

HALSTON

"VERSAILLES"

102

WRITTEN BY
IAN BRENNAN

OVER BLACK:

HALSTON (V.O.)

Nine. Ten...

1

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- DAY

1

CLOSE ON HALSTON'S face as he walks through Central Park. He's counting his Ultrasuede dresses on WOMEN who pass.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Halston, Versailles is *CRUMBLING* --

HALSTON

I don't care. Eleven...

Reveal he's walking alongside ELEANOR LAMBERT, 70, charming and a force of nature.

ELEANOR

It's where Napoleon was crowned
fucking Emperor! *It's Marie
Antoinette's house, for chrissakes.*

HALSTON

Well, I *LOVE* her. Still? Eleanor?
Not my problem. I can't afford to
do a 'fundraiser'. The person I
have to raise funds for is *me...*

He sidesteps over to a passing WOMAN who's wearing the Ultrasuede dress.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Excuse me, Ma'am? That's a
beautiful dress.

She stops as they keep walking.

WOMAN

Thank you! It's a Halston --

The woman then recognizes him, but Halston smiles and is off. Eleanor slaps him on the arm.

ELEANOR

You're terrible --

HALSTON

I'm *broke*. In five minutes, we've
passed *thirteen* model 704s of the
Ultrasuede dress and I'm barely
keeping the lights on. We're two
months behind on rent at the Salon.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Most sizes of 704 are sold out, we can't keep up with demand. I must be a real artist because I'm a terrible businessman...

ELEANOR

Well, David Mahoney can fix all that. It's a good thing you're meeting with him.

A beat. Halston's face sours as they keep on walking.

HALSTON

IS it a good thing?

2

INT. TAVERN ON THE GREEN -- DAY -- INTERCUT

2

Halston sits across from DAVID MAHONEY, middle aged and buttoned-up -- VERY straight -- but bright-eyed, intelligent and extremely charming.

MAHONEY

My wife's been raving about you since your boutique opened. She thinks you're a genius.

Halston squints. Anticipating the pitch, wary.

HALSTON

And I suppose you're going to tell me the same thing.

MAHONEY

I think that's a dangerous word. I think once you call yourself a genius you stop growing. I ask myself every day: am I smart enough? What am I not anticipating?

(leaning in)

Which is why I wanted to start a conversation with you.

Off David's smile we CUT TO:

3

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- DAY -- INTERCUT

3

Eleanor heaves a beleaguered sigh as they walk.

ELEANOR

Look, Halston, I've done it all. I *invented* publicity in the fashion industry, okay? I gave this world the Met Ball.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

The COTY awards -- *OF WHICH YOU WERE A RECIPIENT*, I might add --

HALSTON

You're an *icon*, Eleanor. If you didn't exist, mankind would have to invent you. I *know* --

ELEANOR

-- no you evidently *don't* know, or you wouldn't be acting like such a prick. I *put* American fashion on the map but we are still -- *STILL* -- seen as the redheaded stepchildren of the fashion world. It's *unacceptable*, it's *wrong*, and Versailles is going to change that.

HALSTON

A benefit.

ELEANOR

A fashion show. *IN* the palace of Versailles. The hottest French designers versus the hottest Americans.

HALSTON

Like a competition?

ELEANOR

Not *like* a competition, *actually* a competition. To finally show them what American fashion really is. Free. Unencumbered. Modern. It's going to be THE fashion event of the century. And it'll be my legacy. My swan song. Oscar's agreed, Bill Blass is considering --

HALSTON

Fucking Bill Blass.

ELEANOR

Anne Klein is on board --

HALSTON

Fucking ANNE KLEIN --

ELEANOR

Oh, stop it. You *wish* you were Anne Klein.

(plowing forward)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

3

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I'm going to promote the show in every French paper, every American paper is going to be covered in *drool* over it. You say you're an artist, Halston -- and you are -- well, show the world your art, for chrissakes!!!

Approaching Tavern on the Green, Halston stops.

HALSTON

Eleanor. I'm sorry. I just can't.

