

AFTER AMERICA

Pilot:
"The Twilight's Last Gleaming"

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TEASER

BLACK. SLOWLY FADING IN.

Indistinct city sounds. Blurred forms move across the screen. The faint sound of buzzing.

EXT. RODEO DRIVE - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Coming into view, flies whiz around a mound of trash. Debris everywhere -- like a war zone.

Pictured on a soiled newspaper -- the White House, cracked and crumbling -- the headline, "Death of a Nation".

Nearby, a JUNKIE sprawled out -- lifeless. Rats scurry off his body, then dart across the street, weaving between scads of homeless encampments.

In every direction, endless piles of humanity and filth.

Panning the scene -- a WOMAN rocks an imaginary infant -- a MAN combs through a dumpster, muttering to himself -- a CHILD slumps over, unable to lift her beggar's cup.

Moving into frame -- jarringly close -- an OLD MAN scowls bitterly, directly at us. In his hands -- a tattered cardboard sign with the scribbled words, "Go piss yourself."

EXT. DOWNTOWN BANK - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Bank run in progress. Customers rush toward and swarm the building -- pounding windows and doors -- absolute panic.

Above the bank, a stock ticker scrolls through massive losses -- a market catastrophe.

A BUSINESS MAN walks toward us -- hands on his head -- distraught. He turns -- gives us a vacant stare. We follow as he approaches the street -- and steps into oncoming --

SLAM!

A large truck plows into him -- then barrels ahead -- grinding his limp body into the ground.

EXT. U.S. CAPITOL - EAST FRONT STEPS - DAY

A horde of RIOTERS storms the Capitol grounds. Pandemonium.

The frenzied mob charges toward the Capitol, ravaging everything in their way. CAPITOL POLICE barricade entrances. Weapons drawn.

A MASKED INSURGENT appears on the roof -- scales the flagpole -- cuts the rope loose up top. The flag drops to the roofline, still tethered to the pole's base.

Rioters advance and assault the wall of officers. Police fire tear gas and stun grenades into the crowd.

An ANARCHIST steps into view. Faces us and glares. Pure rage.

He turns away -- hurls a Molotov cocktail at the Capitol building. A BURST. A barrage of firebombs follows, launched by makeshift slings and cannons.

Flames engulf the dangling flag, burning it loose from the pole. As it slowly flutters to the ground -- all goes dark.

FADE OUT.

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

President DAVID RAMIREZ, early 40s, uncharacteristically disheveled and drenched with sweat, lies asleep on the couch -- stirring restlessly -- loosely clenching the ROSARY around his neck.

Voices stream from the television, feeding his nightmares.

TV COMMENTATOR (ON SCREEN)

Frankly, I'm not sure the president understands the gravity of the situation.

TV GUEST #1 (ON SCREEN)

Apparently not. Maybe he needs a wake-up call.

Ramirez shoots straight up. His heart racing. Beads of sweat drip from his forehead. He collects himself, then searches for the remote, desperate to shut off the noise.

TV GUEST #2 (ON SCREEN)

I think he's just simply not up to the task.

TV COMMENTATOR (ON SCREEN)

Thomas Finch would agree with you. If we could roll the clip... here he was this morning.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - ROTUNDA - DAY [INTERCUT]

Newsreel footage plays of Vice President THOMAS FINCH, mid 40s, in an impromptu interview between meetings. Born without a spine or a soul, he's learned how to get what he wants.

Today, his charm offensive is in full gear.

FINCH

Look, the man is clearly out of his depth.

REPORTER #1

Are you saying he's --

FINCH

Well, listen... that's what happens when you're only on the ticket for the minority vote.

A gaggle of reporters clamors for the next question. One rises above the fray.

REPORTER #2

Mr. Vice President... do you have ideas for the president?

FINCH

Plenty. But look, if the president wants my advice, he knows where to find me. I have to get back...

Ramirez has made his way across the room, having spotted the remote on the floor. He grabs it and CLICK -- silence. Still out of sorts, he stumbles into the

ADJOINING BATHROOM

Ramirez splashes water on his face, then glares bitterly into the bathroom mirror -- engaged in a silent interrogation.

The dangling rosary around his neck catches his eye. With firm resignation, he rips it clean off and storms out to the

EXT. TRUMAN BALCONY

Ramirez hurls the rosary out to the grass beyond the South Portico and lets out a guttural, almost primal, bellow.

RAMIREZ

Aaaauugh!!!

Ramirez leans against the railing, utterly spent. As his heart rate slows, his agonized demeanor begins to soften. He looks up and drinks in the view.

The Washington Monument, the Jefferson Memorial -- nestled in vistas that stretch to the horizon. A breathtaking image of America's past cradled in the promise of her future.

He could live on this balcony. At last -- peace.

In a CONTINUOUS SHOT we PULL OUT, back into the

INT. LIVING ROOM

And we move through the adjacent door into the

MASTER BEDROOM

The room is dark. Asleep in bed is First Lady ANA RAMIREZ, early 40s, a perfect blend of beauty, grace, and fire.

A SHADOWY FIGURE emerges and hovers over her -- then swoops down -- covers her mouth -- drags her out of bed.

Ana struggles to free herself, or make a sound, but can't overpower her captor. He pulls her into the dim light of the

HALLWAY

Everything's happening so fast -- dazed, confused, unsteady -- catching small glimpses, we follow from behind.

As they pass the door to the living room, Ana can see her husband on the balcony, oblivious to what is transpiring.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "Two weeks earlier"

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE CORRIDOR - DAY

The Oval Office door bursts open. Vice President Ramirez strides out, while other MEMBERS of the administration scramble out behind. The place is buzzing.

Ramirez's staff is at the ready. First up, Chief of Staff DEVON KNOX, late 30s, loyal adviser and sharp as a tack.

Also in queue is CONNIE QUINN, early 60s, lifelong D.C. secretary -- she's seen it all, and JANINE BREEN, mid 30s, Ramirez's dutiful press secretary. Not a moment is wasted.

DEVON

Sir, here's your latest draft.

RAMIREZ

Don't need it. But thanks.

DEVON

What??

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING HALLWAY - DAY

They walk toward Ramirez's office amid a flurry of activity.

JANINE

Again?

RAMIREZ

The president just likes to keep us guessing.

DEVON

It sure would be nice to get more warning.

CONNIE

If they'd just keep us in the loop.

RAMIREZ

There's a loop?

Connie shrugs and hands Ramirez a stack of papers.

CONNIE

Sign these.

Ramirez stops a moment and scribbles off his John Hancock.

DEVON

Apparently third-party
administrations run differently.

CONNIE

So it seems.

(points to the page)

One more.

JANINE

(upbeat)

We're still on for post-summit
pressers.

Ramirez hands the papers back as they continue down the hall.

DEVON

How thoughtful.

RAMIREZ

Connie, did you reach my wife?

CONNIE

She's in committee until ten, but
she'll meet us at the car.

RAMIREZ

Perfect... thanks. Devon, let it
go. We're just supporting players.

DEVON

Supporting what though?

President RICHARD BENNETT, 60s, a tall, striking man who almost seems approachable, appears across the hall -- starts walking toward the group.

BENNETT

David, a word?

RAMIREZ

Of course.

(to his staff)

I'll be just a --

JANINE

We'll meet you outside.

Bennett pulls Ramirez into a

SIDE OFFICE

BENNETT

Look, about your speech --

RAMIREZ

Oh... no it's --

BENNETT

No, I'm sorry. It's just -- the protesters, the security -- they wanted to cut things short. You understand.

RAMIREZ

Sure... I underst--

BENNETT

But I've gotta say, your labor initiative, the housing proposal... solid stuff. It really should be you speaking at this summit. But don't worry... the nation will hear from you again soon.

RAMIREZ

I just want the people heard. You understand.

BENNETT

(acknowledging the dig)
That's what I love about you.
Always for the people.

RAMIREZ

That's what drew me to you.

BENNETT

I know... we had big plans. But with this damned economy, the trade crisis... out go the lofty goals.

(beat)

This town has no use for ideals. Everyone sets out to change Washington... but it changes you.

RAMIREZ

These are temporary setbacks. We'll get there again.

BENNETT

I hope you're right... I do hope you're right. See you out there kid.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

A small arsenal of firearms is laid out on the king bed. Calloused hands meticulously check each piece.

The hands belong to TERENCE WALKER, late 30s, an ex-Army Ranger, laser-focused, socially awkward, and not quite right in the head.

The television is on in the background.

NEWS REPORTER (ON SCREEN)
 ... in light of unprecedented levels
 of civil unrest, the nation's
 capital is on high alert, with
 today's economic summit drawing
 historically large crowds and scores
 of protesters. The president hopes
 to talk the nation off the ledge --
 but can he do it? With me today is
 Harvard Economics Professor...

As the reporter rattles on, Terence stashes handguns into a bag, except one, a Sig Sauer P229, he places in his coat pocket. He turns off the television and walks out the door.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

A sleek black Cadillac sedan waits outside. Inside, an UNKNOWN MAN whose face is obscured plays with his WEDDING RING, spinning it back and forth on his finger while Terence approaches and enters the car.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING ENTRANCE - DAY

The presidential motorcade prepares to leave the White House.

CONNIE
 (getting into limousine)
 Sir, we should go.

RAMIREZ
 We'll wait.

Secret Service Agent RAYMOND DOBBS, late 30s, part of President Bennett's security detail, approaches Ramirez. He's a formidable presence and a bit high-strung.

RAYMOND
 Mr. Vice President.

RAMIREZ
Raymond! How's the family?

RAYMOND
Good sir. Thank you, sir. Uh --
Marina wanted me to return this...

Raymond hands Ramirez a book entitled "The Modern Hostess".
Ramirez looks a bit sideways.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
... to your wife.

RAMIREZ
Ah... yes! The Christmas party.

RAYMOND
She really appreciated --

DEVON
Here she is!

A car pulls into the circle drive as Ramirez hands the book
to Connie. It's Ana.

RAMIREZ
(to Raymond)
I'll see she gets it.

RAYMOND
(grabbing Ramirez's arm)
Sir... today... just keep your
distance from the president.

RAMIREZ
(in jest)
Oh... concerned I'll upstage him?
You wouldn't be the only one.

RAYMOND
No sir, it's -- it's just a
precaution.

RAMIREZ
Well, I appreciate your concern.

He gives Raymond a farewell nod as Ana walks up.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
Why look... it's the junior senator
from Pennsylvania.

ANA
You can stop calling me that now.

RAMIREZ

Maybe.

As Ana steps into the limousine, Ramirez assists, placing his hand on her back -- admiring the view...

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

Ayyy...

... he slides his hand down to grab her ass -- in the company of onlookers.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

... mamasita!

ANA

David! You can stop that too!
(to Connie)
Honestly... do men ever grow up?

DEVON

(closing the car door)
No ma'am.

The car pulls away.

INT. PRESIDENT'S MOTORCADE - VP'S LIMOUSINE (MOVING) - DAY

They head toward the summit.

ANA

David --

RAMIREZ

Wait... before you scold me.
(gives Ana a quick kiss)
Okay, let me have it.

ANA

(smiles, a bit flustered)
David, I'm through.

RAMIREZ

Ah... shouldn't we talk about this?

ANA

I hate your old job.

RAMIREZ

Hard day?

ANA
Could these people be any more full
of sh--

RAMIREZ
Honey...
(looks to Connie)
the children.

Connie rolls her eyes.

ANA
I'm sorry. I'll stop. You probably
want to focus on your --

RAMIREZ
Don't need to.

ANA
What??

Ramirez shrugs his shoulders.

ANA (CONT'D)
Ugh! That's what I'm talking about!

RAMIREZ
He apologized.

ANA
Whatever.

EXT. WASHINGTON AVENUE - DAY

Driving past Arlington Cemetery, Terence looks over his handgun, obsessively. The driver, face still obscured, hands Terence a magazine which he inserts into the gun, then checks everything again.

INT. PRESIDENT'S MOTORCADE - VP'S LIMOUSINE (MOVING) - DAY

They continue driving, passing iconic buildings.

RAMIREZ
On a happy note, I spoke with Lily.

ANA
Oh good. She and Scott are moved in?

RAMIREZ
Yep. 10,000 acres. Plenty of room
for their cattle.

ANA
And for little Rosa to run around.
(smiles, then a turn)
What happened?

RAMIREZ
Our baby grew up. Don't you
remember?

ANA
No, about your speech. Of course I
remember. It just went too fast.

RAMIREZ
Security issues. We had some good
years.

ANA
What does that have to do with
anything?

RAMIREZ
Uh... which conversation are we
having?

ANA
Both.

RAMIREZ
Can we go back to having just one?
I can't multitask like you.

ANA
Of course.

RAMIREZ
So... what were we saying?

ANA
Richard has no idea what he's
missing.

RAMIREZ
He has more important things on his
mind than keeping his vice
president happy.

ANA
We're in real trouble David.

RAMIREZ
Things could be worse.

ANA

That's what concerns me.

DRIVER

We're here sir.

RAMIREZ

Thank you.

(to Ana)

Well I'm still hopeful. When I'm worried, then you can be worried.

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

Terence is dropped off toward the front of the National Mall. He walks briskly to a

SECURITY CHECKPOINT

As he approaches, a SECURITY OFFICIAL recognizes him and relieves a GUARD performing pat-downs of his post. He then waves Terence through the gate without screening him.

EXT. U.S. CAPITOL - DAY

The vice president's limousine pulls up, not far behind the president. As their door opens, Ramirez walks out, then assists Ana.

The couple turns, and for the first time, the venue is visible in its entirety. The sheer immensity of the CROWDS gathered -- most in protest -- is overwhelming.

There's a strong sense of agitation. The chants are deafening, some practically calling for the president's head.

CHANTING CROWD #1

There is only one solution - let there be a revolution!

CHANTING CROWD #2

King Richard has to go! It is time to overthrow!

Handmade SIGNS tersely declare the people's frustrations.

-- "Change starts with you Mr. President!"

-- "Get this Dick out of the White House!"

-- "Lose the 'war,' save the poor."

-- "Will work for jobs."

-- "A little handout never killed anyone."

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

Terence pushes his way through the crowd up to the metal barricades holding back protesters near the far-left corner of the platform.

The president, flanked by a bevy of Secret Service agents, walks toward the stage.

Ramirez and Ana follow closely behind, passing FIELD REPORTERS and news crews along the way. Overheard fragments of their live reporting tell the grim story.

FIELD REPORTER #1

... Richard Bennett was elected in part for his radical war on debt proposal. Well that war got ugly, and personal, as you can see...

FIELD REPORTER #2

... have gone to great lengths to keep rioters at bay, but the level of national anger the president has aroused in a mere 12 months is staggering...

FIELD REPORTER #3

... dramatically slashing entitlements, military funding, and essential services to fund an aggressive national debt paydown. Ironically, its unintended consequences have left millions homeless and without jobs, in a nation more economically unstable than ever...

President Bennett walks toward the stage with his head down, not acknowledging the crowd. Just before reaching the stairs, he pauses, looking out to the crowd for the first time.

CUT TO:

From behind Terence's head, we see the president. It's a clear shot. Terence reaches into his coat pocket.

We know what's coming.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

The next few moments will change everything.

Terence grasps his gun. Time slows to a crawl.

Raymond spots Terence -- runs toward the president -- passing Ramirez, shoves him back --

The gun is out -- Terence takes aim -- bystanders scream --

Raymond dives in front of Bennett -- shots ring out.

POP! -- POP! POP!

Panic erupts and ripples across the venue.

Terence enjoys a split second of elation when -- WHOOSH! A horde of Secret Service linebackers takes him to the ground.

Commotion everywhere. The crowd in hysterics -- some flee, some gape, some weep.

SPECTATOR #1

Oh my God!

SPECTATOR #2

The president!!

SPECTATOR #3

What the...

Raymond and President Bennett are on the ground, bleeding. Secret Service AGENTS drag the president behind the platform.

AGENT

Quick! Move him back!!

Special Agent in Charge NICK DAVIS, mid 40s, has his hand to his ear.

NICK

... I repeat, Firebrand is down! We need transport to George Washington...

Security locks down the area. Emergency workers rush to the scene. Ramirez checks on Ana as she's escorted away, then stays by the Bennett's side as medics and officers approach.

Bennett's fading fast. Lying on a stretcher -- gunshot wound to the chest -- the WHITE HOUSE DOCTOR tends to him. As he's wheeled to the ambulance, he struggles to speak.

BENNETT

I... need...

RAMIREZ

You're going to be fine. Just hang in there.

DOCTOR

(to Ramirez)

We need to keep him alert.

(to Bennett)

Sir, can you tell me the date?

BENNETT

Feb... February 1st...

RAMIREZ

Good! Okay, who's the president?

Bennett glares at Ramirez. Not funny.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

(smiles)

Sorry. What's your name?

BENNETT

Ray... Raymond...

RAMIREZ

Uh, yes sir. Mr. Dobbs took a bullet for you. How about your name?

BENNETT

Nnn -- no... tell him... Raymond...

DOCTOR

You need to stay with us sir.

RAMIREZ

You can tell him yourself when --

Bennett's heart rate drops. The doctor scrambles to respond. He yells to the PARAMEDIC.

DOCTOR

Defib! Now!

(to driver)

Let's move!

The doors of the ambulance close and it speeds off to the hospital, leaving Ramirez standing alone amid the chaos.

