

FIRST LADY OUT

Written by

William Richert

FADE IN:

EXT. BROOKLYN NAVAL YARD - NEW YORK CITY - DUSK

A Liberian Oil Tanker half the size of Rhode Island is lashed by the 160 MPH WINDS and RAINS of HURRICANE DUNBAR.

Oceans Away THE TANKER CABLES: Break their ties to the immense dock.

CAPTAIN'S BRIDGE: Lights go out as the vessel is thrust towards Long Island Sound.

IN THE DISTANCE: The STATUE OF LIBERTY is almost obliterated by the cutting rain.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - DUSK

Somewhere over the Atlantic, tossed by the same storm.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - CONTINUOUS

PRESS SECRETARY CYRUS WHITNEY hurries through the cabin towards the curtained aft section passing TWO STEWARDS struggling with dinner trays.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - CHIEF EXECUTIVE SECTION

PRESIDENT ANDREW CRIGHTON sits in his famous pose with his reading glasses almost falling off the tip of his nose, ignoring the shakes of his giant aircraft, reading a dense report.

CYRUS

Mr. President, there's been an accident.

President Crighton turns to his Press Secretary.

CYRUS

A Liberian oil tanker has broken loose and crashed into the Statue of Liberty. There's a half million barrels of oil leaking into Long Island Sound and the East River in Manhattan. president crighton When did this happen?

CYRUS

About two hours ago. I have the Mayor of New York on the line.

He holds out a small portable phone. The President looks at it, then puts it to his ear. His face is grim.

OUT THE WINDOW: LIGHTNING FLASHES across the thunderclouds.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH LAWN - THE WHITE HOUSE - DUSK

It's almost a festive view of the mansion, with lights all atwinkle through the falling RAINSTORM.

INT. PETER CRIGHTON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

At his desk in the corner, eleven-year-old PETER CRIGHTON is trying to do his homework at his computer monitor, but the CRACKLING THUNDER makes him jittery.

PETER'S POV: The windowpanes SHAKE with a CLAP OF THUNDER; LIGHTNING seems to jump right into his room.

Freckle-faced as a cereal ad, intense as a junior hockey player, Peter hates that this final assault makes him lose his cool. He grabs the floppy disk from his PC and runs out.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Rushing out his door, Peter almost trips over cables leading towards the Yellow Sitting Room.

PETER'S POV: Down the hall, TECHNICIANS AND TV MONITORS block the view to the room, where apparently an interview is under way.

Peter slips across the hall towards his parent's bedroom.

INT. YELLOW SITTING ROOM - WHITE HOUSE

FIRST LADY LAURA CRIGHTON, The Belle of her Kentucky Family, the sweetheart of the American people since her birth to President Roland Hartford, now retired, and his beloved wife and partner Kitty Hartford, Laura has always been at home in Washington and on the world stage.

Paradoxically, this has given her the kind of intimate relationship with the public that say, Diana had in England. In fact she is considered the start of the New American Royalty, though she would find the phrase laughable.

Laura is young for her position, in her very early forties. Many men have said they were in love with her.

SEATED OPPOSITE THE FIRST LADY in true CBN interview style is BARBARA BERNHARD.

A LOUD CRACK OF THUNDER makes the chandelier SHAKE. Both women look up at it.

LAURA
 (somewhat mischievous)
 There she goes again. barbara Who?

LAURA
 Mary Todd Lincoln. Hates thunder.
 barbara
 (slightly unnerved)
 You don't really believe this room
 is haunted, do you?

LAURA
 Oh, My Dad used to say Washington is
 full of ghosts - some are even
 deceased. barbara bernhard:

Enjoys the humor but not quite comfortable about the ghost
 as the room SOUNDS WITH THUNDER and the TV DIRECTOR calls
 out:

TV DIRECTOR (O.C.)
 We have picture, Barbara --

FIRST LADY AND BARBARA: Immediately back to business.

BARBARA BERNHARD
 (resumes interview)
 As the daughter of an American
 President President, and now the
 wife of an American president - have
 you ever wondered "what the simple
 folk do?

LAURA
 You mean, like the song? barbara
 Exactly.

LAURA
 I don't think there are any simple
 folk, really. Everyone I've ever
 known has basically been complex.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peter sits at the computer next to the President's massive
 desk, with a bust of Teddy Roosevelt on one side, a Remington
 Indian on the other, and pictures of Laura and his kids in
 between. He inserts his floppy disk even as another CLAP OF
 THUNDER sends shivers up his spine.

A SHRUNKEN HEAD ON A STICK suddenly appears before his eyes,
 lit by a BOLT OF LIGHTNING from outside. Peter is too scared
 to scream.

It's his sister WENDY, thirteen, the secret scourge of his life, teasing him again.

WENDY

What's the matter, scared of a little weather? Have to hide in Mommy's room?

PETER

(livid; levelly, trying to control himself)
I am not hiding. My system went down. I have three tests tomorrow. wendy Good, then since you're so brave, you won't mind if I turn out the lights --

She hurries towards the door, turns out the lights, leaving Peter alone in the pre-night darkness, terrified in spite of himself.

ANOTHER CRACK OF THUNDER. LIGHTNING seems to rush right into the room. Peter is out the door.

CLOSE ON: THE COMPUTER SCREEN.

The monitor changes color to dark blue, and the letters go white, printing: TOP SECRET - PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY- '91THERMAL PAPER 486.'

THE PAPER TRAY IN COMPUTER PRINTER: Begins to download the report on Pentagon Stationery with diagonal watermark.

THE DOORWAY: Peter suddenly darts back into the room, runs to his father's desk, snatches the floppy disk and school papers, unaware of the documents which have lazer-downloaded into his homework, or the rhythmic blue warning signal blinking on the President's computer monitor.

Peter runs out the door, slamming it behind.

CUT TO:

INT. NATIONAL CATHEDRAL SCHOOL CORRIDOR - NEXT MORNING

HIGH SHOT of the STUDENTS rushing to beat the early buzzer. Peter is easy to spot among his friends. He's the kid with two six-foot SECRET SERVICE MEN on either side. Peter waves his briefcase to friends up the hallway.

CLOSE ON: PETER'S BRIEFCASE, CONTENTS YET UNKNOWN.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STATUE OF LIBERTY - MORNING

The gray rain-benumbed sky is dotted with helicopters of every description, with POLICE CHOPPERS watching MEDIA CHOPPERS watching the PRESIDENT'S CHOPPER.

CLOSE ON: PRESIDENT CRIGHTON, peering down from his Air Force Huey surrounded by NEW YORK MAYOR and OFFICIALS. The President's face is as grim as the sky.

REPORTER'S VOICE

And so the President returned last night to wage a battle of a different kind, a war on our own shores...

PRESIDENT'S POV: A TWENTY MILE LONG OIL SLICK black-drenches sooty oil onto the base of the hallowed edifice, with inky blots on Liberty's Face. Small river tugboats appear stuck in the glue like wasps.

EXT. EAST WING GATES - THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A Honda Civic driven by a plumpish young woman, CLARA WRIT, arrives at the kiosk. She holds out her driver's license while the GUARD checks her appointment.

INT. EAST WING OFFICE SUITE - THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The First Lady and her Press Secretary LINDA BLAIR, along with TWO ASSISTANTS, are watching television news reports as President Crighton's helicopter circles the Statue of Liberty.

FIRST LADY: Intent on the circling helicopter.

LAURA

He always makes them fly too close.

Clara arrives, clutching a manila folder.

Laura turns to the blushing younger woman.

LAURA

(to press secretary)

Linda, this is Clara, Peter's teacher.
clara

(with a glance at oil
spill on TV)

Isn't it awful?

LAURA

Did you want to see me alone?

CLARA

Please.

INT. FIRST LADY'S EAST WING OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Laura sits in the wing chair next to her desk, reading pages from Peter's homework, while Clara sits on the sofa.

CLARA

I don't know how it got into his homework.

Laura turns a page.

CLARA

...when I saw "Top Secret" and "President's Daily Briefing", I realized I'd better call you.

Laura abruptly closes the folder, stands.

LAURA

You did the right thing, Clara. I appreciate your coming by.

CLARA

(blurts)

Is it true, Mrs. Crighton?

She rises anxiously.

CLARA

Is the ocean dead?

Laura hesitates.

LAURA

(carefully)

My husband gets lots of reports, not all of them are true.

CLARA

But it says we've only got ten years. I'm sorry, I know it's secret but I couldn't stop reading it -

LAURA

You did nothing wrong.

Clara composes herself.

CLARA

I'd better get back to class. Thank you for seeing me.

LAURA

How is Peter?

CLARA

Feisty, but we get along.

The two women look at each other, aware of some import of this meeting, yet still unsure what that is.

LAURA

Good.

CLARA

Thank you.

Clara leaves. Laura walks to her desk, intent on reading the report.

EXT. NORTH PORTICO - WHITE HOUSE - LATER THIS NIGHT

The President's helicopter descends onto the lawn under the glare of the landing lights. An AIDE runs to greet the President holding an umbrella, followed by the Boss's dog FRANK. As the President crosses the lawn in his solitary manner, MOVE UP TO THE SECOND STORY RESIDENCE WINDOW.

INT. FAMILY HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Alone, President Crighton steps out of the narrow elevator as JOSHUA, THE UPSTAIRS BUTLER, approaches with a tray of partly-eaten dinner. joshua Good evening, Mister President.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Good evening, Joshua.

The President continues to his bedroom door, turns the knob - but, odd - it's locked. Curious, the President looks up and down the hallway, but it's deserted. He tries again.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(leans into the door,
quietly, not to wake
the kids)

Laura?

INT. PRESIDENT AND LAURA'S BEDROOM

Laura turns to the door from the canopied bed, where she is arranging a stack of files. Quickly, she stacks them, then goes towards the door.

INT. HALLWAY

Laura opens the door.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Did you lock the door?

LAURA
You look exhausted.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
I spent the day watching fish and
birds die.

INT. BEDROOM

He slips off his tie, notices the files on the bed.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Don't tell me - another subpoena?

LAURA
I almost wish it were.

She crosses ahead of him, lifts a folder, hands it to him. He accepts it, studies her; she's unusually serious; then he looks at the contents, standing by the light to the side of the bed.

Quickly, he scans the file.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
This came today?

LAURA
Yesterday. It was downloaded into
Peter's homework by mistake.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Is this what's bothering you? Darling,
every day is doomsday to someone in
the Pentagon - that's what they do
for a living.

LAURA
Nifty, isn't it.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
I thought we agreed it would be my
job to worry - and your job to make
it bearable.

LAURA
We have two kids who may never grow
up.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Hey - I wanted to come home to my own berth tonight - I don't need another crisis. Come here, say hello --

LAURA

I can't be your berth if we might bring kids into the world who won't survive.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Kids? We already have kids! What's got into you? Frankly, I wanted to come home and make love to my wife tonight.

She watches as he tosses his jacket onto the bed, sits on the edge of the chair to take off his shoes.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

I did not want to curl up with a bed full of files.

LAURA

I'm sorry. I don't feel sexy tonight.

She crosses towards the door.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Where you going?

LAURA

I just read a military report that the oceans are toxic to the algae, which feed the fish, and now everything is dying. Isn't that the definition of the end of the world, without the bang?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

You may not quote to me from classified documents. You don't have the clearance, Darling.

LAURA

Don't you even care?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Of course I care! I've barely had a chance to study this! What's going on - you PMSing?

LAURA

(dryly)

No.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Honey, you know the drill - I've got
to review this with the agencies
involved - now please, come to bed!

LAURA
Not unless you promise to release
this report tomorrow, so if there's
any hope at all, we can start to
work on it.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
I can't promise that.

LAURA
Then I can't sleep with you.

Their eyes lock. She grabs the files from the bed and turns
abruptly towards the door.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
This is politics in the bedroom! We
said no politics in the bedroom!

But she's gone.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
(to himself)
Just one damn thing after another.

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM

Laura enters without turning on the light. She crosses to
her son's bed, sits on the edge, gazing down fondly at the
sleeping boy, still holding the files in her arm.

Peter is wearing his Cardinals' baseball cap; she gently
takes it off, covers him, and then notices his school
knapsack.

Quietly, she lifts up the knapsack, takes out his books,
enters the secret files.

INT. WENDY'S BEDROOM

Wendy is animatedly talking to one of her girlfriends on the
telephone when she hears the door open.

She glances up to see her Mother enter the room.

WENDY
Just a minute - my mom walked in.
(to Laura)
What's up?

LAURA

Are you okay, honey? wendy Sure,
why?

LAURA

Just checking. wendy
(into phone)
Hold on.
(to Laura)
Did you want something, mom?

LAURA

(kisses her cheek)
Be nice to Peter, will you? He's
your little brother and he looks up
to you. wendy I am nice to Peter!

LAURA

I know you are. You're very precious
to me.

Kissing Wendy's cheek once more, she leaves the room. Wendy
looks after her briefly, then returns to the call.

WENDY

Sorry about that - something's weirded-
out my mom - No! Tell me everything!

CUT TO:

THE HALL CLOSET: It opens, and a trenchcoat is removed.

CUT TO:

THE UMBRELLA STAND: AN UMBRELLA is lifted up and out.

EXT. EAST WING DELIVERY ENTRANCE - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

At this hour, one MARINE GUARD stands watch. He turns at the
sound of APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS.

MARINE: Surprised to see the First Lady walking past wearing
a trenchcoat, holding an umbrella, with her kid's school
knapsack strapped on her back. He remains standing at rigid
attention.

LAURA

Good evening, Sergeant.

SERGEANT

Good evening, Mrs. Crighton.

MARINE'S EYES: Follow her.

MARINE'S POV: The First Lady walks over to the bicycle rack, separates one of the messenger bikes from the other, folds her umbrella and tucks it into Peter's knapsack like an archer's quiver, then gets onto the bike and rides off towards the guarded gates.

THE ASTONISHED SERGEANT: How should he react?

EXT. EAST WING GUARD TOWER. NIGHT.
TWO SECRET SERVICE OFFICERS, sorting
out tomorrow's passes, look up
startled.

WHAT THEY SEE: The First Lady wheels right by, around the lowered arm of the crossing gate, and out onto the street with nary a pause.

THE GUARDS: Exchange glances. What is their duty?

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - NIGHT

Laura Crighton guides her messenger bike across the expanse separating the White House from the outer world. It is deserted at this hour, and the street lamps in the rain cast a blurry glow. Nobody is there to notice the lone cyclist as she rounds the corner and merges with the late night traffic.

EXT. OLD GEORGETOWN COBBLED STREET - NIGHT

A BICYCLE TIRE splashes along the gutter.

UNDER THE CONVERTED GASLIGHT STREET LAMPS: The First Lady bikes through the rain.

LAURA'S FACE: Water streams down her cheeks. She blinks raindrops away.

A COLLEGE COUPLE: Kissing at a car door. They turn as she whips by. college guy Hey lady! Learn how to drive!

