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THE DEAD ZONE

"SCARS"

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THE DEAD ZONE

"SCARS"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. BANNERMAN HOME - DAY

1

A stream of hot coffee hits a cup. The pourer, SARAH, slides it across her table as she sits down.

SARAH

Honestly? I think you make a lot of noise, and people react to noise. I think you're crude, aggressive, and bull-headed.

Reveal she is speaking to GREG STILLSON, who is sitting at her kitchen table, sipping the hot coffee.

GREG

Good coffee.

SARAH

Again, that's just as a public figure, I don't mean to imply...

GREG

Sure you do, and that's just fine. I like to hear it. I never get to hear this stuff. You know why?

SARAH

Because everyone around you kisses your ass?

GREG

Because everyone around me kisses my ass.

(beat)

I say I'm the last honest politician, but I can't find people who'll be honest for me. That's why I'm always on the lookout for people like you.

SARAH

You make house calls to people who are gonna offend you?

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

GREG

No, I make house calls to people
I want on my team.

(off Sarah's surprise)

The success of a grassroots
campaign relies on the dedication
of smart, honest, real people.
Like you, Sarah.

SARAH

You don't even know me...

GREG

Bachelor's in political science
from University of Maine, and you
want Harrison Fisher out of office
just like the rest of us. Who do
you think's gonna do that? Steve
Hansz? It's true, I plan to
shake things up. I'm here to
make a difference, and empower
others to do the same. How do
you feel about making a difference?

She thinks about that, then shakes her head.

SARAH

Your... research must've told you
I'm already running a campaign.

GREG

"Bannerman for Sheriff," I know.
And I completely support that. I
think your husband's doing an
exceptional job.

SARAH

I'll let him know you think so,
but I... I'm just not interested
at this time.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

GREG

Oh, you're at *least* interested.
Otherwise when I called you
wouldn't have said sure, stop on
by and have some coffee.

SARAH

It's not every day a congressional
candidate wants to hear your
thoughts. I was curious.

GREG

I think it was more than that. I
think you want to make a
difference.

SARAH

Everyone wants to make a
difference.

GREG

I wish that were the case. Truth
is, you'd be horrified at the
level of apathy out there.

SARAH

Actually... I see it every day at
work.

GREG

Tell me.

SARAH

I substitute teach at Cleaves
Mills High, English and Music.
Our district is so desperate to
increase its per-student funding
that my classroom gets bigger and
bigger every year. The student-
teacher ratio's gotta be 35 to 1
now, and I can tell you the quality
of these kids' education is
suffering.

GREG

That's exactly the kind of thing
you can change.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

GREG (CONT'D)

That's exactly the kind of thing I'm going to change. "Making sure money helps, not hurts," is one of my planks.

SARAH

And how do you plan on doing it?

Greg smiles, and puts down his coffee.

GREG

By being crude, aggressive, and bull-headed. By making so much noise that Washington can't help but listen. I will go to war for you... but you have to give me the ammunition.

Off Sarah's reaction, absorbing Greg's honest passion. He sees he made a mark, and immediately pulls back.

GREG

Think about it. Meantime, why don't you stop by the debates tonight, check out the scene, see if it sparks you. Better than watching it on TV.

SARAH

Maybe.

GREG

Thanks for the coffee. And thanks for listening.

2 EXT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - DAY

2

Greg strolls down the walk, to a CAR that's waiting for him on the street. He gets in the passenger seat, next to SONNY ELLIMAN.

GREG

Smart woman.

SONNY

Did you ask her about John Smith?

GREG

Decided not to. Old wounds, and all that.

SONNY

We have to deal with this, Greg.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

GREG

You really have it in for this Smith guy.

SONNY

He's been asking questions about you.

GREG

"The wrong kind of questions."

SONNY

Not just that. It's like he already knows what he's looking for...

The way Sonny says this makes Greg look at him, bemused.

GREG

The psychic thing freaks you out, doesn't it?

SONNY

I'm just saying we have to deal with this.

GREG

Relax, Sonny. I'm way, way ahead of you.

Sonny shakes his head, starts the car, they drive out of frame.

3 INT. CAFE - DAY

3

JOHNNY sits in a booth that affords him a good deal of privacy as he reads the paper and enjoys a cheeseburger.

The hanging door bell JINGLES and Johnny casually glances up... then double-takes when he sees Greg Stillson enter. Johnny tenses up as Greg walks straight toward him; suddenly this private booth has become a bear-trap. Greg gives a friendly nod, then slides in across from Johnny.

GREG

Anything about me in there?

Johnny leans out and looks down the aisle - it looks like Stillson came alone. Johnny folds up his paper.

JOHNNY

Uh, no, this is the sports section.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

GREG

No, I mean, is there anything about me...

(points to Johnny's forehead)

In there?

It's like a bad dream. Johnny wants to wake up.

JOHNNY

I'm sorry, Mr. Stillson, can I help you?

GREG

Greg, please. We've met a couple times. Just never had a proper sit-down. Gene Purdy seems to think you're the greatest thing since Christian Rock. Said, "Greg, get to know this guy."

(beat)

I'd call first but I figure you'd sense I was coming anyway.

JOHNNY

Doesn't really work that way.

GREG

Yeah? How does "it" work? You touch someone and get a vision of them doing something bad, like kidnapping a kid or murdering some girl, and then you try and make it right. Right?

JOHNNY

Something like that.

Greg leans forward, as if sharing a secret.

GREG

And when we shook hands at that rally, you got a vision of me doing something bad.

Johnny doesn't answer, which sounds like 'yes' to Greg.

GREG

And now you want to make it right.

Johnny just holds his look. Greg nods, leans back.

GREG

I may have done some things in the past, I'm not proud of.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

3

GREG (CONT'D)

But upon reflection, I realize I had good reasons and best intentions for all of them. Whatever you saw, you probably took out of context.

(beat)

You can't "see" good intentions, can you?

There's a trace of doubt in Greg's voice, like he may be searching for a way to confess. But all that's banished in a hearty laugh.

GREG

As if I have to justify myself to a fortune teller.

(suddenly all business)

Look, I know what this is about. You want a chip in the big game, and I don't blame you. But it's not something I can give right now. Maybe when I'm in office...

JOHNNY

I don't want anything from you.

GREG

Then stop going through my closet. I got enough to worry about with Harrison Fisher, I don't have time to worry about you.

JOHNNY

Then don't.

Greg shakes his head, smiling. His tone to Johnny is sympathetic.

GREG

I know you've seen some awful things, Smith. Wicked, brutal things. But you ain't seen politics up close, and trust me, you don't want to.

Greg gets up, drops some bucks on the table to cover Johnny's tab, then pats him on the shoulder --

FIRE ROLLS OUT ACROSS THE SCREEN, then we see three quick images - A SATELLITE in space, a BLOODY FEMALE HAND on a white silk pillow, the BLACK MONOLITH/WASHINGTON MONUMENT rushing toward us... and over this we hear a wild, roaring scream that sounds like Greg in agony or ecstasy...