MONTAGE - AFTERMATH

- A) Ramirez whisked away to motorcade, his wife waiting.
- B) Terence, handcuffed, is shoved into an FBI vehicle.
- C) The president's ambulance tears through city streets.
- D) Raymond's ambulance close behind.
- E) Bennett rushed through hospital corridors on a gurney.
- F) In an operating room, doctors frantically try to save the president. They're losing him.
- G) Raymond lies, unresponsive, in a hospital bed with left arm bandaged.
- H) Terence, in custody, is fingerprinted, then strip-searched.
- I) Investigators scour the crime scene.
- J) The line on the president's electrocardiogram goes flat. He's gone.
- K) In a crime lab, guns are discretely switched and wiped clean. Additional evidence is doctored or discarded.
- L) Doctors cover the president's body with a sheet.
- M) Ramirez is sworn in, Ana at his side, in the Oval Office.
- N) Funeral procession down Pennsylvania Avenue, with mourners alongside the street.
- O) Bennett's body lies in state in the Capitol Rotunda.
- P) The president's casket is carried to the gravesite, with military at attention.
- Q) Bennett's wife, children, and their families watch and weep.
- R) Casket is lowered into the ground.
- S) Soldiers fire 21-gun salute, ringing into the darkness.

FADE OUT.

OVER BLACK

Gunshots ring out again. Familiar gunshots.

POP! -- POP! POP!

Now in reverse. The scene slowly fades in.

SHH-POP! SHH-POP! -- SHH-POP!

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

From over his shoulder, we see Terence aiming his gun toward Bennett. IN REAL TIME Raymond jumps in front of the president just as --

POP! -- POP! POP!

Raymond and Bennett fall to the ground. Panic erupts. Secret Service agents encircle the president as others rush at Terence to tackle --

PAUSE

The scene freezes -- and then begins playing quickly IN REVERSE until -- forward again --

POP! -- POP! POP!

The events unfold, just as before, but PAUSE midway into the president and Raymond's fall.

CUT TO:

A new angle, further left. Terence is about to reach for the gun. Raymond shoves Ramirez and runs toward the president --

PAUSE

Our POV swings around to the left, centered on Bennett - a la The Matrix - though not as smoothly. We jump from angle to angle, each with varying image quality and focal length.

The scene plays again while our POV swings way around to the right. The effect is distinct and slightly jarring.

PAUSE

NEIL (PRE-LAP)
Something's off.

EDWARD (PRE-LAP)
What do you mean?

Angles changing again, swinging around.

NEIL (PRE-LAP)
I don't know -- it's just off.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - SURVEILLANCE SUITE - DAY

We PULL OUT from a computer monitor as assassination footage plays -- forward and backward -- rotating around the president.

On a second monitor, a schematic indicates the locations of the president and shooter -- in 3D space -- with surrounding camera locations marked. As the viewing angle changes, the corresponding camera is highlighted.

At the computer, FBI Video Tech NEIL EVANS, late 20s, reviews the video with FBI Handler EDWARD DAUGHTRY, late 30s, and an FBI SUPERVISOR, 50s. The room is filled with computers, screens, and people buzzing around.

NEIL
Look here. When Agent Dobbs moves -- it's before the shooter even goes for the gun. And when he shoves Ramirez -- it's like he's not just reacting, he's pre-acting.

EDWARD
(sarcastic)
Maybe he's psychic.

SUPERVISOR
That's some damn good training, that's what that is.

EDWARD
I think you've been staring at this screen too long.

SUPERVISOR
What about the trajectory?

The video tech reveals markings indicating the bullet's path.

NEIL
Here's the first shot. The angle looks right. And it just clears Dobbs. The second shot's a problem.

EDWARD
How so?

NEIL
Where does it go?

EDWARD
They both had bullet wounds...

NEIL
(not buying it)
Yeah...

SUPERVISOR
And the third shot?

NEIL
There is no third shot.

SUPERVISOR
I clearly heard --

NEIL
The gun only recoils twice. Look.

The video tech zooms into Terence's gun and plays it again.

SUPERVISOR
Yeah... that's odd.

EDWARD
This is all the footage?

NEIL
So far, but there's still some key
gaps. We're piecing in spectator
video as we find it.

EDWARD
Well, it looks clear to me --

Edward's phone rings. He answers.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
Yeah?
(listens)
No, stay where you are. I'm on my
way.

He hangs up the phone and turns to leave the room.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
I'll be back. Let me know if you
find anything else worth obsessing
over.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Ramirez walks into the Oval Office followed by Devon, who shuts the door. Waiting for him, seated, are Bennett's former Chief of Staff RACHEL COCHRAN, late 30s, and Secretary of the Treasury RAVI BALA, 40s. They stand to greet the president.

RAMIREZ

Sorry to keep you waiting... what's this all about?

RACHEL

You might want to have a seat.

RAMIREZ

(leans against his desk)
No, I'm good.

BALA

Sir, what we're about to tell you is known only to a few in Bennett's inner circle. It requires extreme discretion.

RAMIREZ

Understood...

RACHEL

Let me just cut to the crux -- America's economy is essentially dead and we're living on borrowed time.

RAMIREZ

Okay... what??

BALA

Bennett had the Fed engaged in some pretty questionable monetary policy.

RACHEL

To say the least.

RAMIREZ

Go on...

BALA

He believed our level of debt was unsustainable, and he didn't have congressional support for more spending cuts, so he was quietly, and rapidly, paying the debt down by crediting massive amounts of Treasury bond accounts.

DEVON
Printing money?

BALA
Monetizing the debt.

RAMIREZ
Isn't this done to spur economic growth?

RACHEL
Sure, but at such an accelerated pace, the result is hyperinflation.

BALA
Scarcity keeps the dollar stable.
Greater liquidity --
(aside to Devon)
printing money --
(back to Ramirez)
can give the economy a shot in the arm. But, too much too quickly?

DEVON
The dollar's value goes in the crapper.

RACHEL
Exactly. Look, gas lines, food shortages, soaring unemployment -- these have only been precursors.

BALA
And, needless to say, we're not exactly making friends internationally.

RACHEL
Yeah, China's pissed.

DEVON
They were getting their money back... what do they care?

BALA
Because a capital infusion of this size, dramatically devaluing the dollar, means they're losing money.

RACHEL
Craploads.

DEVON
How was he getting away with --

RACHEL

The Fed's basically a frat house of Bennett's old buddies from his days in finance.

BALA

We strongly advised against it. But, he could be very persuasive.

RAMIREZ

So, boil this down for me. What's the damage?

RACHEL

Sir... we're months away from doomsday.

RAMIREZ

So we stop this. Get me the Fed --

BALA

The damage has already been done. We can only hope to mitigate the ensuing crisis.

RACHEL

Needless to say, this cannot get out -- because once panic sets in, all bets are off.

RAMIREZ

Look, I need some time to digest this.

BALA

We'll leave you to that sir.

They stand to leave and Ramirez walks them to the door.

RAMIREZ

(privately)

Rachel, I know you worked with Bennett for years. This must be an emotional time for you.

RACHEL

Mixed emotions.

RAMIREZ

Well, if there's ever anything Ana or I can do...

INT. OVAL OFFICE CORRIDOR

Two young interns are seated on either side of the door holding cameras, CHRIS DUNN, mid 20s, unassuming and a model young man, and CASS INGRAM, mid 20s, ambitious and model material. As they walk through the door --

CLICK! Cass snaps a photo of Ramirez walking out while Chris starts filming with a camcorder.

RAMIREZ
(to Devon)
Who are they?

RACHEL
They're the interns.

RAMIREZ
Whose interns?

RACHEL
Well, yours now I guess. Bennett had just brought them on. They're documentarians.

CLICK! Cass snaps another picture of Ramirez.

RAMIREZ
I can see that.

CHRIS
(putting camcorder down)
If now's a bad time, we can --

CASS
Speak for yourself, I just got this gig.

DEVON
Well, now that President Bennett is no longer with us... you two can go on home.

CHRIS
Alright. It was nice meeting --

CASS
Oh no -- the assignment was for one year. We're not --

CHRIS
Look... it's really...

RAMIREZ
 It's fine. They can stay.
 (to Cass and Chris)
 But I'd better not know you're
 here.

CHRIS
 (picking up camcorder)
 Like flies on the wall.

CASS
 No promises.

CLICK! Cass takes another picture, mostly out of spite.

RAMIREZ
 Ooo-kay... I'm glad we're on the
 same page.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Raymond sits back in his hospital bed, talking on the phone
 with his wife MARINA DOBBS, 30s. His left arm still bandaged.

RAYMOND
 (with nervous energy)
 Really, I'm fine. It's just a
 scratch. We're still going.
 (listens)
 I know... I know. Even more reason
 we need some time away.
 (looks at his watch)
 Hey, I gotta go. Just have the kids
 ready when I get there.
 (beat)
 I will.

He hangs up the phone, looks around to make sure he's alone,
 then pulls out his IV. Carefully, he gets out of bed and puts
 on his pants.

His shirt has a bullet hole through the left arm, as does his
 jacket. He puts them on anyway over his bandages, with some
 amount of struggle, repeatedly looking over his shoulder to
 ensure he's still alone.

Grabbing a bedside magazine, he leaves the hospital room,
 careful not to be seen. As he passes the nurse station, he
 looks the other way, then uses the magazine to shield his
 face from a security guard.

INT/EXT. EDWARD'S CAR/HOSPITAL LOADING ZONE - DAY

A government-issue black Cadillac sits outside. Inside, Edward waits. Raymond exits the hospital and gets in the car.

EDWARD
What happened?

RAYMOND
Cabin fever.

EDWARD
Look, I know this has been tough,
but you have to follow protocol.
Have you been cleared yet?

RAYMOND
Can't you handle that?

EDWARD
You're making this difficult Ray.

RAYMOND
My family's waiting for me. Can't
you give me that?

EDWARD
Fine. But don't make me regret this.

They drive off.

EXT. DOBBS RESIDENCE - DAY

Edward and Raymond pull up to Raymond's house.

EDWARD
Your bag's in the back seat.
Everything's there.

Raymond gets out of the car, opens the back door, and grabs the black duffel bag.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
Hey, you and your family get lost.
And don't be calling me.

RAYMOND
Alright, alright.

Raymond walks up to the house and sets down the bag as the front door opens. Marina, an absolute wreck, collapses into Raymond's arms.

MARINA

Oh my God, I was so -- I thought
you were --

She begins to weep. Raymond tries to console her.

RAYMOND

It's okay now. Everything's
alright. I'm fine.

MARINA

(hits Raymond's arm)
And they wouldn't let us see you!

RAYMOND

Aaagh -- easy!

MARINA

Oh... sorry! Here, let me --

RAYMOND

It's fine, really... just leave it.
Look, it's -- it's complicated.

MARINA

Are you sure we should be doing
this? You need to --

RAYMOND

(makes eye contact)
Hey -- I'm sure. Let's go.

INT. DOBBS RESIDENCE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

They step into the house. Their son, AIDEN DOBBS, 6, is at a table drawing. He leaps to his feet and runs to Raymond who picks up his son with his good arm.

AIDEN

Daddy!!!

Aiden gives Raymond a big squeeze and eyes his bandaged arm.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

What happened?

RAYMOND

Nothing. Daddy just had a little
accident.

AIDEN

Because you fell on the president?

Raymond notices the television -- news coverage is replaying assassination footage.

RAYMOND
 Marina! Turn that off!
 (to Aiden)
 All you need to know is that
 Daddy's okay.

AIDEN
 Okay.
 (another hug)
 That's good.

Aiden jumps down. His sister, ABBEY DOBBS, 12, now standing nearby.

ABBEY
 Nice one Dad.

MARINA
 She knew you were fine all along.

RAYMOND
 (tousles Abbey's hair)
 Thanks for believing in me kid.

ABBEY
 Can we go now?

RAYMOND
 Oh, now you want to go?
 (to Marina)
 Who is this girl?

Marina shrugs her shoulders.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
 Yes. Get your stuff. Let's get out
 of here.

AIDEN
 (jumping up)
 Yay!!!

EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR (MOVING) - ALEXANDRIA - DAY [SUNSET]

Quick MONTAGE of the Dobbs family as they drive down the highway, across the Virginia border, and through city streets, passing panhandlers and transients.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

A camera is on the president as he addresses the nation with senior staffers and Ana present behind the camera.

Throughout the speech, INTERCUT vignettes give glimpses into the lives of Americans watching on television -- in their homes, in bars and gathering places -- windows into the nation's current economic plight.

RAMIREZ

Fellow Americans. I address you this evening with a heart still heavy, yet a hope still full. Our nation continues to mourn the loss of President Richard Bennett. The tragic events of this week, which have taken this great man from us, have shaken us to our core.

Our hearts go out to his family and all those to whom he meant so much. As we grieve, we remember President Bennett's legacy and honor his service to our country. We also dedicate ourselves to the task of building up our nation by building up one another.

In time, our grief will give way to reflection, our reflection to resolve, and our resolve to strength. And in that strength, we will overcome the challenges set before us. And these challenges are many.

I sit here tonight, humbled -- fully aware of the responsibility entrusted me. I pledge first and foremost to listen, to the needs of Americans from all walks of life, and to fight on your behalf to ease your burden and to heal this land.

As the psalmist said, weeping endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning. With your help, I am confident that this season of pain will be followed by a new day, full of the faith that makes America strong. We will rise from these ashes, together, more resilient than ever.

(MORE)

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

And then, we will thrive once again.

Thank you. Good night. And God bless America.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CABINET ROOM - DAY

Flat screen monitors are positioned around the room displaying charts, stock tickers, and news footage.

Ramirez and Devon, as well as the interns, await handpicked members of the Cabinet who are entering the room: Secretary of the Treasury Bala, Secretary of Commerce GARRET HAINES, late 40s, Secretary of Labor MARTIN DUNN, 50s, and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development LYNN HIGGINS, 50s.

HIGGINS

Wow... someone's been redecorating.

RAMIREZ

Please, take your seats.

Cass takes pictures of those present, while Chris shoots video.

HAINES

Who are they?

RAMIREZ

Hmm? Oh, ignore them. I'm trying to.
(to the group)

Thank you all for being here on such short notice.

(beat)

As of today, everything changes. I'm turning this room into an Economic Situation Room and I'm drafting each of you into my Economic Task Force. You will report here daily until I say otherwise.

Glances exchanged across the room range from bewilderment to frustration.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

We're not going to sit by and watch our economy go to hell. And, we're certainly not going to just bide our time hoping someone after us will find a solution. No! We -- fix -- this -- now.

Devon hands out papers to each member present.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

This is your first order of business. As you know, Bennett's budget was due to go to Congress next week. We're not submitting his. We're submitting mine.

HIGGINS

Sir, if I may -- you have a budget?

RAMIREZ

That's why you're here. We're also sending over an emergency stimulus bill.

DUNN

What about the OMB? Shouldn't we inform --

RAMIREZ

No -- we're keeping this quiet -- nothing leaves this room.

HIGGINS

I'm sorry, Mr. President, but you know it takes months --

RAMIREZ

You have one week.

HAINES

What?!

BALA

I think we can put something --

HIGGINS

You know, I'm sure Marty's got nothing to do in Labor right now...

A few snickers as Dunn glares at Higgins.

HIGGINS (CONT'D)

... but we're swamped in Housing. Isn't there --

RAMIREZ

Excuse me! This is not a negotiation! Now -- I want you to look over what Devon handed you. This is a list of my non-negotiables.

(MORE)

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

Sweeping middle class tax cuts,
massive investments in
infrastructure, a broad expansion
of entitlements, and cuts to all
government salaries by 15%.

That doesn't go over well, apparent by the collective groan.

BALA

Forgive me -- but this may only
exacerbate the problem.

RAMIREZ

I don't see how putting people to
work will make things worse.

BALA

Throwing money at things is how we
got here.

HAINES

Sir?

RAMIREZ

Secretary Haines?

HAINES

How do you intend to pay for this?

RAMIREZ

I'm glad you asked. First of all,
we won't be using the Treasury's
'get out of jail free' card. Those
days are over. Instead, I'm asking
Congress to authorize an additional
three trillion dollars of debt as
emergency relief funds. I'm also
raising taxes on those who can do
more than they are.

More groans around the room.

HIGGINS

You do realize this flies in the
face of your party's platform.

RAMIREZ

I don't serve my party -- I serve my
country. This is what this moment
calls for. That said, anyone who
opposes tax increases can opt out by
making dollar-for-dollar
contributions to government-approved
social programs of their choosing.

HAINES
 (looking around the room)
 Can we even do that?

RAMIREZ
 We absolutely will do that. And you
 all are going to make it happen.

Everyone sits in stunned disbelief.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
 Alright... get to work.

Everyone starts gathering their things and standing to leave.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
 Ah, ah, ah, you stay here. Anything
 you need will be brought to you.

More groans -- and sighs. Connie steps in the door.

CONNIE
 Sir, General Yates is waiting for
 you in the Oval.

RAMIREZ
 Right.
 (to the Task Force)
 Go ahead and get started. I'll be
 back.

Ramirez leaves and heads toward the

OVAL OFFICE CORRIDOR

Janine catches Ramirez on his way through the hall. She is
 carrying an appointment book.