4 INT. TAVERN ON THE GREEN -- DAY -- INTERCUT

4

Halston lights a cigarette and exhales. Then:

HALSTON

David, I have to be blunt. I'm just not interested in selling *Halston, Inc.*

MAHONEY

(with a laugh)

Relax, this isn't a pitch. Really I'm just in the exploratory phase, here. Because fashion -- it's not yet something I know how to make money from. *Real* money. But I will. Norton Simon Industries, we're a packaged goods company. *That* I understand. We're big in food -- Reddi-Wip, Hunt-Wesson, Canada Dry -- booze -- I hear you like Johnnie Walker, I can send you a case -- but fashion is *different*. Fashion *changes*.

HALSTON

Every single day.

MAHONEY

And it requires an *artist*.

Halston's ears perk up. He sits back, considering.

MAHONEY (CONT'D)

If you could have any other designer's business, whose would it be?

HALSTON

Balenciaga.

(CONTINUED)

4

Mahoney frowns. Halston shoots a curious look.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Wrong answer?

MAHONEY

Bobbi went to Balenciaga on our honeymoon. His problem is he's one dress to one woman. He's got his couture collection, you see the dress you love, his people make it for you. In order to make real money in fashion you've got to be one design to *thousands* of women...

Halston's eyes narrow, this man might be onto something.

5

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- TAVERN ON THE GREEN -- DAY -- INTERCUT 5

Eleanor's eyes narrow at Halston, deeply annoyed.

ELEANOR

So let me get this straight -- Givenchy says yes, and Halston's saying no -- ?

HALSTON

(with a shrug)

No.

(then)

I mean, yes. I'm saying no.

6

INT. TAVERN ON THE GREEN -- DAY -- INTERCUT

6

Halston leans in. This man clearly knows more about fashion than he's letting on.

HALSTON

David, I have a saying: *you're only as good as the people you dress*. People come to my boutique *because* I design for the likes of Jackie Onassis and Lauren Bacall. How does a designer dress thousands of women without losing caché?

MAHONEY

You're doing it right now with Ultrasuede. Model 704. A pity you don't have the infrastructure or the support to keep up with demand. And demand, like fashion, is fleeting.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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6.
6

6

MAHONEY (CONT'D)

Halston, you may be *designing* for stars, but you're one step away from actually *being* the star. And *that's* where the real money is...

Halston's stomach leaps in his gut. Mahoney clocks it.

MAHONEY (CONT'D)

You could be big, Halston.

7

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- TAVERN ON THE GREEN -- INTERCUT

7

ELEANOR

Okay. How about this. You don't do Versailles, I make sure not a single word is ever written about Halston again. Ever. And I mean *anywhere*. Newsweek, The Times, you won't make the weekly circular in Evansville.

HALSTON

Eleanor...

ELEANOR

Don't Eleanor me. I'm dead serious. I ask you for a favor and you fucking decline? I will *destroy* Halston. You know I can do it and I will...

Halston is silent, discomfited.

8

INT. TAVERN ON THE GREEN -- DAY -- INTERCUT

8

David leans in, tantalizing.

MAHONEY

You could be as big as Mickey Mouse.

HALSTON

I thought this wasn't a pitch.

MAHONEY

Was I pitching?

Halston laughs. He knows this guy's got him and he knows he knows.

MAHONEY (CONT'D)

How 'bout I stop by the boutique?
See how you operate?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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8 CONTINUED: 8

MAHONEY (CONT'D)

Some time this week? You can give me a little tour...

HALSTON

I'll consider it.

9 EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- DAY -- INTERCUT 9

ELEANOR

Good. You'll consider it. Then you'll tell me you're doing it.

HALSTON

Which is it, do you think? Am I a businessman or an artist?

ELEANOR

Do you have to choose?

HALSTON

Yeah, I probably do.

ELEANOR

Why not both?
(checking her watch)
Now c'mon. You're late.

A10 INT. TAVERN ON THE GREEN -- DAY -- INTERCUT A10

Halston and Eleanor enter the restaurant. She ushers Halston across the floor where David stands to greet them at the best table in the place.