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

THE DARKENED SECOND FLOOR: All at once, a light goes on.

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Unable to sleep, Crighton sits up, stares at the vacant space beside him in frustration. He gets out of bed.

INT. HALLWAY - RESIDENCE

President Crighton strides towards the sitting room, tying his robe.

INT. SITTING ROOM

She's not there.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S ROOM

President Crighton peeks in on Peter, sleeping peacefully, no mom in sight.

CUT TO:

INT. WENDY'S ROOM

Wendy is asleep with the phone to her ear.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON: Frowns. He wonders where his wife is.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLONIAL STREET - GEORGETOWN - NIGHT

Laura bikes up a low hill, stopping in front of an Early American Brownstone with a steep driveway.

INT. SALLY AND BERNIE'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

DR. BERNARD GOLDSTONE and his wife, SALLY, the former Sally Bowles of Harper's Ferry, are in bed asleep in the shuttered room.. DOWNSTAIRS BUZZER SOUNDS.

Nobody moves. Next a LOUD DOG BARKS from the hall below. bernie Somebody's ringing the buzzer.

SALLY
 (refusing to wake)
 I'm in the middle of a dream.

In the shadows, Dr. Goldstone gets out of bed in his silk pajamas.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS FOYER - NIGHT

A LARGE DOBERMAN BARKS at the door.

BERNIE
 (to dog)
 Quiet Lucy - you're waking me up.

He grabs the collar of the beast, then looks at the parted curtains on the colonial door.

HIS POV: The face of Laura Crighton, framed in the rain-spattered window.

Bernie's jaw drops.

LAURA
 (through window)
 Sorry to wake you, Bernie - . It's
 me, Laura. bernie
 (forgetting to open
 the door, just shouts
 upstairs)
 Sally!?! It's Laura Crighton!

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

Even in the dark, we can see Sally's eyes pop open.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Across the lawn, we see the light go on in the ground floor pantry.

INT. GROUND FLOOR PANTRY - NIGHT

The NIGHT CHEF in his immaculate white jacket lifts the RINGING PHONE.

NIGHT CHEF
 (into phone)
 Hello?
 (surprised)
 - Why, no Miser President, the First
 lady isn't here --

With a curious frown, he sets the phone back.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

President Crighton returns the phone to its cradle. He crosses to the window.

PRESIDENT'S POV SHOOTING THROUGH WINDOW: Down below, on the courtyard, SERGEANT MAJOR FORSTER , wearing civilian clothes, is walking towards the East Wing Gate, where one of the Guards we saw earlier is pointing towards the row of messenger bikes.

The President steps back from the window, heads to the door.

CUT TO:

INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The President steps out of the residence elevator even as the Sergeant Major enters the revolving ground floor door, crosses to him.

SERGEANT MAJOR
(clearly worried)
Mrs. Crighton used one of the messenger bikes. She gave no word about where she was going.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
(as this sinks in)
I didn't realize she was this upset. Where can she go in Washington at three AM?

SERGEANT MAJOR
Not too many places, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
We'd better go look for her. It's raining out there. sergeant major The Secret Service is already into it, Mr. President.

He steps aside as Crighton crosses to the revolving door, pushes it open.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE PORTICO - NIGHT

President Crighton steps out into the rain, looks into foggy horizon.

CLOSE ON: PRESIDENT CRIGHTON: The rain splashes his face, the same rain as Laura's.

HIS POV: The world-famous view seems lonely and almost desolate.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLDSTONE HOUSE - GEORGETOWN - NIGHT

The view from the street. Now the Garage Door opens.

INT. BERNIE AND SALLY'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Laura is behind the wheel of the family Jeep Cherokee, while from the side door Sally Bowles, still in her robe, rushes out with a bottle of Evian water.

Laura starts the engine, rolls down the window as Sally hands her the bottle.

SALLY

Sure you don't want to say where
you're going?
(ironic)
Somebody's bound to be curious --

LAURA

You're a real pal, Sally, but It's
better you don't know. I'll get the
car back tomorrow - and thanks -
you've always been there for me...
They hug through the window as Bernie
rushes out with a red gas can. bernie
Here, you might need this .

LAURA

(accepting it through
window)
They still have gas stations where
I'm going, Bernie. bernie Just in
case.

SALLY

(overwrought, hugs
Laura again)
Oh Laura -- !

LAURA

Bye --

And with a quick wave, Laura presses the pedal.

EXT. GARAGE - GEORGETOWN - NIGHT

The Cherokee zips down the steep driveway and heads off.

BERNIE AND SALLY: Look after her.

SALLY

I'm worried about her.

BERNIE

I'd worry about him. This is all he
needs.

THE GEORGETOWN STREET: Laura's car has vanished.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Now the entire first floor has lights on. SECRET SERVICE
AGENTS are congregating at the East Wing Gate., where a SILVER

CORVETTE pulls to a stop. We recognize Press Secretary Cyrus Whitney at the wheel. He's waved on through.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIRGINIA PARKWAY - CONTINUOUS

A GIGANTIC EIGHTEEN WHEELER IS HONKING WILDLY.

INT. CHEROKEE NIGHT

Laura glances up at the monster truck, huge in her rear view mirror.

LAURA
(apologetic, to the
mirror)
Sorry about that.

EXT. VIRGINIA PARKWAY

The Cherokee moves to the fast lane.

CUT TO:

INT. GROUND FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Cyrus enters the GATHERING CROWD, strides towards the residence elevator in his raincoat over pajama bottoms.

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cyrus stops in the doorway, concerned.

CYRUS' POV: The President is standing over at the window, looking out.

CYRUS
(tentative)
I understand there's still no word,
Mr. President.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
First time she's ever done anything
like this. I have always known exactly
where she was. There is nothing
irresponsible about her.
(turns to him)
Yet she's just ridden off on a bicycle
in the middle of the night going who-
the-hell-knows where.

CYRUS
How far can she get on a bicycle? In
the rain?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

I just hope she's all right.

He turns back to the window.

CUT TO:

ROADSIGN: "PARKWAY ENDS. MERGE LEFT."

EXT. VIRGINIA PARKWAY - NIGHT

HIGH SHOT: The Cherokee merges onto a two-lane highway.

INT. CHEROKEE - NIGHT

Laura squints though the rain lashing her windshield. She glances to her side.

CLOSE ON: Peter's knapsack on the seat beside her.

Laura returns her eyes to the road, then blinks in surprise.

LAURA'S POV SHOOTING THROUGH WINDSHIELD: In front of her is a large truck packed with new-baled hay. It's tarpaulin is flapping in the wind like a loose sail, and now, in the glare of her headlights, a BALE OF HAY FALLS LOOSE, BOUNCING IN FRONT OF HER CAR.

Laura swerves hard.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

The Jeep narrowly misses the hay bale, while THREE OTHER BALES BREAK LOOSE, and Laura navigates dangerously close winding through them.

The speeding Cherokee pulls up alongside the truck, Laura HONKING at the TRUCK DRIVER.

INT. CHEROKEE - NIGHT

Laura lowers the side window.

LAURA

(honking, shouts)

You are losing your hay bales!

Then she glances out front.

LAURA'S POV THROUGH WINDSHIELD: A GREYHOUND BUS is heading straight at her.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The BUS bearing down on her from the front, the TRUCK at her side, not a good sign.

HIGH SHOT: The Cherokee shoots ahead of the truck as the bus blasts its HORN, narrowly missing catastrophe.

CUT TO:

INT. HAY TRUCK - NIGHT

THE GRIZZLED DRIVER spits into the spittoon next to his elbow. grizzled driver Insanity.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Laura's car speeds into the stormy night.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - DAWN

ANGLE ON

The side window, where first light finds Bernie and Sally can be seen sipping their morning latte in the kitchen.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bernie looks up at the thunderous ratcheting of an APPROACHING HELICOPTER.

BERNIE AND SALLY'S POV: SHOOTING THROUGH KITCHEN WINDOW:
Laura's bicycle passes by carried in the arms of a beefy man wearing a black parka with F.B.I. stamped on the back.

A KNOCK IS HEARD AT THE OUTSIDE DOOR. The Doberman starts BARKING.

The two look at each other.

BERNIE

(rises)

Well, that's the sound of a million dollar book deal and a movie of the week --

(as he crosses to the door, off Sally's disapproving look)

Just kidding.

EXT. GOLDSTONE BROWNSTONE - DAWN

Bernie opens the front door.

HIS STARTLED POV: The entire street is filled with Secret Service Unmarked Cars and D.C. Squad Cars with choppers overhead.

BERNIE
(nonchalant, to Secret
Service AGENT)
Something I can help you with?

CUT TO:

EXT. BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINTOP ROAD - DAY

CLOSE ON: ROAD SIGN "WELCOME TO KENTUCKY, THE BLUEGRASS STATE"

The Cherokee speeds over the hill.

EXT. HARTFORD FARM - LUMINA, KENTUCKY - DAY.

It's a top stud breeding farm nestled in a low valley between Appalachian peaks where morning mist flows like blue smoke.

There is a small horse racing track, lots of white wood fencing and, there, atop a hilly elevation, sits the historic birthplace of former President Roland Hartford and family .

Now Laura turns her Jeep Cherokee into the long, long driveway.

INT. BREAKFAST ROOM - 'THE FARM'- MORNING

Seated at the head of the long wooden table, wearing his favorite blue morning outfit with a white tie, is FORMER PRESIDENT ROLAND HARTFORD, awaiting his breakfast with implacable calm as he flips through a small stack of newspapers.

NEWSPAPER: An entire front page is rather expertly torn off.

Roland, who is somewhat more than eccentric with his case of Alzheimer's, carefully folds the page and deposits into his jacket pocket. Now he turns to the LONDON TIMES, tears off the front page of this paper, too.

Across the room the kitchen door opens and KITTY HARTFORD, his wife of 37 years, enters with a breakfast tray. She's wearing white gloves and her mouth is covered by a surgical mask.

Roland tears the front page off the DUBLIN GAZETTE.

KITTY

(as she approaches)
 Honey, your hands are black with
 newsprint again. You'd better go
 wash them. roland
 (looks at his black
 fingers)
 I wash them , but it just doesn't do
 any good. Comes right back.

KITTY

Please, before your eggs get cold.
 roland Why are you wearing a mask?

KITTY

Because of the flu. roland You have
 the flu?

KITTY

You do. roland I do what?

KITTY

You have the flu. roland I feel
 fine.

She sets the tray down, serves a small bowl of poached eggs
 and toast in front of her husband.

Roland studies his hands.

ROLAND

(as if suddenly
 occurring to him)
 I'd better wash up before breakfast,
 Hon.

KITTY

Good idea, darling.

She crosses back to her own chair as Roland rises and heads
 for the door. When Roland opens the door, Laura is standing
 there, holding her knapsack.

LAURA

Hi, Dad.

Roland steps back, studies her, then breaks into a beaming
 smile.

ROLAND

Kitty! What a pleasant surprise!

LAURA

It's Laura, dad. Kitty is mother's
 name.

ROLAND

Of course!

He gives her a giant hug, which causes "nurse" Kitty consternation.

KITTY

Roland! Stop that! You're spreading germs!

LAURA

Mom? What's the matter, why are you wearing a mask?

ROLAND

She has the flu.

KITTY

I do not! He does.

(rising)

Laura, what are you doing here? -- Why didn't you call first, it's wonderful to see you darling, but you know I hate surprises -- where's Andrew?

LAURA

He's at home.

ROLAND

Andrew will make a great President some day.

KITTY

Andrew is already President, Roland. roland All the better!

KITTY

Laura I cannot imagine why you didn't let us know you were coming - we are totally unprepared!

LAURA

I came by myself, mother. I drove down from Washington.

KITTY

You drove here alone?! Why?

LAURA

I got tired of the lies.

ROLAND

(confused)

What did she say?

KITTY
 (alarmed)
 What did you say?

LAURA
 I've left Washington and I'm not
 going back until things change.

ROLAND
 Until things change? In Washington?

KITTY
 You mean you've left the President
 and drove down here all by yourself?

LAURA
 It's a protest, mother.

KITTY
 (shocked by the word
 from her own)
 A protest!?

ROLAND
 (annoyed, looks around)
 What protest?!!

Laura crosses to the table, drops her son's knapsack, opens
 it.

KITTY
 What are you doing with that filthy
 bag?

LAURA
 It's Peter's backpack, I borrowed
 it.

Roland starts to help her open it.

KITTY
 Roland, I forbid you to touch that,
 it's filthy.

Laura slides out the files with the Thermal Paper, opens it.

LAURA
 I found this mixed up in Peter's
 homework. It's a kind of blueprint
 for the death of the oceans.

She holds it out.

Kitty looks at the top page, recoils.

KITTY

Laura, this is top secret. You can't walk around with a document like this!

LAURA

Mother, what is top secret about human extinction? Who'll be alive to tell?

KITTY

Are you telling us that you have left the White House without supervision? With a top secret document? Is that the tale you've come home with?

LAURA

Yes, I guess it is.

KITTY

Oh my god, they've got to you. Somebody's got to you. Poor Andrew.

SOUND OF APPROACHING HELICOPTERS. The three turn to the window.

SHOOTING THROUGH WINDOW: An AIR FORCE HUEY ENTERS THE VALLEY. It is followed by a smaller, light blue chopper with the logo KLIQ TV on its side.

KITTY

Look!
 (ripping off surgical
 mask and gloves,
 primping her hair)
 They've already found you!

LAURA

I'm not hiding, Mother. I'm coming out with it. I'm finished tolerating a bunch of men who care about nothing but their own selfish power and ambition.

KITTY

You can't change the world to suit yourself!

LAURA

Why not? Didn't you?

Roland, suddenly hungry, discovers his breakfast.

ROLAND
 Honey, will you tell the cook these
 eggs are ice cold?

Laura and Kitty turn to the former President, who's touching
 his poached eggs..

THE KITCHEN DOOR: Swings open. MARIE GONZALES, the household
 cook, holds a cell phone.

KITTY
 What is it, Marie?

MARIE
 The President is calling Mrs.
 Crighton.

ROLAND
 I'm not calling anyone, I'm having
 breakfast.

LAURA: Stares at the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Holding the phone, President Crighton looks out into the
 rose garden. He's dressed for the day now, in blue suit with
 cream tie.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 (into phone; hiding
 his concern)
 I'm glad you made it. It wasn't a
 great night to be out.
 (a beat)
 They're in school. Peter figured you
 went jogging, He wanted you to help
 him with his play.
 (a beat)
 Would you mind telling me what you're
 doing ?

CUT TO:

INT. FORMAL DINING ROOM - KENTUCY - DAY

Holding the phone to her ear, Laura exits the kitchen doorway,
 slips inside the enourmous room, with a table fit for fifty
 and a fireplace big enough to roast a cow. But at least it's
 deserted and private.