JANINE
 Sir, Bennett had a meet and greet
 scheduled for next week at a public
 school -- a reading initiative. Did
 you want me to cancel it, in light
 of --

RAMIREZ
 No, let's keep it. I want to
 maintain a sense of normalcy as
 much as possible.

JANINE
 You got it.

RAMIREZ
Thanks Janine.

They part ways. Ramirez continues to the

OVAL OFFICE

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General DOUGLAS YATES, mid 70s, sits waiting as Ramirez enters the room. He's a stern, imposing figure with a face unaccustomed to smiling.

YATES
(rising to stand)
Buenos dias el presidente...

RAMIREZ
Since when do you know Spanish?

YATES
I don't -- not really. Poco.

RAMIREZ
Good. Then I won't have to keep hearing you butcher it.

YATES
(beat)
I seem to have gotten off on the wrong foot.

RAMIREZ
What can I do for you General?

YATES
Well, frankly, we were hoping you could throw us a bone --

RAMIREZ
How so?

YATES
Bennett didn't see military readiness as a priority. I'm hoping you'll see differently.

RAMIREZ
I'm no Bennett -- but I have nothing for you.

YATES
Our current levels leave us extremely vulnerable --

RAMIREZ

Well, I guess I'd better not make
any enemies --

YATES

I don't think you're hearing me. We
are not prepared...
(dials it back)
respectfully...

RAMIREZ

Why don't you let me worry about
that. The cuts are only going to
get deeper, so you might want to
get used to it.

YATES

Sounds like political suicide to me.

RAMIREZ

You mistake me for someone who
cares --

YATES

You know, if you could reign in
your pals on the Hill, throwing
around kickbacks like they're
paying off their hookers --

RAMIREZ

If I remember correctly, Defense
isn't exactly known for their
frugality.

YATES

So...

RAMIREZ

So, we're done.

YATES

(it sinks in)
You know... I had hoped you'd be
different.

RAMIREZ

Excuse me?

YATES

(with building intensity)
I'm third generation military.
(MORE)

YATES (CONT'D)

I've seen my share of conflicts lost or prolonged because political blowhards like yourself were too proud to listen to their Generals. In Korea, MacArthur could have decimated those gooks in weeks. But, Truman's arrogance left my father disfigured and demoralized --

RAMIREZ

Look, I'm --

YATES

(almost unhinged)

It is honorable to meet your fate knowing you gave everything for a cause worthy of your life. But having your hands tied behind your back by insolent bastards who could give a damn about honor or the men they use as pawns in their self-indulgent political games... there is no greater shame.

RAMIREZ

I appreciate that, General. But in this case, it is my hands that are tied. We simply do not have --

YATES

The will?

RAMIREZ

-- the resources.

YATES

Tell me that when we've got a nuke bearing down on us.

RAMIREZ

I pray that day never comes.

YATES

Too bad your prayers can't be heard when your head's stuck up your ass.

RAMIREZ

Well then I won't bother asking for yours. Good day General.

General Yates storms out of the room -- seething. As he does, Ana walks in.

YATES
 (settling down)
 Ahhh... Mrs. Ramirez. The sight of
 you certainly does soothe the soul.

ANA
 Uh, thank you?

YATES
 Do me a favor and see if you can
 loosen up your miser of a husband.
 Good day.

Yates leaves the room.

ANA
 What's his problem?

RAMIREZ
 Apparently I am. How'd it go today?

ANA
 Better. I think I'm wearing 'em
 down.

RAMIREZ
 Of course you are. Who could resist
 this pretty face?

ANA
 (playfully)
 Well, not this misogynist.

RAMIREZ
 What -- because I paid you a
 compliment??

ANA
 You're attributing female
 achievement to appearance rather
 than competence.

RAMIREZ
 Fine. See if I ever --

ANA
 (puts her finger to his
 lips)
 Personally, I don't care. But,
 you're under much greater scrutiny
 now. I'm only trying to help.

RAMIREZ

(if you say so)

Alright.

(beat)

Speaking of, I'll really need your help next week drumming up support for my stimulus bill.

(beat)

They're gonna hate it.

ANA

(coming in closer)

Well then... I guess I'd better wear my little black dress.

RAMIREZ

(pulls her to himself)

Mmm... that's my girl.

Before they can go further, Connie peeks into the room.

CONNIE

Sir, the General --

YATES

(blowing right past her)

Thank you ma'am.

RAMIREZ

It's okay Connie.

YATES

I want to apologize for my behavior. I can get a little hot under the collar --

RAMIREZ

Look, I understand your concern. You're just going to have to trust me on this. Things are much worse than anyone realizes.

YATES

How bad are we talking?

RAMIREZ

I can't get into it. Let's just say, if we don't fix this, the Great Depression has nothing on what's coming.

ANA

My God David.

YATES

Well then, do what you need to do.

RAMIREZ

Getting this stimulus passed will be a huge step in the right direction. But, it's going to be a tough sell.

YATES

I bet it will.

(turns to walk away)

Well good luck with that.

RAMIREZ

I'll need it.

YATES

(stops and turns back)

You know... I just had a hell of an idea.

RAMIREZ

Did you now.

YATES

Let's be honest, as a third-party president you really don't have the support to get anything through Congress --

ANA

He has many friends in the Senate.

YATES

Sure, but the House ain't gonna give you a pot to piss in.

RAMIREZ

And your point?

YATES

Look, I'm not one to give political advice, but I do think Speaker Finch would make one hell of a VP.

ANA

That's a terrible choice. He hates David.

YATES

That's why it's perfect. Hear me out. They love him on the Hill. You bring him into your inner circle?

(MORE)

YATES (CONT'D)

He'll see first hand what you're up against -- and with a new perspective, he can rally the troops for you.

RAMIREZ

Interesting... I guess there's some logic to that.

ANA

I don't know...

RAMIREZ

Well, thank you for the suggestion General. I'll take it under advisement.

YATES

I see. Alright, well good day then.

Yates exits -- Ana's eyes trained on him as he leaves.

ANA

I don't like him.

RAMIREZ

Now Ana --

ANA

You wouldn't actually consider Finch. The man's a snake David.

RAMIREZ

Not on your life.

ANA

Good.

(gives it more thought)
I hate how clever it is.

RAMIREZ

Yeah, me too.

EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR (MOVING) - ATLANTA - DAY

The Dobbs family drives through downtown. The city streets are overrun by the homeless -- roaming aimlessly -- living under bridges and in tent cities.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Atlanta, Georgia"

INT./EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR/CITY STREETS (MOVING) - DAY

Raymond seems uneasy. His eyes repeatedly dart over to the rearview mirror. A black car is in the distance behind him. He's sure he's seen it before. He turns down several random streets, but still the car follows, keeping pace.

MARINA

Is everything okay? You seem --

RAYMOND

Huh?

The car is still behind them. Raymond is growing more agitated, driving more erratically.

MARINA

Are you alright? You're really tense.

RAYMOND

No, no. I'm fine. Why don't you get some rest?

Raymond turns. Again, the car turns. WTF?!

MARINA

I -- I thought we were going to stop for the night?

RAYMOND

Just let me drive, alright?

MARINA

You're making me nervous.

One more turn. The car drives right past and keeps on going. Raymond pulls over, relieved.

RAYMOND

I'm sorry. You're right. I should get some sleep. You pick the place.

Marina runs her fingers through Raymond's hair, then rubs his neck for a moment.

MARINA

You've been through a lot.

RAYMOND

(lets out a long sigh)
Yeah.

The Dobbs family pulls away from the curb and drives off.

INT. PENTAGON - MEETING ROOM - DAY

The Joint Chiefs of Staff are gathered for a scheduled briefing. Fourteen members are present including General Yates and the VICE CHAIRMAN.

VICE CHAIRMAN

General Yates, any news on your meeting with the president?

YATES

Well, we had hoped a changing of the guard would provide us a more favorable position. Unfortunately, it appears Ramirez is cut from the same cloth as Bennett.

VICE CHAIRMAN

That's disappointing. Can he be reasoned with -- or influenced?

YATES

Not likely. He's as short-sided and bullheaded as they come. Not that we expected otherwise. These goddamn handshakers couldn't see a terrorist threat unless it was campaigning against them.

Restrained chuckles and audible agreement filter around the table.

YATES (CONT'D)

If I had a nickel for every time these guys put politics above our security...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Images from Yates's military past begin falling and fading onto the screen, like flipping through old photographs, traveling progressively further back in time.

INT. PENTAGON - DINING ROOM - DAY

Yates dominates the room full of commanding officers.

YATES

... how close we've been to the brink, no thanks to Washington.

(MORE)

YATES (CONT'D)

If America were ever wiped off the map, it would be on the president's watch with his head in the sand.

INT. PENTAGON - YATES'S OFFICE - DAY

Yates speaks privately with a staff sergeant.

YATES

Roosevelt was paralyzed by public opinion until the Japs bit us in the ass. This president is no different. We may have to force his hand.

EXT. WEST POINT COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY - DAY

Yates delivers an impassioned speech to academy graduates.

YATES

Thank God for the brave souls who protect this nation in spite of its leaders. One day, it may be up to you alone to preserve this land.

EXT. FORT BENNING BOOT CAMP - FIELD - DAY

Yates walks through lines of new U.S. Army recruits. TWO CADETS, a row in front with their backs to Yates, are whispering to each other and snickering.

YATES

Never give the enemy the upper hand. If he's breathing down your neck, don't take out your legal guide -- take out the threat!

(done with these jokers)

Don't get caught...

Without warning, he yanks one cadet's shorts down, continuing to speak, with increased intensity, right between them.

YATES (CONT'D)

... with your pants down, and your dick flapping in the wind. That ain't the symbol of freedom boys.

The cadet's friend struggles to contain a laugh.

YATES (CONT'D)

You got a problem with his privates, private?!

(MORE)

YATES (CONT'D)

(no reply)

I didn't think so.

INT. YATES RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM (1951) - DAY

On television, a ticker tape parade. Historic crowds welcome home a celebrated war hero. Onscreen text reads: "General Douglas MacArthur" as he waves from his car.

SUPERIMPOSE: "April 20, 1951"

CHILD YATES, 5, pulls the sleeve of his uniformed father, FREDRICK YATES, 20s. Fredrick's wife, BEVERLY YATES, 20s, stands nearby -- her touch apparent throughout the home.

CHILD YATES

Is that the president dad?

FREDRICK

Son, that's the greatest man alive.
No president will ever be his equal.

INT. YATES RESIDENCE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Fredrick stands at the front door, in uniform, kissing Beverly and Child Yates goodbye.

INT. YATES RESIDENCE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

A soldier wheels Fredrick home through the door. His arms severely burned -- face marred, almost beyond recognition. Beverly, in shock -- tears trickle down her cheeks.

Child Yates stands in silence, watching.

INT. YATES RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

YOUNG YATES, 8, enters the room, now clearly lacking the warmth of a mother. Fredrick is slumped over in an armchair, a beer bottle on the floor just below his dangling arm. Young Yates covers the broken man with a blanket.

INT. YATES RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

PRETEEN YATES, 12, finds Fredrick collapsed on the floor, clenching a vodka bottle -- other bottles strewn about the floor. He stirs his father and helps him to the couch.

INT. YATES RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

ADOLESCENT YATES, 16, enters -- his father not in view. He turns toward the staircase. A body dangles from the banister, rope around the neck. It's Fredrick.

Yates rushes over -- loosens the rope. Lifeless, his father's war-torn body collapses onto him. The boy holds his father -- and sobs.

EXT. FORT JACKSON - BASIC TRAINING GRADUATION - DAY

Yates addresses scores of soldiers -- his charisma undeniable.

YATES

Adversity will test you. But defeat is never an option. In the immortal words of General MacArthur... there is no substitute for victory!

END FLASHBACK.

INT. PENTAGON - MEETING ROOM - DAY

The meeting with the Joint Chiefs continues.

YATES

... but I do admire his tenacity. Ramirez seems hell-bent on rescuing the economy even if it destroys him.

VICE CHAIRMAN

Where does that leave us?

YATES

We're going to help him get there.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - SENATE CHAMBER - DAY

Ana saunters down the aisle wearing a little black dress, stopping along the way to use her power of persuasion. The good ol' boys are eating it up. She first comes to Senator JOE HALBERT, 60s, an overstuffed teddy bear of a man.

ANA

Hey Joe -- just wanted to make sure you know how important this bill is to David.

JOE

I know, Ana. But you realize you're asking a lot of me.

ANA

Of course I do.
(pinching his side)
There's a lot of you to ask.

JOE

(aw shucks)
Heh-heh... oh, you know you can count on me.

ANA

Thank you Joe.

Further down the aisle, Ana spots Senator RANDALL PITTS, late 50s. Unable to evade her, he averts his gaze as if to avoid a scolding from his wife.

ANA (CONT'D)

Randy, just the man I was looking for.

RANDALL

Oh, uh --

ANA

The president really needs your support on his stimulus package.

RANDALL

Uh, I don't know. It's really not in my wheelhouse right now.

ANA

Maybe we could help you get it there?

RANDALL
I -- I'll give it some thought.

ANA
(touching his arm)
Alright, but don't hurt yourself.

RANDALL
(she broke through)
Oh, heh... Okay.

Ana dials down the wiles as she approaches Senator KATRINA WHIT, mid 40s.

ANA
Hey Kat, I hope we can count on your help.

KATRINA
You bet your britches. I love making the old guard squirm.

ANA
That's what I love to hear.

EXT. MARYLAND GRADE SCHOOL - DAY

Ramirez, flanked by Secret Service and staff, greets a mass of admirers outside a public school. The connection he makes with each person is undeniable.

FEMALE BYSTANDER
(reaching toward Ramirez)
We love you Mr. President!

RAMIREZ
(grasping her hand)
Thank you. We can all use a little more of that.

Ramirez eyes a YOUNG GIRL, 5, with muscular dystrophy in a wheelchair wearing her Sunday best.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
Is that your little girl? She's beautiful.
(leaning down, to the young girl)
What's your name?

YOUNG GIRL
Ana.

RAMIREZ
Is that right? Well, Ana is my
favorite name.

She beams from ear to ear. Ramirez notices the YOUNG GIRL'S
BROTHER, 8.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
Is this your brother?

She nods.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
(to her brother)
Hey big guy.
(back to the young girl)
If he ever gives you a hard time,
you let me know okay?

Ramirez pats her brother's arm. She nods again, all smiles.
Janine moves Ramirez down the line.

MALE BYSTANDER
Thank you for all you're doing.

RAMIREZ
(shaking his hand)
It won't be easy, but we're gonna
get through this -- together.

MALE BYSTANDER
Yes sir.

Ramirez's entourage moves him along toward the motorcade.

INT. CABLE NEWS TV STUDIO - DAY

In-studio video monitors continue rolling the clip as Ramirez
gives a final wave to the crowd.

ANCHOR #1
While the public seems to have
great affection for the president,
not everything is roses for
Ramirez.

Monitors now show Speaker of the House Thomas Finch giving a
press conference, just hours earlier.

ANCHOR #2

True. In a stunning rebuke of the president's stimulus bill today, House Speaker Finch said he would not be putting the bill to a vote, in his words, not in this lifetime, or the next.

ANCHOR #1

Ouch! So, I guess that plan is dead in the water.

PROGRAM GUEST

It really was a Hail Mary. I don't think anyone seriously thought...

INT. ECONOMIC SITUATION ROOM [CABINET ROOM] - DAY

The broadcast continues on a flat screen monitor. Ramirez looks distraught. Devon and Janine are fuming.

PROGRAM GUEST (ON SCREEN)

... it stood a chance.

DEVON

I hate when they do that! Not even a vote??

ANCHOR #1 (ON SCREEN)

Reactions on the Hill to the proposal have been all over the place. Some criticize it for not doing enough, while others say it goes too far.

Devon mutes the broadcast. Connie walks in.

JANINE

What does that even mean??

DEVON

It means back to the drawing board.

RAMIREZ

It means we need to play hardball. Connie, get me Thomas Finch.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Ramirez and Finch are seated, up close and personal. The mood is ominous.

RAMIREZ

I know we haven't always seen eye
to eye --

FINCH

It's not personal. Your party's
just wrong about... everything.

RAMIREZ

Listen, I have no intention of
playing politics right now. In
times of crisis, I think one needs
to reevaluate his priorities.

FINCH

I see...

RAMIREZ

How would you feel about putting
aside our differences long enough
to get America back on her feet?

FINCH

In what way?

RAMIREZ

Become my vice president, see what
I'm dealing with here, and help me
get something through the House.

FINCH

Look, we both want what's best for
the country. But I'm not sure what
kind of message that sends my
constituents.

RAMIREZ

It sends the right message. Is it
really better for our nation that
we remain enemies?

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - SENATE CHAMBER - DAY

Finch stands with his right hand on a Bible, held by his wife,
CORINA FINCH, 40s. Administering the oath of office is Supreme
Court Justice PAULA DODSON. Everything feels strangely off.

DODSON

Mr. Speaker, please raise your
right hand and repeat after me. I,
Thomas Demetrius Finch, do solemnly
swear.

FINCH
I, Thomas Demetrius Finch...

Fading in and out over the scene, OFFICERS and RECRUITS recite the oath with Finch -- first a few, then more -- each voice added to the collective. Monotone. Cult-like.

FINCH (CONT'D)
... do solemnly swear.

DODSON
That I will support and defend the
constitution of the United States.