Johnny snaps out of his vision, shaken. Greg notices.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (3)

3

GREG

What'd you see? Do I win? Wait,
don't tell me! Don't tell me.

Greg backs out, finger to his lips. He turns and exits. Johnny watches him go. Then realizes he's been clenching his butter knife under the table so tightly that he's broken skin... and drawn a thin line of his own blood.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 INT. SMITH HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY 4

Johnny, working fast, closes down his laptop and starts winding up the power cord. BRUCE turns from staring at the Stillson bulletin board.

BRUCE

I got a bad feeling about this,
Johnny.

JOHNNY

So do I. I got this real bad
feeling about the end of the world.
Do you see a brown leather case...

Bruce picks it up off a chair. Johnny takes it, starts packing in the laptop.

BRUCE

How do you know that?

JOHNNY

What are you talking about? You
know how I know.

BRUCE

You told me you touched Stillson,
and saw Washington D.C. in flames.
But did you see how it got that
way? Was it a nuclear attack?
Did Greg Stillson breathe fire on
everyone? Did you actually see
him *doing* anything?

Johnny crosses to the board, begins pulling down select clippings to pack in his valise.

JOHNNY

For the past two months, I've
been sitting in this basement,
digging into the past, trying to
find a connection. A clue.
Something.

BRUCE

And?

JOHNNY

And I'm sick of waiting. I *know*
this guy is linked... no,
responsible, for a future atrocity
that ends in apocalypse. I know
it. I feel it.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

BRUCE

But you didn't see it. Not exactly.

JOHNNY

I saw enough.

Johnny heads for the door, passing Bruce, who is unconvinced and concerned. Johnny suddenly turns.

JOHNNY

If you had the chance to go back in time, and kill Hitler, would you do it?

BRUCE

Whoa. Slow down.

JOHNNY

It's 1926, he hasn't risen to power yet. You can still get to him.

(Bruce opens his mouth,
Johnny cuts him off)

You're in a room alone with him and you have a gun. What do you do?

BRUCE

Did you buy a gun, John?

JOHNNY

I don't need a gun. All I need to do is change one detail, and all of life changes. Today I found that detail, and you know who showed it to me?

BRUCE

I know you're not gonna say --

JOHNNY

Greg Stillson.

Johnny walks through the door, heads up the stairs.

5 INT. SMITH HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

5

Follow Johnny as he comes out of the basement. Bruce follows.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

JOHNNY

He said, "I have enough to worry about with Harrison Fisher, I don't have time to worry about you." I don't know why I didn't see it before.

BRUCE

See what?

JOHNNY

If I can help Fisher win the election, Stillson's rise to power is shut down.

BRUCE

So that's it, huh? Mr. Smith goes to Washington?

JOHNNY

(stopping at door)
You gotta admit, the one place that could use a psychic is a campaign office.

BRUCE

I don't know, man. Politics... just saying it makes me feel dirty. You sure this is how you should be using yourself?

JOHNNY

(starts the car)
Only thing I've been sure of for a long time.

He heads out the door.

6 OMITTED

6

7 INT. FISHER CAMPAIGN HQ - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

7

HANK CASSISSI, Fisher's charismatic, mercurial campaign manager, preaches to the very tired CAMPAIGN STAFFERS seated around the conference table.

HANK CASSISSI

Okay, we're two days into the debates and let's not beat around the bush: We're losing. Greg Stillson will say pretty much anything, and the result is he's closing the gap in the polls.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Most of the staffers are terrified of Hank. A young man stands in the back of the room, watching them. This is PHIL ROGERS (25), picture Alex P. Keaton but more conservative. Phil already knows Hank's routine. His eyes roam out the conference room window into the campaign bullpen... then narrow as he spots JOHNNY enter the offices and begin chatting up a volunteer.

HANK CASSISSI

We have to change our angle of approach. This isn't issue vs. issue, it's candidate vs. candidate. It's experience vs. ignorance. A decorated past vs. a shady past...

ON A HARRISON FISHER POSTER - featuring the confident, smiling face of the incumbent. Pan down to find the real man, HARRISON FISHER, whose mouth is closed in thought (also on the walls: pictures of Fisher shaking hands with George Bush, Arnold Schwarzenegger, etc.)

HARRISON FISHER

Let's not go there.

Everyone turns to face their ultimate boss.

HARRISON FISHER

I've managed to stay in office fifteen years without name-calling. It'll look like weakness. The dirtier Stillson plays, the cleaner we play.

PHIL ROGERS

I agree. Excuse me one moment.

Phil exits the conference room.

8 INT. FISHER CAMPAIGN HQ - BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

8

Johnny is filling out a form with cheerful SYLVIA when Phil walks up. He addresses Sylvia, eyes on Johnny.

PHIL ROGERS

Hey Sylvia, what's going on here?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

SYLVIA

Just taking an application.

PHIL ROGERS

An application.

JOHNNY

Hi. John Smith...

Phil is curt with him.

PHIL ROGERS

I know who you are. I read the papers cover to cover every morning, Mr. Smith.

JOHNNY

(disarming, nice)

Do you start with the funnies?
'Cause sometimes I think I'm the only one.

SYLVIA

Oh, I *always* --

PHIL ROGERS

What do you want?

JOHNNY

I'd like to volunteer my services, Mr...

PHIL ROGERS

Phil Rogers, I'm the campaign's party liaison, and I'm wondering why a local celebrity and known Stillson supporter is lurking around our offices in the middle of the debates.

JOHNNY

I wouldn't call this lurking, and you shouldn't believe everything they print in the papers. Especially if you read them cover to cover.

PHIL ROGERS

It's hard to misinterpret a color photo of Greg Stillson and yourself hand in hand at a rally for his benefit.

The conference door opens and STAFFERS pour out of the adjourned meeting, heading to phones and computers,

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

marshalled to work. Harrison Fisher and Hank Cassissi walk out last. Johnny calls out over Phil's shoulder.

JOHNNY

Mr. Fisher!

Hank and Fisher look over. Phil, ticked off, calls to a suited BODYGUARD, who's reading the paper at his desk.

PHIL ROGERS

Rick.

RICK, the bodyguard, heads over to Johnny.

HANK CASSISSI

There a problem, Phil?

PHIL ROGERS

Greg Stillson sent over a celebrity spy.

JOHNNY

(to Fisher)

That's not true, Sir.

HANK CASSISSI

(trying to place Johnny)

Channel 9. You do the weather, right?

HARRISON FISHER

Guys. Guys. Let the man speak.

JOHNNY

I'm not a spy for Stillson, and I don't do the Weather.

(some staffers laugh,

Johnny turns to Fisher)

Some people like to call me a psychic, which is a pretty broad term...

Fisher gives a look to his aides, "Okay, Get me out."

JOHNNY

I've helped out the police in the past, and some other people.

I've never used my abilities for a political cause, but I think this is important.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (3)

8

PHIL ROGERS

I'm sorry, Mr. Smith, the
Congressman's time is very limited,
I'm afraid we don't have room for
a psychic in our circus.