LAURA

(into phone)

Mother thinks I'm ruining your career
and hurting the party and abandoning
my duties...

(a beat)

But I can't worry about the small
stuff.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Small stuff?

He turns.

PRESIDENT'S POV: Across his desk WHITE HOUSE CRISIS STAFF
HAS BEGUN TO GATHER: SECURITY ADVISOR THORNTON, SECRETARY OF
STATE MARION BURNHEIM, CHIEF OF STAFF BRET COTTER, PRESS
SECRETARY CYRUS WHITNEY, PERSONAL SECRETARY ROSEMARY ALICE
WOODS, WHITE HOUSE COUNSEL GEORGIA BRITWEATHER.

He tries to keep his voice low.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Darling, you have to come home. - I
mean, to this home, to me and Peter
and Wendy --

Cyrus steps over with a piece of paper he's just written on.
Crighton reads it, informs Laura.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

The media spin is that you're leaving
me because you heard I had an affair.
It's going to be the lead story in
the Post.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND DINING HALL - KENTUCKY - DAY

LAURA

Did you have an affair?

(smiles)

No, I won't burden you with that
kind of question, but I will be a
thorn in your side as long as you're
one of them.

(pause)

A man, I guess. As long as you're a
man.

She speaks to him, but wonders about her own convictions.

LAURA

No my love, I won't be reasonable.
You know what I want, and if you
can't give it, I will take it. Either
you release that report or I will,
at noon tomorrow on the steps of
Birchwood Methodist.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(into phone)

Laura, if you do that it can have
legal ramifications which I can't
control. Already we have a Press
Room baying like a pack of hounds -
you've got to come to your senses!

He turns, realizing he spoke too loudly.

HIS POV:

A ROOMFUL OF OFFICIALS: listening intently.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(into phone)

Just try to remember you're not alone
in your concerns about the
environment. There is a very big
world out there, and it depends on
diligence and --

(a pause, surprised)

What did you say?

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - KENTUCKY - CONTINUOUS

LAURA

I said: bullshit. It's one of my
farm girl words. I have to go now.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 (somewhat ironically,
 not revealing her
 remark)
 Yes. I've got some things to do here,
 too --

He lowers the phone; she's obviously hung up. Now he turns to the room.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 My wife intends to hold a press
 conference at noon tomorrow on the
 steps of her family church.

CYRUS
 (lame joke)
 Be there or be square --

GATHERING OF HIGH OFFICIALS: STUNNED.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATIONAL CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - DAY

Peter is leaving class, soberly walking between his SECRET SERVICE AGENTS, briefcase at his side, while the PRESS SHOUTS QUESTIONS.

PRESS
 (en masse)
 " Did your mother say why she was
 leaving, press Peter?" "Did your
 parents have an argument Peter?"
 "Why did your mother need to leave
 the White House on a bicycle, Peter?"

Peter enters the waiting towncar, which quickly drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITECOME SCHOOL FOR GIRLS - DAY

Wendy and TWO CLASSMATES are ushered towards her waiting car while across the street the PRESS CALL OUT.

PRESS
 "Are you going to visit your mother,
 Wendy?" "Do you know when your mother
 is coming home, Wendy?" " Did you
 hear your parents fight, Wendy?"

Wendy enters the car with her friends.

CUT TO:

INT. ABC EVENING NEWS - NIGHT

This is the view from inside the studio, where REUTER HEMMINGS gets his cue and looks up at the camera.

REUTER HEMMINGS

Good evening. Tonight we have the other shoe - that is, to many Americans who've followed the life-long saga of the President's Daughter and the Captain of the Guard, and have wondered what the First Lady may have - and I say MAY have endured in her obvious infatuation with his charms and his high achievement, in spite of the many rumors of his possible philandering, here we have the first evidence that something in fact, was wrong. Possibly VERY wrong... shots of the west wing bicycle rack, of the road to georgetown and the townhouse of dr. bernard and mrs. sally goldsone.

REUTER HEMMINGS (V.O.)

While the exact time has not been disclosed, we do know now that sometime during the wee hours of this morning, First Lady Laura Crighton took a messenger bike and left her husband and children for her family home in Lumina Kentucky, where, we are told, she will issue a statement tomorrow at noon... shots of laura as a girl, and andrew crighton as a boy.

REUTER HEMMINGS (V.O.)

In our history, no couple was ever so well known, or so captivating to the American People...

Snapshots of Laura playing on the white house lawn with a pony.

REUTER HEMMINGS (V.O.)

She grew up right before our eyes...We watched her meet and then fall in love with the boy from Maine...

Shots of Laura and Andrew in a convertible driving away from new haven.

REUTER HEMMINGS (V.O.)
He was, she said, the smartest man
she'd ever met, and the cutest...

Shots of a rowboat slipping through trees on the wide kentucky creek

REUTER HEMMINGS (V.O.)
Even when they tried their hardest,
their love affair was never much of
a secret...

CUT TO:

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The President, dressing for a formal dinner, is watching the TV.

CLOSE ON: Crighton. Remembering.

CUT TO:

INT. KENTUCKY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Laura pours a cup of tea, watching he portable TV.

CLOSE ON: Laura. Remembering.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAZY KENTUCKY CREEK - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Remains of a picnic sit in the center of the boat as it slowly winds along the riverbank. Laura is sitting forward, letting her fingers trail in the water, while the future President is working on his laptop.

Laura looks back at him. Andrew is intent on his work. Laura frowns.

LAURA
Problems?

ANDREW
I just erased the last three lines.

LAURA
You have to remember to press "save".

ANDREW
I did.

LAURA

You can write me another one.

ANDREW

It won't be as good.

LAURA

I'm not sure laptops are meant for spontaneous poems.

ANDREW

This one is top of the line!

LAURA

When I did the grammar on "How Do I love thee, Let me count the ways, I love you from the depths and height my soul can reach" my PC changed it to "By what means do I state affection for you, from the bottom or the top or distant calibrations"...Poems and technology don't always mix... ALONG THE BANK OF THE CREEK: The brush seems to be alive with hidden movement, following the pair with UNSEEN EYES.

ANDREW

Dead right!

Without further ado, he tosses the laptop into the creek.

LAURA

Andrew!

ANDREW

Down with technology! Up with poetry!

They watch the lap top as it floats briefly, then sinks like a stone. Suddenly Laura jumps in after it.

ANDREW

Laura!

He stands up on the rowboat, but even before he's got a chance to react, FIVE SECRET SERVICE AGENTS WHO'VE BEEN FOLLOWING dash into he water to save the President's Daughter, who stands up now, in the waist-high creek, holding the laptop and laughing.

ANDREW

(looks from the Agents
to Laura)

That was crazy!

He leans over quickly to pull his fiancée up into the boat, but instead she grabs his hand and pulls him into the creek with her.

ON THE OPPOSITE BANK: A SCORE OF FOLLOWING PAPARAZZI POP UP TO RECORD THE MOMENT.

Ignoring them all, the two of them kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. FIRST LADY'S GROUND FLOOR OFFICE - NIGHT

The First Lady's staff is watching the news.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROOM - NIGHT

The President's Staff is watching the news.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

President Crighton is dressing in his tux, wearing black suspenders, affixing his cuff links while THREE SMALL MONITORS show various SCENES OF HIS LIFE WITH LAURA.

CLOSE ON: TV MONITOR:

REUTER HEMMINGS (V.O.)

Who doesn't remember the famous
inaugural night when the First Couple
stood up an entire country...?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE - THREE YEARS AGO - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The pair step back from the front door of the White House and the eyes of the world, into the shadows of the corridor.

LAURA

(takes his hand)
Come.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(taking it all in,
looking around, hardly
able to control his
awe)
We're here. We did it!

LAURA

This way --

She slips from his embrace, takes his hand, leads him quickly along the corridor, passing the Oval Office, turning into a small corridor.

INT. PANTRY - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

THE PANTRY REFRIGERATOR: Loaded with the parfaits of state dinner; large and small bottles of Wine and Champagne and Imported Beer. A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE IS LIFTED OUT.

INT. RESIDENCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Laura can't conceal her excitement as she guides the new President along the residence hallway.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Darling - we have a call to make to the Grand Ballroom --

LAURA

Later --

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Where do you take the President of the United States?

LAURA

A secret hideout.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Secret hideout? Here?

Off the Lincoln Sitting room, a narrow door. She turns the knob, facing him seductively, and backs inside, holding the champagne.

LAURA

Don't be scared.

He allows himself to be led up a very narrow staircase.

INT. STEW ROOM

Off the attic is a small room with tiny windows overlooking the swirling fountain on the grassy lawn below.

Laura finds a light switch.

It's an ultra-masculine attic den, with a Steward's sink, work rug, round table with rustic wooden chairs all around and very large ash trays.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 What is this? We weren't shown this
 in the orientation.

LAURA
 It's the stew room.

President Crighton touches a lamp made of the shells of a
 WWII bazooka.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 Stew room?

LAURA
 Dad used to come up here and make
 stew for his cronies when he got
 bored with the dinners downstairs.
 Sometimes I'd sneak up here when Mom
 and Dad were out of town and hang
 out and smoke cigars.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 You did not!

LAURA
 Sure did.

And she opens a drawer with a box of cigars with MADE IN
 HAVANA clearly marked.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 Cuban cigars? Your dad smoked Cuban
 cigars?

LAURA
 Family secret.

She undoes the wrapper, snips the end off expertly.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 Laura, we have five thousand people
 waiting for a phone call --

LAURA
 I always wanted to do this with a
 boy, but I was afraid to bring someone
 up here - Dad would have had a fit --

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 Our first night in the White House
 and you are living out a childhood
 fantasy?

LAURA
 Aren't you?

Mesmerized, he watches her light the cigar, expertly draw a puff, then hold it out to him.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Hmm. I wonder if Castro knew about this.

He takes a puff while she sets up two glasses from the little bar under the counter. She holds out the bottle, then suddenly changes her mind, takes his cigar, puts it in the ash tray.

LAURA

Mr. President?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Mrs. President --

LAURA

(shakes her head..
correcting him)

I'm Mrs. Crighton. I wouldn't be anyone else in all the world.

She pours the champagne into two glasses.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

But what ... if I were just an ordinary man?

LAURA

Then we wouldn't have to worry about all these phone calls to return --

She slips her arms around him, they kiss, even as her fingers start to unbutton his shirt.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Laura - there are people waiting - what are we doing?

LAURA

(gazing up at him)
What the world provides for those like us.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

And what does the world provide for those like us?

LAURA

Each other.

MOVE PAST THEM OUT THE WINDOW TO THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN, WHERE THE FLAG FLAPS IN ALL ITS OLD GLORY.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRAND BALLROOM - MAYFLOWER HOTEL (FLASHBACK)

The giant inaugural celebration is long over.

CLOSE ON TABLE 109: a DELEGATE FROM MICHIGAN is passed out at his table. Suddenly a bunch of balloons break free from the centerpiece and fly up.

THE BALOONS: Soar up to the ceiling.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - THE PRESENT

President Crighton touches the remote, the TV monitors go black.

CUT TO:

INT. KENTUCKY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Laura switches off the TV as Kitty enters.

KITTY

Look what you've done. You've ended your husband's career.

LAURA

We don't have careers if we're extinct.

KITTY

He won't recover from this.

LAURA

That's his choice.

KITTY

His choice? What choice have you given him?

LAURA

Only one. I hope he takes it.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: the powerful hooves of a kentucky thoroughbred

EXT. HARTFORD FARM - FOLLOWING MORNING

THE FEET OF CAESAR, the Grand Champion thoroughbred, churn the blue green sods of grass as he feints away from the stable.

First lady Crighton, wearing a plaid shirt and leather jacket, heads out the stable and across the field towards the track.

LAURA: Fit as a wish upon her saddle. On her back is Peter's knapsack.

CUT TO:

EXT. SECRET SERVICE VAN - FARM GATE - DAY

Along with a local squad car, the van and an Explorer Secret Service Car wait by the front gate to the long road to the house on the ridge. All at once FIRST AGENT adjusts the tiny remote in his ear. He turns to SECOND AGENT who is adding powdered milk to his coffee.

FIRST AGENT
(alarmed)
Red Rose is Moving!

The Second Agent looks down the driveway, but sees nothing except a few ONLOOKERS who've crossed the gate.

SECOND AGENT
Where?

FIRST AGENT
(points)
THERE!

Across the field on the turf below Laura is suddenly jumps the fence and enters the forest. first agent Shit!

He starts running towards the van.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Arriving PAPARAZZI have already spotted her, and run along the grass to get a shot.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENTUCKY FOREST - DAY

Once Daniel Boone rode through these woods, but not as fast as Laura Crighton, crouched down low on the back of the swift animal, moving through trees which pass in a blur.

LAURA: Peers around the neck of Caesar.

HER POV: The woods ahead clear onto bluegrass and the horizon opens, and there is a barbed wide fence along a field of Jersey cows.

THE FENCE: The hooves extend high and out as her Caesar carries her across.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRST METHODIST CHURCH - LUMINA KY - NOON

MOVE THROUGH A CARVAN OF ARRIVING MEDIA, REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, and SIGHTSEERS.

Near the steps of the church the very worried REVEREND TRENT SLIPPINGCOMBE, his wispy blond hair amiss in the breeze as he reassures ANXIOUS PARISHONERS that the world's media blitz is somehow all right.

UNDER THE TREE: DON SAMUELSON has chosen to stand next to one of the old tombstones with the church visible behind.

DON SAMUELSON

(to news camera)

With the expected arrival of the runaway first lady any moment, the crowd here must include at least the entire town of Lumina, Population 659, as well as press arriving from around the world. She intends to nail a classified document to the front door of the church behind me, the same church where her great don samuelson (contd) grandfather rode a horse to warn the south that the Yankee arm had arrived...

(adjusts his earphone)

Just a minute, it appears that the First Lady is - the First --

He turns as REPORTERS RUSH BY.

Don follows them with his CAMERAMAN.

DON SAMUELSON

There she is!

DON SAMUELSON'S POV: In the distance, Laura is riding her family's favorite horse through the bluegrass turf, moving faster and faster, now crossing a gully, around a tree, quick as a brushstroke.

AT THE CHURCH DOOR: The Reverend Spillingcombe watches in stunned silence along with the Parishioners as Laura rides up the grassy knoll to the hilltop and dismounts.

Rev. Spillingcombe: Hurrys to help.

Laura dismounts, walks quickly to her Pastor.

Around them, the MEDIA SURGE, even as the Secret Service Van pulls up to a stop, honking.

LAURA

Thanks for letting my use your front door, Trent.

REV. SPILLINGCOMBE

(known each other
since Childhood)

My front door is always open to you,
Laura.

He takes her bridle as she walks through the PARTING CROWD as her TWO SECRET SERVICE AGENTS, out of breath, catch up to her and help give her space. shouts from media "Why have you run away, Mrs.Crighton?" "Will you divorce the President, Mrs. Crighton?" " Look this way, Laura - "

THE CROWD QUIETS as she raises the document above her head for all to see.

