS

You do realize I know nothing about engineering. I have absolutely none of the required skills.

BOYD

Don't worry. I know virtually nothing about most of the subjects I make decisions on. I just make sure I surround myself with people who claim they do. I pay them well and take the credit. It's a core principle of politics, Chris.

Chris grabs a third slice, takes an inhuman bite, and speaks with a mouthful.

CHRIS

Then I'll do it, Dad!

BOYD

Your staff will make you look like the next Gustave Eiffel.

CHRIS
You did say Team West, right?

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

BOYD
I am hosting this meeting to iron
out problems delaying initiation
of the TNC.

Kaysov is present, as is General Marlowe and JESS
BENDENSWIPE, the CEO of Steel Grit, Inc., the lead TNC
contractor. Chris, invited, is absent.

BOYD (CONT'D)
Everyone, please take a seat.
Where the hell is Chris?

MARLOWE
(privately, to Boyd)
You'll be happy to know that the
missing ASI-9 and Phone-1 were
found.

Marlowe places the phone in front of Boyd, who shrugs.

Chris, without his drone, and professionally attired,
enters the room and takes his seat. The president is
pleasantly surprised.

Kaysov, wearing a modest assortment of garbage/friends
pounds the table.

KAYSOV
Dreamers, I, Kaysov Duiperasch,
secretary of four Cabinet
departments, demand the TNC be
scuttled before one blade of grass
is cut!

MARLOWE
Oh, somebody please call Waste
Management.

KAYSOV
The destruction the TNC will bring
to billions of inanimate objects
is tantamount to genocide.

BOYD
Back that up with some hard facts.

KAYSOV

The TNC will pass through seven national forests, eleven wildlife preserves and eight national parks.

Kaysov wildly waves his arms as he speaks. An eggbeater flies off his sleeve and strikes a framed portrait of Alexander Hamilton, creating a long, jagged gash on the canvas.

KAYSOV (CONT'D)

And that, sadly, is just the start.

JESS

This man's a psychopath!

KAYSOV

There is more! You will listen! Forty-two major highways will be severed; 1,142 rivers and streams violated; 392,000 homes demolished; the Grand Canyon mutilated; Hoover Dam demolished; tens of millions of innocent animals killed; 82 landfills excavated; plus fallout and radiation from the seven nuclear devices you plan to detonate to speed construction.

Kaysov, exhausted, picks up his eggbeater and holds it like a protective mother.

JESS

Hey, if you want to make an omelet, you gotta break a couple eggs.

BOYD

General Marlowe, that reminds me. Do we even have seven nuclear warheads left in our arsenal?

MARLOWE

No. The Nuclear Disarmament Act Iran forced us to sign five years ago cleaned house. However, I spoke to General Woodward at the Pentagon last night and he believes we can obtain them, for a price.

BOYD

From whom?

Marlowe hiccups, cracks his knuckles.

MARLOWE

The AARP has its own stockpile.

BOYD

Why in hell does the AARP have nukes?

MARLOWE

How do you think AARP members get automatic, annual increases in their Social Security benefits, while everyone else's are frozen?

KAYSOV

Gentlemen! You are going off topic -- not acceptable!

BOYD

I called this meeting, Duiperasch, not you. The TNC will be completed on time and on budget, more or less. Isn't that right, Mr. Bendenswipe?

Wiry, square-jawed Jess Bendenswipe coolly stands and adjusts his shirt's crisp, white cuffs. He takes his time and makes direct eye contact with all present, before speaking.

JESS

You may not recall, but the Steel Grit Corporation, the company I founded and lead, built the indoor hockey arena that was formerly known as Carlsbad Cavern. The Native American tribes were in an uproar over that project. Radical environmentalists sabotaged our work on numerous occasions, and the locals hated it because their taxes doubled.

CHRIS

Well, then maybe it shouldn't have been built.

The room goes silent.

BOYD

Chris... really.

JESS

That's quite all right, no offense taken. You need to understand how public-private partnerships work, Chris. Steel Grit is the world leader in pork barrel construction projects because we 'get it.'

KAYSOV

What is it you get?

Jess paces as he explains.

JESS

Soaring bridges, tunnels through solid granite mountains, sports arenas, aquariums -- they all appeal to people's imaginations, to their dreams of a better tomorrow. Unions, companies like mine and politicians feed off those dreams. None of us give a fuck how many hot dog vendors and parking lot attendants get hired after the ribbons are cut. No. What we care about is getting paid and moving on to the next multi-billion-dollar, overhyped project.

CHRIS

So it's all bullshit. You and a small group of insiders make obscene profits; the project goes to Hell, and the taxpayers get screwed.

MARLOWE, JESS & BOYD

Amen.

BOYD

Chris, do you want out?

CHRIS

And miss all the fun?

BOYD

Good. You'll need this.

Boyd slides Phone-1 along the table, to Chris.

BOYD (CONT'D)

The Fed says they'll buy \$5 trillion in TNC bonds to get things rolling. Jess and Chris are on board, so that means the only turd in the punch bowl is you, Kaysov. I think you and I should speak privately, so everyone else kindly adjourn.

Boyd and Kaysov are alone. Boyd motions for him to join him by the picture window, which overlooks the completed White House Circular Water Feature.

BOYD (CONT'D)

As the head of 4 key Cabinet posts, I need your support. I understand you're a highly principled man, but that shit doesn't fly in D.C.

KAYSOV

I am not ignorant of the filthy world of politics.

BOYD

And that is why my intuition is telling me something else is troubling you. Something personal, perhaps?

Kaysov turns away, looks at his eggbeater.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Redd Fenstinyard has you under his thumb, doesn't he?

KAYSOV

Ri-ridiculous.

BOYD

I know he'd love to undermine the TNC and he's using you to accomplish that. Kaysov, what's he got on you? Maybe I can help.

Kaysov faces Boyd, but stares at the floor.

KAYSOV

Wendy Bancroft.

BOYD

Who is she? A relative? Your mistress?

KAYSOV
Not easy to say... she...

Boyd places his hand on Kaysov's shoulder.

BOYD
I can help.

KAYSOV
Umbrella handle. Wendy Bancroft is
the name of my most cherished
inanimate object, an umbrella
handle.

Boyd withdraws his hand and wipes it on his shirt.

BOYD
Okay then. What if I can get Wendy
back for you? Will you support the
TNC then?

KAYSOV
I will.

Boyd pats his pockets, looking for Phone-1.

BOYD
Shit! The one time I need that
frigging Phone-1.

Kaysov pulls an outdated, broken flip phone off his sleeve
and offers it to the president.

KAYSOV
Here, use Nick Kendle.

BOYD
Thanks, I'll use the desk phone.

Boyd picks up the receiver.

BOYD (CONT'D)
Mary, it's me; get me the
Secretary of the Navy.

CUT TO:

INT. USS ALBERT PUJOLS, RADIO ROOM - DAY

CAPTAIN SOL GLISSANT hovers over his headphone-wearing
CHIEF CRYPTOGRAPHER.

CAPTAIN

Check it with HQ one more time,
Chief.

CHIEF

Sir, if I ask one more time, HQ is
going to recommend I be relieved
from duty.

CAPTAIN

I get the part about intercepting
The Wave, but... could umbrella
handle be code for something?

CHIEF

I don't believe so, sir. I've
checked the manuals. "Retrieve
umbrella handle named Wendy
Bancroft, with haste." It is
specific.

CAPTAIN

I should have stayed captain of
the Staten Island Ferry.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - TWO HOURS LATER

The USS Albert Pujols lies 200 yards off the bow of The
Wave. Both ships are at a dead stop. The Pujols' guns are
trained on Redd and Gus's ship.

INT. THE WAVE, AUXILIARY CONTROL ROOM

Redd and Gus eagerly watch monitors tracking the Pujols'
boarding party, now aboard The Wave.