Johnny watches Fisher being swept away into another
meeting.

9 EXT. BANNERMAN HOME - DAY

9

WALT stows his jacket in the trunk of his car. Sarah
leans up against the car.

WALT

He was here?

SARAH

Yeah, had his driver wait right
over there.

WALT

All this because you gave him a
piece of your mind at the "Meet
the Candidates" rally?

SARAH

I don't know what I said, but it
must've been brilliant.

(beat)

I'm really considering his offer.

Walt leans against the opposite counter. Looks at her.

SARAH

I used to be involved, Walt. In
college. Politics, protests... a
lot of my songwriting started
with that. Now I'm just an
"armchair activist." Sitting on
the sidelines, baking cookies...

Walt puts his arms around her.

WALT

I like your cookies.

SARAH

Well, you'll like the store's
cookies, too.

WALT

(joking)

Damn that Stillson.

10 EXT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT 10

The "Town Hall" style debates are literally being held in Bangor's town hall building. Johnny's jeep pulls up.

11 INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT 11

The meeting hall is substantially sized, but still intimate (shaped like a mini-stadium theater). A couple CUSTODIANS are vacuuming the aisles. Johnny keeps to the side of the room as he heads for center stage, where three podiums are set up in close proximity.

Johnny steps up on the stage. The podiums have nameplates: HANSZ on stage right, FISHER in the center, and STILLSON on stage left. Johnny walks around Stillson's podium. Standing behind it, he reaches out and grips the podium with both of his hands...

We CIRCLE 360 degrees around Johnny - as the camera arcs behind his back we see the empty hall is now FULL of people, including TV Cameras. When the camera arcs back to its original position facing Johnny, we see he's now in a suit, raging. He is GREG STILLSON, and right now he's in the middle of savaging Harrison Fisher.

JOHNNY/STILLSON

...For the last 15 years all it's been about is tax breaks and campaign kickbacks and woe to any mere mortal who gets in the way!

MODERATOR (O.S.)

Mr. Stillson, please back your argument with facts --

JOHNNY/STILLSON

I'm sorry, Teddy. I just don't know which of the many to pick.

(MORE)

11 CONTINUED:

11

JOHNNY/STILLSON (CONT'D)

(pointing at Fisher)

Fact: In August '99, you voted yes on H.R. 232, which awarded 300,000 acres of the North Woods to Harper Lumber, the biggest timber company in Maine and your major campaign contributor. You didn't care that it forced a smaller logging business to go under. Put a 138 people out of work, but that's just a drop in the bucket, right?

Harrison Fisher reels at the speed of the tirade. He tries to recall that bill and all its amendments...

HARRISON FISHER

I'd... have to check on that incident but I'm sure my vote had the best interests of our citizens and workers in mind...

JOHNNY/STILLSON

Oh, we're all sure of that, Harry.

The room APPLAUDS Stillson, cheering David over Goliath.

And the room is suddenly quiet as Johnny snaps back to reality. He exhales, lifts his hands off the podium, looks at them... and smiles.

CUSTODIAN

Hey! Whatcha doin' up there?

JOHNNY

I'm getting good at this.

Johnny walks off the stage.

12 INT. FISHER CAMPAIGN HQ - BULLPEN - DAY

12

Sylvia is on the phone at her desk. General campaign chaos in the background action. She's multi-tasking as she writes on a message pad.

SYLVIA

Uh-huh... bill two twenty two...

13 INT. SMITH HOUSE (INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION)

13

Johnny, on the phone, getting anxious.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

JOHNNY

No, two thirty two. Stillson is gonna try to sandbag him tonight about some logging company and how H.R. 232 shut them down and put people out of work...

Sylvia scribbles this down, distracted. She has three calls holding.

SYLVIA

Okay, I'll pass it on. Thanks for calling, Mr. Schmidt.
(switches lines)
Fisher for Congress.

At home, Johnny slowly hangs up. Uncertain.

14 INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

14

The debates have already begun. C-SPAN is covering the packed house. On stage, democratic candidate STEVEN HANSZ has the floor, droning in a thick nasal accent.

STEVEN HANZ

...A list of things that folks have told me are important to them. At the top of that list, affordable prescription drugs for the elderly...

JOHNNY AND BRUCE

Watch from the back of the room, standing. They whisper to each other. Johnny seems anxious, on edge.

JOHNNY

Come on... come on...

BRUCE

Don't get nervous, man. You make me nervous.

JOHNNY

I'm not nervous. I'm psyched.

BRUCE

Psyched?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

JOHNNY

You should've seen me today, Bruce. I walked up on that stage, touched the podium, and saw what was going to happen.

BRUCE

So? That's what you always do.

JOHNNY

Is that what you think? That I'm in control of this thing? The visions have a life of their own, I work for them. Except today, up there, they worked for me.

(off Bruce's look)

What?

BRUCE

Nothing. I guess I never seen you excited about a vision before. Don't know if that's good or bad.

JOHNNY

All I know is it feels right. Like instinct. Or deja vu.

BRUCE

(joking)

Or "destiny."

Johnny thinks about that, then looks across the seated audience where he knows he'll see REVEREND PURDY, sitting in the Stillson-Supporters section. We also spot Sonny. They applaud for Greg on stage, who begins speaking.

JOHNNY

Wonder what Purdy will say when he finds out I'm standing against his golden boy.

BRUCE

Forget Purdy, what's that about?

Johnny doesn't know what he's talking about. He follows Bruce's nod to another person in the Stillson Section...

JOHNNY

Sarah? What's she doing with Stillson's people?

BRUCE

Still haven't told her about the big bad vision?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

JOHNNY

I can't burden her with that. I
feel bad enough I told you.

MODERATOR (O.S.)

Mr. Stillson, please back your
argument with facts --

Johnny's attention is suddenly drawn back to stage. Greg's
words and gestures are exactly as they were in the vision.

GREG

I'm sorry, Teddy. I just don't
know which of the many to pick.

(pointing at Fisher)

Fact: In August '99, you voted
yes on H.R. 232, which awarded
300,000 acres of the North Woods
to Harper Lumber, the biggest
timber company in Maine and your
major campaign contributor. You
didn't care that it forced a
smaller logging business to go
under. Put a 138 people out of
work, but that's just a drop in
the bucket, right?

Heads turn to Fisher, who weighs his response.

HARRISON FISHER

You're right about one thing,
Greg. Aaron Harper is my primary
campaign contributor, and I'm
grateful for his support, and
proud of our friendship. I asked
him to step in and clean up a
mess. Ajax Logging, that "small
business," was clear-cutting the
area to shreds. I allowed Haper
to annex the land under the
condition they'd employ selective
cutting. They did, and we saved
that forest. Mr. Harper, I believe
you're in the audience tonight,
would you stand up? Come on,
Aaron. Get up.

AARON HARPER stands up. Harrison leads the crowd in
APPLAUSE for him. Stillson is speechless.