DAVID

Hope you don't mind I ordered up some champagne.

They all smile.

SMASH TO TITLES.

10 INT. A CHARTERED TWA 737 -- NIGHT 10

Start from the TAIL. Camera pushes up the aisle through the commotion: BATHROOM DOORS clack open and JOE and ELSA spill out, SNIFFING and laughing. HALSTONETTES drink champagne and dance in the aisles. Push into the FIRST CLASS CABIN.

CHYRON: **NOVEMBER, 1973**

An ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, BOBBI, in an Ultrasuede dress, can't believe she's mid-conversation with a chatty LIZA.

(CONTINUED)

LIZA

So here I am -- I'm the lead,
right? Sally fucking Bowles, okay?
And I tell Bob Fosse -- BOB FOSSE --
I tell him I says -- "Bob. These
costumes! I can't move in 'em!"
But Bobby was so...preoccupied. So
on the sly, I called Halston. He
redesigned the whole wardrobe.
Finally, I could move -- *I could
play the character!* Halston didn't
get a credit and he didn't even
care. Saved the whole movie...

BOBBI

That's -- wow. That's amazing.

Bobbi shoots a look of sheer joy to David Mahoney who sits
across from Halston, scotch glasses in hand.

MAHONEY

My wife's having the time of her
life.

HALSTON

Well, I suppose she should. You're
paying for the ride...

MAHONEY

My pleasure. It's a token of Norton
Simon's good will. And Bobbi loves
Paris, she's so excited to go and
see you in action.

(then)

I asked you to remind me about
licensing, remember? When Ford got
into the car business, the future
of the automobile could have
belonged to anyone. And then he
invented the assembly line. Twenty
years later, people didn't say 'get
into the automobile,' they said
'get in the Ford.' Licensing will
be *your* assembly line.

Halston chuckles.

MAHONEY (CONT'D)

Halston. Innovate. Don't just sit
passively by and ask the market
where there's a place for you.
Create the market. Have you thought
about my offer?

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON
(blowing smoke)
Every day.

MAHONEY
And when you want to talk business,
I got the paperwork right here...

He taps on the briefcase next to him. Halston shuts him down.

HALSTON
David? Don't fart in the pup tent.
I'm considering it. I've got to get
through this week.

MAHONEY
(with a smile)
Fair enough. But you're not getting
rid of me. I'm like the clap.

Halston laughs. David raises his glass. They clink. They
drink. But Halston is hiding worry.

CHYRON: **TWO MONTHS EARLIER**

11 INT. 68TH STREET -- WORKROOM -- NIGHT 11 *

Find Halston smoking, pacing, exhausted. Joe sketches, then
shows Halston. *

JOE *

How 'bout that? *

HALSTON *

No, that's...give it to me. *

He takes the sketch pad and draws on it with the pencil. *

HALSTON (CONT'D) *

I'd lower the neckline. *

JOE *

That's just like this one... *

HALSTON *

I don't like that one. *

JOE *

Well, then you don't like *this* one
either... *

Elsa walks in. *

(CONTINUED)

ELSA *
We're out of money. *

HALSTON *
What *specifically* do we need that *
we don't have money for? *

ELSA *
A lightbulb went out downstairs. *

JOE *
Take it out of petty cash. *

ELSA *
Um, dipshit. I looked in petty *
cash. There's nothing in it. Hence *
my comment that we're out of money. *

JOE *
We are *so* fucking fucked... *

HALSTON *
Joe, could you not -- ? *
(then) *
Elsa -- I can't design and be *
thinking about light bulbs -- *

ELSA *
Well, shit, Halston! It's not like *
BOTHERING YOU ABOUT LIGHTBULBS IS *
MY JOB, IS IT? I'm just *TELLING* you *
that a lightbulb went out and we *
don't have the money to replace it! *

HALSTON *
Just go buy a lightbulb! *

ELSA *
WITH MY OWN MONEY? *

JOE *
I can't exactly sketch in the dark. *

HALSTON *
(exploding) *
FUCK!!!! *

Halston throws the sketchpad across the room. A moment, then *
Elsa throws up her hands up, whoa, and heads back downstairs. *