FINCH
That I will support and defend the
constitution of the United States.

DODSON
Against all enemies foreign and
domestic.

FINCH
Against all enemies foreign and
domestic...

The final words, now a chorus of many, eerily continue to echo -- into the void.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - SENATE RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

Members of Congress gather for a post-ceremony reception. The interns film the event. During a lull, Cass looks over and catches Chris watching her. He quickly averts his eyes. Ana and Ramirez stand toward the back of the room.

ANA
I hope you know what you're doing.

RAMIREZ
Have I ever?

ANA
Just be careful. I don't trust that
man for one --

Finch has made his way over to the couple.

RAMIREZ
Speak of the devil!

FINCH
Ah, should my ears be burning?

ANA
Amongst other things...

FINCH
She's feisty. I like that in a woman.

ANA
I'll bet you do.

RAMIREZ
Ana...

FINCH
It's okay. Apparently I don't inspire her confidence.

ANA
Let's say the jury's still out.

RAMIREZ
I think what she means is --

FINCH
I know what she means. And it's alright. This is new territory for all of us.
(holds his hand out)
But, I'm willing to try if you are.

Ana reluctantly gives Finch her hand and he lays a kiss on it.

ANA
Charming. I'm going to go mingle.

She gives Ramirez a peck on the lips and walks away.

FINCH
(coming in closer)
Not to change the subject, but I've been putting out the feelers, and your stimulus bill is never gonna fly.

RAMIREZ
Of course I have you to thank for that.

FINCH
That was before I had all the facts. But, regardless, I hope you have another plan.

RAMIREZ

You just work on getting the budget through. I'll take care of the stimulus.

FINCH

It's a tough sell. I wouldn't get your hopes up --

RAMIREZ

Don't worry, I've --

CLICK! Cass interrupts their conversation with a picture. Finch is immediately taken with her.

FINCH

Well hello... I don't believe we've met. Maybe if you're not doing anything later --

RAMIREZ

That's Cassidy, the intern. Maybe you should introduce her to your wife.

FINCH

Hi Cassidy, the intern.

CASS

It's just Cass.

FINCH

Cass it is.
(to Ramirez)
And, my wife wouldn't be interested. She's pretty old-fashioned.

RAMIREZ

(leaning in close)
Look, I'm counting on you. Don't let me down.

CLICK! Cass takes another picture and turns to leave.

FINCH

I wouldn't dream of it. If you'll excuse me.

Finch turns and walks quickly to catch up to Cass.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - DAY

TIME LAPSE: People filter out of the reception hall --

EXT. U.S. CAPITOL - DAY

-- the sun sets on the Capitol building --

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

-- and darkness descends on the White House.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Finch is arranging his belongings when his cell phone rings. He looks around, shuts the door, and cautiously takes the call from an UNKNOWN CALLER. The voice on the other end is stern -- deliberate -- chilling.

FINCH
(speaking quietly)
Are you sure it's a good idea to --

UNKNOWN CALLER (V.O.)
Ideas are not your department. You
leave those to me.

FINCH
Okay.

UNKNOWN CALLER (V.O.)
I'd say things are falling into
place nicely, wouldn't you?

FINCH
(now at his desk)
I'm pretty happy with where I'm
sitting.

UNKNOWN CALLER (V.O.)
Well, don't get too comfortable.
You're just about to become useful.

FINCH
I understand.

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - NIGHT

The Unknown Caller, cloaked in shadows, sits at his desk. A plaque on the wall, out of focus, is in the background.

UNKNOWN CALLER
I hope you do. I value allegiance
above patriotism.
(MORE)

UNKNOWN CALLER (CONT'D)

Don't be a patriot Finch. And don't
get any ideas.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Finch taps a pencil with nervous energy.

FINCH

Of course.

The caller is gone. Finch sits alone -- in silence.

INT. ECONOMIC SITUATION ROOM [CABINET ROOM] - DAY

All fifteen Cabinet members are in attendance including Finch,
the president's staff, and the interns.

RAMIREZ

I'm going to get right to it. I
will not wait around for Congress
to take this crisis seriously. Not
while millions of Americans suffer.
So, I'm bypassing them. This...
(lifts a stack of folders)
... is my nuclear option.

Ramirez SLAMS the stack on the table.

BALA

Woah.

RAMIREZ

These executive orders are my way
of getting some kind of relief to
the American people -- now. They're
also my middle finger to the House.

DUNN

I'm afraid to ask --

RAMIREZ

Starting today, we are gutting
every federal agency and directing
those funds to social programs. All
departments, all personnel, all
budgets are being dramatically
downsized -- immediately. That
includes the Cabinet.

All sit in stunned disbelief, except for one solitary --

HAINES

What?!

RAMIREZ

When you walked in here today, some
of you were handed a folder.

Curiosity gets the better of everyone, each scanning the room.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

Those who did not receive one -- we
thank you for your service -- you
are being relieved of duty.

DUNN

Oh my...

HIGGINS

Are you out of your mind?!

RAMIREZ

We'll find out. Please gather your
things.

The members murmur among themselves.

CABINET MEMBER #1

Can he even do --

CABINET MEMBER #2

He's overstepping his --

Tensions escalate sharply.

HIGGINS

(cuts through the noise)
Congress won't take this sitting
down!

RAMIREZ

Good! It's about time they stood
for something!

A collective pause.

HIGGINS

So this is what we've come to? This
is not America.

RAMIREZ

America can wait. The people are
suffering.

HIGGINS

But, without America, who are they?

RAMIREZ

Without its people, what is America?

(beat)

Look, America is an idea.

(MORE)

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

And I love that idea. But no idea
is worth sacrificing humanity for.

HIGGINS

Tell that to the military.

That resonates at the table, but Ramirez shuts them down.

RAMIREZ

Sacrificing one's own life is noble.
Sacrificing another's is cowardice.
We will not sacrifice these people --
we will sacrifice our ideals.

A hush falls over the room.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

You may go now. Those with folders,
please remain.

Two-thirds of the Cabinet gets up to leave. Remaining are
Secretary of State MICHAEL LIN, 50s, Secretary of Defense
ROBERT GRADY, 50s, Attorney General PATRICIA HELMS, 50s,
Secretary of Homeland Security ABIGAIL MAYFIELD, 40s, and
Secretary of the Treasury Bala.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

(to the remaining members)
I'm going to rely heavily on the
rest of you here.

LIN

Yes sir.

RAMIREZ

Your first task... I need to find
more money. I'll entertain any
idea, no matter how crazy.

Silence.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

Well don't all speak at once.

HELMS

Well, it's not a popular idea, but
one option is to cut off all
foreign aid -- especially to
regimes hostile to the U.S.

GRADY

I'm not so sure that's --

RAMIREZ

I'm listening -- how much are we talking?

BALA

Over fifty billion dollars.

RAMIREZ

It's brilliant. We'll do it... temporarily. Just long enough for us to --

MAYFIELD

Get ourselves blown up?! Yeah, brilliant.

RAMIREZ

You have another option??
(looks around, no reply)
Alright -- we'll go with this.

INT. CABLE NEWS BROADCAST - DAY

Breaking news. Over the anchor's shoulder, footage plays of Iran's SUPREME LEADER fervently addressing Iranians following morning prayer.

NEWS ANCHOR

A developing story out of Tehran this morning as Iran's Supreme Leader blasts the U.S. for its decision to deny foreign aid to the country, just one of several nations reeling from the recent announcement. The Supreme Leader has vowed to reopen all uranium enrichment facilities and to immediately resume ballistic missile testing. He also had these words for President Ramirez.

INT. IMAM KHOMEINI GRAND MOSQUE - TEHRAN - DAY

Hundreds are gathered, listening to the leader.

SUPREME LEADER (TRANSLATOR, V.O.)

(in Farsi, under English translator)

The American president apparently wants to play with fire. Well, fire we will bring him -- and with it, eternal regret.

INT. CABLE NEWS BROADCAST - DAY

Back to the anchor.

NEWS ANCHOR

The White House immediately began damage control, working to stave off fears of Iranian retaliation.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESS BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Janine fields questions from a CORRESPONDENT.

JANINE

President Ramirez stands behind the cuts. He will not be intimidated by what amounts to extortion by Iran.

CORRESPONDENT

Should the American people be worried?

JANINE

Worried about the president refusing to pay bribes for peace while Americans are suffering? No.

Closing her notebook --

JANINE (CONT'D)

That'll be all today.

Reporters verbally trip over themselves for a follow-up question. No dice.

INT. CABLE NEWS BROADCAST - DAY

The news report continues. Footage plays behind the anchor -- massive numbers of troops boarding ships.

NEWS ANCHOR

In response to these latest threats, tens of thousands of U.S. troops are being deployed overseas, further agitating the international community. Yet, with the souring of U.S. foreign relations worldwide, you'd think Congress would reconsider repeated requests by the Pentagon to increase military spending.

(MORE)

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

(beat)
You'd be wrong.

INT. PENTAGON - PRESS BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Yates is on the podium answering questions from an obnoxious
PRESS CORPS REPORTER.

PRESS CORPS REPORTER
Is it true, General, the military
remains severely underfunded, even
in light of recent threats?

YATES
While we are not pleased with
current funding levels, we remain
prepared to handle any threat --

PRESS CORPS REPORTER
Sir, pardon me, but it's clear our
forces are spread very thin --

YATES
(growing agitated)
If you'd allow me to finish --
we remain prepared to handle any
threat, as well as maintain our
current levels of deployment.

PRESS CORPS REPORTER
Does the lack of congressional
support at all reflect on the
quality of your leadership?

YATES
Excuse me?!

Yates leaps off the platform and charges toward the reporter,
now within striking distance.

YATES (CONT'D)
Does that asinine question reflect
on your quality as a journalist?!

PRESS CORPS REPORTER
I'm just asking --

YATES
Yes, but are you listening?! We --
remain -- prepared... ah, the hell
with it!
(unbridled now)
(MORE)

YATES (CONT'D)

Congress is nothing but a cesspool of self-serving cowards -- and the U.S. presidency is, and always has been, the biggest exercise in buffoonery the world over.

(beat)

Print that, you worthless sack of ass wipes.

The general storms out of the room as the press sits stunned, with a couple questions futilely lobbed at the general's back.

FUTILE QUESTIONER #1

Sir, can you comment on --

FUTILE QUESTIONER #2

What about Iran?

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SITUATION ROOM - DAY

Members of the NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL are exiting the room, including Bala, Mayfield, Helms, and about twelve others. Devon, Finch, Lin, and Grady lag behind.

GRADY

Mr. President, may I have a word?

RAMIREZ

Certainly.

Devon closes the door.

GRADY

Sir, we've been getting disturbing reports about tension growing within the military.

DEVON

What do they want now, a spa day?

GRADY

This is serious. I'm told it goes right up to the combatant commanders and Joint Chiefs.

LIN

I've also heard rumors of unauthorized military exercises being conducted.

RAMIREZ

What, are we talking deep state activities here?

LIN

The culture within the armed forces has been changing steadily over the past decade -- and there's developed a genuine distrust and resentment of civilian leadership.

GRADY

This would have been unthinkable during my years of service.

DEVON

(to Ramirez and Grady)

But they answer to the two of you. So what's the --

LIN

By law, yes. But loyalties run deep in our fighting forces -- and should those loyalties be tested --

GRADY

(to Lin)

They're not going to go against the president.

LIN

Not unless they lose confidence in his judgement.

GRADY

Not in a million --

LIN

I'm only saying that the military is the highest enforcer of our laws, and if you lose their confidence, you've lost everything.

RAMIREZ

Yates has really been testing me lately.

GRADY

He's suffering from low morale just like many are. That wears on you and feeds idiotic notions like those we're discussing.

RAMIREZ

And this troop deployment was without my authorization.

LIN
Then you need to reign in Yates.

DEVON
I say you pull a Truman and fire his ass.

FINCH
If I may, there's another option.

RAMIREZ
I'm all ears.

FINCH
If the goal is simply to boost morale, then give them a morale boost.

RAMIREZ
We don't have any money --

FINCH
No, I mean, promote Yates. The troops love him. Elevate his rank to five stars and you'll have them eating out of your hand for years.

GRADY
Interesting... it wouldn't cost you anything.

LIN
And it may signal to Iran and others that we've assumed a war-readiness stance.

GRADY
That could tamp down some of their threats. I like it.

LIN
I do too.

FINCH
Thank you gentlemen.

RAMIREZ
I guess it couldn't hurt. Alright, make the preparations.

INT./EXT. PENTAGON SUV/WHITE HOUSE SOUTH LAWN (MOVING) - DAY

A sleek black Suburban pulls around the South Lawn driveway. Yates peers toward the residence and sees Ramirez standing on the Truman Balcony, soaking in the view.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CROSS HALL - DAY

Yates proceeds down the hall and approaches the

GRAND STAIRCASE

As he ascends the stairs, Yates passes a large, looming portrait of Harry S Truman. It's as if the former president were there -- watching -- sending a chill up the general's spine.

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Yates pauses a moment to glare at Ramirez, then walks out to the balcony.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - TRUMAN BALCONY - DAY

The view is intoxicating.

YATES

Mr. President.

RAMIREZ

(turning toward Yates)
General. Thanks for meeting me here on short notice.

YATES

You really love it up here.

RAMIREZ

It helps me clear my head.
(beat)
You know, this balcony was Truman's idea. I guess he did something right after all.

YATES

That would be the only thing.

RAMIREZ

He also created your position...
and the Department of Defense...

YATES

Are you going somewhere with this?

RAMIREZ

General, it's come to my attention that there's dissension growing among your ranks.

YATES

Oh?

RAMIREZ

Some even say it comes straight from the top.

YATES

People like to talk. You can't believe everything you hear.

RAMIREZ

And then, it would be unwise to ignore a potential threat. No?

YATES

(that hits home)

Well you can rest assured, Mr. President, I serve at your pleasure.

RAMIREZ

That's good. Because I need you to fix this.

YATES

I'll see what I can do --

RAMIREZ

And I'm going to help you. I know morale is low and you're running a skeleton crew... but the world doesn't need to know that. Let's send a different message.

YATES

How so?

RAMIREZ

When it's in the national interest, a president may elevate a general's rank...

YATES

True...

RAMIREZ

(holds up a folder)

This is my nomination to promote you to General of the Army. I'm sending it to the Senate tonight.

YATES

Well, I'm honored. And this would certainly lift the boys' spirits. But, what's the rub?

RAMIREZ

Let's just say I'm counting on your complete support.

YATES

You'd have my undying devotion.

RAMIREZ

Good. Oh, and no more moving troops around without my knowledge. Everything goes by me.

YATES

Understood. Still, forgive me -- I'm having a hard time understanding your play here.

RAMIREZ

Let's just say, I try to keep my friends close -- and my enemies closer.

The mood shifts.

YATES

I see -- so where does that put me?

RAMIREZ

(right in the eye)

I'll let you decide.

The men stare at each other for a moment as that sinks in. The gauntlet has been dropped.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - EAST ROOM - NIGHT

Distinguished guests are gathered for a reception honoring the general's promotion. Yates stands concluding a speech.

YATES

... so I want to sincerely thank
President Ramirez for this honor,
and I thank each of you for joining
me on this occasion. My only wish...

(tearing up)

... is that my father were here to
see this.

(collects himself)

Oh, and my dear wife Judith, God
rest her soul. But, truly -- thank
you all.

The crowd applauds as Yates steps away from the microphone.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - EAST ROOM - NIGHT

Finch approaches a JOURNALIST standing alone at a table of
hors d'oeuvres. The conversation is uncomfortably secretive.

FINCH

(coming in close)

You're from the Times, right?

JOURNALIST

The Post.

FINCH

Of course...

(even closer)

I'm going to give you a little gift.

JOURNALIST

I see. What kind of gift?

FINCH

(up to his ear)

The kind that defines a career.

Ramirez stands across the room with Ana. He glances over and
sees the odd exchange. He's puzzled, but not alarmed.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Chris walks into the corridor to put away his camera gear. He
hears a sound down the hallway leading toward the vice
president's office. As he peers down the hall, he can see
Finch and Cass getting to know each other much, much better.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Finch has Cass pinned against the wall. His mouth investigates her neck -- her ears -- then he goes in for the kill -- his lips attack hers -- she attacks back. Finch starts untucking her shirt --

CASS
(stopping him)
Ah, ah, ah... I'm not that kind of girl.

Finch looks confused, until she begins unbuckling his belt.

CASS (CONT'D)
I'm this kind of girl.

For a moment, Finch almost forgets where they are.

FINCH
Hey, hey -- not out here.

Then, grabbing her shirt, he pulls her toward the door leading to his office. She dutifully follows.

In they go -- the door closing behind them.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cass walks down the hall toward the corridor, straightening her skirt -- tucking in her blouse -- fixing her hair --

CASS
(startled)
Oh, hey Chris... what're you still doing here?

CHRIS
Cass, I need to talk to you.

CASS
Couldn't it wait 'til tomorrow?

CHRIS
I don't think so.

Chris pulls Cass down toward a seat and sits next to her.

CASS
Hey, you're not getting weird on me are you?

CHRIS
What?? No. Look, I'm concerned
about you.

CASS
Okay... well you needn't be.

CHRIS
I saw you with Finch, Cass.

CASS
Okay, first -- that is weird. And
second -- it's none of your
business.