SMASH CUT TO:

15 INT. TOWN HALL - LATER

15

The debates are over now. The crowd is breaking up. The Candidates have regrouped to their camps of aides and supporters.

JOHNNY AND BRUCE

Are still in back, people are shuffling out past them. Moving against the traffic flow is Sylvia, the Fisher campaigner. She's wearing a bright blue "Fisher For Congress" campaign shirt. Johnny smiles at her. She leans over and whispers in his ear.

SYLVIA

Congressman Fisher would like you to stop by our post-debate meeting tonight at campaign headquarters. If you're available.

STILLSON AND SONNY

Are in a heated pow-wow in the Stillson section.

GREG

I don't care, Sonny. We got a leak somewhere, and I when I find it I'm gonna plug it with my bare hands. I looked like a *fool*.

SONNY

Greg, there is no way he could've seen that question coming. No way.

Greg looks around, pissed off. And then, in the back of the room, he spots Johnny Smith.

Talking to a staffer from the Fisher campaign.

Johnny looks over this way, and the two men lock eyes.

Stillson then realizes that Johnny was somehow responsible for this. He nods, as if acknowledging a well-made chess move. Johnny makes no move to return the nod, but he makes no move to deny his responsibility, either.

Holding on both of their looks, we...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

16 INT. STILLSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

16

Greg sits with his shirt off, while LINDA massages his back and shoulders. Sonny Elliman enters.

GREG

What's the fallout?

SONNY

Word is the night pretty much went to Fisher.

GREG

I looked like an idiot up there. Unprepared.

(to Linda)

Harder.

SONNY

Your Dad's not happy about you calling Aaron Harper out like that.

GREG

Ah, Harper doesn't care.
(over his shoulder)
Harder.

SONNY

I think you made a bad play with John Smith.

Greg suddenly grabs Linda's hand, gripping it tight and making her nails dig into his skin.

GREG

So I can feel it.

She gasps, as he's crushing her hand. Greg stands, releasing Linda who backs away, holding her reddened hand.

LINDA

(pissed off, to Sonny)
He's all yours.

Linda stalks out of the room. Greg opens the mini-bar, pours himself a drink as he laughs to himself.

GREG

God damn crippled freak. I hate freaks, Sonny, I really do. Like that retarded chick in that movie, I just wanted to strangle her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

GREG (CONT'D)

*

What was the name of that movie?

SONNY

Maybe I should have a talk with
him.

Greg looks at him, and we wonder what "have a talk" might
mean.

GREG

I don't think that's necessary
yet. Let's give him a little
time.

Sonny's not happy with that. Greg downs his drink.

17 OMITTED
AND
18

17
AND
18

19 INT. FISHER CAMPAIGN HQ - NIGHT

19

As Johnny and Bruce enter the campaign bullpen. Fisher staffers are applauding Johnny. It's a bit of a party in here. Punch, cookies, finger foods.

HANK CASSISSI

Is this the guy? This him?
Someone get Fisher out here.

(to Johnny)

You, my friend, may have punch.

Hank hands Johnny a paper cup with some punch. Someone else hands Bruce a cup. Johnny raises his glass to Phil Rogers, who sheepishly looks away into his cup.

The crowd parts for Harrison Fisher as he approaches Johnny. Holding Fisher's hand is his sleepy GRAND-DAUGHTER. He hands her off to his DAUGHTER, who's on the campaign staff. The room naturally goes quiet for him.

HARRISON FISHER

You could say it's an...
unexplained phenomenon that
Stillson is gaining on us. Maybe
we can use a psychic around here,
after all.

Everyone laughs. Fisher extends his hand. Johnny shakes it. And on their touch we RAMP INTO JOHNNY'S FACE --

20 *FLASH!*

20

A DARK MASK. The eyes open, and we realize we're looking at Johnny, whose face is covered in camouflage. He moves through the jungle with five heavily armed NAVY SEALS. Keeping silent, pushing some plants aside, we reveal:

21 EXT. VIETNAMESE VILLAGE - NIGHT

21

Five HOOCHES/HUTS. The armed men stealth into the village, led by Johnny. He signals for them to stop and the line freezes as a VIETNAMESE MAN exits one of the huts, yawning. His back to the group, he begins to urinate. Slung round his back is a Chinese Model AK-47 (no stock). Johnny looks back to his COMMANDER, who gives a kill signal. Johnny then sets down his rifle and unsheathes a gleaming combat knife. He stealths to the Man's back, who finishes his business just as Johnny strikes, pulling him close and jamming his knife into the brain stem. *

Too late to spot THE SEVEN YEAR OLD BOY in the hut, watching his Father get killed. The boy's MOTHER comes out of the hut and SCREAMS. She throws herself over the body of the dead man.

More SCREAMS as PEOPLE begin running from the other hooches. And we INTERCUT fractured hand-held moments of chaos with EXTREME CLOSE-UPS of JOHNNY'S EYES and FISHER'S EYES back in the light of the campaign office. We see Women and Children rounded up and thrown together.

JOHNNY/FISHER
(looking around)
Where're the men? Where're the
weapons? These are civilians. *

Johnny/Fisher addresses his COMMANDER.

COMMANDER
Fisher, cover the forest. *

The Commander moves off into the darkness. Johnny/Fisher looks down at the group of terrified WOMEN on the ground in front of him. One of the SEALS, MULVERT, spots a woman trying to hide a metallic object underneath her hat. *

MULVERT
Grenade! *

He opens fire, killing the woman. Johnny/Fisher steps forward to look at the body. The hat has blown aside, and he can see the "grenade" was a simple C-RAT can. *

Johnny is about to open his mouth when Terrified VILLAGERS begin to run for their lives. The SEAL team opens fire, begins taking them down before they can escape the village. An atrocity in the making. *

JOHNNY/FISHER
Stand down! Stand down! *

But no one can hear him over the sound of the gunfire. *

(CONTINUED)

- 21 CONTINUED: 21
- ECU - Johnny/Fisher's eyes, wide with terror, as muzzle flashes dilate his pupils...* *
- 22 INT. FISHER CAMPAIGN HQ - BULLPEN 22
- The machine-gun fire bleeds back into applause as Johnny comes out of the vision, the color drained from his face. Bruce notices. So does Fisher.
- HARRISON FISHER
- You okay?
- JOHNNY
- No. Yes. It's nothing.
(forcing a smile)
What'd you guys put in this punch,
anyway?
- More chuckles all around. Johnny steps aside.
- BRUCE
- (sotto)
You saw something. What?
- Johnny collects himself, then faces Bruce.
- JOHNNY
- A chance. We got a good chance
of beating Stillson.
- Bruce is dubious. Johnny turns back and spots Fisher,
looking at him.
- DISSOLVE TO:
- 22A EXT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING 22A
- Johnny's Jeep parked out front...

23 EXT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

23

Johnny steps up onto the porch. He hesitates, then musters his will and rings the doorbell. A beat as he looks around the porch, then Sarah opens the door.