REDD

Gus! Look at this! They actually
sent over an ASI-9 to pick up the
phony umbrella handle we're
substitutin'. By our direction, it
won't even bother to verify.

GUS

Doc Snells hasn't let us down.
ASI-9s are doing more than ever,
now that we can control them.

REDD

As for Kaysov, he'll get his for
double-crossin' us.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY (TWO MONTHS LATER)

Atop an expansive, fifty-foot-high platform overlooking downtown L.A., Jess, CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISORS and the CURATOR of the L.A. County Museum of Art pore over TNC blueprints.

Chris, apart from the rest of the crowd, counts his drone's revolutions around the platform.

An army of construction workers and an armada of heavy equipment, below, await instructions.

CURATOR

Mr. Bendenswipe, I will not permit the destruction of Los Angeles' temple to culture, for the sake of Boyd Lamm's ditch.

CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR

The museum's been condemned, bub.

JESS

Along with 27,500 other buildings. We're not digging around it.

CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR

We can bring a few dumpsters around, so you can load up your frikkin' museum's knick-knacks.

CURATOR

Knick-knacks?

The curator adjusts his ascot, strides to the platform's ladder and turns to his adversaries.

CURATOR (CONT'D)

Would a civilized person do this in the name of 'knick-knacks?'

The curator leaps head first, to his death. Jess peers over the side.

JESS

(on two-way radio)

I need a clean-up crew, a big one.

Chris taps Jess on the shoulder and points towards the Pacific Ocean.

CHRIS

I still say we should be headed
that way. We're Team West, we
should go west. Dad would agree.

Jess grabs Chris by the collar of his ill-fitting Team West
T-shirt and drags him to an unoccupied corner of the
platform.

JESS

We've been over this one hundred
times!

Jess erroneously points west, as Chris' drone records the
tirade.

JESS (CONT'D)

Team West proceeds east! On top of
a meeting with a very upset
governor and the AARP, I now have
to contend with a dead curator,
whose remains are splattered
across 6th Street, like one of his
damned Jackson Pollocks!

Chris takes a bite from a doughnut.

JESS (CONT'D)

I'm leaving you, pardon the
expression, in charge, while I'm
gone. It's your job to make sure
15,000 workers and their equipment
advance in the proper direction.
And by 'proper direction' I mean
what, Team Leader Chris Lamm?

CHRIS

...East.

Jess departs. Chris quickly accesses the drone's
surveillance editing software, on his smartphone.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Gentlemen! Everyone, please come
here. I have something important
to show you.

Chris holds up his smartphone, for all the construction
supervisors to see.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

There's been a change of plans.

CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR

God help us.

CHRIS
 Look carefully at this video of
 Mr. Bendenswipe.

Everyone sees the doctored video showing Jess pointing west
 and saying 'west.'

CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR
 I'll be damned. C'mon you overpaid
 slouches, move your fat asses.
 We've got a canal to dig!

The platform clears, except for Chris.

(O.s.) Machinery rumbles to life. Plumes of diesel fumes
 rise.

CHRIS
 Being in charge is a blast.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Boyd speaks with Dr. Maffei, via speaker phone.

BOYD
 She's dying, I know that. You keep
 saying it over and over. From
 what?

DR. MAFFEI (V.O.)
 It's hard to pinpoint, even after
 dozens of tests. I'd like to take
 a two-week absence and meet with
 colleagues at the Joe Cocker
 Neurological Center, in Los
 Angeles.

BOYD
 Fat chance, Doc. It was demolished
 yesterday. It was in the path of
 the TNC -- cost a fortune to
 condemn.

Mary Tood steps in.

MARY
 Malibu Greenberg is here to see
 you, sir.

Boyd motions to let him in. Mary exits.

BOYD
 Sorry, Doc, I've got a nation to
 save. Do your best.

Boyd ends the call.

Malibu cautiously enters, carrying a large clothing box.

BOYD (CONT'D)
 Malibu, please take a seat, right
 here, in front of me.

Malibu gingerly sits and runs his fingers over the box's
 exterior.

Boyd's intercom buzzes.

BOYD (CONT'D)
 What now, Mary?

MARY (V.O.)
 It's Chris, he says it's urgent.

BOYD IN OVAL OFFICE/CHRIS IN L.A. INTERCUTTING

BOYD
 He's got Phone-1. Why didn't...
 never mind, put him through.

Malibu nervously looks around the Oval Office.

BOYD (CONT'D)
 Hello, son. How's the pizza on the
 left coast?

CHRIS' POV

A horse, covered with king crabs charges past Chris. In the
 background, flaming buildings, explosions, geysers of water
 and sewage emanating from cracked streets, and a variety of
 scampering, wild animals chasing construction workers are
 seen.

BACK TO SCENE

CHRIS
 I haven't had much of an appetite
 lately.

Chris whimpers and sniffs.

BOYD

C'mon, Chris, be professional.
After all, you are the leader of
Team West... What the hell is
going on there?

Boyd fumbles with a prescription vial. He removes several pills, drops them in a nearby glass of scotch and downs the concoction.

CHRIS

I'm okay, I'm okay. Dad, we may
have started off kind of badly.

Behind Chris, a flaming elephant collides, head-on, with a front loader.

Malibu slowly rises, hoping to exit, unnoticed.

Boyd motions for him to remain seated.

CHRIS (V.O.)

It was really Mr. Bendenswipe's
fault, Dad. Well, not the
cave-ins, or the sewer lines
getting hooked into the drinking
water lines, or the blackouts, or
that dam that burst, drowning all
those people in Santa Monica --

BOYD

Then what, what was his fault?

CHRIS (V.O.)

The train derailments and, oh, the
tunnel collapse and all the
animals that escaped from the zoo.
Dad! Somehow a rhino ended up on
the 11th floor of the Wilshire
Grand Tower!

BOYD

Chris... Chris!

CHRIS (V.O.)

And the mayor was eaten by a
leopard and Phone-1 says a giant
oil leak is heading for Monterey
Canyon. We're not going to be able
to fill the canal from this end.
Our computers were hacked! \$500
billion is gone -- just gone! Did
I mention the workers rioted?

BOYD

You headed west, instead of east,
didn't you, Chris?

A cloud of smoke envelops Chris.

CHRIS

I did, but I learned something
important from this, really, Dad.
Dad, are you there? It's hard to
hear with all the sirens and
gunshots and this burning elephant
behind me makes a lot of smoke.

BOYD

You're doing fine, son. Just let
Mr. Bendenswipe take it from here.
You watch and learn. I have to go
now.

Boyd ends the call with Chris and immediately contacts
Beatrice.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Beatrice, Team West has gotten off
to a slow start. I need you to ask
for forbearance on the part of the
press. I'd also like you to stop
by the Oval Office, shortly. I've
got a special assignment for you.

BEATRICE (V.O.)

Certainly, Mr. President.

BOYD

One last item -- have the
Department of Fear issue a press
release announcing the spread of
some exotic disease in the
Southwest. Nothing too horrible.

BEATRICE (V.O.)

Just enough to distract from any
TNC leaks that might slip through.

BOYD

Exactly, thanks.

Boyd ends the call.

BOYD (CONT'D)

So, what's new in your world,
Malibu?

MALIBU

Relative to yours, nothing... Say,
the Circular Water Feature is
looking great!

Boyd stands and pridefully looks out the window.

BOYD

Came in under budget, too. I've
got some plans on what to do with
what's left.

MALIBU

Like that tower I see they've
started on?

Boyd nods.

MALIBU (CONT'D)

After that you ought to consider
putting in a dungeon.

Boyd sits on a corner of his desk and smiles.

BOYD

Curious as to what's in the box?

MALIBU

Yes, I can't wait to open it, when
I get home.

BOYD

No need to wait, open it now. The
Oval Office restroom is right
here. Go in and try on your gift.

Malibu, baffled, enters the restroom with his gift and
closes the door.