CHRIS
Look, you're a friend... I just...
these things never end well.

CASS
(standing up)
Well no one asked you, so --

CHRIS
I don't want to see you get hurt.

CASS
That's very kind of you. But I
think I can manage.

Cass starts to walk away. Chris stands up.

CHRIS
Okay -- but don't you think it's a
conflict of interest?

Stops for a moment.

CASS
Well, I'm not conflicted... and he
seems very interested. So... no.

CHRIS
(sincerely)
Just... take care.

CASS
(sexy as hell)
Oh, I always take care of myself.
See you tomorrow.

She grabs her handbag and walks away, leaving Chris standing
alone.

INT. SUPERMAX CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - PRISON CELL - DAY

A fisheyed security camera feed looks down on a lone prisoner in a windowless cell. Terence Walker, verging on insanity, appeals to the camera.

SERIES OF SHOTS - TERENCE IN PRISON

Security footage fast-forwards from shot to shot.

- A) Terence on his bed, stirring.
- B) Now up, pacing.
- C) Sitting in a corner, legs fully extended -- looks directly at the camera.

TERENCE

Hey! Hey you!

- D) Pacing again -- turns back toward the camera.

TERENCE (CONT'D)

I know you can hear me!

- E) Jumping up and down.
- F) Balled up in a corner.
- G) In the center of the room now, arms out, as big as he can make himself -- locked on the lens.

TERENCE (CONT'D)

I want my lawyer! I have my rights!
 (charges toward camera)
 I didn't kill him man! Get me outta here!

- H) Turned away -- pounding the wall.
- I) Back on his bed, rocking -- pulling out his hair.
- J) Jumping up toward the camera.

TERENCE (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you?? Get me somebody! You hear me?!
 (falls to his knees)
 Get me somebody!

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Ramirez is seated at his desk when Devon runs in, fraught with concern.

DEVON
Sir, you need to see this.

Devon drops a WASHINGTON POST on Ramirez's desk.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER HEADLINE

"Ramirez conceals truth of money printing scandal, source says"

RAMIREZ
What is -- ? Who -- ?
(sinking in)
What source?? Who's the source??

DEVON
It just says someone close to the president.

RAMIREZ
That could be any -- ugh -- this is unbelievable.

DEVON
I guess it was bound to come out --

RAMIREZ
Why... and why now?

Secretary Bala runs in.

BALA
Sir, we have a problem.

RAMIREZ
(holding up the newspaper)
I know we do!

BALA
No sir -- another problem. This way.

Bala leads Devon and Ramirez as they sprint next door to the

ECONOMIC SITUATION ROOM [CABINET ROOM]

Breaking news on every channel. No sound, but the reports are obvious, and devastating. Onscreen graphics read "S&P slashes U.S. credit rating" and "Stocks sink amid allegations".

RAMIREZ

What is this??

Connie and Janine run in.

BALA

Standard and Poor downgraded the federal government's credit rating to triple B, our lowest in history.

JANINE

Oh no...

DEVON

Over allegations?!

BALA

Apparently the claims were substantiated.

CONNIE

Look at the market --

DEVON

We know Connie!

RAMIREZ

(losing his grip)
Ravi, you told me to keep this quiet.

BALA

I'm sorry sir. In hindsight --

RAMIREZ

No... no it's fine. It's my fault.
(to himself)
I should have done more... I should have seen this...
(back to the group)
We need to get ahead of this. What do we do first?

DEVON

Uh... we need to make an address.

JANINE

I'll set up a press conference.

CONNIE

I'm calling my broker.

DEVON

Honestly Connie.

BALA

Sir, I think you need to tread carefully here. Your presidency could be in jeopardy.

RAMIREZ

You should know me well enough by now that I could care less --

DEVON

No, sir. He's right. Consider who's next in line.

JANINE

God no! That would be --

RAMIREZ

Look, nothing's going to happen. We're going to get through this. Okay?

JANINE

Okay.

DEVON

Yes sir.

RAMIREZ

Alright. Let's fix this.

Everyone leaves, except Ramirez, who slumps into a chair and stares blankly at the wall.

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - NIGHT

Blurred, indistinct, dark glimpses of a room. The voice of an Unknown Man -- uneasy -- choosing his words carefully.

UNKNOWN MAN (V.O.)

Sir, Walker's becoming a problem.

(silence)

What do you want me to do?

The room becomes slightly more clear. Familiar darkened office -- familiar shadowed figure -- familiar steely voice.

UNKNOWN CALLER

You shouldn't need to ask me.

UNKNOWN MAN (V.O.)

(beat)

Right. I just --

UNKNOWN CALLER

I thought you were a handler.

Handle it.

UNKNOWN MAN (V.O.)
Yes sir. And what about --

UNKNOWN CALLER
When there's a mess -- you tidy it
up. Are we clear?

UNKNOWN MAN (V.O.)
Yes sir.

UNKNOWN CALLER
Good. Don't disappoint me.

INT. SUPERMAX CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Unknown Man, seen from behind, walks down a long concrete
hall -- a single door at the end. Solitary confinement.

INT. SUPERMAX CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Terence, at the back of the room, is shackled to his chair.
The Unknown Man, walks slowly toward Terence, setting his
things on a table. The man's face unseen, we recognize his
WEDDING RING as he spins it -- back and forth -- on his
finger.

UNKNOWN MAN
Terence... I hear you're unhappy. I
thought we had an understanding.

TERENCE
I want out man. I thought you said --

UNKNOWN MAN
I know what I said, but things have
changed.

TERENCE
I didn't even kill him. You gave me
blanks man!

UNKNOWN MAN
Oh no.... you killed him. The world
watched you.

The Unknown Man methodically loads a magazine with blanks.

TERENCE
No way man... not with blanks.

UNKNOWN MAN
You mean like these?

He finishes loading the magazine and inserts it into his gun.

TERENCE

Wha -- what're you doing??

UNKNOWN MAN

What's wrong? Blanks never hurt anyone, right?

Terence thrashes around.

TERENCE

N-no... alright, alright... I won't...

The Unknown Man cradles Terence's head to still him, then puts the gun to his temple. Terence's eyes well with tears.

TERENCE (CONT'D)

Please... no... I won't talk.

UNKNOWN MAN

(almost motherly)

I know you won't.

The Unknown Man turns his head away as -- POP!

Terence's body falls limp.

CUT TO:

A fisheye security camera view of the prison cell -- Terence's body lies still. The Unknown Man gathers his things and walks out of frame.

A dialog box appears on screen: "Are you sure you want to delete this file?" The "Yes" button highlights, expands slightly, and CLICK. The screen goes dark.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Finch speaks privately with Congressman CLAY ATKINS, 40s. Not privately enough, however, as Ana rounds the corner and sees Finch and Atkins engaged in hushed conversation.

Realizing they've been seen, Finch motions to Atkins, and they slip back into a private room.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - COMMITTEE ROOM - DAY

Their conversation continues.

ATKINS

... I'm just saying something needs to be done.

FINCH

I agree. What do you propose?

ATKINS

What about a vote of no confidence? You can initiate that.

FINCH

No, that'll open floodgates of suspicion. Plus, he disbanded two-thirds of the Cabinet, and the rest are loyalists. It's going to have to come from you.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY

Congressman Atkins stands behind a lectern addressing members of the House.

ATKINS

Mr. Speaker -- I introduce today these articles of impeachment against President David Ramirez for the following high crimes and misdemeanors: Abuse of power, exceeding presidential authority, acting without consent of Congress, violating the Presidential Succession Act, and disrupting the function of government. I motion that these articles be adopted and that we act speedily to remove President Ramirez from office.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR (MOVING) - DALLAS - DAY [SUNSET]

The Dobbs family drives through downtown Dallas. It's clear the city has been ravaged by the economic crisis.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Dallas, Texas"

INT./EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR/CITY STREETS (MOVING) - DAY

Raymond, paranoid as ever, keeps looking in his rearview mirror. A black car is behind them following at a distance, sometimes slipping out of sight, but always returning.

EXT. SMALL DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT - DAY

Raymond stops at a hole-in-the-wall restaurant for dinner. As the family gets out of the car and walks to the door, Raymond lags behind, looking over his shoulder suspiciously, in all directions, certain they are being watched.

The rest of the family enters the empty restaurant while Raymond makes a call on his cell phone.

EDWARD (V.O.)

Ray -- what do you want?

RAYMOND

(in a hushed tone)

Hey, call off the goons.

EDWARD (V.O.)

What are you talking about?

RAYMOND

You know what I'm talking about.

Why are you following me??

EDWARD (V.O.)

Ray, you need to calm down. No one is following you.

RAYMOND

(trying to stay quiet)

I'm not a jackass Eddie!

EDWARD (V.O.)

Look, you've been through a lot.

You need to get some rest --

Frustrated, Raymond ends the call and walks inside.

INT. SMALL DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT - DAY

The family is already seated, preparing to order.

MARINA
(to the kids)
You guys know what you want?

ABBEY
I don't care. Whatever.

AIDEN
I want a cheeseburger -- and lots
and lots and lots of fries.

MARINA
(laughing)
Oh boy... we'll see.

Raymond makes his way to the table to sit down.

MARINA (CONT'D)
Who was that?

RAYMOND
No one. Just somebody from work.

MARINA
Honey, I thought we were leaving
work behind.

RAYMOND
I know... I am. I don't want to
talk about it.

MARINA
Okay.
(getting up)
It's cold in here... I'm going to
grab my sweater.

EXT. SMALL DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT - DAY

Marina goes to the car, daylight almost gone. She peers through the window and doesn't see her sweater -- so she opens the trunk and rifles through their bags, but nothing.

Raymond's black duffel bag catches her eye. She pauses a moment, then slowly unzips it. A look of sheer dread falls over her face.

Inside the bag are stacks of cash, guns, ammo, and sitting on top is a folder. She takes it and looks inside, her eyes welling up with tears. Sadness quickly turns to rage.

INT. SMALL DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Marina storms inside, holds up the folder, and screams --

MARINA

What's the meaning of this?!

RAYMOND

What??

(realizes what she has)

Hey, what're you... why're you going through my --

MARINA

What is all this?!

Marina throws the folder down on the table -- fake identification and papers for each family member spill out onto the table -- driver's licenses -- birth certificates -- a marriage license.

RAYMOND

Look, I can explain --

MARINA

You bet you will!

By now, the scene has drawn the attention of the restaurant's staff. Aiden and Abbey are eyeing the documents.

RAYMOND

(trying to calm Marina)

Hey, let's talk about this somewhere else.

MARINA

Oh no! We'll talk about this right here. Right now!

A beat.

AIDEN

(confused)

Who's Jadon?

ABBEY

And Elli? Really Dad?

MARINA
 (overcome with emotion)
 Are we fugitives?? What are you not
 telling me??

Just then, CRASH! A brick shatters the restaurant's window. Raymond races to the front and sees a TEENAGE BOY sprinting away, his face covered by a bandana.

Raymond turns and sees a MOB of rioters approaching, brandishing torches and baseball bats.

RAYMOND
 Quick! Get to the car!

Aiden and Abbey are slow to respond. Marina is frozen.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
 Now! C'mon! Let's go!

EXT. SMALL DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Raymond scrambles to get his family to the vehicle. As their doors close, he backs away from the curb -- not a second too soon. THUGS surround their car -- pounding, grabbing hold, and shouting -- as Raymond peels out and speeds away.

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ramirez stands looking out from the balcony as Ana walks into the room. She sets her things down and joins him.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - TRUMAN BALCONY - NIGHT

As she approaches, Ana caresses her husband's back, then steps forward, squeezing between him and the railing.

ANA
 Hey there handsome.

Ramirez gives her a slight smile.

ANA (CONT'D)
 You don't look so good.

RAMIREZ
 How should I look?

ANA
 I'm just not used to seeing you
 like this.

RAMIREZ

Like what?

ANA

Discouraged.

RAMIREZ

I don't know Ana... everything I do backfires. Maybe I'm just not cut out for this --

ANA

Hey, now you stop right there.

RAMIREZ

I just have this fear I'm doing more harm than good. I don't want to let the people down --

ANA

You won't. You always pull through.

RAMIREZ

Maybe not, this time.

ANA

Wait, this coming from my dreamer? My eternal optimist?

RAMIREZ

Maybe you're getting to me.

ANA

Just because I'm cynical doesn't mean I can't still see the good in things.

(beat)

Look, have we ever been here before?

Ramirez looks puzzled.

ANA (CONT'D)

Have we ever confronted these circumstances?

RAMIREZ

No.

ANA

Then there's no precedent for failure.

(beat)

You've got this.

Ramirez mulls that over and gives another slight smile.

RAMIREZ

I appreciate what you're trying to do. I'm fine. I'm just running out of ideas.

ANA

It's not up to you alone to fix this. You have good people around you -- except maybe Finch.

Ramirez musters a silent laugh.

ANA (CONT'D)

By the way, he's up to something... I caught him sneaking around with Clay Atkins this morning before --

RAMIREZ

Woah... now that you mention it... he was getting pretty cozy with the Post reporter the other night --

ANA

Oh my God.

RAMIREZ

I know.

ANA

(blood pressure rising)
You realize what's happening here.

RAMIREZ

I think I'm starting to.

ANA

Finch is gunning for the presidency.

RAMIREZ

Or worse, he's gunning for the country.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Ana and Ramirez stand as she adjusts his tie, then starts gathering her things.

ANA

Okay, you good? I'll be working the Hill all day... and I have friends in the Senate helping.

RAMIREZ
They only need a simple majority.

ANA
(smiling)
As do we.

RAMIREZ
Apparently Finch is going to be
"helping" today as well.

ANA
(rolls eyes)
Hmph.

RAMIREZ
Just keep an eye on him.

ANA
You know I will.

Nick Davis knocks on the open door.

NICK
Sir... ma'am...

RAMIREZ
C'mon in.

ANA
Nick, how's your lovely wife?

NICK
Doing well. In fact... we're
expecting again.

ANA
How wonderful!

RAMIREZ
Oh wow, that's great Nick!

ANA (CONT'D)
And your daughter, Kayla? Is she
excited?

NICK
Heh... she won't stop talking about
the bun Dad put in Mom's oven.

They all laugh.

ANA
Well, give your ladies my love.

NICK
Will do.

ANA
I'll be off then. Love you.

Ana gives Ramirez a kiss and turns to go.

RAMIREZ
You too.
(to Nick)
So, what's up?

NICK
Just wanted you to know, there'll
be an increased security presence
around here, for the time being.

RAMIREZ
All hands on deck.

NICK
Yes sir. Can't be too careful.

RAMIREZ
I appreciate it... and the work you
all do here.

NICK
Same to you, sir.

RAMIREZ
(touches Nick's arm)
Thank you.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - DAY

Ana and Finch tirelessly walk the halls of Congress.

SERIES OF SHOTS - LOBBYING FOR SUPPORT

- A) Ana is engaged in serious discussion with a CONGRESSMAN FROM OHIO.
- B) Finch walks through a hallway, speaking with a REPRESENTATIVE FROM COLORADO.
- C) Ana speaks privately in the office of a CONGRESSWOMAN FROM INDIANA.
- D) While speaking to yet another CONGRESSMAN, she spots Finch going into the same Indiana congresswoman's office she was just in.
- E) Later, while talking to a REPRESENTATIVE FROM VIRGINIA,

Ana sees Finch with another of her contacts. Her suspicion is giving way to anger.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - ROTUNDA - DAY

Ana speaks with JOHN FISCHER, 50s, a representative from Texas. It's getting late, and desperation is setting in.

ANA

We really need your help, John.

FISCHER

I'm telling you, it's like someone let a pack a wolves loose in here.

ANA

All the more reason we --

FISCHER

Oh, you have my vote. I just don't know that it's going do much good.

ANA

Every little bit helps...

At the other end of the room, Ana sees Finch walk in talking quietly with the same Virginia representative she had just spoken to moments ago.

ANA (CONT'D)

Will you excuse me? I'm sorry.

FISCHER

Not at all. Good day Mrs. Ramirez.

Like a cruise missile, Ana makes a beeline across the room toward Finch. His company takes a hint and scurries away.

Nowhere to hide, Finch retreats backward a few steps.

A viper going for the kill, she thrusts her arm downward -- grabs his crotch -- puts his balls in a death grip -- and pins him against the wall.

ANA

Look, you sleaze. I know what you're trying to do, and it's not going to work.

Finch shrinks upward. His voice tightens.

FINCH

Oh... I think it already has.

ANA
 (clenching even more)
 You'll pay for your schemes, you
 little prick.

FINCH
 (almost unbearable now)
 There are forces at work here...
 greater than us all --

ANA
 (in his face)
 Always passing the buck. So help
 me... you're messing around with
 the wrong president.

FINCH
 Hmph -- I might say the same to you.

Ana releases her hold, flinging her arm back, repulsed. Finch
 brushes himself off and smirks.

ANA
 (with a violent shove)
 You disgust me!

Ana storms off. As she's walking away...

FINCH
 What, no pillow talk?

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY

Congressman Atkins stands, once again, at the lectern in the
 well of the House. His words ring ominously.

ATKINS
 Mr. Speaker, let the record show
 that in each of the five articles
 brought to a vote today, the House
 of Representatives has
 overwhelmingly reached a majority in
 favor of the articles. Mr. Speaker,
 the president is impeached. The
 Senate will now determine the fate
 of David Ramirez.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING - DAY

Finch is walking to his office when Ramirez corners him --
 enraged. The tension is thick.