SARAH

Hi. I didn't know you were coming by.

JOHNNY

Yeah, well, I was around, and I wanted to ask you something, in person.

SARAH

(cautious)

Okay...

JOHNNY

It's nothing serious. I saw you last night at the debates at town hall, and you were sitting with Greg Stillson's people...

SARAH

I guess you could say I'm working for his campaign now.

(leading)

What were you doing at town hall?

JOHNNY

Just observing.

SARAH

Because I heard some people saying you joined Harrison Fisher's campaign. I knew I had to hear that wrong...

JOHNNY

Who told you that?

SARAH

Just the word at the Stillson camp.

JOHNNY

Has Greg Stillson been asking you questions about me?

SARAH

Why would he ask about you? Better yet, why are you asking about him?

Johnny thinks about how to answer that. Stalls.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

SARAH

Is this *true* about Harrison Fisher?

Johnny nods. Sarah can't believe it.

SARAH

When you and I were...

(scratch that)

You've always voted against him. Now you're trying to keep him in office? Since when did you get involved like that?

JOHNNY

Let's just say I want things to stay how they are.

SARAH

You're not using your powers to influence this election, are you? 'Cause that'd be wrong, Johnny. I mean really wrong.

JOHNNY

Sarah, believe me, I have my reasons...

SARAH

What reasons?

Johnny shakes his head, looks down, and sees *THE VIETNAMESE BOY* from the vision step out from behind Sarah, and stare up at him.

Johnny takes a step back, alarmed. Sarah turns around.

SARAH

What is it?

Johnny looks again; the boy is gone.

JOHNNY

I... I don't feel so hot, I'm gonna take off.

SARAH

You sure you should drive...

JOHNNY

I'll be fine. We'll talk later.

Sarah watches him go.

24 INT. CAFE - DAY

24

A distraught Johnny sits with Bruce. He's just finished confessing the truth about the vision he got off Fisher.

BRUCE

Damn. I knew you saw something last night, but not Mai Lai.

JOHNNY

On a smaller scale, that's what it felt like. Except for one guy with a gun, who was probably protecting his family, they were all women and children. I looked up the citation for Fisher's Bronze Star, it says the raid took out 20 Viet Cong insurgents, and destroyed a weapons cache. They reported a lie.

BRUCE

And got a medal for it.

They shut up as a WAITRESS stops by to refill coffee. Bruce speaks quietly after she leaves.

BRUCE

Did you see anything else?

JOHNNY

This morning, I was talking to Sarah, at her place, and I saw the little boy from the village.

BRUCE

(confused)
Saw him where?

JOHNNY

Just standing there, next to her. Looking right at me.

BRUCE

You were having a vision.

JOHNNY

But I wasn't touching anything.
(off Bruce's stare)
And when I saw him, I felt a... pain in my chest. A tightening.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

BRUCE

I'd be feeling something, too. I mean, do you realize how huge this is? You're sitting on top of a major scandal. We gotta corroborate this. Get witnesses who were there...

JOHNNY

No.

BRUCE

No?

JOHNNY

Harrison Fisher is a decorated war hero. If the truth gets out, it's like you said. A major scandal. Big enough to kill any chance for re-election. And then Stillson has a clear path to power.

BRUCE

You are talking about covering up for a guy who lied about murdering innocent people.

JOHNNY

I think Fisher's a good guy who got caught in a bad situation. He wasn't in command...

BRUCE

So you're just gonna let him off the hook? Are you allowed to do that?

JOHNNY

What do you mean, "Am I allowed?"

BRUCE

I mean, can you just ignore one of your visions? I thought you "worked for them."

JOHNNY

Not when they work against each other. If I'm going to change the future, I have to let the past stay where it is.

But as he says this, Johnny looks past Bruce to a booth where a YOUNG COUPLE sits. UNDER THE TABLE, the small Vietnamese Boy huddles with his arms around his knees, peering at Johnny.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2)

24

The couple laughs as the girl feeds the guy a french fry. Johnny breathes in, and out, and closes his eyes. But when he opens them, the boy is still under the table. Staring.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

25 INT. FISHER CAMPAIGN HQ - DAY

25

Johnny sits at the conference table. Harrison Fisher sits at the head of the table, Phil Rogers sits on the other side. Hank Cassissi is pacing, energetic. During the following, Fisher's eyes never leave Johnny, and Johnny makes an effort not to make eye contact with Fisher.

HANK CASSISSI

I gotta tell you, I see no limit to where we can take this. See the future, see the past, we can fire our whole polling team, who needs 'em? This is the epitome of out-of-the-box thinking.

(turning to Fisher)

I got it. Reception for the Daughters of the American Revolution. At the Governor's mansion. All the candidates'll be there.

(to Johnny)

You got a tux?

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

PHIL ROGERS

No. No way. We can't let it get out that Harrison Fisher is consulting a psychic. We'll be laughed out of office.

(to Fisher)

Sir, please.

HARRISON FISHER

Would you guys mind stepping out for a second, I'd like a word with John.

Phil and Hank exchange looks. They nod and exit. The door closes. Johnny and Fisher are alone in the room. Johnny is forced to look at Fisher. Silent, tense beat.

HARRISON FISHER

Got your wallet on you, John?

JOHNNY

Uh, yeah.

HARRISON FISHER

Slide it over.

(off Johnny's confusion)

I can tell everything about a man by looking at his wallet.

Johnny hesitates, then takes out his wallet, and slides it across the table to Fisher, who stops it.

HARRISON FISHER

Mm. Less than a year old. Looks like department store leather, I'm guessing you didn't buy this yourself.

JOHNNY

It was a gift.

HARRISON FISHER

From your girlfriend?

JOHNNY

Not at the time.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

Fisher nods, opens it up. Smiles.

HARRISON FISHER

You hate taking Drivers License photos like everyone else.
(flips through billfold)
Twenty five bucks, travel light.
And you're an easygoing guy; bills just go where they go. Unlike Phil, who needs to order his twenties, tens and fives, and all facing the same way.

JOHNNY

I can see that.

HARRISON FISHER

One credit card. Cleaves Mills public library card, frayed laminate, you actually use it. Insurance, no pictures, but...
(pulls out a wad of business cards)
Jackpot.

JOHNNY

Business cards are the jackpot?

Fisher goes through the cards, which reflect the various people Johnny has helped throughout the series so far.

HARRISON FISHER

Each one's a story. We got sheriff, doctors, C.E.O.'s, website designers, bartenders, chemists...
(beat)
You know what this wallet says? It says here's a man whose life is stripped down, unstructured, and very, very complicated. Because your life is more focused on others than it is on yourself.
(puts wallet on table)
In that way, you and I are a lot alike.

He slides the wallet back to Johnny, who catches it:

ECU - JOHNNY/FISHER'S EYES, ABSORBING THE ATROCITY, STROBE MUZZLE FLASHES AND DEAFENING SOUND.