LAURA

(above the SOUND OF
HOVERING HELICOPTERS)

This document is named Thermal Paper 486. It is top secret and was prepared by the Pentagon for those few privileged men who hold in trust the lives of all mankind. I have come here today to reveal its contents to you, and to anyone who will listen. According to this report, the oceans are dead, with the result that our food chain will soon be depleted.

FEMALE REPORTER

Are you referring to the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN REPORT? It's old news --

LOUD REPORTER

Tell us something new, Mrs. Crighton!

LAURA

The new news is this: I have no intention of having sex again with my husband while I carry the eggs of a future life.

The Press: murmurs among them: What's this?

LAURA

Even though I am no longer as young as I was, I will not make a short term choice with my body, or the lives of the unborn. Until Andrew Crighton starts thinking like a man again, instead of a political office holder, this woman will not be at his side or in his bed. In the meantime I've asked the Reverend Trent Lowscroft to post this paper on the church door so that we all have at least an inkling of what our fate may be. Thank you all for coming.

As she starts to climb down, THE MEDIA SURGES LIKE A WAVE TOWARDS HER.

CUT TO:

EXT. SENATOR WARREN HYPE'S BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Abutting the windswept golf course, the white-haired patrician SENATOR WARREN HYPE'S barbecue pit is smoldering, his beer is getting warm in his hand, but his hot eyes are glued to the portable TV. Now he grabs the phone from a console with many blinking lights.

SEN. HYPE

(into phone)

Did you see that, Senator? Did you witness that display which may - by the by - be treason! Disclosing top secret documents! - Oh boy, oh boy, we got him now! He can't control his own bitch, how can he run the country, that's what the folks'll want to know! wife's voice His own bitch?

Sen. Hyde turns to see a peculiar kind of scorn on the face of his wife of many years.

She abruptly drops a steak back into the pit like a rock, starts off.

SEN. HYDE

(quickly, into phone)

Call you back.

CUT TO:

INT. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE BEAU 'BIF' GINGLES OFFICE -
CAPITOL - DAY

At his desk with flags on four corners, the Majority Leader lowers the phone like an ax.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
Wait until the Special Prosecutor
gets into this!
(to SECRETARY)
Imagine not having sex to influence
policy! secretary
(fading Fawn Hall)
Right. It's usually just the opposite.

He frowns. She's out.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SPECIAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A television set has been placed in the middle of the dark wood conference table, with the blinds drawn. Lunch is in paper bags and paper plates, but SPECIAL PROSECUTOR RONALD SPITTE is using his tall cup from home as he sips coffee, looks at the media wrap-up on the TV. He has a round, cherubic, youthful face with dimples when he smiles and acres of only slightly yellow teeth.

Across from him are WINTHRIP RUTHERFORD III AND CO-COUNSEL TROT PLINTH. They are fastidiously wiping their place mats, knowing the boss hates a mess.

ON TELEVISION: NEWS ANCHOR BARBARA BERNHARD is interviewing REPORTER DON SAMUELSON on location in Lumina.

ANCHORWOMAN BERHARD
The First lady seems to have two
agendas here, Don. First is the
release of top secret information,
and second is a political use of the
human reproductive system, if I am
correct.

PROSECUTOR SPITTE: Shakes his head IN REVULSION, reaches for a toothpick.

ON TV: Don Samuelson is standing at the Kentucky Church where moments ago the First Lady made her historic announcement. In spite of the rollicking breeze, his toupee sits on his head flat as a tire.

DON SAMUELSON

That's right, Barbara - the First Lady seems to think that by withholding conjugal rights from the President, she can influence policy, which is a first of many firsts for this first family. Of course, no man wants his wife to turn away from him, but then the question is: which man would want a wife like Laura Crighton, in spite of her other qualities, when she's a hack in the sack?

ON TV: ANCHORWOMAN BERNHARD: Unable to conceal her distaste for her colleagues choice of words.

ANCHORWOMAN BERNHARD

There seems to be more behind Mrs. Crighton's message than "hack in the sack," Jack --

Counsel SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE holds up his plate as STAFF SECRETARY NORA RUPE starts to collect lunch trays. He presses the 'volume down' button.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

(picking his teeth)

Seems to me if the woman wants to play the sex card she should be holding a better deck, eh?

Nora, who is slightly plump, knocks over a cup.

THE MEN TURN TO HER: Was this, could this, be purposeful?

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

Release of classified materials is prosecutable under the Abbot-Lambert Act, and I believe prison is mandatory.

SIDE DOOR OPENS: CLERK DAVIS ENTERS.

CLERK DAVIS

I have the Attorney General on the line, Mr. Spitte.

With a glance at his cohorts, Spitte lifts the blinking line.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

(into phone)

Of course I intend to pursue this,
I'd be a fool not to. Treason is not
an everyday offense. If you ask me,
this woman is an insult to her sex.

CUT TO:

INT. ATTORNEY GENERAL LOUISE VEGAS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LOUISE VEGAS, fondly known as hatchet face, stares at the receiver. Her cheek twitches faintly.

CUT TO:

INT. KINGS HEAD EATING CLUB - MANHATTAN - CONTINUOUS

THE OVERHEAD BAR TV: LAURA AT THE CHURCH RE-CAP.

AT THE ROWDY LUNCH HOUR BAR: A PRIDE OF YOUNG WALL STREET LIONS Martini-up their lunch hour with HOOTS AND HOWLS at the all but inaudible newscast.

YOUNG STOCKBROKER

First lady nukes nookie - but we
keep the votes for those we love,
and we know ladies love "love", right?
pal stockbroker No doubt!

A SHORT-SHORTS CLAD TRENDY WAITRESS passes with a tray of beer, and the Pal Stockbroker puts out his arm in front of her, as if to corral her in.

PAL STOCKBROKER

(to trendy waitress,
leering grin)

Right?

As she seems pliable, and falls right into his arms, he gives a big smirk to his companion until:

CLOSE ON: Waitress' BEER MUG, SPILLING YELLOW CONTENTS into his Armani crotch.

PAL STOCKBROKER: His expression changes rapidly.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTERY PARK, MANHATTAN

TWO LOVERS approach the ancient iron fence which rings the waterfront, Wall Street visible behind them.

THE YOUNG MALE slips his arm around the Young Female.

THE YOUNG FEMALE: Gazes out towards the Statue of Liberty, then looks down at the water lapping the concrete below.

HER POV: The Staten Island Ferry is OUT OF ORDER, black with congealed crude oil from the shattered tanker.

A SEAGULL is struggling valiantly but hopelessly to extricate itself from the gook.

A RADIO strapped on the back of a WALL STREET MESSENGER'S BIKE streaks by. on boombox: FIRST LADY'S VOICE ...I will not make a short term choice with my body, or the lives of the unborn... HEARING LAURA'S VOICE, THE YOUNG MALE spins the Y. F. to face him.

YOUNG MALE

(joking)

Want to make a short term choice
with your body?

THE YOUNG FEMALE: Studies him closely. He grows uncomfortable. Then she glances past him, down to the Seagull.

HER POV: THE SEAGULL: Dying.

YOUNG FEMALE

No.

SHE STARTS OFF.

YOUNG MALE

(following)

You're kiddin', right? ...Right?

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL STUDY - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

In the little room made famous by scandals in other times, President Crighton is watching the CNN HEADLINE NEWS, WITH FOOTAGE OF LAURA CRIGHTON.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON: Leans forward.

HIS POV: LAURA'S FACE.

THE PRESIDENT'S FACE: Transfixed in the glare of the screen; a kind of yearning seems to overcome him.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - GEORGETOWN - THIRTEEN YEARS AGO (FLASHBACK)

CLOSE ON: LAURA, a slightly bemused, somewhat quizzical expression on her face as she watches something OFF SCREEN.

HER POV: Now we see that a younger Andrew Crighton is dashing down the steps , hastily buttoning his shirt over his boxer shorts. Suddenly stops in awe.

HIS POV: Laura is holding a crib. In it is a newborn. His newborn. Behind her is the TAXI DRIVER.

ANDREW

What're you doing? Why didn't you call first? -- I was just coming to pick you up at the hospital!

LAURA

She couldn't wait. She wanted to be with her Dad.

Keeping the crib in one hand, she wraps her other arm around his neck and whispers.

LAURA

I couldn't wait either.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE STUDY - THE PRESENT (END FLASHBACK)

Crighton turns away from the TV. He emboldens himself and quits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Cyrus is there with SENIOR WHITE HOUSE STAFF MEMBERS.

As he steps into the doorway, he hesitates, looks at them.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Uh oh. Drop in the polls.

(silence)

Substantial, from the sound of it.

MRS. BRITWEATHER GLANCES AT HER POCKETBOOK.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

When Mrs. Britweather brings her pocketbook, that's a ten point drop at least.

CYRUS COUGHS.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Cyrus coughing - that's another five. chief of staff blowcrift We've seen this pattern before, Mr. President --

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 Uh oh. A "Blowcroft Pattern". That's
 another seven.

IN THE SILENCE, HE CROSSES TO DESK, PRESSES INTERCOM.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 (into console)
 Rosemary, would you bring me some
 clippers please? Flower clippers?
 You may ask the gardener. rosemary's
 voice ON intercom Yes, Mr. President.

He crosses round the desk towards the Garden door.

CYRUS
 We think it should be business as
 usual, Mr. President, at least until
 the Special Prosecutor issues his
 recommendation.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 (hesitates)
 Special Prosecutor?

CYRUS
 The Attorney General has given him
 permission to look into the possible
 felonious leak of classified
 materials.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 You're joking.

CYRUS
 I'm afraid not, Mr. President. chief
 of staff It's become known that your
 son first exposed the material at
 his school to other classmates and
 his teacher --

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 '91Exposed' the material? It got
 caught up with his homework! chief
 of staff Nonetheless, when he shared
 it, he broke the law.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 Gentlemen - and Mrs. Britweather -
 my wife is a passionate and committed
 woman, and she may have gone overboard
 here, but she's certainly no felon -
 and as for my son - well, let SPECIAL
 PROSECUTOR SPITTE subpoena him!

CYRUS
That's what he intends to do.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
What?

CYRUS
Subpoena Peter. And your wife.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Well that's a spectacle I dare him
to perform! In the meantime, I'm
going to focus on what any man in my
position is obliged to --

Rosemary enters with garden clippers, hands them to the
President.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
I'm going to send my wife some
flowers.

He crosses to the door, turns back.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Whatever she wants to become, she is
still a woman.

MRS. BRIT
Weather But Mr. President, what shall
we tell our colleagues, and the Press ---

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Tell them Mrs. Crighton works her
side of the street, and I work mine.

THEY ALL WATCH as the President exits the room. They watch
through the windows as steps out into the garden and starts
to cut a swell bunch of Lilacs. This is not the reaction
they'd expected.

CHIEF OF STAFF
I'm afraid he's taking this
personally.

CUT TO:

INT. SPECIAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE is down to business now, his tie
open slightly at the collar, his gold Cross pen waving back
and forth in front of himself like a swaying Cobra.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
 We have obtained information from sources in the Fifth Grade that Peter Crighton was displaying top secret documents not only to his teacher, Clara Witt, but to other students in wanton violation of the Abbott-Lambert Act.

SPECIAL COU NSEL ATTORNEYS, F.B.I. AGENTS AND JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DETECTIVES surround the conference table sitting or standing, while Spitte sits flanked by somber Winthrop Rutherford III and Co-Counsel Plitt.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
 We also know that the First Lady went to the home of a Dr. and Mrs. Goldstone in Georgetown. These, and other accomplices, must be thoroughly investigated - we've asked for help from the IRS in this, because Dr. Goldstone apparently takes cash from some of his patients - in the end, this is about the law and the flagrant violation of the law - in Mrs. Crighton's case, and I don't want to sound alarmist here, but in Mrs. Crighton's case this could be tantamount to treason.

WINTRHOP
 No woman is above the law.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
 Don't worry. She'll come clean on this.

CUT TO:

A large bucket of water, hands sudsing a PAIR OF HORSE BRUSHES.

INT. STABLES - HARTFORD FARM, KENTUCKY - NIGHT

Laura is giving her thoroughbred a bath, using two brushes in large circular motions, pretty wet herself in jeans, hair tied up.

LAURA
 I know they treat you well, Caesar, but I bet you miss some of the old lovin' touch, don't you? caesar:
 Snorts his agreement.

LAURA

We're going to put a little cod liver
oil in --

She turns at the sound of a GATE UNLACHING.

Her father, Roland, swings the side gate back and forth,
observing it.

ROLAND

Will you look at how warped this is
already? Hells bells it's been only
a couple of years and its bent like
a hot girdle - y'know, we used to
dip this wood in crude oil, just
came bubbling up from the ground,
and season after season it was
straight as an arrow, but now they
use water proofing at twenty bucks a
gallon and - and --

ROLAND

(suddenly recognizes
her)

Laura? What are you doing home? Spring
break?

LAURA

I've been out of college some time
now, dad.

ROLAND

Well let me look at you! You look
just the same!

LAURA

Thank you.

ROLAND

Are you going to stick around a while?
We don't see you too often any more.

LAURA

I guess I'll stay as long as it takes.

ROLAND

As long as what takes?

LAURA

To change the world.

ROLAND

Well, your own home is a good place to begin, I'll tell you. Why once in a while, on my porch back home in Lumina, Kentucky, I sit back and look up at the night sky, and all the stars that gave Lumina its name, and I imagine that I'm flying out, up there, past the moon and the big dipper and Orion and on into the farthest reaches of space, but then I look around all at - I look around, and -- Darn.

LAURA

(helping him remember)

"And then I realize, that no matter how far you travel, you can never travel far from who you really are, and --

(he joins in the refrain)

roland and laura together
"-- All great journeys bright you right back home."

He nods, smiles at her fondly.

ROLAND

Well, I'm glad you could visit, Kitty.

LAURA

(not bothering to correct him)

Good night, Dad. Roland ambles out.

Laura looks after him, thoughtful

INT. WHITE HOUSE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

President Crighton, Cyrus and Chief of Staff Brett Cotter emerge from the President's room, head down the hall. All are wearing tuxedos.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(to Cyrus)

You say there've been how many calls?

They cross towards the elevator.

CYRUS

At last count our switchboard had twenty seven thousand -- The phone's ringing off the hook - she seems to have touched a nerve among women - it's like the "bully nerve" or something - she's turning the natural power of men into some kind of vendetta --

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(ironic)

The natural power of men.

BRETT COTTER

(not to mince words)

You mean the natural "power of the puss" over men.

President Crighton and Cyrus turn to him sharply as the narrow elevator door opens. Crighton enters first. All suddenly seem thoughtful.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The Presidents and his Aides smoothly descend.