RAMIREZ
How dare you. It's all you isn't it?
The leak -- the impeachment --

FINCH
(with a smug grin)
You give me way too much credit.

RAMIREZ
Finch -- you're not just attacking
me -- this is an offense against
America!

FINCH
(unbridled now)
Your presidency is an offense
against America.

RAMIREZ
That's it... I'm done with you!

FINCH
What, you're gonna fire me?

RAMIREZ
Oh, if I could, I would --

FINCH
Look, I didn't ask for this job --

RAMIREZ
Well, it'll be in name only now.

FINCH
You're cutting me off?

RAMIREZ
You cut yourself off!

FINCH
(fine then)
I'll get my things.

RAMIREZ
No, we'll keep up appearances. But,
from this moment on, you and I are
through.

INT. CASS'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Finch holds Cass as they lie in bed.

FINCH
Cass, I'm gonna be off the grid for
a little while.

CASS
What's wrong?

FINCH
Nothing. But I need a favor.

CASS
Of course.

FINCH
I need to know what's going on when
I'm not around. And you're going to
be my eyes and ears.

CASS
You just get anything you want,
don't you?

FINCH
That's the idea.

CASS
(rolling on top of him)
God that's a turn on.

FINCH
(pushing her off)
Cass, I'm serious.

CASS
Alright! What's with the spy games
all of a sudden?

FINCH
Look... how would you like to be
making love to the president?

CASS
Mmm... he's not really my type.

FINCH
I think you know what I mean.

CASS
(oozing with seduction)
Well, if I wanted something enough,
no one could stop me.

Finch smiles. She gets it.

CASS (CONT'D)
(rolls back on top of him)
Now shut the hell up, Mr. President.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY - DAY

FBI Video Tech Neil Evans runs down the hallway, headed straight to Edward's office. He runs into Edward on the way.

NEIL
Mr. Daughtry, I think we have something.

EDWARD
(not convinced)
Really...

NEIL
No, really. Come with me.

They run toward the Surveillance Suite, but Edward stops Neil along the way, motioning to a door.

EDWARD
Wait... in here. Let's keep this on the down low.

NEIL
Oh, okay. Sure.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - EDIT BAY - DAY

The room is much smaller than the Surveillance Suite, but still contains an impressive array of equipment.

Neil sits at the computer and connects a thumb drive. Edward stands behind him watching.

NEIL
This just came in.

EDWARD
From who?

Neil works on importing the file.

NEIL
It was anonymous.

EDWARD
What is it?

NEIL

Not sure yet. The package was unmarked, but look at the drive.

Neil takes the drive and lays it on the desk. Written across the top, in black marker, are the words "SMOKING GUN".

EDWARD

Interesting.

Neil opens the file -- a video clip -- assesses the vantage point, and moves the clip into the 3D scene reconstruction.

Video from the assassination plays on the preview monitor. Neil swings the viewing angle around, scrubbing the footage forward and backward. When he comes to the moment of the gunshots, he swings around to the new piece of footage.

The entire event plays FULL SCREEN, as captured by a cell phone, covering a key missing angle. Neil rewinds -- runs it again -- moves around the scene -- plays it again -- zeros in on Raymond.

NEIL

Woah... you seeing what I'm seeing?

EDWARD

That depends on what you're seeing...

NEIL

It looks like this guy --

EDWARD

Raymond Dobbs.

NEIL

Right, it looks like he --

Neil zooms in and marks the clip. Raymond's gun is visible, from this angle only, through a small gap in his coat. He is obviously firing at Bennett whose eyes are locked on Raymond the entire time.

NEIL (CONT'D)

-- he shot the president -- through his own arm! Why would he --

EDWARD

Neil, has anyone else seen this?

NEIL

No, we're the first.

Edward lifts his hands, and begins spinning an all too familiar WEDDING RING on his finger -- back and forth.

EDWARD

Good. You've done good.

Before Neil can react, Edward has him in a chokehold.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

You've done real good.

Neil struggles for a moment, then realizes he can't free himself. His face turning blue -- eyes rolling back.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Attaboy... just let go.

Neil's body silently convulses a final time, then goes still.

Edward leans over Neil's body and grabs the mouse. A few clicks and DELETE. The footage is gone. He pockets the thumb drive and heads to the door.

Grabbing a yellow strip of nylon as he exits the room, he locks the deadbolt, looks over his shoulder, then places the magnetic nylon barrier across the doorway printed with the words "DO NOT ENTER - CLOSED FOR CLEANING".

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. RADIO STATION - DAY

RADIO HOST and RADIO GUEST discuss recent events during a typical in-studio interview.

RADIO HOST

So, things are looking up for President Ramirez. The economy's on an upswing, and the big news today is the Senate's acquittal on all five articles of impeachment, voting not to remove the president from office.

RADIO GUEST

It's remarkable. Of course, it does show just how hard it is to remove a president in this country.

RADIO HOST

Not that this president needed removing, necessarily --

EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR (MOVING) - PHOENIX - DAY [SUNSET]

The Dobbs family drives into the city, much of which has been boarded up and abandoned.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Phoenix, Arizona"

The radio broadcast continues.

RADIO GUEST (V.O.)

No, no. Just that it's very difficult to do. He'd basically have to be a serial killer caught on camera dismembering a small child --

INT./EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR/CITY STREETS (MOVING) - DAY

Raymond listens to the radio as he drives. Marina stares out the window, still furious. Aiden and Abbey are asleep in back.

RADIO HOST

(laughing)

Oh my... wouldn't that be a media circus? Wow. Let's take some calls.

Raymond turns off the radio.

RAYMOND
The president's sure had a hard
time of things.

MARINA
(can't stay silent)
He's had a hard time? How about us?
How've we been doing?

RAYMOND
C'mon Marina, it's just witness
protection.

MARINA
And I'm just supposed to be okay
with that? Especially since you
never said a word --

RAYMOND
Look, I was going to...

Raymond spots a black car in his rearview mirror.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
Dammit!

Raymond swerves to make a turn at the last second. He watches
the mirror -- the black car follows.

MARINA
What is wrong with you?!

He swerves again -- again it follows. The children wake up.

MARINA (CONT'D)
Raymond! Knock it off!

ABBEY
Dad, what's going on?

Raymond speeds up -- the black car stays with him.

MARINA
Not now Abbey!

Raymond watches the mirror.

AIDEN
I gotta go pee!

MARINA
Not now Aiden!

Raymond swerves again.

MARINA (CONT'D)
 Alright, let us out! Let us out of
 this car!!

The black car doesn't turn -- continues straight.

Raymond pulls over, his heart racing.

RAYMOND
 No, no. Look I'm sorry. I'm done.
 It was nothing.

MARINA
 (collecting her things)
 It wasn't nothing. You're out of
your mind.

RAYMOND
 We need gas, let me pull up a bit.

MARINA
 Fine.

INT./EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR/GAS STATION - DAY

Raymond gets out of the car, looks around, and starts fueling. He then pulls out his phone and starts texting Edward -- fingers flying.

While Raymond pumps gas, Marina eyes the keys in the ignition.

RAYMOND (TEXT)
 "Get off my ass!!!"

Marina jumps across her seat to the driver's side.

ABBEY
 Mom?

AIDEN
 I gotta pee!

MARINA
 (hushed)
 Quiet!

ABBEY
 Mom? What are you doing?

MARINA
 (in a loud whisper)
 I said quiet!

Raymond continues texting while pumping gas.

EDWARD (TEXT)
 "What are you talking about?"

RAYMOND (TEXT)
 "Don't play dumb!!"

Marina has her hands on the keys, ready to start the car, trying to get up the nerve.

EDWARD (TEXT)
 "Calm down."

RAYMOND (TEXT)
 "No! I'm out. This ends now!"

There's a long pause -- no reply. Raymond keeps checking his phone. Nothing. He puts the nozzle away.

Marina's hand still on the keys, head on the steering wheel, sobbing now.

A new text comes through on Raymond's phone.

EDWARD (TEXT)
 "Keep it together, or I release
 this."

Another text -- a video. Raymond plays it.

The SMOKING GUN video plays on Raymond's phone.

RAYMOND
 (quiet rage)
 God... what... ugh!

Marina can't do it. She moves back over to her seat, an emotional wreck.

Raymond walks back to the car and gets in. Marina wipes tears from her eyes. No one says a word.

They drive away -- in silence.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

As the day dawns, an increased security presence is obvious around the White House.

NEWS ANCHOR (PRE-LAP)
 ... Mother Nature must be smiling
 on us because it's going to be
 another beautiful day across most
 of the nation...

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Ramirez looks in the mirror as he puts on his tie. A small television in the room is on a cable news channel.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON SCREEN)
 ... and it should remain that way
 throughout the rest of the week. So,
 if you're planning on getting away --
 oh, wait... I'm getting some breaking
 news... we're receiving reports of an
 announcement just made in Europe. The
 Dow is plummeting... panic has
 erupted on Wall Street... oh my...
 details are trickling in...

As Ramirez watches, the color drains from his face.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D)
 (listens to earpiece)
 Ladies and gentlemen, it seems the
 EU, in conjunction with China, has
 declared the end of the U.S. dollar
 as the world's reserve currency,
 effectively collapsing the value of
 the dollar...

Ramirez is stupefied. He runs as fast as he can across the White House to the West Wing.

INT. ECONOMIC SITUATION ROOM [CABINET ROOM] - DAY

Administration officials are glued to the television screens, stunned, as video footage pours in from across the country -- bank runs -- panicked traders -- looters ravaging stores -- rioters taking to the streets.

Ramirez bursts through the door, panicked.

RAMIREZ
 What the hell is going on?

BALA
 China and Europe introduced a new
 reserve currency. It's replacing
 the dollar --

RAMIREZ

How?? What does this mean?

JANINE

Wait, here's the announcement.

Janine raises the volume on one screen showing BERNARD DUBOIS, president of the European Central Bank, speaking. Standing next to him is the CHAIRMAN of China's Banking Regulatory Commission.

On the surrounding screens, scenes show the devastation unfolding nationwide.

DUBOIS

... a new international reserve currency, replacing the U.S. dollar as the exchange currency of choice. This decision was made by a coalition of nations due to the volatility of the dollar and the growing instability of the U.S. economy. Months of planning and infrastructure changes have been spent preparing for the rollout...

RAMIREZ

Okay, that's enough!

Janine mutes the television.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

Help me out here. What needs to happen?

BALA

We need to shut down the markets and banks, immediately.

RAMIREZ

Won't that create more panic?

BALA

Sir, Americans are bleeding billions every minute our markets stay open. And the banks are going to --

RAMIREZ

Alright, yes -- shut 'em down! Shut everything down!

Bala runs out of the room.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
 (to Helms and Grady)
 We've got to restore order. I need
 you on that. Back up law
 enforcement, call up the reserves,
 whatever is necessary.

GRADY
 Yes, sir.

Helms and Grady leave the room.

RAMIREZ
 Connie, I need a meeting with the
 Fed, now!

CONNIE
 On it.

Connie runs out.

RAMIREZ
 (grasping at straws)
 What else do we need to do? Should
 we print more money?

DEVON
 Sir... the dollar is practically
 worthless now.

Ramirez's frustration can no longer be contained. He
 explodes, shoving paperwork, coffee, and everything else in
 his way off the table.

RAMIREZ
 Aaaargh!!!

DEVON
 (moving closer)
 Sir --

RAMIREZ
 (stepping back, throwing
 up his hands)
 No! Stop -- leave me alone!

Ana runs in.

ANA
 David, I just heard. What's the
 plan?

RAMIREZ
 What plan?! There is no plan!
 That's it! It's over!

ANA
 (moving in to console)
 Honey --

RAMIREZ
 (pulling away)
 No, no -- there's no helping this.

ANA
 We're America. We'll get back on
 our feet --

RAMIREZ
 They've cut off our legs Ana!

Everyone stands there -- silent -- Devon, Janine, the interns
 -- shocked, saddened, stunned. Ramirez's blood is boiling.
 Chris continues filming.

ANA
 This isn't you talking --

RAMIREZ
 (becoming delusional)
 Oh no, it is me. It's very much me!
 They did it! I don't even know who
 they are... but they did it! I have
 officially given up! You heard it
 here first.
 (beside himself, to the
 air)
 I'm throwing in the towel. That's
 all she wrote! It's all over folks!

Ramirez drops to the floor in a heap, now weeping.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
 I couldn't do it. I tried, Ana, I
 tried.

ANA
 (bending down, wrapping
 her arms around him)
 Oh, honey, I know you did.

Ramirez lets out a heart-wrenching guttural groan. Tears are
 streaming down Ana's cheeks. Not a dry eye in the room.

RAMIREZ
Oh..... I failed them... I failed
the people.

ANA
(arms still around him)
No, no... you haven't... you
won't...

FADE OUT.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE CORRIDOR - DAY

Cass looks around to ensure she's alone, then digs through Chris's camera equipment. She lifts his camcorder and pulls out the memory card, stuffs it in her pocket, and walks away.

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - DAY

Finch sits in front of a desk in a vaguely familiar office watching a video on his phone. A plaque in the background, an inscription now visible: "There is no substitute for victory."

RAMIREZ (ON SCREEN)
... I don't even know who they
are... but they did it! I have
officially given up...

Finch pauses the video, looks up across the desk.

FINCH
I think it's time.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

Ramirez is seated addressing the nation. Members of his staff and Ana accompany him off camera. The mood is somber.

As he speaks, we once again see scenes of American lives. This time, however, shots of families and individuals in gathering places are INTERCUT with scenes showing rampant mayhem and utter desperation.

RAMIREZ
My fellow Americans. Like you, I
have been devastated by the news
from Europe today, and by the
response of world markets.
(MORE)

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

However, more devastating has been the reaction of some among us who feel the solution to crisis is to wreak havoc on our struggling towns and citizens.

Understandably, many are frightened by these events and their aftermath. But, I plead with you to remain civil, patient, and hopeful. I pledge to do everything in my power to bring relief, restore order, and to restore your confidence in your government.

Many have lost their life savings. And for many, the prospect of a prosperous future looks grim. But, remember, America's true worth has never been in its currency or its markets. It's strength comes from the grit, perseverance, and faith of its people.

We have faced many challenges in our past that would have been the end of a lesser people. I am confident that this moment in history will be no different. We will overcome, and we will see the dawning of a new day.

Thank you, and God bless you.

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ramirez walks into the room, visibly distraught. Ana, reading in bed, looks up to see her husband's demeanor.

ANA

You know, stewing over things won't make them better.

RAMIREZ

Where did we go wrong, Ana?

ANA

We didn't go wrong. The world did -- and we're along for the ride.

Ana pats the bed, motioning for Ramirez to sit down.

RAMIREZ

But, people are looking to us to fix it.

ANA

(rubbing his shoulders)
People always look for someone besides themselves to blame.

RAMIREZ

Exactly... so where did we go wrong?

ANA

(smiles)
I see your point.

Ramirez turns toward Ana.

RAMIREZ

Remember when life was full of possibilities? When we thought we could do anything, and be anything?
(beat)
When did that change?

ANA

For most people? A long time ago.
For you? I don't know... today?

RAMIREZ

Have I been blind to reality for that long?

ANA

David, there's nothing wrong with your believing the best, and hoping for the best. It's why I fell in love with you.

RAMIREZ

I still believe. I just feel so lost...

ANA

(grabs his tie and pulls him close)
Come to bed with me tonight. Let's forget about all this, just for a little while.

Ana kisses Ramirez and almost has him convinced, but --

RAMIREZ
I'm sorry. I just need some time to
think.
(kisses her head)
Love you.

ANA
(as he's walking out)
Honey -- I may be a cynic -- but I
believe in you.

RAMIREZ
That makes one of us.

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ramirez loosens his tie and sits down -- exhausted --
distressed.

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick Davis, making his nightly rounds, walks past the living
room and sees Ramirez. Nick quietly enters the

LIVING ROOM

Ramirez doesn't notice him at first.

NICK
Sir? I'm sorry, I don't mean to
disturb --

RAMIREZ
Oh... no, it's okay Nick.

NICK
I just wanted to say -- your speech
tonight -- it can only help.

RAMIREZ
I hope so.

NICK
No one in the world would trade
places with you... I mean --

RAMIREZ
(slight smile)
I know what you mean.

Ramirez reflects a moment.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

Nick... have you ever had to make a decision... without any options?

NICK

Not sure I follow --

RAMIREZ

Like if you had to escape from a room... that had no doors.

NICK

I don't think so, sir. But, my mom always said, when God closes a door, he opens a window.

RAMIREZ

(silent laugh)

I think our mothers sat in the same pew.

NICK

(smiles and nods)

You keep believin', sir. The answer will come.

Ramirez is lost in thought.

NICK (CONT'D)

Well... I'll leave you to it.

As Nick gets up to leave, Ramirez comes to.

RAMIREZ

You have a good night.

NICK

You too, sir.

Ramirez gets up and walks back into the

MASTER BEDROOM

The lights are still on, but Ana has fallen asleep, holding her book. Ramirez takes the book, covers Ana with a blanket, and kisses her on the forehead.

Ramirez walks over to a dresser, opens the top drawer, digs through a box, and pulls out his rosary. His thumb slowly strokes the cross as he seems to study it.