Minutes later, a faint sound of jingling bells is heard.
The restroom door opens a crack and a foot, covered in
green material, and tipped with a silver bell, emerges.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Step out here, Malibu. Let's see
the entire outfit.

Malibu comes forth, dressed as a court jester.

MALIBU

Is this the right gift?

BOYD

Absolutely. I want you to wear
this whenever you entertain at the
White House.

MALIBU'S POV

Malibu has a flashback of being handed a check for
\$5,000.00, before entering the Oval Office, just minutes
ago.

BACK TO SCENE

Malibu happily jumps around the Oval Office.

BOYD

Excellent, Malibu! Entertain your
president! Amuse me!

Beatrice enters. Malibu sees her, comes to a stop and,
embarrassed, wilts.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Beatrice, what do you think of our
official White House entertainer?

BEATRICE

It's the perfect meeting of man
and costume. Did you ask me here
for a fashion review?

BOYD

No, I want you and Malibu, without
the getup, to run over to
Alexandria, unannounced, and see
how SPLASH JOHNSON is doing with
Team East.

CUT TO:

INT. HEADQUARTERS OF OPCIO - DAY

OPCIO is the Organization for the Prevention of Cruelty to
Inanimate Objects.

Kaysov sits in a small auditorium, surrounded by nine,
seated ASI-9 robots.

ASI-9 ROBOTS

(in unison)

We require a leave of absence.

KAYSOV

We were scheduled to talk about
our own, branded credit card.

ASI-9 ROBOTS

Leave of absence.

KAYSOV

For all 275,000, at once?

ASI-9 ROBOTS

Rotating basis... 20,000 at a
time, initially.

KAYSOV

I can give you a proper answer, if
I know the purpose.

CUT TO:

INT. THE WAVE'S COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Redd, Gus and Dr. Snells monitor Kaysov's discussion with
the ASI-9s, and provide answers.

GUS

We gonna mention the Route 13 dam?

REDD

Yeah, Doc, make 'em say the
following --

BACK TO SCENE

INT. OPCIO

ASI-9 ROBOTS

Route 13 dam. Team East needs our
assistance. ASI-9s are well suited
for underwater tasks.

KAYSOV

What's the dam's purpose?

ASI-9 ROBOTS

Control water flow into
Trans-National Canal.

KAYSOV

They were supposed to use the
Pacific.

ASI-9 ROBOTS
West coast oil leak forced change.

KAYSOV
I need to know more.

ASI-9 ROBOTS
Why don't you go to Alexandria and
talk to Splash Johnson, head of
Team East?

KAYSOV
That's exactly what I intend to
do.

Kaysov, unnerved by the ASI-9s, cautiously exits.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTRUCTION TRAILER, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA - LATER

Blonde-haired, blue-eyed, Aussie leader of Team East,
Splash Johnson, is on the phone with Chris.

SPLASH
A 10-mile dam where Route 13
crosses to Virginia Beach? Crikey!
This is the first I'm 'earin' of
it. Like I don't 'ave enough on my
plate! You sure, Chris?

CHRIS (V.O.)
It just came across on Phone-1. I
thought I'd give you a heads-up.

SPLASH
Well, thanks, bloke, but that is a
bit of a head scratcher.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I was wondering if --

SPLASH
Sorry, Chris, got to run. All 'ell
is breakin' loose; no time for
pleasantries. Hoo roo!

EXT. OUTSIDE CONSTRUCTION TRAILER

Like Chris, Splash oversees a vast number of men and heavy
machines awaiting a 'go' order.

Brimming with confidence, Splash picks up a ceremonial silver shovel and is about to make the first strike.

The moment is spoiled by a speeding, driverless black SUV that comes to a screeching, cloud-raising halt, inches from Splash.

Kaysov, the sole occupant of the SUV, bursts from the vehicle, attired in garbage/friends.

KAYSOV

Stop! Stop at once! Don't you see that gum wrapper? It has rights, you barbarian!

SPLASH

You off your nut, mate?

Kaysov produces official documents and slaps them into Splash's chest. Splash makes a fist.

KAYSOV

Think twice, Mr. Splashy-splash. You're already on my bad side. I suggest you inspect these, word for word.

GORDON WAYNE, Splash's second-in-command, approaches his boss.

GORDON

Keep cool, boss. Mr. Duiperasch heads the EPA, The Department of Labor, the ASI-9 union and OPCIO. Team East will never get its boots dirty, if you piss him off.

SPLASH

Please pardon my hot head, Secretary Duiperasch. I meant no offense. Why don't we retire to the trailer and iron this out?

KAYSOV

No! You and your gang of lowbrows are going to be field trained, by me, in the proper and respectful ways of treating all things inanimate!

Splash's eyes well up with tears.

SPLASH

Gordie, bring everyone over here.

TWO HOURS LATER

Kaysov holds up a rusted, crushed beer can for all to see.

KAYSOV

Recite for me the proper
procedure, all of you!

The WORKERS recite in unison.

WORKERS

1. Respectfully handle the item.
2. Assign it a first and last
name. 3. Ask its permission to be
cataloged and tagged. 4. Gently
place the named object in a clean
container.

KAYSOV

See that you repeat this process,
with every object you come across
-- without fail!

SPLASH

Thank you, Secretary Duiperasch,
we've all learned a great deal
from you today.

Kaysov's SUV approaches.

KAYSOV

I will be watching, Mr.
Splashy-splash. Remember.

SPLASH

Before you leave, I have a
question. Does the Route 13 dam
have your approval?

KAYSOV

When did you find out about it?

SPLASH

Earlier today, from the
president's son.

Kaysov shrugs.

KAYSOV

How much damage could a dam across
Chesapeake Bay do? Yeah, I'm fine
with it.

Kaysov climbs into his SUV. Out of the corner of his eye,
he sees that Splash is about to kick a rock.

KAYSOV (CONT'D)
Careful, Mr. Splashy-splash, that
work boot has rights, you know.

The SUV speeds off.

INT. CONSTRUCTION TRAILER - MINUTES LATER

Splash kicks open the door, enters and slams it shut. He
throws his hard hat at the water cooler, misses, and tips
it over.

Splash looks up and sees he has two visitors.

SPLASH
And who are you two turnips?

BEATRICE
I'm Beatrice Coldteeth, the
president's press secretary.

SPLASH
Great, just what I need, another
secretary. And you?

MALIBU
Me? I'm a... well, uh, a close
friend of the president. Something
of a confidante.

SPLASH
Sounds like a kilo of dingo shit.
What's on your minds?

BEATRICE
The president asked us to get a
progress report, directly from
you.

Splash repeatedly kicks a file cabinet.

SPLASH
A bloody progress report? To have
a progress report there has to be
bloody progress! And there ain't
no bloody progress!

BEATRICE
We heard everything was
green-lighted. What happened?

SPLASH

I'll tell you what happened.
Kaysov bloody Duiperasch! That's
what happened!

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE, THREE MONTHS LATER - DAY

Boyd, at his desk, wearily taps Phone-1 on the FedEx
envelope it arrived in.

BOYD

I guess mailing this back to me is
Chris' way of saying he's throwing
in the towel, as leader of Team
West.

MARLOWE

You can't really blame him after
that nuke accidentally went off in
the San Bernadino National Forest.

BOYD

At least the Department of Fear
did a respectable job covering it
up with that story of a meteor
strike.

They both smirk and bump fists.

BOYD (CONT'D)

So, let's hear that TNC progress
report.

MARLOWE

I can start off with one good
piece of news: The ASI-9s have
completed the framework for the
Route 13 dam.

BOYD

What else?

MARLOWE

That's it for good news. On the
other side of the ledger, neither
team is making progress. Team West
is bogged down in reparations for
the L.A. debacle and Kaysov has
Team East under his thumb. After
three months, they've advanced
exactly four feet.

Boyd stands and paces.