BRETT COTTER

The New York Times front page is calling it the Lysistrata Response.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Lysistrata?

CYRUS

The Greek heroine --

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(remembering)

That's right. She brought down an empire by refusing to sleep with her husband - but her husband was a General, right?

INT. GROUND FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The President and his Aides exit the elevator towards doorway, MARINES on either side.

CYRUS

Her husband was the General of the Spartans, I believe.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 Generals are appointed, not elected.
 Laura's hitting below the belt on
 this one.

Crighton nods to the GUARD as he steps out onto the portico.

EXT. NORTH PORICO - NIGHT

The waiting LIMOUSINES LINE THE DRIVEWAY. The CHAUFFER is waiting at the President's car.

As he's about to enter the open door, Crighton looks across the lawn.

HIS POV: A LARGE CROWD OF WOMEN appears to be forming.

President Crighton glances back at Cyrus and Brett.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 We just continue doing what we're
 doing. If women side with Laura,
 they'll soon realize they need men
 as much as men need them. brett
 Even more, Mr. President, even more.
 chauffer Wouldn't hurt me none if my
 wife backed off a little - she's
 insatiable! the president and his
 aides: Hesitate. chauffer:
 Immediately businesslike.

He shuts the limo door.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A SMALL BLACK AND WHITE MOUSE.

Peter, in his robe and shorts, is introducing BEN, his new mouse, into a treadmill on his overcrowded desk when the PHONE RINGS.

He picks up the receiver.

PETER
 Mom! Wait! Wait! I want to turn
 on the videophone -
 (presses his computer
 code)
 Can you see me?

INT. STABLE - KENTUCKY FARM - CONTINUOUS

Laura is standing under the bare bulb in the far end of the stalls, her jacket open, a towel over her shoulder, using the old fashioned barn phone.

LAURA

We don't have video here yet, Peter.
How are you? How was school? Is
Wendy all right? peter Well, the
shit's kind of hit the fan -

(quickly)

I didn't mean that mom, I'm sorry --

(beat)

Wendy says all her girlfriends think,
like, right on - they really support
the ecology of it -- but the guys
don't seem to like it much. - Dad's
been in meetings all day - hey, guess
what? I figured out about flying
saucers!

He takes a Frisbee off the desk, unaware that:

THE MOUSE SLIPS OUT OF THE CAGE.

PETER FRISBEES

Work on air, see? So if you hook a
vacuum cleaner to a Frisbee, it would
fly, if you hooked the power on -
that's how they work!

(beat)

You're not coming home tomorrow?

(beat)

Okay, and you take care of yourself
too --

(suddenly he notices)

PETER'S POV

The mouse is gone.

PETER

Mom - I've got to go --

CRASH IN THE HALL

PETER

Bye --

CUT TO:

INT. STABLE - KENTUCKY FARM - NIGHT

Laura sets the phone back, turns.

HER POV: The empty stable, a long way from Washington.

CEASAR IN HIS STALL: Neighs, snorts, tosses his head.

Laura steps up to him, touches his nose.

LAURA

Male of the species.

(wraps her arms around
his mane, briefly,
her forehead to his
flaring nostrils)

Good golly Ollie - what've we got
ourselves into? - no, don't you worry.
I'm not scared. Not in the least
little bit. - Good night.

She heads off.

CEASAR: Neighs after her, like he understands.

CUT TO:

INT. RESIDENCE HALL - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: TRAY OF COFFEE CUPS AND SAUCERS, FALLEN, AND THE
HAND THAT PICKS UP THE SCUTTling MOUSE.

Joshua is picking up the little mouse next to the tray he's
taken from the President's bedroom.

PETER

Thanks, Joshua --

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATING THEATER - WALTER REED HOSPITAL - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: President Crighton, at the podium.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

...From this hospital and others
like it, we shall embark on an
adventure into the next great realm
of exploration: the human brain...

HIS POV: The vast GALA audience: DOCTORS, DIGNITARIES, DONORS
TO THE HOSPITAL.

All are intent on the President.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

...For thoughts can go where sunlight
cannot, see what the eyes cannot,
touch what the hands cannot...

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON: Hesitates.

HIS POV: Crossing directly below, heading for a seat on the middle tier, is - is Laura!

Abruptly, President Crighton steps away from the podium and calls out:

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 Laura! What are you -- the audience:
 All eyes on the woman.

THE WOMAN: Turns from looking for her seat.

It isn't Laura. President Crighton:

Embarrassed by the display of something akin to need, he quickly recovers and returns to the podium.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 (almost as if nothing
 had happened)
 Emerson wrote that every man's
 progress is through a succession of
 teachers - every man and WOMAN'S
 progress, I should say --

THE AUDIENCE: Thin laughter.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD TO HARTFORD FARM - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

A NEWS VAN is followed by a LIMOUSINE.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Barbara Bernard and her producer KENT PHILLIPS are going over notes.

BARBARA
 I don't think we should push the sex
 issue too much, it's already getting
 out of proportion --

KENT
 Sex is within bounds? Boring.

BARBARA
 I'll ignore that.

Loud motorcycle rumble Barbara and Kent look at each other, then out the window.

THEIR POV

Passing in a SHATTERING THUNDER is a SQUADRON OF MOTORCYCLES.

BARBARA'S POV

SHOOTING THROUGH LIMO WINDOW

CYCLLIST AFTER LEATHER JACKETED CYCLIST passes; and even under their leather jackets and German-style helmets, we can see they are women.

KENT
(reads jacket emblem)
"Lesbo Cycle Sluts From Hell."

CUT TO:

EXT. KENTUCKY ROADWAY - DAY

29 MEMBERS OF THE LESBO CYCLE SLUTS FROM HELL separate around the news van and limo, passing them in the direction of the farm, wearing outfits that make the Hells Angels look like regular guys.

KENT (V.O.)
She's going to need all the help she can get.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. BERNIE GOLDSTONE'S DENTAL OFFICE - DAY

Bernie Goldstone is about to inject a very nervous PATIENT with Novocain, rubbing her gums with anesthetic, the needle in his left hand, when NURSE BLATCHET enters. nurse You'd better come out to reception, Doctor.

BERNIE
One moment.

NURSE
It's the F.B.I.

BERNIE: Turns sharply to her.

INT. DR. GOLDSTONE'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

TWO F.B.I. AGENTS stand conspicuously in front of the sliding glass window, way out of place against the pictures of smiling kids with toothbrushes and rabbits.

FIRST AGENT
Dr. Goldstone?

BERNIE

Yes?

FIRST AGENT

F.B.I. We'd like to ask you a few questions, if you have the time.

BERNIE

I'm with a patient.

FIRST AGENT

We can wait.

BERNIE

Very well. I'll be another twenty minutes.

The two Agents nod at him, checking their watches.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - HARTFORD FARM - DAY

Laura sits next to the fireplace in her father's favorite chair. Barbara Bernard sits across from her, clip board on her lap, CAMERAS trained on Laura.

BARBARA

...one of the questions which have arisen is: when you say you won't sleep with your husband - and I hope you won't misunderstand me - this means only on a conjugal basis?

LAURA

It means I am remaining celibate until the Government releases all information regarding the death of the phytoplankton.

BARBARA

But according to Thermal Paper 486, isn't it already too late?

LAURA

We still have hope -- someone said that all human wisdom was contained in the words "wait and hope."

BARBARA

Isn't that a gloomy prospect, if the end is already in sight?

LAURA

We're all going to die, but we still make other plans. --

BARBARA

Do you regard your husband, the President, as the villain in this regard?

LAURA

He's as caught up in the game as the others.

BARBARA

What others?

LAURA

The oil industry, the auto industry, the road builders and the investors and advertisers and consumers --

BARBARA

That includes just about every human being then, doesn't it?

LAURA

Oh yes, and me too.

BARBARA

Then what can your celibacy possibly accomplish?

LAURA

We can put brakes on. We can put the brakes on unscrupulous oil shippers - oil shipping is the world's largest business - with an average of ten thousand oil spills a day when our water is destroyed by one drop of oil per million -- and we can encourage auto makers to employ alternate technology and farmers to stop using oil based pesticides --

BARBARA

These businesses don't just involve men.

LAURA

Face it: Men control those industries. And the desire of men for women is fundamental to the male idea of conquest and property. If we take the women from men, we'll see change a lot quicker.

BARBARA

You're asking women to use sex as power.

LAURA

Is that new?

BARBARA

Well, it's way out of fashion politically, you must know.

LAURA

Every new child is a kind of ecological system which must be fed, nurtured, taught and in some sense controlled for upwards of eighty years now. Yet the planet is losing its ability to sustain these lives.

BARBARA

So you are advising women to stop making love.

LAURA

Love? No. I am not advocating the end of love. I am proposing the short term use of female allure to achieve a brand new goal, a new kind of life on earth.

BARBARA

That's an ambitious proposition

LAURA

I have two children. I am highly motivated.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLARA WITT'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Peter's teacher is about to get into her Civic when TWO F.B.I. AGENTS APPROACH.

Not recognizing these men, Clara steps back onto the curb. agent smith Stay where you are. clara: worried.

AGENT JONES

Clara Witt?

CLARA

That's right. agent jones F. B. I. We'd like you to come with us, please.

CLARA

But I have class --

AGENT JONES
You'll be a little late today.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPECIAL PROSECUTOR COURTHOUSE - DAY

LINDA STRIPSTONE and her daughter AMY hurry up the steps.

CUT TO:

INT. SPECIAL COUSEL SPITTE'S OFFICE - DAY

The Special Counsel sits with Rutherford II I and Plinth on either side, while Linda and Amy take their places across from them.

Spitte is reading a sheaf of papers, not looking up.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Amy? amy Yes, sir.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Amy...
(now he lowers his
glasses, looking up)
Amy, do you realize that what I am
about to ask you has the weight of a
court of law, and that you must tell
the truth or accept very grave
consequences?

LINDA
She does.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
I was speaking to the child. amy I
do.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Does the date, October 2nd have any
significance to you?

AMY
Not really.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Not really. Isn't that the date you
first became aware of a document
called THERMAL PAPER 486?

AMY
Yes.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
(with a glance at his
aides)
How did you become aware of this
document?

AMY
Peter showed it to us.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Peter Crighton?

AMY
That's right.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
You say Peter showed you this
document. How exactly did that happen?

AMY
It was in his homework. It was kind
of scary.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Scary? In what way?

AMY
It said kind of like we were near
the end of the world.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Were you aware that this was
classified information?

AMY
Yes.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Yes? But still you read it? Why?
Knowing that reading material like
this was certainly illegal.

AMY
Peter showed it to us, so we read
it.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Peter openly displayed the document?

AMY
I guess so.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Thank you for coming, Amy.
(MORE)

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE (CONT'D)

(to Linda)

Please don't leave the Washington area without checking with us. We'll have more questions as the investigation progresses.

LINDA

Well, I hope you don't think --

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

We are not yet in the thinking stages, we are still gathering evidence.

Linda nods, understanding.

The door opens and Clara Witt enters.

Linda rises, turns to Peter's teacher.

LINDA

(bitter)

How could you?

CLARA

Not understanding.

CUT TO:

INT. NATIONAL CATHEDRAL SCHOOL - DAY

On the stage, a rehearsal is in progress for Gilbert & Sullivan's PIRATES OF PENZANCE. The ship is not yet constructed, and none of the KIDS is in costume. Peter takes his cue.

PETER

I am the very model of a Major General. I've information Animal, Vegetable and Mineral. I know the Kings of England and I quote the fights historical, from Marathon to Waterloo...

CUT TO:

backstage door opens F.B.I. AGENTS JONES AND SMITH ENTER, cross towards the DRAMA TEACHER.

DRAMA TEACHER

May I help you?

AGENT JONES

We're here to see Peter Crighton.

PETER AND THE CAST OF PIRATES: Stop at the sight of the suited Agents, very different from the kids in rehearsal clothes.

Agent Smith crosses to Peter.

AGENT SMITH
Peter Crighton?

PETER
That's me. agent smith I have an order for you to appear.

He hands Peter a legal envelope.

PETER
Looks at he paper in his hand.

CUT TO:

INT. ABC NEW STUDIOS - NEW YORK - NIGHT

REUTER HEMMING'S begins at the top of the report.

REUTER HEMMING'S
Tonight we have more of the reaction to First Lady Laura Crighton's remarkable manifesto --

on the screen are shots of limousines arriving at the white house to deposit increasing numbers of high officials of:

THE OIL INDUSTRY, THE AUTO INUSTRY, THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY, THE BANKING INDUSTRY, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH & THE MILITARY GENERALS

REUTER HEMMING'S
From Big Oil to Big Auto to the Military, the President got an earful about his wife's actions today, and most of it was not what he wanted to hear, since the First Lady has managed to offend just about every major political and religious group in these United States...

MORE SCENES OF president crighton in the oval office greets representatives of the joint chiefs

REUTER HEMMING'S (V.O.)
Particularly incensed was some of our top military, who resent allegations that ships at sea are major polluters, and that Army bases have destroyed tens of thousands of acres...

Shots of women protestors at army bases

REUTER HEMMINGS (V.O.)
 ...and, it appears, at least some of
 the women are responding to Mrs.
 Crighton's request for celibacy, and
 in the most unusual places...

Shot of the cottontail ranch in Nevada.

THE SIGN AT THE GATE READS: WE'RE FOR THE CAUSE. CLOSED.

REUTER HEMMINGS
 And we have this, just in -
 (scans REPORT)
 Peter Crighton, the son of President
 Crighton, we are informed, was given
 a subpoena this afternoon by Special
 Prosecutor Ron Spitte. This is the
 first time in history that the child
 of president has been called before
 a Special Prosecutor, and the
 ramifications of this are
 extraordinary - can our children now
 be used to testify against us?

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

President Crighton paces angrily in front of Cyrus and Brett
 and Mrs. Britweather. rosemary on intercom I have the
 Attorney General on the line, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 (grabs phone)
 Have you lost your mind?

INT. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS (INTERCUT)

The Attorney General is sitting at her totally empty desk
 with an egg-shell cup, and a tea cup. She has been eating a
 poached egg, her evening meal. louise Mr. President, it is
 out of my hands. The Special Prosecutor is appointed by
 Congress.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 What is the point of this, but to
 humiliate the child and embarrass
 the family? I won't let Peter appear!
 Not now, not ever!

LOUISE

(very unruffled)

Mr. President, when you have the flu there is nothing to take for it but to go through it.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

I don't have the flu and neither does my son! It's the Special Prosecutor who's sick!