He places the rosary around his neck, takes one last look at Ana, flicks the light switch off, and leaves the room.

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS: Each one dissolving into the next, Ramirez's intensity growing throughout.

- A) Ramirez paces the floor, holding rosary beads.
- B) He sits on the couch, rocking.
- C) Pacing again.
- D) On the floor, sitting against the wall.
- E) Pacing again.
- F) Ramirez sits on the couch and turns on the television. Cable news. He watches a moment, then throws the remote down, frustrated with himself. He leans back on the couch, still grasping the rosary, staring into the air.

INT. UNDISCLOSED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Dozens of soldiers in black tactical clothing resembling members of a SWAT team suit up and strap on gear, making their way to dark armored vehicles.

Their actions, precise -- their presence, threatening -- their intent... unknown.

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR (MOVING) - SAN DIEGO - NIGHT

The Dobbs's car flies over a dip in the road. CRASH! It slams into the pavement, jolting the family. In hot pursuit, the black car. A series of turns. Each one matched.

SUPERIMPOSE: "San Diego, California"

Meanwhile, the city sleeps. Shuttered buildings. Bums in gutters.

INT./EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR/CITY STREETS (MOVING) - NIGHT

Marina and the kids are terrified. Too afraid to speak. Raymond is bordering on lunacy. It's fight or flight. The cars continue at higher and higher speeds.

Raymond grabs his phone. Low battery warning on the screen. Five percent remaining. Calls Edward.

RAYMOND

Call them off Eddie!

EDWARD (V.O.)

You're in no position to make demands.

RAYMOND

Call them off or I go to the president!

Hard brake. Hard right turn. Matched.

EDWARD (V.O.)

Good luck with that. You might want to watch the news tomorrow.

RAYMOND

What is that supposed to mean?

EDWARD (V.O.)

Let's just say, Ramirez won't be in a position to make demands either.

A wide left through oncoming traffic. They narrowly avoid being hit. Raymond guns it.

MARINA

Oh my God!

AIDEN
Mom... I'm scared.

The black car falls behind, but is still in pursuit.

RAYMOND
What do you want from me?!

EDWARD (V.O.)
Ray, if you stopped running, they'd stop chasing you. Your actions determine their response.

RAYMOND
Nice try. I don't believe that for a --

EDWARD (V.O.)
We don't want to hurt you. We just need to keep you in line.

Swerves right onto a side street. Then swerves left. The black car can't keep up.

MARINA
Please stop, Raymond! Please!

AIDEN
Dad! I'm scared!

Abbey still can't talk. Paralyzed.

EDWARD (V.O.)
Be a good soldier Ray. Think of your family.

Raymond looks in the rearview mirror and sees the terror in his children's eyes.

EDWARD
Look, it'll all be over tonight. Everything will have changed.

RAYMOND
Wait... are you saying...

SCREECH! Raymond slams on the brakes and pulls to the side.

EDWARD (V.O.)
What are you doing Ray?

RAYMOND
I'll have no part of this!

EDWARD (V.O.)
Ray, don't do anything stupid!

Raymond hangs up. Sends Edward a final text.

RAYMOND (TEXT)
"GO TO HELL!!!"

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SECRET SERVICE SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Secret Service Agent BENJAMIN SCHULTZ, 30s, sits monitoring closed-circuit video feeds from around the White House. Nick enters the room and sits down, puts his feet up, pulls out his phone, and places his gun on the table next to him.

BENJAMIN
Taking a load off?

NICK
Nah -- already did that, down the hall.

Benjamin laughs while Nick launches a video app on his phone.

NICK (CONT'D)
Gotta make a call.

BENJAMIN
Ahh...

Nick's daughter, KAYLA, 3, is now on his phone's screen. His wife, JOLENE, mid 30s, can be heard off-screen.

JOLENE (O.S.)
See, it's Daddy.

NICK
Hey baby girl.

KAYLA (ON SCREEN)
Hi...

NICK
You ready for bed?

KAYLA (ON SCREEN)
Mm-hmm -- I miss storytime Daddy.

NICK
I know sweetie. Look, when things settle down here a bit, I'll be able to tuck you in again.

KAYLA (ON SCREEN)
When Daddy?

NICK
I don't know honey, but soon. Okay?

KAYLA (ON SCREEN)
Okay. I love you.

NICK
I love you too. Now, you have sweet
dreams, and give Mommy a big sloppy
kiss from me.

KAYLA (ON SCREEN)
Ewww!

JOLENE (ON SCREEN)
(in the background)
Ha, ha... he can give that to me in
person. Alright, tell Daddy good
night.

KAYLA (ON SCREEN)
Goodnight Daddy!

NICK
Goodnight sweetheart.

JOLENE (ON SCREEN)
(takes the phone)
Night babe.

NICK
G'night.

Nick ends the call.

BENJAMIN
Gotta love that. My son doesn't let
me tuck him in anymore.

NICK
(smiling)
Lucky you.

BENJAMIN
Nah -- I miss it.

NICK
Yeah... me too.

INT./EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR/ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Raymond's phone is almost dead. Two percent. He pulls up his contact list -- Secret Service group -- and types a message.

RAYMOND (TEXT)
"Coup attempt tonight! Señor and Spirit targets! TRUST NO ONE!"

He hits send. Battery at one percent. He anxiously watches the status bar while texts are sent. Agonizingly slow.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
C'mon... c'mon...

Halfway through sending, his phone dies.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
Damn!

Raymond throws his phone down.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
Dammit!!

Then, around the corner comes the black car. Abbey spots it.

ABBEY
Dad! It's back!

Raymond shifts into gear. Guns it. Fishtailing -- tires smoking -- then screams down the road.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SECRET SERVICE SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Just then, Nick receives Raymond's text. He reads it and --

NICK
What the --

Nick looks at the security feed and sees COUP FORCES converging on the White House's outer gate.

On another monitor, a SECRET SERVICE AGENT shoots a COLLEAGUE.

NICK (CONT'D)
Oh hell no!

Benjamin looks up from his phone, then scans the monitors.

Both men are now staring at each other -- they each start slowly reaching for their guns, eyes locked the entire time.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

SOLDIERS in black crouch and move in around a guard booth. A COUP MEMBER kneels below a window and opens the door while another steps in, fires on the GUARD, dropping him instantly.

The same occurs on the opposite end of the property. Swift. Surgical.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Two Secret Service AGENTS stand a few feet apart. They glance at their phones simultaneously. Raymond's text. One agent looks up, sees his partner's gun trained on him.

POP! He drops to the floor. Dead.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

Another Secret Service AGENT reads Raymond's text. Puts his phone away. Reaches for his gun.

POP! He's been hit. Looks up. Sees his assailant. Drops dead.

An AGENT to his side lowers his weapon and resumes his post.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SECRET SERVICE SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Nick and Benjamin are in a standoff. Guns in hand. Now on their feet, doing a slow motion shadow dance of sorts.

NICK

Benny, now there's two kinds of men in this world -- which one are you?

BENJAMIN

The kind that's not getting killed tonight.

NICK

Okay... that would make two of us.

BENJAMIN

You didn't sound real happy about that text.

NICK

I've been happier...

BENJAMIN

So have I...

NICK
 Would I be right to think we might
 be thinking the same thing?

BENJAMIN
 You might be...

NICK
 Okay, look. I'm just gonna come
 right out and say it... I'm not one
 of them.

Nick slowly starts to set his gun down.

NICK (CONT'D)
 I hope I'm not wrong about you.

Benjamin starts putting his gun away.

BENJAMIN
 Okay man, good because --

Nick, feeling better, reaches for his gun. Benjamin flinches.
 Gun back up. Aimed at Nick.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
 Whoa!

NICK
 Whoa! Hey... settle down... we're
 cool. We're cool?

BENJAMIN
 Oh yeah... very.

Benjamin lowers his gun again.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
 Sorry.

NICK
 Alright now, I'm gonna go get the
 president. You find us a way out.
 (removing his earpiece)
 But, don't call me on this. Phones
 only.

BENJAMIN
 Got it. Good luck.

NICK
 We're gonna need it.

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We've seen this before -- Ramirez asleep on the couch -- talking heads babbling on the television.

Ramirez sits straight up. Heart racing. Looks for the remote. Finds it across the room. CLICK.

He stumbles into the

ADJOINING BATHROOM

Ramirez splashes water on his face and stares into the mirror. His mind wanders for a moment.

PHOTO FLIPPING EFFECT: Images from Ramirez's life begin fading onto the screen, taking us further back in time.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY [FLASHBACK]

A schoolyard BULLY, 12, pushes a BOY, 8, half his size. The Boy is on the ground crying.

BULLY

What... can't take it? How 'bout I give you a real reason to cry.

As the Bully zeros in on the Boy, YOUNG RAMIREZ, 9, tries to help, though the Bully dwarfs him also. Young Ramirez's brother, SANTIAGO, 14, watches.

YOUNG RAMIREZ

Hey! Cut it out!

BULLY

Yeah? What's it to ya?

Young Ramirez takes a swing. A feeble attempt. The Bully shoves Young Ramirez to the ground, starts kicking the Boy.

SANTIAGO

David, stay out of it. He probably had it coming.

BOY

Ow! No... please no.

Ramirez is back on his feet. Rushes the Bully. Thrashing his arms. Connecting a few times.

YOUNG RAMIREZ

Leave him alone!

The Bully's had enough of Young Ramirez. Lands a blow square on the nose. Young Ramirez goes down. Out cold.

INT. RAMIREZ'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Young Ramirez's mother, MARGARITA, mid 30s, cleans his face and applies an ice pack.

MARGARITA

Ay David... why you do this? Always getting hurt.

YOUNG RAMIREZ

He wouldn't stop. I couldn't make him stop.

MARGARITA

You should try and talk --

YOUNG RAMIREZ

He wouldn't listen to me, mamá. No one listens to me.

MARGARITA

You can't help everyone David.

SANTIAGO

(walking by)

That's what I told him.

Margarita looks at Santiago with disapproval.

YOUNG RAMIREZ

Then who's going to?

Margarita runs her fingers through Young Ramirez's hair. Young Santiago looks on -- envious of the attention, but too proud to admit it.

MARGARITA

Ay... my boy. My beautiful boy.
You won't win every fight, mijito.
Pero, be patient. Your time will come.

YOUNG RAMIREZ

When mamá?

She brings Young Ramirez's head to her to kiss it, then holds him. Her words draw from a well of emotion.

MARGARITA

At just the right time. Mijo, you were my special promise.

Margarita strokes beads from a familiar ROSARY around her neck. As she speaks, she removes the necklace and drapes it over Young Ramirez's head.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

When I'd given up hope, you were the answer to my prayers. Someday you'll be that for the world.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - ADJOINING BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ramirez glares bitterly into the mirror. Defeated. The dangling rosary catches his eye. He rips it off and storms out to the

EXT. TRUMAN BALCONY

Ramirez hurls the rosary to the grass beyond the South Portico, letting out an --

RAMIREZ

Aaaauugh!!!

Exhausted and distraught, he leans against the railing with his head down. Then, he looks up and gets lost in the view. Peace is returning to him one deep breath at a time.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ana is asleep in bed. A Shadowy Figure emerges from the darkness and hovers over her. He covers her mouth.

NICK

(whispering)

Mrs. Ramirez... I'm sorry.

He drags Ana from bed. Ana coming to, tries to free herself.

ANA

(muffled)

Mmmm... whhh... mmm-mmmm...

NICK

(extremely hushed)

Mrs. Ramirez, it's Nick. You need to come with me... quietly. We're under attack.

Nick continues moving her to the door.

ANA
 (panic in her eyes)
 Mmmm???

Nick pulls Ana into the

HALLWAY

NICK
 I'll explain later. We need to get
 your husband.

Nick and Ana move through the hall and reach the living room door. From the hallway, they can see Ramirez on the balcony.

ANA
 (panicked whisper)
 David!

Ramirez turns to see Nick with a gun, holding Ana at his side. He rushes toward them.

RAMIREZ
 Let her go!

ANA
 No David, it's not --

NICK
 (still hushed)
 Sir, the White House is under siege!
 You need to come with me -- now!

INT./EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR/CITY STREET - NIGHT

The Dobbs's car blazes down the road. Raymond brakes hard. Turns left. Rounds the intersection. The black car hot on their heels. Another left through traffic.

The black car tries to follow. CRASH! An oncoming car clips its tail. Sends it spinning off to the shoulder.

Raymond is home free. Floors it. No looking back.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Coup forces advance on the grounds until they surround the entire perimeter of the White House.

Soldiers are now stationed near every outer exit.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick leads Ramirez and Ana carefully through the second floor residence toward the East Stairs. Nick receives a text.

BENJAMIN (TEXT)
"Surrounded! No ground floor exits!"

They start walking down the

GRAND STAIRCASE

Nick stops them.

NICK
Wait...

Nick sees two Secret Service AGENTS moving west through the first floor Cross Hall toward the State Dining Room.

NICK (CONT'D)
Back up!

They backtrack and wait in the

SECOND FLOOR STAIR LANDING

Nick tries calling Benjamin.

NICK
C'mon Benny... pick up.

ANA
If we could just get downstairs --

NICK
It won't help. We're surrounded.
Every door is blocked.

RAMIREZ
Um... how about a window?

NICK
(smiles)
I don't think that applies in this situation.

Ramirez shrugs. Benjamin answers the phone.

NICK (CONT'D)
Thank God --

BENJAMIN (V.O.)
(hushed)
Sorry. They're right outside my door.

NICK
Can we get to the PEOC?

BENJAMIN (V.O.)
Yeah... I don't think they're subterranean.

NICK
(to Ramirez and Ana)
Okay, we're going to the Operations Center. Follow me.

Nick carefully leads Ramirez and Ana down the Grand Staircase and checks the first floor hallway again.

NICK (CONT'D)
We're clear. But hurry!

Ramirez and Ana follow Nick through

CROSS HALL

They quickly round the bottom of the stairs, then continue around to the top of the first floor

STAIRCASE

They walk down, almost reaching the bottom, when --

NICK
Stop!

At the base of the stairs, around the curve, a Secret Service agent lies dead. Shot through the head. Gruesome. Ana's heart drops into her gut.

ANA
Oh... my... God...

RAMIREZ
Oh Lord...

Ramirez pulls Ana back and holds her.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
It'll be okay --

Nick proceeds further down to check the ground floor Center Hall. Ana looks back to the agent's body.

ANA
Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God.

RAMIREZ
Honey --

ANA
(tearing up)
It's not okay, it's not okay...

BENJAMIN (V.O.)
What happened?

NICK
(into phone)
They got Jimmy. Bullet to the head.

BENJAMIN (V.O.)
Oh no.

Nick checks the

CENTER HALL

Nick motions to Ramirez and Ana.

NICK
We're clear. This way.

Ramirez stops for a moment.

RAMIREZ
Nick, let's put away the gun.

NICK
Sir, your lives are in danger!

RAMIREZ
I don't care. No one is going to be killed on account of me.

NICK
(reluctant)
Alright sir... but we need to move.

BENJAMIN (V.O.)
Be careful Nick, they've been dropping guys all over.

NICK
(into phone)
Oh I'm not dying tonight. My little
girl's gettin' her storytime.

BENJAMIN (V.O.)
Yeah she is.

They continue around, down the stairs to the

BASEMENT

Still further they go, coming to an opening leading to a

SUBTERRANEAN TUNNEL

They quickly enter the tunnel.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SECRET SERVICE SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Benjamin looks at the security monitors. He sees Nick,
Ramirez, and Ana heading through the tunnel. Then, he sees
coup forces moving through the tunnel from the opposite end.

BENJAMIN
(hushed, into phone)
No, no! Wait Nick! Turn back!

NICK (V.O.)
What??

BENJAMIN
(loud whisper, into phone)
They're coming from the Treasury!

NICK (V.O.)
Dammit! Where do we --

Benjamin looks at another screen. Men are entering his room.

BENJAMIN
(into phone)
I gotta go! They're coming in --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SUBTERRANEAN TUNNEL - NIGHT

All on their own now.

NICK
 Wait! Oh man...
 (to Ramirez and Ana)
 This way, this way. Hurry!

Nick ushers the couple back to the

STAIRWELL

They climb back up the stairs.

RAMIREZ
 What happened to Ben?

NICK
 I think he's in trouble.

ANA
 Oh no.

NICK
 We're running out of options. We're
 gonna have to try the Command
 Center.

ANA
 Under the Oval?

RAMIREZ
 Yes.
 (to Nick)
 Can we get there?

NICK
 I sure hope so.

INT./EXT. DOBBS FAMILY CAR/CITY STREET - NIGHT

Raymond approaches an intersection. Not a soul around. The only lights emanate from a gas station across the street. Raymond pulls the car to the side of the road. He's frantic.

RAYMOND
 I need your phone.

MARINA
 What? Why?

RAYMOND
 Mine's dead. C'mon, I need it now.

MARINA
Mine's dead too.

RAYMOND
Are you sure?

MARINA
(annoyed)
Yes I'm sure.
(pulls out phone)
No battery. Dead.

Raymond looks up and spots a payphone at the gas station.

RAYMOND
Marina, listen to me. I want you to
take the car and drive away and
don't look back. You understand?

MARINA
What're you doing? What're you
talking about??

Raymond digs in the ashtray for change.