Johnny controls his reaction. Fisher stands, walks over.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (3)

25

HARRISON FISHER

I like your wallet, John.

JOHNNY

Thanks, I guess.

HARRISON FISHER

I suppose you already know what's
in mine.

JOHNNY

Not without looking. My "powers"
don't tell me everything, they
just kind of lead me where I'm
needed, or where I can be of use.

HARRISON FISHER

Well, you could definitely be of
use here. Though I agree with
Phil, about keeping a low profile.
You should come to the reception
tonight, but come alone, and we
probably should keep interaction
between us to a minimum.

JOHNNY

I think that's best.

Sylvia knocks, then pops her head in the door.

SYLVIA

Sir, Congressman Russell's on the
phone for you.

HARRISON FISHER

Welcome aboard.

No hand shake this time. Fisher exits with Sylvia. Johnny exhales, releasing tension. He looks at the wall of pictures. At one in particular; Fisher in Navy Uniform, with the Bronze Star.

Through the conference room windows, we see Fisher in the middle of the bullpen, looking back at Johnny, looking at that picture.

26 INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

26

THE JAZZ BAND - as they kick off an instrumental version of "Look for the Silver Lining".

ON JOHNNY

In a tux (with gold-tipped cane), as he enters the main ball room. It's a black tie affair, the colorful standouts being the D.A.R. members, all are dressed in historically accurate 18th century dresses. ROVING SERVERS and BARTENDERS serve traditional food from the period (most of which remains on the trays).

HANK CASSISSI (O.S.)

Johnny!

Hank walks up, Martini in hand.

HANK CASSISSI

Find the place okay? Nice cane.

JOHNNY

All I need is a top hat.

Hank leads him through the party, pointing OFF SCREEN.

HANK CASSISSI

That's Patty Keenan, Governor's wife, she's a D.A.R. officer, puts this party together. Bald guy with the baby face over there is Benny Sarver, Mayor of Augusta. Chinese gentleman with red bow tie is Henry Chao...

JOHNNY

Supreme Court Justice.

HANK CASSISSI

(zero irony)

Definitely want you to touch him later. And there's the Congressman and Aaron Harper of Harper Lumber.

Johnny sees Harrison Fisher talking with Aaron Harper. He suddenly catches a *GLIMPSE* of the *VIETNAMESE BOY* passing between two talking *GUESTS*. Johnny turns around, and grabs a wine glass off a passing D.A.R. server.

(CONTINUED)

26

CONTINUED:

26

POV FROM ACROSS THE ROOM - JOHNNY AND HANK CASSISSI

The man watching is Sonny Elliman, and he doesn't like what he sees.

We FOLLOW Sonny as he moves through the party guests. He manages to give a polite nod to Sarah, who looks stunning in a formal dress. We STAY with Sarah and Walt, who is tugging at his bowtie. He looks good in his tux, but doesn't feel good in it.

SARAH

(re: Sonny)

That guy creeps me out.

WALT

Everyone here creeps me out.

SARAH

(fixing Walt's bowtie)

Hey, this is supposed to be the glamorous part of politics.

WALT

I think glamour looks better on you than on me.

SARAH

I think you look very debonair.

WALT

(a la James Bond)

Bannerman. Walt Bannerman.

As Sarah laughs, Walt spots someone over her shoulder.

WALT

What's he doing here?

Like Johnny in the debate scene, Sarah doesn't know who he's talking about. She follows Walt's look to see JOHNNY across the room.

27 INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 27

Sonny walks down the carpeted hallway up to a door that a BODYGUARD is standing in front of.

SONNY

He in there?

The Bodyguard nods and steps aside.

28 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 28

Sonny walks in, we hear the sounds of rough sex.

Greg is in the handicapped stall with a beautiful Daughter of the American Revolution, in full 18th century garb. He's having her up against the door, which is shaking.

Sonny turns on the sink faucet, turns it off. Greg stops.

GREG

Three minutes.

SONNY

Smith is here.

Greg reacts with mild surprise, grins at the Girl.

GREG

Why don't we hold this thought.

He lets her down and exits the stall, crosses to the sink and begins to wash his hands. Sonny waits a moment, then exits, starting the air dryer for Greg on his way out. Greg checks himself in the mirror.

29 INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS 29

We find Johnny off by himself, sipping his wine, taking in the crowd. He sees SARAH, and then pretends not to have. He turns away... straight into Purdy.

PURDY

Hello, Johnny. Didn't expect to see you here.

JOHNNY

Me neither. Nice tux.

PURDY

Thank you, now what in God's name do you think you're doing?

29 CONTINUED:

29

JOHNNY

(shrugs)

I do so many things in God's name,
which are you referring to...

PURDY

Is this because of something I've
done? If so there are easier
ways to get my attention.

JOHNNY

It doesn't concern you.

PURDY

Faith Heritage Alliance is backing
Greg Stillson for Congress, and
to have our...

JOHNNY

Mascot?

PURDY

Most visible representative,
besides myself, turn his back on
our endorsement... this concerns
me.

JOHNNY

It's a free country, Gene. Two
years ago you endorsed Harrison
Fisher.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

You had no problem turning your
back on him.

PURDY

Johnny, talk to me. I need to
understand your reasons.

Greg walks up, right in the middle of the conversation.

GREG

Hello, Boys.

It's an awkward moment for everyone but Greg, who appears
to graze on nervous energy.

GREG

Have you tried those stuffed
chicken things? Blechh.
Cornbread's okay, though.

Behind them, THE BAND starts up an appropriate slow dance
song. LINDA approaches as if cued, taps Purdy's shoulder.

LINDA

Reverend, may I have the honor of
this dance?

PURDY

Oh, I...

GREG

Go for it, Reverend.
(whispers in his ear,
re: Johnny)
He wants to talk to me.

Purdy looks at Greg, feeling like he's on the outside of
something important - a place he hates to be. But Greg's
honest look is enough to hold Purdy's trust. For now.
Linda takes his hand and leads him to the dance floor.

Greg and Johnny stand alone, face to face in tuxedos.

GREG

Thought you'd like to chat just
the two of us.

JOHNNY

Not really.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (3)

29

GREG

I gotta say, Smith, I'm disappointed with your performance so far. Haven't been living up to the hype.

JOHNNY

You have my deepest apologies.

GREG

Hey, listen, I know that sending you over to Fisher was a gamble, but in my experience, risk provides the greatest payoff.

Johnny goes from smug to confused.

JOHNNY

What did you say?

GREG

That trick at the debates was good, I don't know how you did that. I figured you'd be of some use to Fisher but I was betting that by now you would've blown his secret wide open. I mean, whatever he did's gotta be ten times worse than anything I did.

Johnny's world is reeling. He looks over and spots the *VIETNAMESE BOY* again. Ignores him.

JOHNNY

I don't know what you're talking about.

GREG

Come on, Johnny. There's no one else here. I'm being honest with you. I know Fisher's hiding something but I don't know what. I found out a year ago when we tracked down an old 'Nam buddy of his, name of John Mulvert. Used to be a Navy SEAL, but by the time we found him he was a useless drunk.