LOUISE

If the opposition party intends to pursue this at all costs, perhaps you should allow Peter to appear and tell his story. Mr. Spitte is shopping here. Let him buy a bag full of snakes. Give him what he's asking for.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

You are advising me to let Peter appear? louise You are going to need all your energy for your wife.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

What do you mean? louise I am expecting Frank Swann from the F.B.I. They have it in mind to charge the First lady with treason under the Abbot-Lambert Act.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

What?! louise The Senate Majority leader is saying that your wife deliberately released state secret classified information in a conspiracy to derail the Liberian shipping bill.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Preposterous! louise I understand, Mr. President. But the charges carry mandatory prison.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

What're they gonna do, arrest her?! louise I believe the Judiciary Committee has formally requested the F.B.I. to return the First Lady to Washington.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

How the hell can they do that?

CYRUS, BRETT AND MRS. BRITWEATHER: Surprised to see the President losing it.

LOUISE

Because they can. - Mr. President, I am really not at liberty to say any more since you yourself may be under investigation.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(this stops him; he takes a breath)

You tell the committee I will show up at any time to resolve this. I do not want it hanging.

LOUISE

I understand, Mr. President.

He sets back the phone, turns to look out the window a moment, then back at the little gathering.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

They think I released that document to Laura to kill the oil shipping bill.

CYRUS

Letting Peter appear is maybe a good idea. The public adores the boy. I think it's a public relations nightmare to call him at all.

MRS. BRITWEATHER

I think the prosecutor has shot himself in the foot, big time. For them to suggest for a moment arresting the First Lady, why --

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

That will never happen.

(presses intercom)

Rosemary, have Peter come by my office when he returns from school.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE HARTFORD FARM - DAY

Police have set up barricades, but all along the ridge the Lesbo Cycle Sluts From Hell have set up portable chairs and tables, and arranged placards GIVE THEM HELL LAURA, NO SEX FOR SEXISTS, etc.

Down below, the Farm sits fresh and green in the midday sun.
A MAILMAN crosses to the side entrance.

INT. HARTFORD KITCHEN - DAY

Kitty carves several slices of cold turkey, places them in a saucer.

THE CAT sniffs at them.

KITTY

No, I am not in the mood to heat it
up. It's a cold lunch today. the
mail drop is heard in the foyer.

Kitty exits.

INT. FOYER - DAY

KITTY PICKS UP THE LARGE PACKAGE OF MAIL FROM IN FRONT OF
THE DOOR. ONE PACKAGE SPILLS OPEN.HER POV:

THE LILACS sent by the President pop their staples.

Kitty stares at them.

INT. LAURA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Her bed is covered with documents and open law books. She is
looking out the window.

LAURA'S POV

THE ONLOOKERS ON THE HILLSIDE. A TOUR BUSS ARRIVES, AND ON
ITS SIDE A BANNER READS '91NO REFORM, NO SEX!''.

DOOR KNOCK.

Laura crosses to open it.

Kitty stands there, holding the lilacs.

KITTY

Look what your husband sent.

Laura stares at the flowers.

KITTY

Sent by his own hand, you can see
that. He probably cut them as well.
What do you say to that?

LAURA

I should say it to him, mother, if I
say it to anyone.

KITTY

(near breaking point)

What are you doing? Have you looked at that hillside? LESBIANS ON OUR HILLSIDE!

LAURA

Yes, and we have bats in our belfry.

KITTY

(shocked at the insubordination)

I am your mother, I have done all I could for you, but now you are disgracing your family, your husband, your country and your children.

LAURA

The special prosecutor wants to call Peter before the Grand Jury.

KITTY

My God! Do you see where this is leading?!

LAURA

It's a fight. That's true.

KITTY

A good man is hard to find, Laura.

LAURA

What did you say?

KITTY

A man who cares about you, loves you, gives you children, gives you gifts - sits with you at night and - and REMEMBERS YOUR NAME, for God's sake - that is a great gift.

Kitty is thinking of her own husband, and she seems near tears; of course, that wouldn't be done.

KITTY

You think about the real treasures of life before you go giving up your man for politics.

LAURA

This isn't politics, mother, don't you see? This is the struggle to stay alive.

KITTY

That's right. It is a struggle to stay alive.

She realizes she's still holding the flowers. She hands them to Laura, then exits.

Laura looks at Andrew's present. Then she crosses to the window.

LAURA'S POV SHOOTING THROUGH BEDROOM CURTAINS:

The hillside is growing with a population of women.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THE PRESIDENT, ARAFAT AND BARAK are sharing a photo-op, shaking hands.

THE SMALL CONTINGENT OF PHOTOGRAPHERS SNAP AWAY.

ARAFAT

(while smiling for camera, undertone)

On another note, Mr. President - your wife is having quite an effect on my household --

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(smiling, through his teeth)

She's having an effect in this house, too. arafat I am an older man with a young wife. I don't have time to spare, if you know what I mean.

BARAK

(though his teeth)

I'm also married, and last night my wife turned a cold shoulder to me. I swear! -- Of course, she was probably just using the politics as excuse --

PHOTORAPHERS

Thank you, Mr. Presidents - Thank you --

The President leads the two men to the door.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

I know in your cultures the man has somewhat more to say in the lives of the women --

ARAFAT

Illusion, Mr. President. All illusion --

BARAK

Sometimes a man can't say shit, if
you pardon the expression --

THE MEN SHAKE HANDS FAREWELL THE LARGE DOORS SWING OPEN.

As the leaders exit, Peter enters, just home from school.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Peter! Come in!

PETER

Hi, Dad -

Peter walks over, a little glum.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

How was school?

PETER

Okay.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

I want to talk to you about
something..

AT THE PRESIDENT'S DESK, the Chief Executive looks at the
boy.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Son, the Special Prosecutor wants to
question you tomorrow, and even though
I bitterly oppose this, he can tie
up our productive lives indefinitely
if we refuse.

PETER

I'm not afraid of questions.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

I know you're not.

He presses the intercom, somewhat importantly.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Rosemary?

ROSEMARY'S VOICE ON INTERCOM

Yes, Mr. President?.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Bring me the Frisbee, please.

ROSEMARY'S VOICE ON INTERCOM
Yes, Mr. President.

Peter's eyes light up.

PETER
Frisbee? Did you know that Frisbees
make flying saucers ? I mean, for
real?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Flying saucers are classified
information.

PETER
Oh.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
And we don't release classified
information in this house, do we.

PETER
No.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
It's hard, isn't. It's hard be just
a kid in a place like this, with so
many strange faces and a father who's
always preoccupied...

PETER
It's okay.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Do you know just how courageous I
think you are? Why, every day you're
called upon to be someone near perfect
and presentable - which most adults
can hardly manage. And you've got to
be quiet when you don't want to be -
smile, when you don't feel like it -
stand in line for hours --
(Peter nods agreement
with that)
You've been asked to sacrifice in
ways most kids never know about. And
tomorrow you're going to be called
in front of a group of men you've
never seen before, but you won't be
alone, because you'll have the truth
with you. And the truth is something
you can't outgrow, or lose, or have
taken from you by any living being -
personal truth stays with you all
your life.

Rosemary enters with a Frisbee, crosses to the desk where Crighton turns to her somewhat formally.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
May I have the Frisbee, please?

ROSEMARY EXTENDS THE FRISBEE IN HER HAND

ROSEMARY
Here it is, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Thank you.
(turns solemnly to
Peter)
Today, Pete, you are to be recognized
for Bravery beyond the call of
childhood.

PETER
I'm not so brave.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Rise, Peter Michael Crighton.

Peter stands straight.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
By the power invested in me as
President of the United States and
Commander-in-Chief of the Armed
Forces, I hereby proclaim you
hereinafter and forevermore the
recipient of the Great and Wonderful
Order of the Blue and Gold Frisbee
First Class, Legatsium, Legatsitorium.

He solemnly hands Peter the Frisbee. Peter rather grandly accepts.

Then the two salute.

SOUND OF RHYTHMIC METAL SWISHING.

THE WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER, standing in the outer office, has caught the shot for posterity.

CUT TO:

EXT. BERNIE AND SALLY'S BROWNSTONE - GEORGETOWN - DAY

Sally is pulling up into the garage while F.B.I AGENTS wait rather conspicuously below.

INT. KITCHEN - SALLY'S BROWNSTONE - GEORGETOWN - DAY

She enters with groceries. THE PHONE IS RINGING. She picks it up.

SALLY

Laura! Thanks for sending the car back, I'm so glad you called, why --
 (a beat)
 Well no - I'm not doing anything tonight.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR DOUBLE BAR RANCH - MARYLAND - DAY

Horse Dealer SHERI BLOOMINGDALE is instructing SEVERAL YOUNG FEMALE RIDERS on the niceties of saddle-strapping.

THE WRANGLER leans across, motions towards the RINGING TELEPHONE.

IN THE BACKGROUND: Beyond the stables, a yellow BEECHCRAFT sits on a farmland runway.

Sheri picks up the telephone.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUMINA AIRPORT - DAY

UNDER THE WING OF A SILVER CESSNA torn and tattered JEANS A RINGING PHONE causes the owner to step out.

NELLIE GRACE Owner-operator and chief mechanic at the tiny rural airport, steps away from her work, wiping her pants as she crosses to the telephone, lifts receiver.

CUT TO:

EXT. REAR ENTRANCE - TOWNHOUSE - GEORGETOWN - DAY

The door opens. Sally peeks out. She's wearing Bev Hills sunglasses and a Man's hat and lumberjacket as a sincere attempt at disguise. She looks around surreptitiously.

SALLY'S POV

The alley is deserted.

Quickly she dashes across the alley into an adjoining yard, rounds a corner and disappears.

EXT. ALAMO RENT A CAR - DAY

Sally crosses the street, enters the rental company.

THE RENTACAR CLERK

Looks up.

SALLY

(to Clerk)

I'd like to rent something large and nondescript, please.

CUT TO:

a horse's hoof: Wrapped in burlap.

INT. LAURA'S STABLE - NIGHT

Laura has wrapped the hooves of Caesar for silence. Now she steps to the stall gate.

HER POV: The stalls appear to be deserted.

Very quietly, she unlatches the stall gate and leads Caesar out, the way her Grandfather escaped the Yankees.

EXT. HILLSIDENIGHT - NIGHT

Almost garish with the campfires of the Cyclists and the SUPPORTERS camping out.

EXT. STABLES - NIGHT

TWO WRANGLERS are unloading hay from the back of a truck. Neither notices as Laura and Caesar walk by, heading for the forest.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Like the dark side of the moon. Laura quickly unties the burlap booties from the thoroughbred.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - HARTFORD FARM - NIGHT

The Secret Service CONTINGENT is doing paperwork. One of them glances down the hill towards the house.

HIS POV: LAURA'S BEDROOM WINDOW

Laura can be seen sitting at her desk.

S.S. OFFICER
(into walkie talkie)
Red Rose is stationary.

The bedroom window: Laura's shadow IS A SILHOUETTE on the curtains.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laura has constructed a dummy out of old clothes and coat hangers and a standup lamp.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENTUCKY FOREST - NIGHT

The moon seems to be following along with the swiftly moving horse, Laura bent low on his Caesar's back.

CUT TO:

INT. LUMINA AIRPORT - NIGHT

Only a handful of planes in front of the corrugated steel hangar, built for private aircraft.

HANK THE HANDYMAN rushes out of the hangar as the propellers start to turn on the small two engine BEEHCRAFT.

Now Laura appears on Caesar, dodging the old heaps in the junkyard next to the field.

Hank holds out his hands for the reins. Laura jumps down, heads for the plane.

INT. BEEHCRAFT - NIGHT

Nellie leans across, opens the tiny door. Laura gets in.
LOUD ENGINE ROAR.

EXT. BEEHCRAFT - NIGHT

In front of the aircraft, HANK waves his flashlight like some kind of Paul Revere.

The little plane lifts off.

INT. BEEHCRAFT - NIGHT

Laura leans forward to peer out the windshield.

LAURA'S POV

Down below, the crowd has almost surrounded the East End of the farm, with more car headlights arriving.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

SECRET SERVICE AGENT WILLARD

Clicks on his walkie-talkie.

AGENT WILLARD

Red rose is remaining stationary.

HIS POV

The shadow of Laura on her bedroom curtains, stationary.

CUT TO:

A long telephone cord It is twisted around a starched cuff sleeve with gold cufflinks with the Presidential Seal.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(into phone)

Won't she at least take my calls?

Why - not to take my calls is almost -
un-American!

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - FARM - NIGHT

Kitty holds the telephone to her ear, glances along the hall.

KITTYS POV:

The light under Laura's closed door.

KITTY

I'm terribly sorry, Andrew, but she's not come out and she's not responded to my knocks. I don't know how this happened, that she should turn into some politico wacko after all these years of absolute stability and good form, but I am sorry.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

President Crighton turns as THREE ADMIRALS in full dress uniforms are ushered inside by Joshua.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(lowers his voice)

I'll be back in three hours - of course, she can call here anytime, I just want a - word with her.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

KITTY

(quietly, into phone)

Actually, this might be a good sign. She used to meditate like this for hours as a child, she was very quiet - I think she may be quietly working this out...

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRFIELD - BLOOMINGDALE RANCH - MARYLAND - NIGHT

OUT FROM THE BLACK HORIZON the lights of a twin-engine Beechcraft descend, narrowly missing the treetops along the Hudson as the craft touches down for a smooth landing.

SHERI BLOOMINGDALE guides the plane towards the hangar with a flashlight, while a gray Ford rental car waits at the edge of the field.

Now Sally starts her engine, drives across the field towards the plane, where Nell and Laura jump down.

The women enter the car and it speeds off.

CUT TO:

INT. RENT-A-CAR - NIGHT

As it bounces along.

LAURA

Sure you weren't followed?

SALLY

I threw those guys off my tail like a duck throws off water - or something.

LAURA

Ohmigod let me look at you - it's been so long!

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)
 (then she brightens,)
 Guys! It's so great you could help
 me like this --

Nellie and Sheri LEAN FORWARD, HUGS ALL AROUND, ALMOST LIKE
 A girls night out But then the reality sets in.

EXT. MARYLAND LANDING FIELD. NIGHT.

The car scoots off and turns onto a Suburban street, where
 it makes a turn out of sight.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING. MORNING.

SENATOR WARREN HYPE

Is holding a Press Conference on the Capitol Steps.

SENATOR HYPE
 Does the judiciary committee want to
 prosecute a child for doing his
 homework? Of course not! But does
 the Judiciary want a response to
 charges of malfeasance in High Places -
 why that is our utmost obligation
 and responsibility, no matter where
 it leads! The President has agreed
 to meet us halfway in this regard
 and is on his way to this Capitol
 this very minute --

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Indeed, the Presidential Motorcade is leaving the gates.

AT WHITE HOUSE GATES: A GROUP OF WOMEN WITH PLACARDS READING
 'CELIBACY : TRADE MEN FOR WATER'

We can see the President reading the signs as the WOMEN CALL
 AFTER HIM.