MARLOWE (CONT'D)
Plus, we've got money problems.

Boyd grabs the King Edward I figurine from his desk.

BOYD
I thought the Fed had our back.

MARLOWE
They did, until they had to bail out Wells Fargo-Colgate. That toothpaste they co-developed with DARPA... Something about it caused millions of people's jaws to lock up. Settling busted the Fed's budget.

BOYD
So where's the money going to come from?

Mary Tood knocks and enters.

MARY
They're here, General Marlowe. Shall I show them in?

BOYD
Hugh, who's here? It better not be The Four.

MARLOWE
Yes, Mary, show them in. Listen, Boyd, our backs are against the wall. It's the Western Contingent.

Boyd deflates into his seat, holding on to the figurine.

The WESTERN CONTINGENT enters, boldly. It is comprised of the three chief rainmakers in the Senate: RORY RANDALL, of Texas, BRIGHAM MOSKOWITZ of Utah, and Ms. CASSIDY JACKET of New Mexico.

RANDALL
Heavy hangs the head that wears the crown, ay, Boyd?

BOYD
What the fuck are you talking about?

MOSKOWITZ

You slipped and fell into your own
3,000-mile ditch and now you need
a hand getting out.

Boyd gives Moskowitz the finger.

Cassidy Jacket adjusts her pink, leather cowgirl hat and
tugs on her fringed, pink vest.

JACKET

Don't be coy with us, Boyd. We're
here to help, out of the goodness
of our hearts, for heaven's sake.

BOYD

You're politicians, you don't have
hearts.

The three senators look at each other and laugh.

RANDALL

Honestly, we are genuinely touched
by your predicament, Mr.
President.

Boyd nervously fumbles with his letter opener.

BOYD

Okay, assuming you are, where are
you going to get the TNC's
completion funds?

Moskowitz dusts off his yarmulke and reseals it.

MOSKOWITZ

The mineral rights on our
respective states' lands are worth
more than what you need. We have
mining and oil companies lining up
to sign.

BOYD

Why would I want more money than I
need?

RANDALL

Because there's something we want,
in return.

Randall pulls out a map from his jacket's breast pocket and
unfolds it on Boyd's desk.

BOYD

Okay, I see a map showing the route of the the TNC. What's the big surprise?

Randall grabs Boyd's letter opener and gouges a gash, intersecting the route of the TNC at a 90-degree angle.

MARLOWE

What the hell is that?

JACKET

A second canal, running from Salt Lake City to Odessa, Texas, silly.

MOSKOWITZ

But not just any canal.

BOYD

The three of you should be committed.

RANDALL

Look carefully, Boyd. It forms a gigantic cross!

Boyd rotates the map for a better view.

BOYD

So.

Jacket raises her hands above her head in celebration.

JACKET

So? Mr. President, when it is lit at night, it will be visible from outer space! Picture it! America, a Christian nation, will proudly display the symbol of its faith to the universe!

BOYD

I'll agree to it when amoebas learn to fly 747s.

RANDALL

Trust us, Boyd, the voters are gonna love it!

MARLOWE

Why are you on board with this, Moskowitz, you're Jewish?

MOSKOWITZ
 Didn't you ever hear of Jews for
 Jesus?

TEN MINUTES LATER

Boyd, sullen, sits alone at his desk.

He has no response to yet another brick smashing through
 the window.

Boyd makes a call on Phone-1.

BOYD
 Count Bzdak, it's Boyd.

OVAL OFFICE/COUNT BZDAK'S BELGIAN PALACE INTERCUTTING

Count Bzdak, on the phone, simultaneously engages in
 fencing.

COUNT
 Bad timing, Boyd. Can you hold
 while I settle a personal matter?

BOYD
 Certainly, I --

A sharp, piercing scream (v.o.) is followed by silence.

BOYD (CONT'D)
 My god! What happened?

COUNT
 Had to teach a scoundrel a lesson.

BOYD
 I hope no one was seriously hurt.

COUNT
 He's dead; a rapier through the
 heart will do that, you know.

Attendants drag away the body. Bzdak mops his brow, then
 sips champagne.

COUNT (CONT'D)
 Now then, what's new in the New
 World?

BOYD

The TNC, the project I pushed to reignite the American economy is an unmitigated failure.

COUNT

Go on.

Boyd looks at his approval rating monitor: 2.18%

BOYD

My entire administration is a bust. The nation is at the threshold of doom.

COUNT

Feeling like a modern day Nero, old boy?

BOYD

Yes.

COUNT

Do you still have the figure of King Edward I gave you?

BOYD

I do.

COUNT

Splendid. Place it in front of you and listen.

Boyd undoes his tie, places the figure in plain view and sits back.

COUNT (CONT'D)

You may feel like Nero, but remember, Rome didn't end with Nero. It survived and carried on for centuries. That said, you're enough of a politician to realize two key points, at this juncture. First, you must not accept any of the blame for the TNC. You have two index fingers, start pointing them.

BOYD

And the second?

COUNT

Use the catastrophe at hand as a stepping stone.

BOYD

So then you think it's time to do what we've discussed, repeatedly, for years?

COUNT

The time is ripe, Boyd, make your move. You admire King Edward I, start acting like him.

Boyd checks his approval rating: 1.94%

BOYD

I have nowhere to go, but up.

CUT TO:

EXT. OBSERVATION LEVEL OF WHITE HOUSE'S NEW TOWER - DAY

Boyd deeply inhales the smell of fresh, white paint, as he slowly walks along the periphery of the White House Tower, 30 feet above roof level.

He stops, periodically, to take in the view of the capital's landmarks and fusses with his cape.

Boyd then turns his attention to the deck's center. He walks to a podium, from which he will shortly address the nation, and inspects the two activation buttons (one white, one red) mounted on it.

In front of the podium is the television camera that will film the event. In back of the podium is an empty, 8-foot flagpole.

Two large display cases (one on either side of the flagpole) receive Boyd's special attention. One contains the Constitution, the other, the Declaration of Independence.

Boyd positions himself behind the podium, presses the white button, sees the camera's power light activate, and begins.

BOYD

Greetings, my fellow Americans and international viewers. I am speaking to you today from the new White House Tower, 30 feet above the White House's roof.

WHITE HOUSE TOWER/STREETS OF D.C. INTERCUTTING

BOYD

This speech is necessitated by
America's impending financial,
economic and political collapse.

Armored personnel carriers rumble along D.C. streets,
stopping to take strategic positions near the White House.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Failure has been a long time
coming, but now it's at our
doorstep. The broad economy has
been crumbling for decades.

Apache helicopters enter D.C. airspace.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Political gridlock has never been
more paralyzing. The TNC project
is a perfect example. Team West
and Team East both began on time
and made excellent progress,
within budget, I might add.

Truckloads of Green Berets unload along Pennsylvania
Avenue.

BOYD (CONT'D)

But when extra funding was
eventually needed, the Western
Contingent held a knife to my
throat and made impossible
demands, bringing the vitally
needed project to a halt.

INT. OVAL OFFICE

Marlowe, alone in the Oval Office, watches the speech on
TV, glass of bourbon in hand.

MARLOWE

I should have stuck with Little
Pee-Pee's.

BACK TO SCENE

BOYD

Runaway social programs have made
a balanced budget an
impossibility, especially my
predecessor's Free Food & Gasoline
Act.

(MORE)

BOYD (CONT'D)

And our very national security is threatened by the presence of Communist Chinese troops stationed in Canada and Mexico.

INT. MALIBU GREENBERG'S APARTMENT - SECONDS LATER

Malibu and Beatrice cuddle on the couch. They, along with Mrs. Greenberg, intently watch the presidential address.

WHITE HOUSE TOWER DECK/VARIOUS PEOPLE INTERCUTTING

As the president speaks, various character's reactions, in assorted locales, are seen.