MEMORY FLASH - Johnny/Fisher grabbing MULVERT.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (4)

29

GREG

We got all excited 'cause Mulvert was ready to spill his guts about something he wanted to get off his chest. But before we got the fat lush to talk he blew his brains out with a 45.

ON SARAH AND WALT

In a slow dance. Sarah is looking past Walt, across the dance floor to Johnny and Stillson talking. She can't take her eyes off them - what the hell is going on?

STILLSON AND JOHNNY

Johnny, not feeling well, starts to walk away. Greg casually keeps up with him.

GREG

Now this was a damn shame, but it convinced me that there was an awful truth to be found. And I knew if I sweet-talked you right, you'd go see Fisher. And if you'd go see Fisher, you'd see the awful truth. 'Cause that's what you do.

JOHNNY

(stops to face him)
Sorry to break it to you, but Fisher's got nothing to hide. And now, thanks to you, he's got nothing to worry about. I'm gonna make sure he wins this.

Greg shakes his head, that didn't faze him at all.

GREG

I think I can tell when people having something to hide. I don't have second sight, but my first sight's pretty solid. Hell, I could see within five minutes that Sarah Bannerman spread for you not too long ago...

JOHNNY

You son of a bitch --

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (5)

29

GREG
(walking away)
Hey, secret's safe with me,
partner.

Johnny looks down, trying to maintain self-control.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (6)

29

Sounds of the room become echoes.

JOHNNY'S POV - WINE GLASS

His glass of white wine becomes stained with red, spreading from within like blood through the River Nile.

Johnny then sees the BOY standing five feet away, staring at him just as he did in the hut.

CLOSE ON JOHNNY

Suddenly an arm in camouflage fatigue wraps around Johnny's neck, and a knife in the other hand cuts Johnny's throat (we don't see the face of his attacker). Johnny's hands go to his throat, and blood pours out between them. He drops his glass and drops to his knees, bleeding.

JOHNNY

(hoarse)

We gotta get outta here!

Guests look over. The shattered glass has spilled white wine, and Johnny is fine. Johnny takes his hands from his throat. They're clean. Greg reaches down.

GREG

You okay?

Johnny recoils from Stillson's hand. He turns around... and there's Harrison Fisher. Ten feet away. He clearly saw and heard everything. Johnny then hurries for the exit, passing Stillson. Many eyes following him. Walt and Sarah move to help him, but they're too far away.

Johnny runs out the front door...

29A EXT. VIETNAMESE VILLAGE - NIGHT

29A

...and right into Vietnam. Instead of assuming the role of Harrison Fisher, Johnny is still in his tux. He stumbles, disorientated.

Suddenly two VIETNAMESE WOMEN run past him and MACHINE-GUN FIRE roars and lights up the dark jungle. Johnny falls to his knees again, throwing his hands over his head for cover.

Silence. Shaking, Johnny keeps his head covered. Then, he hears a soft crunching of leaves and twigs. Someone is walking up behind him. Crunch. Crunch. Crunch.

(CONTINUED)

29A CONTINUED: 29A

Johnny slowly turns around...

30 OMITTED 30

31 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT 31

And sees Sonny Elliman walking up to him. Behind Sonny are the lit pillars of the Governor's mansion. Johnny looks around. He's in the parking lot of the Governor's Mansion, crouched on his knees. Johnny gets up.

SONNY

Too much to drink?

JOHNNY

What do you want?

SONNY

We didn't get a chance to chat at the party.

JOHNNY

I said, what do you want?

SONNY

I want you off my radar. I know my boss is having fun playing games with you, but sometimes he has too much fun playing too many games.

JOHNNY

Maybe you should have this talk with him.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

SONNY

I wanted to work this out between
you and me. No games.

He gets right in Johnny's face.

SONNY

Do not stand against Greg Stillson,
or anywhere near him, or your
family will suffer.

Johnny violently pushes Sonny away from him - *VISION FLASH*
on a *SPINNING WHEEL* - Sonny stumbles back.

SONNY

I was hoping you'd do that.

He takes two steps forward and DECKS Johnny. As his FIST
connects, Johnny is literally KNOCKED into a vision he
gets off Sonny's knuckles...

32 INT. STILLSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

32

*Johnny falls to the floor, right next to a desk. Standing
over him is Sonny Elliman, but he's not looking at Johnny.
Greg Stillson also towers above. Both men are facing
AARON HARPER. Greg hands Aaron a drink.*

GREG

*I'm sorry I called you out like
that at the debate. I meant no
disrespect.*

AARON HARPER

*Greg, one of my sayings is, "I
know which way the tree is gonna
fall." And I think it's pretty
clear Fisher's gonna be under it.
But I think you got a damn good
chance at this office, and I don't
mind helping out with a little
boost to help you get there.*

GREG

A little boost?

AARON HARPER

*Yeah, neighborhood of say, six
million dollars.*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

AARON HARPER (CONT'D)

(smiles)

If you look out for me on Capitol Hill, you can call me anything you want in public.

Greg remains poker-faced. He shakes his head, scolding.

GREG

Aaron, you know one of the main platforms I run on is campaign finance reform.

(beat)

So we better keep this between you and me.

They smile and toast with their glasses...

33 EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

33

Johnny, rubbing his cheek, looks up at Sonny, and smiles.

JOHNNY

And I was hoping you'd do that.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

34 INT. FISHER CAMPAIGN HQ - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT 34

A dark figure sits alone in the dark room. Closer, we can make out the features of Harrison Fisher, still in tuxedo. He's staring across the table, at the American flag hanging from a pole in the corner. In this light it looks like a dark, drooping curtain.

Fisher reaches into his pocket, and pulls out his wallet. He opens it. Looks at a family photo. Wife, two daughters. Fisher's eyes move to the right, distracted by something through the conference room windows. In the lighted bullpen, he can see Johnny Smith enter. Johnny chats with a VOLUNTEER STAFFER (a skeleton crew is working late into the night), who points him toward Fisher's back office. Johnny approaches.

35 OMITTED 35

36 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS 36

Johnny walks into the dark room, is excited to see Fisher.

JOHNNY

I'm glad you're here. I've found something out. Something big.

HARRISON FISHER

Have you.

JOHNNY

Aaron Harper has cut a back door deal with Greg Stillson. He's giving his campaign six million dollars, I don't know how Stillson's going to hide it...

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

HARRISON FISHER

I know.

JOHNNY

You know?

HARRISON FISHER

I know... that you know, John.

Johnny stares into Fisher's eyes, and then looks down to see what's sitting on the table in front of him. His wallet.

HARRISON FISHER

The operation's code-name was Hondo. Captain Aulbach named all our operations after old Westerns. Objective was to take down a Viet Cong outfit that was supposed to be storing weapons along the Mekong River. Turns out there were no weapons, no soldiers. But you already knew that.

*
*
*
*

Johnny nods.