OPPOSITE THE WOMEN: The "MENS RIGHT TO THE RIGHT TO WOMEN
 "shout their angry opposition.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

President Crighton is looking over his testimony. Cyrus and
 Brett sit across from him. Now he takes a folded piece of
 paper from his jacket pocket.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(reads)

...Our happiness is not an ordinary matter of young lovers: it is, for me, a matter of efficiency. I am absolutely dependent on intimate love for the right and free and most effective use of my power, and I know by experience what it costs my work to do without it. If during this dreadful week that has just gone by, the most anxious week of my whole term as President, when loneliness sat upon me like a pall - I could have you actually at my side, I would have laughed at the strain and carried it with a light heart. Love, personal love, is the one thing a man's heart cannot do without.

CYRUS AND BRETT: Stare at their boss, moved.

CYRUS

Are you sending that to Laura?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

It's already been sent. By Woodrow Wilson to Edith Bolling Galt - almost eighty years ago.

He folds up the paper, returns it to his pocket when he catches sight of the TV console.

ON LIMO TV:

Peter is getting out of his Minivan in front of the Special Prosecutor's Courthouse, looking even smaller in the crush of ONLOOKERS AND PRESS.

The President looks hard at the sight.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(eyes on Peter on the monitor)

He should be in school. I made a mistake.

(calls to Chauffeur)

I want to go by the Federal Courthouse!

CYRUS AND BRETT

(turn pale together)

Now, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Now. brett But they're waiting foryou
in Congress - the entire committee --
!

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

I don't give a damn. I'm getting my
priorities straight.
(shouts to Chauffeur)
Albert! I said Haul Ass!

CUT TO:

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - INERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

TWO PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE COPS suddenly burst into the
intersection. The First Motorcycle Cop dismounts, starts re-
arranging traffic, while the other hurries to the next light.

MOVE ALONG THE BLOCKED CARS TO A RENTED GREY FORD ESCORT. We
see Laura and Sally, stuck in traffic.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Sally shakes her head.

SALLY

Another darn motorcade - I heard the
Pope's in town --

LAURA

That's next month. - Look, I'd better
jump out --

SALLY

You sure?

LAURA

Meet me at the courthouse - but if
I'm not there, don't worry - I'll
grab a cab --

SALLY

But Laura - Too late. Laura is already
on the sidewalk, running.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND JURY ROOOM 2A - MORNING

SEVENTEEN MEMBERS OF THE JURY FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE SIT IN
ROWS OF CHAIRS.

Special Prosecutor Spitte is flanked by Rutherford III, Plinth
and OTHER COUNSEL, ALL IN A ROW.

There is no audience, just COURT REPORTERS, SHERIFFS AND LEGAL SECRETARIES, some typing earlier testimony.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

Looks at the papers in front of him, folds his hands, looks up, an almost cherubic smile.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Peter Michael Crighton?

PETER
Yes. I am Peter Michael Crighton.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
You only need to say yes.

PETER
Yes.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
And you reside at the White House,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue?

PETER
Yes.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
And how long have you resided there? -
I know it's three years, but this is
for the record.

PETER
Three years.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Peter, have you ever entered into,
or conspired to enter into, a writ
or other document which may be
deleterious to the U.S. armed forces,
military institutions, or subjects
acrimonious or hostile to our national
interests?

PETER
Are you kiddin'?

THE JURY: Almost burst into laughter.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE turns to them, face flushed with instant rage.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
The Jury will refrain from laughing,
please.

Peter: Tries not to giggle.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE returns to his question.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
(kindly)
We'll be here for quite some while,
Peter, so you may take your time
before you answer. Now: I ask that
you provide for us in a comprehensive
time-frame-quotient --

LOUD VOICE FROM REAR
Have you no decency?

ALL EYES TURN

LAURA: Stands in the rear of the room, feet planted defiantly,
fists on her hips, elbows out as if ready to fight. In white
hot fury, she appears as cool as she is angry.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

Stares up at her over his glasses; rattled at first; but
then he forms a sweet- dimpled wide-toothed smile..

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Your turn will come, Mrs. Crighton,
but today is just for Peter.

PETER
Mom --

LAURA
Come here, Peter.

Peter hurries to his mother.

THE JURY: Look from Laura to Spitte and back.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
Peter is being questioned by a Grand
Jury. Disrupt this process at your
peril.

LAURA
This is no process, this is abuse.
Peter belongs in Clara Witts
classroom, not a federal courthouse.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
It is his strange and unusual behavior
relating to state secrets in that
very classroom which have brought
him here --

LAURA

You, sir, speak of strange and unusual behavior? Have you no decency? You have made criminals out of children, have asked families to spy on one another, cost a teacher her spotless record. And all the while you already know the answers to all the questions you are asking - Have you no decency?

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

I am going to have you removed from my courtroom.

LAURA

Don't bother! I'll remove myself!
 (touches Peter's
 shoulder)
 You may be able to haul him here, Mister, but there is no man alive who will keep him here!
 (takes Peter's hand)
 Come on, Peter - let's blow this joint.

So saying, she and Peter march out the room.

WOMAN IN JURY: Stands and applauds.

SPITTE: Livid.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

You are in contempt, Mrs. Crighton.
 Mrs. Crighton --
 (leans forward in
 frenzy)
 I'll get you for this - do you hear?
 I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS!

WINTHROP: Quickly pours a water into a tiny paper cup to calm his boss.

Suddenly Spitte. glares at the Jury, then shouts to the Sheriff:

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

(snarls)
 Sequester that jury!

THE JURY: Cringe as one.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTER HALL - DAY

Laura and Peter exit the courtroom.

LAURA HESITATES

THE LONG HALLWAY, VARIOUS GROUPS ASSEMBLING FOR HEARINGS.

She leans down to Peter.

LAURA
(harsh whisper)
Run for it!

Their hands break apart and the two dash hell-for-leather down the long hallway and around the corner.

EXT. courthouse. CONTINUOUS.

THE ONLOOKERS AND MEDIA are relaxing, having coffee, checking cameras, looking around - nobody is prepared for the mad run down the steps of Laura and Peter.

PAPARAZZI: Gape, then start after.

ON THE STREET

A GRAY SEDAN pulls around the corner even as the Presidential Motorcade arrives from the opposite direction.

Laura and Peter run into the street with the Press following after.

PETER'S SECRET SERVICE AGENTS: Spring into action, holding the people back.

INT. PRESIDENT'S LIMO - DAY

As Crighton starts to get out, he spots Laura and Peter on the television monitor.

TELEVISION MONITOR: Laura is opening the side door.

The President looks up from the TV out the side window of his own car:

Not ten feet away, Laura and Peter slip into the front seat of Sally's car.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STREET - DAY

THE PRESIDENT'S MEN try to keep up as Crighton makes a dash into the street and over to where Sally is trying to merge into traffic.

INT. SALLY'S CAR - DAY

Peter sees his Dad approach.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Laura!

Laura sees him.

PETER
It's Dad!

Suddenly the back door opens and the President jumps in the rear, slamming it shut.

Laura turns to him. Sally freezes, staring straight ahead.

LAURA
He should never have been in that
court room!

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
You should be home where you belong!

LAURA
What did you say to me?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
He needs his mother

LAURA
His mother's right here!

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Well dammit, I need you too!

LAURA
Then formally release those reports.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
I won't be blackmailed. Even by the
woman I love.

LAURA
Don't make me sentimental. I'm at
war with you!

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Come home, Laura. We all miss you. I
miss you.

LAURA
I won't be blackmailed. Even by the
man I love.

PETER

Wow, I never knew you two talked like that!

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Laura, this has gone way beyond a simple protest - the F.B.I. and the Special Prosecutor have the authority to arrest you! In Russia last week they sentenced a man to death for release of environmental documents!

LAURA

Are we in Russia?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(almost bitter)

Well, we sure as hell ain't in Kansas any more!

LAURA

(firm)

Mr. President...you are holding up traffic.

He sees her resolve, then looks around.

HIS POV: They are totally surrounded by BODIES, making the car almost dark.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

HIGH SHOT: Suddenly the President of the United States steps out of the gray sedan and begins ordering the Secret Service away from the car. Now he steps around front and motions that the MOTORCYCLE PATROLS clear the way.

THE PRESIDENT: Directing traffic.

THE GRAY SEDAN: Laura watches after him until the car is out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. JUDICIARY COMMITTEE - DAY

Senator Hype turns to the Speaker of the House.

SENATOR HYPE

(with a glance at the
OTHER MEMBERS)

Well Senators - Mr. Speaker - it appears that the President has done stood us up.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

(angry)

He's flaunting us, that's what he's doing - and his wife - who is a private citizen -- has damaged our national security. I see that this committee has no choice but to bring the First Lady to justice and open a formal inquiry into the actions of the President.

SENATOR HYPE

All in favor?

THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: Raise their hands.

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE (all)

Aye. senator hype

(slams gavel)

Inform the Special Prosecutor the motion is carried.

CUT TO:

INT. SPECIAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Wintrhop Rutherford III rushes in, breathless.

WINTRHOP

(to prosecutor Spittle)

Pick up the phone! It's the Speaker of the House!

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE: Catches the excitement in his colleague's voice, slowly lifts the telephone receiver.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE

Yes, Mr. Speaker?

INT. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OFFICE - CAPITOL - DAY

The Speaker stares ahead, twirling a paper clip.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Tell the F.B.I. to bring the bitch in.

CUT TO:

INT. BEECHCRAFT - DUSK

The plane is airborne. Nellie has let Peter take the controls.

PETER
(nervously excited)
Look mom - I'm flying! They'll never
catch us now!

LAURA AND NELLIE: Exchange glances. They hope he's right.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY OVER CAROLINA - NIGHT

The Little Beechcraft is followed on either side by SECRET
SERVICE HUEY HELICOPTERS, keeping watch.

CUT TO:

INT. ABC NEWS STUDIOS - NIGHT

REUTER HEMMINGS turns on his stool, holds a clipboard.

REUTER HEMMINGS
There has been much talk about the
legal and social ramifications of
First Lady Laura Crighton's celibacy
campaign - indeed, there may be a
mass movement among women to heed
her call - but what does her call to
"consciousness" as it were, about
the oceans, really mean? Tonight, we
take a closer look. shots of the
florida keys, underwater photography
of the coral

REUTER HEMMINGS
We know that the vast coral reefs
are dying, and have been for some
time... shots of the southern ice
caps

REUTER HEMMINGS
What is new are reports of the death
of phytoplankton, which is what the
tiny creatures eat who feed the even
tiny-er creatures which supply
nourishment, by a delicate chain, to
nearly all living things...

THE SCREEN PRODUCES A computer simulation of a LIFE under
the ice caps. BILLIONS OF MINUTE RED DOTS OF LIGHT.

REUTER HEMMING

Here you see a computer simulation of the Antarctic ice floes just four years ago. Those sparks of light are phytoplankton, and they appear to be thriving...

another computer simulation: diving beneath the ice caps: the dots are black and lifeless.

REUTER HEMMING

And here are the phytoplankton today. Apparently sludge from countless oil spills has covered the ice like oil spilled into the kitchen sink. As you can see, the phytoplankton are very, very sick...

CUT TO:

A PAIR OF RED SWIMMING GOGGLES:

PLOWING THROUGH:

INT. WHITE HOUSE SWIMMING POLL - NIGHT

The President is working off his day in the long narrow steamy pool while Cyrus walks along side, reviewing papers.

CYRUS

A stone may drop slower than these polls, I'm afraid, Mr. President.

The President swims on.

CYRUS

The men are angry because large numbers of us are simply not getting laid - I must say my own fiancée has been a bit political lately --and the women are angry - I suppose - for the same reason - even though they started it - also the Judiciary Committee has entered into negotiations with the Special Prosecutor --

BRETT ENTERS ANXIOUSLY

He crosses to the President who reaches the shallow end, drops under to reverse direction.

BRETT

(following the swimmer)
Mr. President - Mr. President --

Crighton keeps swimming.

BRETT

The FBI has been given the go-ahead to bring in the First Lady. They are preparing to arrest her tomorrow morning in Lumina.

Almost as if he hadn't heard, President Crighton swims to the deep end, looks up at Brett and removes his goggles.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

I want to see all the Pentagon files relating to Thermal Paper 486 on my desk in the next hour. brett
(glance at Cyrus)
In the next hour?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

That's right. brett Yes, Mr. President.

He hurries out.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Cyrus, would you hand me that towel?

CUT TO:

EXT. MONOLITHIC BUILDING - WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

The BRONZE PLAQUE reads: FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

A red lazer beam crosses the room, originating in a GROUP OF SHADOWY AGENTS standing by a slide projector.

ON THE BRIEFING SCREEN: Is an aerial reconnaissance photo of the Kentucky Farm of Laura Crighton.

The beam zeros in on a tiny pair of dots.

F.B.I. CHIEF'S (V.O.)

There they are - Laura Crighton and the boy - less than four hours ago as they arrived back at the farm.

ZOOM IN TO: SPY SATELLITE PHOTO OF LAURA AND PETER.

NEXT, THE. red lazer pointer crosses to the road, where HUNDREDS OF WOMEN are visible, as SURVEILLANCE dots.

F.B.I. CHIEF'S (V.O.)

We don't expect too much resistance - the former President is, of course, advanced in age and the others are mainly women - nevertheless we want to use the new Invader Tank as an indication of our resolution and capabilities --

SECOND IN COMMAND

Right. Congress did well by us on those tanks, we might as well strut our stuff --

CUT TO:

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crighton has files spread out all around the room, and is going through a pile on his desk, absorbing the information.

Without warning, Wendy pops the doorway, an open paperback in her hand.

WENDY

(absolutely oblivious to the intense activity at the President's desk, she starts to read as she enters the room)

"WHAT WOULD I FIGHT FOR?"

(reads)

I am not sure I would always fight for my life. Life might not be worth fighting for."

President crighton: Hesitates Turns slightly in her direction.

WENDY

(reads, walks closer towards her father's desk)

"I am not sure I would always fight for my wife. A wife isn't always worth fighting for."

Crighton turns to his daughter WENDY: Reads.

WENDY

"Nor my children, nor my country,
nor my fellow men. It all depends
whether I found them worth fighting
for."

(stops)

"The only thing men invariably fight
for is their money. But I doubt if
I'd fight for mine--

(pause)

Yet one thing I do fight for, tooth
and nail, all the time: and that is:
my bit of inward Peace, where I am
at one with myself."

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON:

Listening.

WENDY

...D. H. Lawrence. - don't you just
much prefer his poetry to even his
great prose like LADY CHATTERLY'S
LOVER?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

"Lady Chatterly's Lover" - you're
reading that?

WENDY

Dad, I am a sophomore in high school,
I am a TEENAGER, I surf the INTERNET -
you're asking about "Lady Chatterly?"

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

You surf the Internet? Can you do a
job for Me?

WENDY

Me? -- Sure!

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

I'm writing a memorandum to members
of my cabinet, and I want to put it
on the Internet. Can you do that?
wendy I told you! I'm a sophomore!

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Excellent.