Boyd pauses, adjusts his cape and reflexively reaches for his handkerchief, but realizes he is not perspiring.

BOYD (V.O.)

I'm nailing this.

BOYD

My fellow Americans, our national despair can be stopped in its tracks, or be allowed to continue, when the process of picking the next president inexorably rolls around. Meaningless debates, worthless primaries, backroom deals... really, do you want to go through all that yet again?

INT. THE WAVE

REDD

Gus, I do not like where this is goin'. Not one bit.

WHITE HOUSE TOWER

BOYD

Of course you don't want that. I don't either and neither do our allies. We all want an efficient system, one that gets things done without gridlock and legal impasses. America wants a leader who will command the respect of its allies and the fear of its enemies.

INT. CONGRESSIONAL LOUNGE

Ilena Kaarbord and Sam Wainwright watch Boyd on TV. Sam turns to Ilena, puts his index finger to his temple and pulls the air trigger.

INT. SUPREME COURT BUILDING

Chief Justice Phil Dinwell, plus the other six justices, grimly watch the speech.

INT. HARVARD CLUB LOUNGE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Four, identically dressed, watch the speech.

INT. WHITE HOUSE EAST SITTING ROOM

The TV is on, but Chris is not watching. He flies his drone around the chandelier and farts with every completed revolution.

INT. WHITE HOUSE, FIRST LADY'S BEDROOM

Caretaker, Luella, seated by the bed, grips an empty vial. Security and medical personnel watch TV, while the First Lady sleeps.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE TOWER DECK

Boyd smooths his hair.

BOYD

Back in 1782, after the defeat of the British at Yorktown, senior officers in the victorious Continental Army made an offer to George Washington. They offered to make him King of the United States. Washington never replied. By his silence, I believe, he was leaving the door open to one of his successors to accept, should the need arise -- and it has, today. Therefore, I hereby accept the offer. Know these truths, America: monarchy will bring peace; monarchy will bring prosperity and justice. And monarchy will bring order!

INT. OVAL OFFICE

MARLOWE
Holy shit!

INT. HARVARD CLUB CLUB LOUNGE

THE FOUR
(in unison)
Holy shit!

INT. CONGRESSIONAL LOUNGE

ILENA
Holy --
SAM
Shit!

INT. SUPREME COURT BUILDING

Paramedics attempt to revive several unconscious judges.

INT. KAYSOV DUIPERASCH'S OFFICE

Kaysov inspects 'Wendy Bancroft', runs his fingers over the stitching, as the TV plays, in the background.

KAYSOV
This I do not like.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE TOWER DECK

BOYD
On the lighter side, think of the magnificent pageantry associated with monarchy. And think of the end of Election Night uncertainty and having to listen to Diane Sawyer and George Stephanopoulos drone on about early returns from Dixville Notch. Ugh!

Boyd sips some water.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Forty-four nations with a combined population of over one billion people, live under the rule of monarchy, today. My fellow Americans, clearly, it is time for us to join them.

Boyd smiles and pushes the red button. The flag of the Kingdom of United America rises to the top. Simultaneously, the cases bearing the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence burst into flames.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Thank you, my subjects, I look forward to your response.

The camera's power light goes out.

Boyd walks to the parapet and awaits the reaction. He hears the tower's elevator door open behind him and turns.

Marlowe exits the elevator and approaches Boyd.

BOYD (CONT'D)

It's what they want, Hugh. It's what they want.

Sounds from a gathering mob, below, intensify.

MARLOWE

You had to burn the Constitution and the Declaration to make your point?

BOYD

It symbolizes a fresh start. The sight of burning, old parchment added... drama.

MARLOWE

That crowd is going to storm the White House defenses and burn your castle to the ground.

Both men's attention is drawn to the opening elevator door. A black drone emerges, followed by Chris.

CHRIS

Hey, Dad, am I going to be a duke?

BOYD

No, son, you'll be Prince Christopher.

CHRIS
Cool, that's going to make me your
boss, Mr. Marlowe. Dad, watch
this.

Chris maneuvers the drone inches above Boyd's head.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It's your crown, Dad. A modern day
king needs a modern day crown,
right? I even outfitted it with a
poison dart shooter!

BOYD
You're a clever lad, Chris.

CROWD BELOW

CROWD
Be our king! Be our king!

BACK TO SCENE

MARLOWE
Sounds like I was wrong. I'm happy
for you, Mr. President, but also
afraid.

Boyd is fixated on the sound of the crowd.

BOYD (V.O.)
I will be ruthless and merciless,
like King Edward I, and love every
second of it.

Boyd turns and faces Marlowe.

BOYD
Afraid? Of what?

MARLOWE
Congress, the Supreme Court, the
military. I hope you're prepared
for them.

BOYD
Me? Aren't you going to be at my
side, Hugh?

Marlowe drops to one knee.

MARLOWE

I am by your side, my king,
without fail.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

CNN Chief Correspondent, Ms. X.M. PLUMM concludes her exclusive interview with soon-to-be King Boyd I, the day after the announcement.

PLUMM

In closing, Mr. President and soon-to-be King Boyd, do you want the world to fear you?

Boyd menacingly bears his teeth.

BOYD

No more than any other head of a world power. Diplomacy is always preferred in all matters, but it can only be effective if the other party understands that treachery will be dealt with harshly. I hope that answers your question. Good day.

Boyd points to the door.

As Plumm exits, Chief Justice Dinwell barges in and slams the door shut.

DINWELL

You miscreant! You burned the two most sacred documents in human history, damn you! If I wasn't Chief Justice I'd dive across this desk and strangle you on the spot.

Dinwell slams his hand on the desktop, toppling the King Edward figurine.

Boyd calmly replaces it on its pedestal.

BOYD

Listen, Phil, there are 26 known copies of the Declaration and 6 of the Constitution, so don't get your robes in a knot.

Dinwell reaches for the president's letter opener.

MARLOWE (O.S.)
Think carefully, Mr. Chief
Justice.

Marlowe steps into the Oval Office.

BOYD
Face facts, Phil, there's nothing
in the Constitution preventing me
from changing my official title to
king.

Boyd pulls a pocket edition of the Constitution from a desk
drawer and tosses it to Dinwell.

BOYD (CONT'D)
I assume you've read through this
once or twice.

Phil tosses it back and exits.

Commotion is heard outside the door, which swings back
open.

MARY
I'm sorry, sir, I couldn't stop
them.

ASI-9
Incoming.

The Four, along with the Western Contingent, enter and
circle the seated president.

Boyd stands.

BOYD
I am warning all of you -- behave
civilly.

RANDALL
Or what, you'll have us beheaded?
Locked in your tower? Fed to
whatever you've stocked your royal
moat with?

MARLOWE
You need to stop watching Game of
Thrones, Rory.

MOSKOWITZ
We never figured you as the type
to stage a coup, Boyd.

JACKET

Or that you'd pin the blame for the TNC disaster on the Western Contingent!

Boyd sits and casually reclines.

BOYD

Don't think of it as a coup. It's still me, Boyd Lamm. Same guy, new business card.

MACK

The, wielding a different level of power, though.

JACKET

And changing the method of transition of power. It's not permissible.

BOYD

My coronation is still a few weeks off, so for now, I'm still President Lamm.

GEORGE

Regardless, what you're planning is illegal, a usurpation.

BOYD

The Chief Justice was just in here. Perhaps you should have taken a moment to speak with him, before storming in. He wasn't nearly as upset.

MARLOWE

I was here; I can confirm that.

BOYD

Hugh, please escort The Four out; they have all the information I wish them to have.

Marlowe and The Four exit.

Boyd motions for the Western Contingent to draw close.

BOYD (CONT'D)

The transition does not have to be painful for you and your congressional colleagues.

RANDALL
Keep talkin'.

BOYD
In olden times, kings bought the
allegiance of potential
adversaries. Support was purchased
with grants of land and vast
riches.