ELSA *
Happy to pay for a lightbulb *
myself. Be right back. *

(CONTINUED)

11

JOE *
We need money, Halston. *

HALSTON *
I know -- *

JOE *
I *KNOW* you know. I'm just saying it *
out loud. We need money, and *
Eleanor Lambert says Norton Simon *
wants to talk to you. *

HALSTON *
I'm not selling Halston. *

JOE *
Maybe they're not *buying* Halston. *
Maybe they want to *invest* in *
Halston. She says this Mahoney guy *
is smart, somebody you could do *
business with... *

HALSTON *
(storming out, derisive) *
Business... *

JOE *
Where are you going? *

HALSTON *
To get some air. *

12 EXT. UNDER BRIDGE -- NIGHT (LATER) 12 *

Halston cruises the streets, unburdened somehow as he prowls *
the grime of the city at night. Streetlamps are low, he *
passes other MEN cruising, looking for liberation. He slows *
as he hears low groans coming from the bushes, keeps walking *
as he observes shadowy silhouettes of men having sex. *

He pauses near the bridge. Wants a smoke. As he lights the *
cigarette, the FLAME illuminates a MEATY AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN *
in leather, leaning against a wall. Also cruising. They lock *
eyes for a beat, then -- *

MAN *
I know you. *

Halston demurs. *
*

HALSTON *
No, I don't think so. *

(CONTINUED)

DANTE

You're Halston. I saw you in
Newsweek.

Halston heaves a sigh with a wry grin. His cruising days are
over. The man steps in, almost threatening:

DANTE (CONT'D)

What's the guy in Newsweek doing
out here?

HALSTON

I like places like this. Nobody's
asking me for anything.

DANTE

Well, you could ask *me* for
something.

A beat. Halston smiles, coolly exhales.

HALSTON

Do you charge?

DANTE

Yes I do. Is that not what you're
looking for?

HALSTON

No no no. That's *exactly* what I'm
looking for...

A beat, Halston stubs out his cigarette and approaches. Looks
him up and down. Eyes locked on his crotch.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Lemme ask you -- do you think
leather pants could ever catch on
with women?

DANTE

(with a laugh)
Fuck off.

Dante suddenly and quite roughly grabs Halston, pulls him
into the shadows. Pulls down his pants. Enters him.

Halston seems relieved, transported somehow. It's rough, but
he likes it. Needs it, really.

DANTE (CONT'D)

You wanna try something?

(CONTINUED)

15

MAHONEY
Anything else?

HALSTON
(insecure)
...No.

MAHONEY
Does that worry you?

HALSTON
Do I look worried?

MAHONEY
I think you're really good at not
looking worried.

Halston smiles and leads him in.

16

INT. 68TH STREET -- BOUTIQUE -- MOMENTS LATER

16

Halston leads David through the ground floor as women all
around them comb through the racks, checking for their sizes.

HALSTON
(conspiratorial whisper)
*The more affordable items are on
the ground floor.*

MAHONEY
Bobbi says she usually heads right
back to the sale rack.

HALSTON
Tell her Jackie-O does the same
thing.

David laughs. ED AUSTIN steps up next to them. Although his
suit exudes confidence, Ed himself is quite frazzled.

ED AUSTIN
So we're flat out of sizes 2
through 10 in Model 704. Again.
(to Mahoney, grand)
Hi there; Ed Austin, Boutique
Manager.

There is a sweet knowing look between Ed and Halston -- they
took their relationship to a successful other level.

ED AUSTIN (CONT'D)
(to Halston)
And Genevieve from Bergdorf's
called;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

16

ED AUSTIN (CONT'D)
once Ben Shaw finally gets more off
his machines...they want them
first. Which means we won't have
any for weeks.

Halston watches as David turns quizzically to him.

HALSTON
We're having some fulfillment
issues. Thanks for the news, Ed.

MAHONEY
Ben Shaw does your reproductions?

HALSTON
Do you know him?