RAYMOND
I don't have time to explain. This
doesn't involve you. It should
never have involved you.

Raymond jumps out of the car.

MARINA
What's going on?!

ABBEY
Dad, what are you doing?!

RAYMOND
I'm so sorry. I'm sorry about
everything.

Raymond starts to walk away.

MARINA
(tearing up)
Raymond! Talk to me!

AIDEN
Dad?

A car pulls up next to the gas station across the street --
veiled in shadows, facing the Dobbs's car.

RAYMOND
 (turning back, pleading)
 I can't! I have to go! You have to
 go!

The whole family in tears now.

MARINA
 Ray --

ABBEY
 Dad! You can't leave!

Raymond walks a few more steps. Turns back again.

RAYMOND
 (to Marina)
 I love you! I always will!
 (to Aiden and Abbey)
 Kids, I love you! Be good for mom!

Across the street, the veiled car turns on its headlights.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
 Go Marina! Go now!

AIDEN
 No Dad! Wait!

Raymond starts running to the payphone. Marina puts the car
 in reverse, starts rolling backward.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
 Mom! No mom!

ABBEY
 You can't just leave him Mom! You
 can't!

She's right. Marina throws the car into drive -- speeds
 forward toward the intersection -- then slams on the brakes.
 Red light.

Raymond is halfway to the payphone. The car across the street
 pulls forward, into the light. The black car! Raymond is
 bathed in the light of its headlamps.

AIDEN
 Mom! It's --

MARINA
 Oh God, no --

ABBEY

Mom! Do something!

Seconds feel like hours now. A FIGURE leans out the passenger window holding an assault rifle. Takes aim.

Raymond unaware, eyes locked on the payphone. Almost there.

POP! POP! POP! Rounds unload -- striking Raymond -- repeatedly jolting his body. He falls to the ground. Dead.

Raymond's family in shock. Light still red. Aiden bursts out of the car, now standing in the street. In tears.

AIDEN

Daaaaaddy!

MARINA

Aiden! Get in the car!

ABBEY

Aiden!!

MARINA

Abbey! Get your brother!

Abbey, a basket case, pulls Aiden into the car. Slams the door shut. Marina pounds the gas. Cranks the wheel. Tires spinning. One-eighty. Speeds off into the night.

END ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING - NIGHT

In darkness, coup forces sweep each room.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Kicking in the door, a TEAM of three moves methodically through the room, looking for opposition. None here. The TEAM LEADER moves them along.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESS SECRETARY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Door kicked in -- sweeping the room -- a TEAM MEMBER finds a JUNIOR STAFFER hiding under her desk, seized by terror. Gun in her face, he forces her up -- shoves her toward the door.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The team comes around a corner and takes fire. Shots come from the connecting hall. A SECRET SERVICE AGENT is making a desperate attempt to stop the insurgents.

A COUP TEAM MEMBER uses an adjoining room to move around behind the Secret Service Agent. Trapped.

POP! POP! The agent falls to the floor.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - RESIDENCE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nick leads Ramirez and Ana in the dark through side rooms, narrowly avoiding being caught. They move in silence.

In the hallway just feet from them, rogue Secret Service agents move in and out of the ground floor residence Secret Service office.

Nick peers into the Center Hall, waits for the right moment.

NICK

When I say, move in and go left.
Quickly.

Ramirez and Ana nod. He gives the signal. Ana runs out first. Ramirez right behind. Nick follows, scanning all directions.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PALM ROOM - NIGHT

Ana, Ramirez, and Nick move swiftly to the --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESS CORPS OFFICES - NIGHT

As they enter the West Wing, they hear movement from the other side of the Press Corps Offices. Coup soldiers are entering. Nick, Ramirez, and Ana cut to the right just in time, entering the Press Kitchen.

As they move through the kitchen and around through the adjoining office space, coup members move around the opposite end, winding up in the press kitchen the moment it is empty.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESS BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Nick continues to lead the president and First Lady. A quick scan. Then a quick sprint through the briefing room.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING HALLWAY - NIGHT

When clear, Nick moves them through the hall to the

ECONOMIC SITUATION ROOM [CABINET ROOM]

Almost home free. They continue through

CONNIE'S OFFICE

Nick stops them. Goes over the plan.

NICK

We're gonna head toward the study.
Now we don't know if they'll be
coming up through there so --

RAMIREZ

Say a little prayer?

NICK

Right.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

Nick, Ramirez and Ana walk into the Oval Office. Strangely, the lights are on. Stranger still, Finch is seated at the president's desk. Calmly. As if nothing were happening.

RAMIREZ
What the hell are you doing here?

FINCH
Just trying out the chair.

ANA
Why you little...

NICK
Sir, you want me to remove him?

RAMIREZ
No, I'll handle it.
(to Finch)
I thought I told you never to come
back here.

FINCH
That's the thing about transitions
-- the outgoing party doesn't get
to make the rules.

ANA
Outgoing party?

RAMIREZ
Transition??

Finch stands and walks around the desk toward Ramirez.

FINCH
Look, it's nothing personal -- but
I pledged to defend America from
enemies foreign and domestic. And
right now, you're domestic enemy
number one.

ANA
He was elected by the people of the
United States!

RAMIREZ
You would subvert the will of the
people?

FINCH
(how quaint)
Oh, the people's will. What's
really more important, David --
what they want, or what they need?

Ramirez's hot button. He is seething now.

RAMIREZ
What they need is a functioning
democracy!

FINCH
Look, you had your chance. It's
time to let the adults have a turn.

RAMIREZ
That's it...

Ramirez lunges -- clocks Finch square in the jaw, then rushes
him, knocking Finch to the floor. They wrestle on the ground,
throwing verbal jabs in between punches. Frenzied. Chaotic.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
Seditious bastard!

FINCH
It's my duty --

RAMIREZ
Your duty my ass!

FINCH
I swore an oath!

Then from the doorway --

YATES (O.S.)
Gentlemen please...

Yates walks into the room, flanked by heavily armed SOLDIERS.
Ramirez and Finch stand, dusting themselves off.

ANA
You!

YATES
Let's be civil about this.

RAMIREZ
War is never civil, General!

A soldier pats Nick down and confiscates his GUN. Other
soldiers stand around the room with weapons at the ready.

YATES
This isn't war, David... it's a re-
appropriation of power.

RAMIREZ
A takeover??

FINCH
A coup d'état.

RAMIREZ
Don't sound so excited Thomas. You sure you want to get in bed with this filth?

ANA
Of course he does.

RAMIREZ
So, you're just seizing control... the hell with the constitution.

YATES
In its current form -- yes.

ANA
What does that mean?

YATES
It's outlived its usefulness. We have some, shall we say... tweaks.

NICK
Is this guy for real??

Yates looks over at Nick, annoyed.

YATES
(back to Ramirez and Ana)
We're going to form a more perfect union.

RAMIREZ
Yeah, well you're too late. It's been done.

YATES
Had our founders known what we know now, they would've never given civilians control --

RAMIREZ
Over their own government?!

ANA
I can guess who you'd put in charge.

YATES
Politicians work for their own interests. The military serves the interests of the nation.

NICK
You could've fooled me!

Yates has had it with this guy -- looks at SOLDIER #1.

YATES
What's he doing here?

SOLDIER #1
He was helping them escape, sir.

YATES
(walking over to Nick)
Oh, how unfortunate for you. They were never going to get out of this unscathed -- I never lose.

NICK
(furious)
What's going to happen to them??

YATES
Don't you worry. I'll put them to good use -- and then I'll dispose of them responsibly.

NICK
You won't get away with this!!

Nick lunges at Yates, but is pulled back by Soldier #1.

YATES
My... such gallantry. What a waste.
(in his face)
I hope you don't have anyone who cares for you.
(to Soldier #1)
Take him out and reward him for his treason.

SOLDIER #1
Sir?

YATES
You heard me!

The soldier escorts Nick out of the room at gunpoint.

RAMIREZ
General, you don't need to do this.
Let's take a few steps back --

ANA
What's wrong with you?!

YATES

You act as though I'm the villain.
I'm rescuing the country from you.

RAMIREZ

This isn't who you are! There's
still time to stop this!

YATES

His fate is in your hands. Either
leave quietly or --

RAMIREZ

Alright! We'll go! No one needs to
get --

POP! A gunshot comes from the Oval Office Corridor, startling everyone.

ANA

Oh my God!!

There's a moment where no one says a word while what just happened sinks in.

YATES

Oop... too late. Well, I guess
we've crossed a threshold.

RAMIREZ

You bet we have! You'll pay for
this!

YATES

Perhaps. But not today.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT [FOOTAGE]

Black and white security camera feed is FULL SCREEN. Nick's body lies on the ground where he was taken out to be shot.

The footage starts to rewind. Quickly, in reverse, Nick rises from the floor, he stands with his hands up, the soldier comes into view -- his gun aimed at Nick, then the two men walk backwards out of frame.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The scene plays in real time, forward, no longer security footage. Nick walks out, hands raised. Behind him -- the soldier -- with his gun raised.

A gunshot. POP! Nick drops to the ground, as does the soldier. We PAN over to reveal Benjamin around the corner with his gun drawn. The soldier is dead with a gunshot wound. Nick, unharmed, had dropped to the floor purely by instinct.

Benjamin helps Nick up.

NICK

Woah... am I glad to see you.

BENJAMIN

I thought you could use a hand.

Nick and Benjamin head down the stairs toward the Secret Service Office. Benjamin thinks he sees something down the hall and fires off a shot. POP! It's nothing.

NICK

Hey! Don't be so quick on the trigger.

BENJAMIN

Why??

NICK

These are our guys.

BENJAMIN

Well they're not acting like it!

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SECRET SERVICE OFFICE - NIGHT

Back where they started.

NICK

Look, it was the president's request. By the way, how did you get away earlier?

Benjamin lifts the gun, then looks over and points to a heap of bodies on the floor.

NICK (CONT'D)

Oh man. Okay, put that away.

Benjamin reluctantly complies.

BENJAMIN

It saved your life.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SECRET SERVICE SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

NICK
(heartfelt)
Thanks, by the way.

BENJAMIN
I did it for storytime.

Nick smiles and gives Benjamin's shoulder a squeeze. As they talk, Nick sits at the video console, scrubs through and marks the footage from his botched execution, and deletes it.

NICK
Man, that general's a real whack job.

BENJAMIN
What's he gonna do with 'em?

NICK
It ain't good, whatever it is.

BENJAMIN
Well... I guess high-value hostages are good insurance.

NICK
Yeah -- well we're gonna cancel his policy.

BENJAMIN
Alright. What's the plan?

In the distance, they hear the sound of a helicopter.

NICK
Marine One?

Looking to the security camera monitors, they see Marine One coming in.

BENJAMIN
Where's the rest of the fleet?

NICK
(scanning all monitors)
That's only for a sitting president.

BENJAMIN
Oh. Brutal.

NICK
Okay... I've got a dumb idea.

BENJAMIN
I love it already.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - SOUTH LAWN - NIGHT

Marine One begins its descent.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

Through Oval Office windows, Marine One can be seen landing on the South Lawn just outside.

YATES
Looks like your ride's here.

RAMIREZ
We're not leaving.

YATES
You don't have a choice, David.

RAMIREZ
You'll have to kill me.

YATES
No... the country doesn't need
another dead president right now.
But seeing as you need motivation --

RAMIREZ
Leave Ana out of this!

ANA
Let them! I'd rather die than --

YATES
No, no, no -- you two are way too
stubborn. I have something else in
mind.

Yates looks at SOLDIER #2

YATES (CONT'D)
Bring the prisoners.

SOLDIER #2
Yes, sir.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick and Benjamin quietly head toward the lobby. Benjamin starts to draw his gun.

NICK
(hushed)
Hey, put that away. They're
unarmed. In fact...
(holds out his hand)
... give it to me.

Benjamin capitulates -- hands Nick his gun.

BENJAMIN
(jeez Louise)
Alright!

Nick holsters Benjamin's gun.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING LOBBY - NIGHT

TWO MARINES put on gloves and hats, preparing to escort the president on Marine One. One is noticeably larger than the other.

Nick and Benjamin creep up behind the unsuspecting Marines. Quickly, they reach around their necks. Nick has his Marine in a chokehold. Benjamin struggles. Too short to get a good hold on the larger Marine, he dangles behind him.

Nick's Marine thrashes around, trying to free himself, to no avail. Benjamin's Marine lobs punches around his back, dragging Benjamin around the room.

Nick's Marine drops to his knees, almost out. Benjamin's Marine spins him around, feet swinging, knocking lamps off tables while Benjamin tries to get Nick's attention.

BENJAMIN
Hey -- hey --

Nick's Marine falls unconscious. Nick charges the larger Marine. Two on one. Punches fly in all directions. The Marine throws Benjamin over his shoulder -- slams him to the ground.

Nick takes several hits to the face, then the gut. Nick falls to the floor. Reeling in pain. Wind knocked out of him. The Marine moves in to finish Nick off when CRASH -- Benjamin slams a small table across the Marine's back. Not a dent.

The Marine turns and barrels toward Benjamin. A shove. A series of jabs. The Marine pounds Benjamin mercilessly.

The Marine grabs Benjamin, puts him in a chokehold -- Benjamin's face turning blue -- he tries desperately to pry the Marine's arm away.

With what little breath he has left, Benjamin squeaks out --

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
A little help --

CLOSE ON Benjamin and the Marine. Seconds from asphyxiation. Then, next to the Marine's head, a gun appears in frame. It's Nick -- standing -- barely.

NICK
Let him go.

The Marine drops Benjamin.

BENJAMIN
(gasping for air)
I thought you said no guns.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING LOBBY - DAY

Nick and Benjamin emerge from a closet wearing Marine Corps uniforms. Both Marines are standing in the closet wearing only their underwear. Nick locks them in from the outside.

Nick's uniform fits well, but Benjamin's is quite large. He's being swallowed by the coat and the slacks are falling off.

BENJAMIN
How's this gonna work?

NICK
Here, fold 'em over a few times.

Nick helps Benjamin with his pants, then they begin walking out to the

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - SOUTH LAWN - DAY [DAWN]

Side by side, Nick and Benjamin proceed to Marine One as the sun breaks over the horizon. Benjamin's uniform is noticeably oversized, but from a distance it almost works. Nick looks over and notices Benjamin struggling.

NICK
Hey, walk like a Marine.

BENJAMIN
I'm trying.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - ROSE GARDEN - DAY

Soldiers lead a dozen frightened CAPTIVES at gunpoint out to the Rose Garden, just outside the Oval Office.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Captives and soldiers are visible through the window.

YATES

It's amazing who you can find around here in the middle of the night.

RAMIREZ

(to Soldier #3)

Let them go! I'm your commander in chief.

SOLDIER #3

(to Ramirez)

Sorry sir.

YATES

They don't answer to you anymore, David. But you have the power to release the prisoners.

(to the soldiers outside)

Ready!

Soldiers raise weapons. Fear washes over each captive's face.

ANA

David --

RAMIREZ

Alright, alright... put the guns down. We'll go.

YATES

I knew you'd come around. The guns stay up, though, until you're gone.

RAMIREZ

No. Guns down, or we don't leave.

YATES

(to the soldiers inside)

So stubborn, this one.

(to soldiers outside)

Aim!

The soldiers point their guns at the Junior Staffer on the far left. Tears and beads of sweat drip down her face.

ANA

David!

RAMIREZ

Stop!! We're going -- you sick son
of a bitch.

YATES

David, you flatter me.
(to the soldiers)
See them to the door, would you?

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - SOUTH LAWN - DAY

Nick and Benjamin make it to Marine One, rotors spinning. The door closest to the front opens. They walk up the steps.

INT. MARINE ONE - DAY

One PILOT notices something is off.

PILOT

Hey, you're not --

Benjamin decks the pilot. The COPILOT tries to stop him. Nick pulls out his gun. The pilots back up and sit down.

NICK

(to Benjamin)

Hey! We need them to fly this thing. Just stand there and hold this.

(hands gun to Benjamin)

Hold it.

BENJAMIN

Okay, okay.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - SOUTH LAWN - DAY

Nick walks down the steps and stands to the side at attention.

Ramirez and Ana walk slowly from the Oval Office, hand in hand, across the South Lawn to Marine One. Along the way, a glint from Ramirez's rosary can be seen lying in the grass. Getting closer, they notice their escort.

ANA

David, it's Nick!

RAMIREZ
Well, I'll be...

Nick stands saluting the president. Ramirez throws a strong salute back.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
Well done Nick... well done.

NICK
My pleasure sir.

Ramirez and Ana board Marine One. Nick follows behind and pulls the stairs up into the craft.

INT./EXT. - MARINE ONE/NATIONAL MALL - DAY

The helicopter takes to the air, unchallenged -- only its occupants aware of the successful rescue.

As they leave, they fly over the same breathtaking vistas that once so captivated Ramirez from his balcony.

The TITLE THEME begins playing for the first time. Over it we hear Ramirez's voice in an address soon to become immortal.

RAMIREZ (V.O.)
America has fallen.

Forces from within systematically eroded the intent of her founders.

Once a beacon of hope to millions, the dream became a nightmare -- and that nightmare consumed us.

This account has been preserved for posterity, in hopes that the mistakes of the past will not become the mistakes of the future... should ever a great nation arise... after America.

THE END