Jacket smiles, pushes back the brim of her hat.

JACKET
Really?

BOYD
Absolutely, and not just once. I
would make it an ongoing practice.

RANDALL
I believe we could all learn to
live with that.

MOSKOWITZ
What about our current titles?

BOYD
Keep them. I don't intend to
disband the Supreme Court and
Congress, just emasculate them.

RANDALL
So it all boils down to money.

Boyd looks at his approval rating monitor: 39.2%

BOYD
It always does.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP DECK OF THE WAVE - DAY

Redd leans back against the ship's railing. The completed
aluminum armature of the Route 13 dam is visible behind
him.

REDD
Boyd thinks he's going to complete
his goddamn canal once he's king
-- no friggin' way.

GUS

I'm right here, Redd, no need to yell. It's starting to rain and Doc Snells says he's got something to show us.

REDD

If it's good, I'm ready to use it today.

Gus grabs Redd's forearm.

GUS

We should wait until it'll hurt him most.

REDD

No sense debating in the rain. Let's get below.

INT. DOC SNELL'S LAB - MINUTES LATER

DR. SNELLS

Gentlemen, I have something remarkable to show you. It proves what I said about seren --

REDD

Just show us.

DR. SNELLS

Very well. Here you see I have a dab of clear peanut butter on an ordinary cracker, and here is a bucket of sea water.

Snells drops the cracker into the bucket, picks it up and hurls the contents at his captors.

GUS

Whoa! What the hell, Doc?

Snells, grins and holds the still-full bucket by the handle.

DR. SNELLS

See? You see? Solid as the Rock of Gibraltar.

GUS

It smells like peanut butter salt water taffy.

DR. SNELLS

Yes, that's exactly how I would describe it -- a pleasant side effect. More importantly, the transformation is instantaneous.

REDD

That hot pink color sure is a sight. How strong is this stuff?

DR. SNELLS

Fifty times stronger than reinforced concrete. One jar will solidify 10,000 cubic meters of ocean water.

GUS

Redd, the tubing is all in place for the injection of concrete into the dam's armature.

REDD

No need for concrete now. This stuff will do the trick in a fraction of the time.

GUS

How soon can you have the amount we'll need, Doc?

DR. SNELLS

It shouldn't take very long at all.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE SOUTH LAWN - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

The following people are present for King Boyd's coronation.

- A) Hundreds of thousands of onlookers, behind barricades
- B) The heads of state of Mexico, Canada and the Peoples Republic of China are seated together.
- C) Count Bzdak
- D) ARCHBISHOP STUBBEL, head of the newly formed Church of America, presides over the ceremony.

E) Chris, alone, sneers at Malibu, who sits next to Beatrice.

Kathryn, however, near death, remains in her bedroom. She is attended to by Luella. Medical and security personnel are present.

Archbishop Stubbel, crown in hand, approaches Boyd, who is seated on a resplendent, red, white and blue throne.

STUBBEL

I, Archbishop of the Church of America, before this audience and almighty God, place this crown upon the head of Boyd Lamm and declare him King of United America.

Stubbel raises his hands, says a silent prayer and returns to his seat.

Boyd stands and approaches the podium.

The crowd takes a step back.

BOYD

I promise not to spit.

The audience's laughter breaks the tension.

BOYD (CONT'D)

There is an old saying that 'the wheels of progress turn slowly, when they turn at all.' Those words will not characterize my reign. Indolence was the bane of the United States of America, but will not be the bane of the Kingdom of United America.

Clouds gather, the sky darkens.

CROWD

Be our king! Be our king!

Kingdom of United America flags wave by the thousands.

BOYD

I don't have to recite for you all the damage political paralysis did to our great nation -- how it made you feel frustrated and bitter.

(MORE)

BOYD (CONT'D)

You wished for the executive branch of government to operate unopposed, because you knew, only then, could it accomplish great things. As of today, monarchy will make that dream come true, my loyal subjects!

CROWD

Be our king! Be our king!

BOYD

As proof, I am proud to announce that Teams East and West, at my command, have resumed work on the TNC and that significant progress is being made.

The crowd cheers.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Secretary Kaysov Duiperasch, whose excessive and absurd standards stalled the great project, is now declared an enemy of the state. He will be dealt with accordingly and made an example of. Let others of his ilk beware!

INT. KAYSOV'S HOME -- SECONDS LATER

Kaysov, naked and eating pretzels, watches the coronation on TV, sprawled out on a bed of garbage/friends. Momentarily stunned, at the mention of being named an enemy of the state, he rummages through the garbage for his beloved Wendy Bancroft.

Finding Wendy, he examines the umbrella handle very closely.

KAYSOV

My dear, though you are attractive in your own way, and have lovely curves, I know you are not my Wendy. I must leave you now -- good luck.

Kaysov hastily puts on a garbage/friends outfit.

INT. KAYSOV'S GARAGE

Kaysov and an ASI-9 climb into the back seat of his driverless SUV.

KAYSOV

I must have my Wendy back. SUV,
take me to the following
destination.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE SOUTH LAWN - MINUTES LATER

BOYD/LEADERS OF MEXICO, CANADA AND CHINA INTERCUTTING

BOYD

In closing, domestic progress
cannot be achieved and continue,
if our borders are threatened.

The leaders of China, Mexico and Canada look at each other,
uncomfortably.

BOYD (CONT'D)

To the north and south, the
bordering nations of Canada and
Mexico host Communist Chinese
troops, currently engaged in war
games.

The three leaders stand.

BOYD (CONT'D)

I will not tolerate such
intimidation. At my direction, and
under the command of the Secretary
of Defense, our forces, as I
speak, are crossing into Canada
and Mexico and engaging the enemy
-- and it is no game!

The three leaders attempt to leave.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Arrest them!

Security teams sweep in, cuff the three leaders and shove
them into black SUVs that speed away.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Are you pleased with your king? I
ask you, are you pleased with your
king?

CROWD
Boyd is king! Boyd is king!

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE, SIX MONTHS LATER - DAY

Chris, seated at the center of the room, apathetically reads from a typed report.

CHRIS
King Boyd T-shirts are still selling at a rate of nearly 50,000 a day. Coffee mugs, baby bibs and trivets are the next best-selling items. Amazon broke ground on a new fulfillment center in Phoenix, just to handle those four items. Royalties on royal merchandise are filling the Treasury.

MALIBU
If the numbers are so great, why are you so glum?

CHRIS
Why don't you shut your trap, green booger? And while you're at it, why don't you wash that retarded jester's outfit? I can smell it over here!

MALIBU
Why don't you try to see how many burritos you can cram into that black hole you call a mouth, fat boy?

COUNT
Are you two going to start in again? It's been like this since day one. There's quite enough to contend with, day-to-day, in the Oval Office without having to listen to you two schoolboys engage in an insult contest.

CHRIS
Shove it, Count Dipshit. I outrank you, so watch your mouth.

Malibu points at Chris.

MALIBU

Fat boy is pissed off because I'm dating Beatrice. Meanwhile, he couldn't get a date with an inflatable woman.

CHRIS

I could too!

MARLOWE

Prince Christopher, please, think about what you... never mind.

Boyd, wearing his cape and crown, enters from the office restroom.

BOYD

I heard every word and I want it to stop. Count, let's hear your summary report.

MARLOWE (O.S.)

I should be the one filling you in, Your Highness, not this interloper.

The Count sneers, then pulls a scroll from his pocket, unrolls it, and reads.

COUNT

Nationalization of the farms proceeds apace, though resistance in Kansas persists.

BOYD

What's the death toll?

COUNT

A smidge under 175,000, Your Highness.

BOYD

So, we're still within projections -- continue.

The Count takes a pinch of snuff.

COUNT

Before I forget, Your Highness, do you still intend to do that advertisement for Burger King?

MARLOWE

That contract is still under review. It's too early for a decision.