He turns to his computer, starts to type. Wendy walks to his
side.

CLOSE ON: PC. SCREEN

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Bradley, Pentagon, Mr. Smithe, CIA, Mr. Wilson, NSA:

GENTLEMEN:

By Executive Order you are to De-Classify and release all documents relating to Thermal Paper 486 into the public record via available electronic methods and by Government Printing Office.

Sincerely, Andrew Michael Crichton President.

Wendy looks over her father's shoulder. wendy You really want me to send that on the Internet?

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Right away. Then go to bed.

WENDY

Dad!? Mom NEVER tells me when to go to bed!

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

Do as I say. I'm not your mother.

He exits.

CUT TO:

INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR - WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

President Crichton leaves the elevator, enters the Red Room.

CUT TO:

INT. RED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THE WALLS OF WATCHING PRESIDENTS

Crichton passes through.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

President Crichton looks among the volumes.

WOODROW WILSON BUST: Stares down at him.

VOLUME: 'THE LETTERS OF WOODROW WILSON'

Crichton takes the book down.

CUT TO:

INT. BUREAU DRAWER - NIGHT

A hand reaches in, takes out socks.

ON A BED:

A small overnighter is opened, shaving cream and razor and undershirts are stacked inside. "Letters of Woodwork Wilson" is deposited.

CLOSE ON: THE OVERNIGHTER: Zipped up.

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST WING SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The MARINE standing guard watches the President pass by, heading towards the bike rack.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
Evening, Sergeant.

SERGEANT
Good evening, Mister President.

Marine's eyes: FOLLOW THE PRESIDENT

MARINE'S POV:

Crichton sets the overnighter in the basket, climbs on a bike.

CUT TO:

EXT. GUARD GATE - EAST WING - NIGHT

THE GUARD: His attention riveted on an approaching bicycle in disbelief.

GUARD'S POV: The President up to the gate, then pedals right on through, around the crossing bar and into the street.

Quickly, the guard runs to the phone as IN THE BACKGROUND , SECRET SERVICE AGENTS begins SHOUTING.

CUT TO:

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - NIGHT

A D.C. SQUAD CAR on patrol along the expanse of the White House..

INT. D.C. SQUAD CAR - NIGHT

Two WEARY COPS riding low in their seats. The PASSENGER COP glances out the window.

Suddenly he sits up.

HIS POV: SHOOTING THROUGH WINDSHIELD:

President Crighton is riding towards them, clearly recognizable in the light of the street lamp.

COPS: EXCHANGE GLANCES

THEIR POV: THROUGH WINDSHIELD

TWO SECRET SERVICE UNMARKED CARS, BLUE DASHBOARD BUBBLE LIGHTS BLARING, SPEED AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE WHITE HOUSE.

D.C. COP
Did you see what I saw?

CUT TO:

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - NIGHT

HIGH SHOT

The President rounds the corner on his bike, the S.S. catching up, while the D.C. Squad car U-turns in quick pursuit.

EXT. AVENUE J. - NIGHT

The President is making good speed, and now the following cars are joined by FOUR MOTORCYCLE COPS.

THE COPS AND THE S.S. CARS AND THE SQUAD CARS:

Keep pace with the President, who pays no attention. on the bicycle PRESIDENT CRIGHTON: Keeps his eyes on the road.

THE INTERSECTION AHEAD: Abruptly, TWO MORE MOTORCYCLE COPS APPEAR, and start to divert the approaching traffic.

The President zips right through, as if he were entirely alone.

EXT. GEORGETOWN STREET - NIGHT

A YOUNG COUPLE NECKING AT A CAR, turn.

THEIR POV: The President is now being followed by a CARAVAN OF SECRET SERVICE AND WASHINGTON D.C. POLICE.

As he passes by, Crighton nods to them.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 Good evening. the couple Was that -
 it was, wasn't it...

CUT TO:

INT. BERNIE AND SALLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

THE DOWNSTAIRS BUZZER IS RINGING AND LUCY THE DOBERMAN STARTS TO BARK.

In the shadows, Bernie gets out of bed, grabs his robe.

INT. DARK STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Bernie descends the stairs.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS FOYER - NIGHT

Lucy is barking at someone at the front door. Bernie grabs the dog's collar.

BERNIE
 (to dog)
 Quiet, you're waking us up --

He stops in his tracks.

BERNIE'S POV

President Crighton is framed in the Colonial window.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON
 (calls through window)
 Bernie? It's Andrew!

BERNIE
 (almost a squeak,
 calls upstairs)
 Sally? It's the President!

CUT TO:

INT. BERNIE AND SALLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sally's eyes pop open.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE GARAGE - NIGHT

The door opens and the Cherokee drives out and down the steep driveway, while Bernie and Sally remain framed in the garage.

THEIR POV: The family wagon turns onto the street and around the corner, a motorcycle escort steady at its side, Secret Service cars behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIRGINIA PARKWAY - NIGHT

The Jeep turns onto the four-lane. The escort has grown.

IN THE NIGHT SKY: HEUY HELICOPTERS arrive from the East.

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

The President keeps his eyes on the road.

CUT TO:

INT. CYRUS WHITNEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cyrus is getting dressed as he talks into his portable phone.

CYRUS

Well I don't think there's an issue about where he's going, Colonel - let's just make damn sure he gets there! -- And for once let's try to keep it out of the press till we find out what's going on!

CUT TO:

ROAD SIGN:

"freeway ends - merge left."

INT. HAY TRUCK - NIGHT

It's the same Driver Laura passed on her trip to Lumina.

SIDE MIRROR: OUT OF DARKNESS, A BRILLIANT DISPLAY OF SPEEDING BUBBLE LIGHTS.

Almost immediately TWO MOTORCYCLE COPS appear alongside the driver, motioning him to pull to the side.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

The hay truck pulls onto the shoulder as SIX MOTORCYCLES SPEED BY.

INT. HAY TRUCK - NIGHT

driver Insanity.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATOR HYPE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The PHONE IS RINGING in the dark. A hand reaches out from covers, lifts the receiver.

SENATOR HYPE
 (coughs, into phone)
 What?
 (suddenly sits up)
 What did you say? He put a top secret
 document on the Internet?
 (incredulous)
 He de-classified it? Are you out of
 your mind?

CUT TO:

INT. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Speaker is staring at the phone in the dark.

SPEAKER
 He can't do that -

CUT TO:

INT. PROSECUTOR SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ron, wearing a cotton nightcap and nightgown, glares at the receiver.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
 You're LYING!

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - FIRST LIGHT

THREE LIMOUSINES pull up at the colonnade.

CYRUS, BRETT AND MRS. BRITWEATHER all exit simultaneously,
 hurry up the steps.

CUT TO:

INT. JEEP - DAWN

Behind the wheel, President Crighton is beginning to show signs of fatigue. He glances at the radio, turns it on.

RADIO:

RADIO NEWSCASTER
 ...Already word is coming from
 overseas, where it's late in the
 day, reactions to the President's
 extraordinary trip are pouring in.
 The British Prime Minister is reported
 to have said --

Crichton turns off the radio.

CUT TO:

THE RED CREST OF THE DAWNING SUN OVER A BLUE MOUNTAIN TOP.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - HARTFORD FARM - EARLY MORNING

Peter is eating a bowl of cereal in his pajamas at the kitchen table with one hand while with the other he points the TV remote control at the portable television.

THE CAT

Wanders by. Peter leans down to pet him.

THE TV: ABRUPTLY SWITCHES ON TO FOLLOW BREAKING NEWS:

WE SEE A HELICOPTER SHOT OF THE PRESIDENT'S JEEP, FOLLOWED BY MILES OF SECRET SERVICE VEHICLES AND JUST FOLKS OUT TO WATCH.

TV REPORTER'S (V.O.)
 ...While it's not much of a secret
 where this President is headed, it's
 uncertain when he'll get there, since
 the whole world is not only watching,
 they are trying to get on the road
 with him...

Peter: GAPES AT THE SIGHT.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

KNOCKING AT THE DOOR.

Laura opens her eyes sleepily.

PETER'S (V.O.)
 (outside door)
 Mom! Mom! Turn on the TV! Mom?

LAURA

Leans on her elbow, grabs the remote,
snaps it.

THE TV: THE SHOT OF THE PRESIDENT'S MOTORCADE.

There's Sally's Jeep, and even from this high ANGLE, we can see President Crighton behind the wheel.

REPORTER'S (V.O.)

...There you see him - he is now about ten miles east of the First Lady's family home in Lumina...

Laura sits up IN DISBELIEF.

REPORTER'S (V.O.)

...Reaction has been quick and furious in the Capitol to the President's extraordinary release on the Internet last night of the Pentagon's files on the so-called Thermal Death of the oceans...

LAURA:

THIS SINKS IN.

She throws back the covers, gets out of bed.

INT. STAIRWELL - EARLY MORNING

Laura, in her riding clothes, rushes down the steps even as her father Roland is walking up, newspapers under his arm.

ROLAND

(as Laura descends)

Your Andrew is on television this morning, Laura - I must say, he's a bold one. You two should hook up with each other --

Passing her father on the steps, she hesitates.

LAURA

Thanks Dad. I think we will.

INT. LONG DINING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Laura walks swiftly towards the door.

Kitty enters from the kitchen at the far end of the long room.

KITTY

(calls after)

Have you seen what Andrew is doing?
Why he has given his Presidency for
you!

(but Laura hurries on)

Laura, you can't run away from him!

LAURA

(doesn't turn back)

I'm not running from him, Mother --

Laura's out the door.

EXT. HILLSIDE. LUMINA FARM - EARLY MORNING

THE CROWD CAMPING OUT are watching portable TVs in groups,
sharing coffee and rolls, spellbound at the unfolding drama.

A Cycle Slut with pierced nose, ears, nostrils, eyebrows and
lips, looks off.

SLUT'S POV:

Laura takes off on Caesar, leaving the stables for the forest.
cycle slut Look! She's escaping! Right on, Sister! along
the hillside: The onlookers and media watch laura RIDE OFF
AND disappear into the forest

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER ROAD - EARLY MORNING

A TWO-TRUCK F.B.I. CONVOY is making its way to the Farm from
the opposite field. Very conspicuous on the back is a
camouflaged INVADER TANK.

INT. FRONT TRUCK - EARLY MORNING

F.B.I. FIELD AGENT WHIPP is listening to his headset, shaking
his head.

AGENT WHIPP

Sir, we are - but sir, we are almost
on target, sir - sir -- Yes sir.

(to his partner)

They're calling off Operation First
Lady. They want us back on base.
Pronto.

AGENT FRATTLE

They canceling? BUMMER!

In pure frustration, he rips off his hat and slams it on the
dash. Then he looks in front of him

HIS POV:

Laura gallops across the road on Caesar in full speed,
vanishes instantly into the thicket.

AGENT'S (V.O.)
That was HER! DAMN!!

CUT TO:

EXT. KENTUCKY WOODS - EARLY MORNING

Laura and Caesar ride like the wind through the trees.

CUT TO:

INT. JEEP CHEROKEE - EARLY MORNING

President Crighton squints in the sunlight, wipes his eyes,
it's been a long night.

HIS POV: SHOOTING THROUGH WINDSHIELD

In front, the Motorcycle escort is moving slowly behind miles
of slow traffic on the narrow two-lane.

Now he glances out the side window.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON:

His attention suddenly riveted.

HIS POV:

Out of the edge of a forest thicket on a ridge which rises
up to the crescent of a great orange morning sun, Laura
appears on the back of Caesar, riding hell for leather across
a field, heading his way.

Crighton turns the wheel.

EXT. ROAD TO LUMINA - EARLY MORNING

Before his protectors can react, President Crighton turns
his Jeep off the road and speeds into the field, raising
clouds of dust. Above, HELICOPTERS FROM THREE FEDERAL AGENCIES
AND TWELVE NEWS ORGANIZATIONS observe the event.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD. LUMINA - EARLY MORNING

LAURA RIDING CEASAR

Approaches the car at full gallop.

THE JEEP STOPS IN THE FIELD

President Crighton steps out.

IN THE DISTANCE ALONG THE DIRT FURROWS: THE SECRET SERVICE SPEEDS TOWARDS THEM.

Laura pulls up directly in front of the President.

The two of them look at each other seems a very long time, almost like old friends checking each other out after a long separation. Then Laura smiles her quizzical smile.

LAURA

Going my way, Mister President?

He just continues looking up at her, a curious expression on his face, as if seeing her in a new way. but he doesn't answer.

LAURA

(somehow philosophical)

Won't make a statement, will you.

(shakes her head, not unkindly)

...Politician.

PRESIDENT CRIGHTON

(answering her challenge)

...Wife.

Keeping her eyes on him, she leads Caesar closer, then Laura reaches down with an offer of help. He takes her arm and slips up behind her on the great Caesar.

Suddenly, they're off like a shot.

BEHIND THEM, ON THE KENTUCKY FIELD: The speeding federal sedans take off after the pair on the thoroughbred.

WE FOLLOW ALONG THE DARK TURF OF THE SOIL WITH THE MIGHTY CAESAR, WHO SWIFTLY CARRIES ANDREW AND LAURA

All at once they enter the thick forest and vanish almost magically.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAPITOL STEPS - WASHINGTON D.C. - MORNING

OPPOSITION SENATORS, including Senators Warren Hype, the Speaker of the House and Special Prosecutor Spitte have gathered in a hastily arranged PRESS CONFERENCE.

The men are angry, serious, and grave.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
 (into bank of media
 microphones)

The President has made a mockery of
 this committee and this process - he
 thinks he can decriminalize the
 situation by releasing top secret
 information and get away with it
 like some romantic schoolboy --

Special prosecutor spitte:

Can't control himself.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
 (interrupting)

We'll throw him in prison! We'll
 jail him! Him and his whole rotten
 family! We still have law and order
 in this country!

The senators: Alarmed by the outburst, THEY ALL step to the
 side almost as ONE man, leaving spitte ALL by himself IN
 FRONT OF THE INCREDULOUS REPORTERS.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR SPITTE
 (frothing at the mouth,
 SCREAMS)

The kids will be tried as adults!!!

MOVE UP TO THE GREAT ROTUNDA OF THE U.S. SENATE. OLD GLORY
 FLAPS IN THE WIND

DISSOLVE TO:

A pristine stream Pure clear waters in a gentle stream flowing
 through the Kentucky forest, green moss along its banks. We
 may remember the place from one of the President's daydreams.
 Now Caesar bends his great mane down, shakes his head, and
 drinks.

BEHIND HIM

In the thicket, murmured laughing is heard. We recognize the
 whispering voices of Andrew and Laura. Then silence.

Caesar cocks his head; perhaps he's eavesdropping on the
 pair.

Then the mighty thoroughbred steps back from the bank of the
 stream, stomps his hoof as if in approval, and, almost
 joyously:

CEASAR SCREAMS.

FREEZE FRAME:

THE END