HARRISON FISHER

I saw the look in your eyes the first time we shook hands. You looked sick, drained, tired. I recognized that look but I didn't know where from. Then, it came to me.

(beat)

It's the look I see in the mirror every morning.

JOHNNY

I saw what happened. It wasn't your fault. Mulvert opened fire...

HARRISON FISHER

Mulvert opened fire, he couldn't see it was a C-Rat can, it was dark... excuses like that are what's kept me going.

*
*
*

JOHNNY

Maybe if you told the Navy that, they would've understood.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

HARRISON FISHER

But instead we told 'em a lie.
And so that's what all those little
excuses became. And every time I
try to remember them, all I can
see is this... one face.

JOHNNY

A little boy.

HARRISON FISHER

You're the first person I've ever
talked about this with outside
the unit. Even my wife still
thinks I deserve that Bronze Star.
I lived the lie for so long I
feel like it's a part of me.
Like an extra arm that no one
else can see, but I can feel.
And I'm tired of it.

JOHNNY

Let's talk about this.

HARRISON FISHER

I know you want to keep it a
secret. If not you'd have gone
to the press already.

JOHNNY

If this gets to the press, the
campaign's over. Your political
career is over.

HARRISON FISHER

Casualties of war.

JOHNNY

The casualties we'll suffer if
Greg Stillson wins this election
are a hundred times worse.

HARRISON FISHER

How do you-

JOHNNY

Trust me. I know what your hell
looks like, and I'm willing to
stay there for as long as it takes
to bring Stillson down.

(beat)

It's going to take courage, from
both us, to see that through.

Fisher looks at Johnny, moved by his conviction.

37 INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

37

The final night of the debates. Stillson has the floor,
and he's back on his game.

GREG

The truth is, Harrison Fisher has
lost sight of what's truly
important, and that's the people.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

GREG (CONT'D)

Big Business is all it's about
and all it's ever been about for
the last 15 years. We need to
introduce policy that's going to
protect Maine's most endangered
species: the *middle class*.

Applause from the audience. Johnny leans forward,
anticipating the response. Fisher leans into his
microphone. For a while he doesn't say anything. Johnny
tenses. Fisher looks at Greg.

HARRISON FISHER

You claim to stand against corrupt
corporate influence, against
serving special interests.

GREG

Business has no business in
government. They don't control
us, and we don't control them.

HARRISON FISHER

So you would never accept campaign
support from one of our state's
largest corporations for a sum
like... ten million dollars?

Greg hesitates. Where is he going with this?

GREG

My contributions cap is twenty
five hundred, so that's a little
rich for my blood, I'm sorry.

HARRISON FISHER

How about six million?

GREG

(hesitates, then)
Can I bid one dollar, Bob?

The audience laughs, but Fisher keeps going.

HARRISON FISHER

So you would say in good faith
that you would never accept a
campaign contribution of six
million dollars from a big company
like Culp & Belling, or ProTEK,
or Harper Lumber...

Stillson's eyes sweep the audience... and settle on Johnny,
who raises his eyebrows. What's your answer, Greg?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

Greg, a dead gleam in his eyes, leans into his microphone.

GREG

Absolutely not.

HARRISON FISHER

I'll be holding you to that, and the people will be holding you to that. I'll be watching you, Sir. I will be watching you from the sidelines, and as you may discover, it affords a much clearer view.

(to Moderator)

Teddy, I'd like to announce that I'm withdrawing from the Congressional race tonight.

A SHOCKED BUZZ goes through the crowd. Johnny closes his eyes. Harrison Fisher speaks and silence follows quickly.

HARRISON FISHER

My decision to withdraw is not based on a change in my commitment or dedication to the office. Instead it is deeply personal, painful, and something I need to tell you all, because you deserve to know.

Audience members look around; what's going on?

HARRISON FISHER

For the last 32 years, I've been living a lie. The Bronze Star I earned in Vietnam was not awarded appropriately. The true story of what happened then has been sent by myself to the media, you'll all get a chance to read about it tomorrow morning. Tonight, I only wish to say that I am sorry, for deceiving you so long as to who I am. Because my past is a part of me.

ON JOHNNY

HARRISON FISHER (O.S.)

And I've found to deny who you are is more painful than to confront what you hate about yourself.

Johnny feels something, turns around to see the VIETNAMESE

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (3)

37

BOY sitting in an empty seat in the row behind him.

ON SARAH

sitting next to Walt.

HARRISON FISHER (O.S.)

It takes courage to face yourself,
and I was too weak to admit how
weak I was.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (4)

37

BACK TO FISHER

HARRISON FISHER

Guilt drove me to silence, and
guilt forced me to the truth. It
is something we should embrace.
It is the only weapon our morality
has to wield against us when we
forget ourselves.

(beat)

Thank you.

And he walks off stage. UPROAR. Everyone getting up,
making calls on their phones, everyone moving. Everyone
except Johnny. He looks behind him. The boy is gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

38 INT. CAFE - DAY

38

Johnny is sitting in his booth, absently stirring milk
into his coffee.

We hear the "Jingle" of the door bell. Johnny doesn't
look up this time. He almost knows who it's going to be.

Greg slides in across from him. This time it's he who
has the paper, and he puts it in front of Johnny. Fisher
is the cover story.

GREG

I just want to thank you, for
doing what I consider to be the
right thing. I knew you would.

Johnny doesn't answer.

GREG

Although when he said that crap
about Harper Lumber I wanted to
rip your throat out. How'd you
find out about that? Did you
touch Harper at the party?

JOHNNY

You can thank your lap dog, Sonny.
(points to his shiner)
All it takes is one touch.

GREG

(shakes his head)
Sonny. That boy's heart's in the
right place.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

GREG (CONT'D)

He's just gotta learn a little finesse.

JOHNNY

Pretty forgiving for someone who cost you six million dollars. There's no way you could hide that money now.

GREG

That is true and that does hurt, but I choose to look at it this way... it's a small price to pay for the house seat. So I think it evened out in the end, wouldn't you agree?

JOHNNY

What makes you think this is the end?

Stillson slaps the table, grinning.

GREG

I like you, Johnny. I can see why Purdy's so high on you now. You see the truth, simple as that.

Greg suddenly gets very serious, his voice slipping into his near-confessional tone.

GREG (CONT'D)

I see the truth, too. Inside myself. And I know I'm right.

Greg whispers, this is just between them.

GREG (CONT'D)

It's a powerful feeling, isn't it? To know you're right? Lots of people think it, but you and I... we know it.

JOHNNY

What do you want?

GREG

(leaning back)

If we go toe to toe, I know how that ends. And I don't find it that interesting. But, if we go side by side, join forces, I have no idea where that goes, but I gotta admit... it makes me curious.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

GREG (CONT'D)

(beat)

What are you thinking?

JOHNNY

I don't think you'll find it that interesting.

Greg gets it. He stands up.

GREG

Keep the paper.

Johnny watches him as he walks out. He looks down at the headline of the newspaper: "THE AWFUL TRUTH."

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END