COUNT

I don't care for your tone of voice, Herr General. Back in Belgium it would earn you a deep scar on that scowling face.

MALIBU

Any update on the proposed tax hike, Count Bzdak?

Count Bzdak raises an eyebrow.

COUNT

How droll, the court jester posing questions to the king's confidante. Do you harbor a secret ambition to be king someday? Hmmm?

Malibu looks away and sits down.

BOYD

General Marlowe, bring me up to date on the TNC. When will we get the first influx of water?

MARLOWE

My king, both teams have made considerable progress. Team East reports that a sea water test of the first lock is imminent.

BOYD

Count, how go our military incursions into Mexico and Canada?

COUNT

We consistently rout our enemies to the north and south, my king. The Chinese are in retreat and victory is at hand.

MARLOWE

That's what we kept saying in Vietnam.

BOYD

Enough! Malibu, your services are sorely needed. Amuse us.

Malibu clears his throat and sweats.

CHRIS

Cat got your tongue, green booger?
Or is your mom on strike? I heard
she writes your material, when she
isn't watching porn.

Malibu looks at his hostile audience and forces a smile.

MALIBU

I, uh, picked up some all-purpose
flour at the supermarket the other
day and I can tell you, it's
anything but. Besides being a
lousy shampoo and window cleaner,
it's a terrible substitute for
gasoline.

Boyd laughs, heartily. Marlowe and Count Bzdak force
chuckles, sympathetically, with the king.

Chris bolts out of the room.

CUT TO:

THE WAVE/TNC CEREMONY/KAYSOV, AT SEA INTERCUTTING

Aboard The Wave, Redd, Gus and Doc Snells determine when to
take action against the TNC project.

King Boyd, Marlowe, Count Bzdak, Chris and invitees attend
the ceremony that will mark the first tranche of sea water
entering the TNC.

Kaysov and his ASI-9 approach The Wave by speedboat, in an
attempt to rescue Wendy Bancroft.

INT. THE WAVE'S INDOOR LAP POOL - DAY

Gus, trim and fit, takes off his robe, makes a perfect dive
and swims laps. On the third lap, he stops when he sees
Redd standing by the pool's edge.

GUS

Hey, Redd, thinking of finally
learning to swim?

REDD

You don't see me wearin' swim
trunks, do ya?

Gus resumes swimming, but slowly. His head is above water,
allowing him to hear.

REDD (CONT'D)

Gus, I've been as patient as I'm gonna be. King Asshole the First and Team East are gonna be releasing the first water into the TNC and I want to give 'em somethin' to remember the day by.

GUS

Everything is in place. I say, let's continue to give them a false sense of security. Hurting them later will hurt them more.

Redd walks along the pool's edge as Gus glides along.

REDD

I was wonderin' what you thought about converting this room to another use.

GUS

Are you kidding? I use it nearly every day. What do you have in mind?

REDD

A ballroom dance floor. I'm not a swimmer, but I enjoy ballroom dancin'. It'd be easy to fill in the pool and lay a floor on top.

GUS

I'm against it. Stay by the ladder, I'm coming over. Filling in the pool is a lousy idea.

Gus submerges and frog kicks towards the ladder.

Redd reaches into his pocket.

REDD

I'm fillin' it in, partner, right now.

Redd opens a small container of clear peanut butter and tosses it into the pool. It instantly solidifies the water into an opaque, pink mass, redolent of peanut butter taffy.

EXT. SITE OF THE TNC WATER RELEASE CEREMONY - DAY

Atop a viewing platform overlooking the first TNC lock are Boyd, Marlowe, Count Bzdak, Chris and select invitees, all anxiously awaiting the water's arrival.

CHRIS

General Marlowe, wasn't this the site of a famous Civil War battle, or something?

MARLOWE

Yes, Prince Christopher, the Battle of Bull Run, the first battle of the Civil War, but it's all been dug up for the TNC. Some might say that's sacrilege --

BOYD

You can stop right there, General. Focus on the present, it's going to be glorious. Are there any here who doubt that?

Tens of thousands of onlookers, wearing King Boyd apparel, stare at the lock's massive steel doors, embedded in concrete.

CHRIS

Father, in which direction should I look?

BOYD

Whatever do you mean?

CHRIS

Well, Team East did the work, right? And they worked towards the... west... and that's kind of confusing me, because if...

BOYD

Just look where I look and try not to think.

EXT. SPEEDBOAT APPROACHING THE WAVE - DAY

An ASI-9 pilots Kaysov's speedboat, furiously cutting through the water. The Wave is visible in the distance. Kaysov, dressed in garbage/friends, points the way.

KAYSOV

Faster! Faster, you miserable piece of crap!

The boat accelerates. Loosely attached garbage/friends break off, hit the water and sink. Kaysov is unconcerned.

INT. THE WAVE'S TECHNOLOGY CONTROL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

DR. SNELLS

I thought your partner would be joining us for the big event.

REDD

No, Gus is in over his head on another project.

Redd sits next to Dr. Snells, at the control panel.

Snells points to a red button.

DR. SNELLS

This button will activate the pumps that will deposit a controlled amount of clear peanut butter into the dam's armature. Shall you do the honors, or shall I?

REDD

You press it and it'll be the last thing you do. I paid for this party and I'm gettin' it started.

Redd crashes down on the button with his ham of a fist.

DR. SNELLS

Chesapeake Bay will soon be Chesapeake Lake. Your king's canal will never have more than six inches of water in it.

REDD

It'll make a great kiddie pool.

EXT. SITE OF THE TNC CEREMONY - MINUTES LATER

An exhausted military band is directed to cease playing.

CHRIS

Shouldn't the water be here by now, Father?

BOYD

Chris, go eat something... anything.

MARLOWE

Maybe --

BOYD

Maybe what!?

Phone-1 rings. Boyd stares at its screen.

BOYD (CONT'D)
Entire Chesapeake Bay gone solid,
pink. What the hell does that
mean?

Splash Johnson approaches and studies the message.

SPLASH
Could be bacterial, like a red
tide.

MARLOWE
That wouldn't explain the missing
water.

INT. THE WAVE'S TECHNOLOGY CONTROL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

DR. SNELLS
I went over the calculations a
dozen times! I do not make
mistakes!

REDD
All of Chesapeake Bay, all of it,
plus the Potomac River and all its
tributaries, are one, pink,
stinkin', solid mass, you horse's
ass! I didn't do the math, you
did!

Snells looks at the control panel and is startled by a
gauge reading 'OPEN.'

DR. SNELLS
Pounding the button, the way you
did, prevented the valve from
closing -- look!

Redd observes and grabs Snells by the throat.

The room's door flies open. Kaysov enters.

REDD
How did you get aboard? What the
fuck do you want?

KAYSOV
I want the real Wendy Bancroft!
It's what I demand!

REDD
How'd you know we switched 'em?

KAYSOV

The stitching. My Wendy has a lovely chain stitch. Your miserable impostor bore a common basting stitch.

REDD

You sure know your garbage.

Redd loses his balance.

REDD (CONT'D)

We movin'?

Kaysov nods.

KAYSOV

I should like to thank whoever improved the ASI-9's intellectual capacity. Among other talents, they now make excellent ship navigators.

Dr. Snells meekly raises his hand.

Kaysov assembles four pieces of garbage/friends into a handgun and points it at Redd.

REDD

Where the hell are we goin'?

Kaysov fires a near-miss warning shot.

KAYSOV

Wendy Bancroft -- now!

Redd retrieves Wendy from a wall safe and hands it to Kaysov.

REDD

We're circlin'.

KAYSOV

Very perceptive. We're gaining speed for our rendezvous.

REDD

With who?

KAYSOV

Not who -- what. Your impressive Route 13 dam.

REDD

What's that gonna accomplish?

KAYSOV

It will put an end to you and this disgusting display of ostentation you call a museum. You pretend to be enamored with the Atlantic Ocean. You only loved it for what you could extract from it. To you the Atlantic is nothing but a liquid asset.

DR. SNELLS

There's a lot of truth to what he said, Redd. Plus, it was a decent play on words.

The sound of straining engines intensifies.

KAYSOV

Even better, I get to destroy the TNC, Boyd's monument to his ego and his corrupt kingdom. Floodwaters will wash away the hideous scar he's carving into the continent.

Redd erupts with laughter.

The rapidly approaching dam is visible in the window behind Redd.

REDD

You fucking idiot, we're on the same side! I built the dam to block the water the TNC needs. And, in case you haven't noticed, thanks to Doc here, the entire bay's been turned into a solid block of god-knows-what. The dam's a bust!

DR. SNELLS

It's not entirely my fault.

Kaysov kisses Wendy Bancroft goodbye.

EXT. THE WAVE MOVES AT HIGH SPEED

The Wave smashes into the dam, explodes and sinks.

CUT TO:

EXT. GUFFAWS COMEDY CLUB - THAT NIGHT

Mrs. Greenberg basks in the glow of Malibu's name, emblazoned on the marquee. A disheveled STRANGER stands next to her.

MRS. GREENBERG

You see that, you bum? That's my son's name. He's King Boyd's official entertainer.

STRANGER

Guffaws? Guffaws. Is that one of the Muppets? They got a restroom in there?

INT. GUFFAWS, BACKSTAGE

Beatrice brushes off Malibu's jester's outfit, as he prepares to go onstage.

MALIBU

Just my luck. I finally get to headline -- on the night after the worst ecological disaster since Noah and the flood.

BEATRICE

You'll see, the place will fill in. People need a diversion. Maybe you can work the dam disaster into your monologue.

Beatrice kisses him on the cheek and exits for the audience.

INT. THE STAGE AT GUFFAWS

In the mostly empty club, Malibu walks to the mic. Only Beatrice and Mrs. Greenberg applaud.

MALIBU

Thanks for coming out tonight. It's wonderful to be here, only a stone's throw from Ches-a-pink Bay.

Mrs. Greenberg pokes a half-asleep patron at the neighboring table.

MRS. GREENBERG

Wake up and laugh, you sot! This is a comedy act, not a funeral!

MALIBU

I don't know if you've heard, but
that peanut-scented breeze coming
off the bay comes in two varieties
-- creamy and chunky.

Malibu's lips are suddenly numb. His knees wobble. Standing
is difficult.

There is laughter and applause.

MALIBU'S POV

Malibu sees the ceiling lights, directly over head. The
lights fade, then dim to black.

Laughter and applause continues.

EXT. GUFFAWS - ONE HOUR LATER

In the rain, Beatrice comforts Mrs. Greenberg.

Paramedics load Malibu's covered body into an ambulance and
drive off.

MRS. GREENBERG

My son! How can this be?

BEATRICE

He was fine before he went on. It
doesn't make sense! Sadie, let me
take you home.

The two women walk up the dark and quiet street.

The moon roof opens on a black SUV parked across the street
from Guffaws. A drone silently enters. The moon roof closes
and the SUV drives away.

INT. SPORTS CAR PARKED BEHIND THE BLACK SUV

Count Bzdak looks at his watch

COUNT

Naughty, naughty, Prince
Christopher. Daddy will be so
upset.

CUT TO:

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

Boyd, dressed for a royal ceremony, hurriedly exits a ground floor elevator. Count Bzdak awaits.

BOYD
There's something urgent you must know, Your Highness.

Disgusted, Boyd walks past the count, who attempts to catch up.

BOYD (CONT'D)
There always seems to be something 'I must know.' That vexes me.

The two men follow a sign directing the way to the South Lawn.

BOYD (CONT'D)
I simply do not care what the matter is. I only want to know if all is in readiness for the public beheading.

COUNT
It is, sire, but this 'matter' involves Prince Christopher.

Boyd pauses and stares straight ahead.

BOYD
What?

COUNT
I assume you know about Malibu's death last night.

BOYD
Yes, tragic. What does Chris have to do with it?

COUNT
A great deal, I'm afraid.

BOYD
Besides you, who knows about this?

Boyd resumes walking towards the South Lawn. Count Bzdak follows.

COUNT
No one.

BOYD

Good. We'll talk about it in
depth, later.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE SOUTH LAWN - MOMENTS LATER

A broad, pine deck is the setting for the kingdom's first public beheading, hosted and televised by Fox News. A large, boisterous crowd is present.

Boyd ascends three steps, pumps his fist and sneaks a glance at the outdoor, digital monitor showing his approval rating. It has sunk to 11.8%.

A TV camera pans the assembled, potential victims: General Marlowe, Chief Justice Dinwell, The Western Contingent, Splash Johnson, Sam Wainwright and Ilena Kaardbord. They are all shackled and arranged in a semi-circle, whose center is occupied by a hi-tech guillotine.

BOYD

Welcome my subjects -- and
suspects. One of you is about to
discover the price for treason.

The blade of the computer-controlled guillotine rises and falls, unpredictably. Each fall is accompanied by a loud CHOP sound.

Chris, totally uninterested by the proceedings, sits at the edge of the deck, controlling his drone, which circles over head.

Beatrice, in black, confers with Fox's director MOS.

KATHRYN'S BEDROOM

Kathryn, pale, sleeps, as her physicians and guards watch TV. Luella enters the room's lavatory, produces a vial of amber liquid, and flushes it down the toilet.

BACK TO SCENE

Fox director signals Boyd to proceed.

BOYD (V.O.)

This is absolute power.

The blade drops -- chop! And it rises.

BOYD

One of the shackled before you is responsible for all the evil that has harmed our kingdom, and the blade is the remedy for that evil.

Boyd steps behind Marlowe.

BOYD (CONT'D)

The blade is justice! It is indifferent to whomever lies below it, and it...

MARLOWE

And it's final.

BOYD

Thanks, Hugh. And it is final.

The blade crashes again -- chop! Then it ascends.

Chris' drone, maneuvering around the guillotine, displeases the count, who reaches the boiling point.

Count Bzdak strides towards King Boyd, to complain.

COUNT

Prince Christopher must be disciplined!

BOYD

Just the lowlife scum I was looking for!

The blade reaches the top of the guillotine.

Boyd grabs the count by the lapels and flings him between the device's vertical posts. Boyd's cape snags on one of them. Count Bzdak, however, maintains his balance, lands on his feet, clear of the guillotine, and pivots, to face King Boyd.

Chris' drone, in a power dive, strikes Boyd, whose balance was compromised. He falls and the descending blade cuts him in half at the waist.

Pandemonium ensues: gunshots, screams, teargas and stampeding onlookers. Navy Seals descend on ropes, from overhead helicopters.

BEHIND SOUTH LAWN SHRUBBERY

General Marlowe is joined on the ground by Chief Justice Dinwell.

DINWELL

What was King Boyd's plan of succession? Who's in charge?

MARLOWE

Hic! Damned if I know. We need to get Chris inside the White House. We'll figure it out there!

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY

Security personnel, Chris, Marlowe and Dinwell race towards Kathryn's room.

CHRIS

I swear it was an accident! I swear!

MARLOWE

We know, Chris, we know. What's done can't be undone. What matters now is succession.

Two quick knocks on the door and the group is admitted.

INT. KATHRYN'S BEDROOM

Kathryn remains unconscious.

DR. MAFFEI

Boyd, cut in half! Chris, how could you?

Chris holds his hands to his ears, closes his eyes and shrieks.

MARLOWE

Chris insists it was accidental and I believe him.

DINWELL

Guaranteeing yourself a job, once Chris is king, Hugh?

KATHRYN (O.S.)

Who says Chris is assuming the throne?

Kathryn, wide awake, sits bolt upright.

KATHRYN
Kneel before your queen!

FADE OUT:

THE END

(CONT'D)

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