MAHONEY
Sure, Ben's producing for the
biggies: Oscar De La Renta, Bill
Blass, Anne Klein...

HALSTON
I thought you said you didn't know
anything about fashion.

*

17 OMITTED

17 *

18 INT. 68TH STREET -- SALON -- MOMENTS LATER

18

Halston and Mahoney step out of the elevator and into a
private HEAVEN: bleached white floors and large windows let
sunbeams spill across a room glowing with white orchids and
all-white furniture.

HALSTON
And this is the Salon.

MAHONEY
Where you do your version of
couture.

HALSTON
Made-to-order. I shut everything
down at lunchtime to entertain all
the famous ladies. And...if a few
models happen to appear in cashmere
maxi dresses for sale, no one seems
to complain.

Mahoney laughs. A beat.

(CONTINUED)

MAHONEY

So this is the magic. That covers up all the gears.

(off his look)

What I tell people about Norton Simon is that all our businesses, they're like the...gas inside a hot air balloon. They keep the organization flying, but what we're lacking is a pretty outer skin. Because boy, when a shareholder gets the quarterly report there's *nothing* on it that sparks the imagination. Norton Simon needs some magic over its machinery, Halston. Both De La Renta and Bill Blass came to me a few years ago asking for an investment. Stupidly, I said no. Look where they are now.

(then)

Can I tell you what your problem is? You've got the demand. But you don't have the capital to provide the supply.

HALSTON

That's right. All day long, I'm robbing Peter to pay Paul.

MAHONEY

I have to tell you, I don't think there's any business I've seen that has *more* potential than yours, and which needs capital infusion more than yours.

HALSTON

So what's your proposal? Ballpark.

MAHONEY

Seven million in stock plus a to-be-determined cash payment and a percentage of all licensing. Oh. Remind me to talk licensing. That's in addition to a ten-year contract for your design services, beginning at some large number and increasing to a huge number. I will make you so intrinsic to American culture that nobody will remember a time when there wasn't a *Halston*.

The ELEVATOR DOOR opens and a secretary, SASSY steps out.

(CONTINUED)

SASSY

H? Your eleven o'clock is here for her fitting? *

HALSTON

Yes of course, why don't you please escort Mr. Mahoney up to my office -- David, if you don't mind, I'll be right up.

19 INT. 68TH STREET -- OUTSIDE HALSTON'S OFFICE -- LATER 19

Halston stops at the door to his office. He hears LAUGHTER inside. He opens the door to find Mahoney and Eleanor.

HALSTON

Eleanor, what a surprise. Sorry to keep you waiting, David.

MAHONEY

My world runs on conspiring behind closed doors, and Eleanor Lambert's the biggest conspirator there is.
(knowing wink at Eleanor)
I'll be in touch, Halston.

David ducks out into the stairwell and is gone. Halston can't help but smile: Jesus, the guy is charming.

ELEANOR (PRE-LAP)

Givenchy, Pierre Cardin, Yves St. Laurent --

20 INT. 68TH STREET -- HALSTON'S OFFICE -- LATER 20

Eleanor sits across from Halston.

ELEANOR

-- Ungaro, Dior are all confirmed as the French contingent, Bill Blass, Anne Klein, Oscar, and Stephen Burrows and you for the Americans. Take off your sunglasses, please.

HALSTON

No. Eleanor, I've thought a lot about it --

ELEANOR

That's fine. I don't care. You're doing it.

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

Dearheart --

ELEANOR

I know. You can't afford it or some bullshit. That problem is solved. Norton Simon is paying for the whole thing. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth and take a shit in it, Halston!

HALSTON

I'm not letting Mahoney pay for me, Eleanor! -- !

ELEANOR

Not just YOU, he's paying for the whole thing! No strings attached he said, and I believe him! Actually, I don't care if there's strings attached -- you should be in business with him --

HALSTON

Jesus *CHRIST* --

ELEANOR

Look, it's gonna be expensive! You're going to have to fly *all* your people over, put them up, all the designers will pool the models but essentially you're going to have to move your whole organization to Versailles for two weeks -- and you're right, that'd bankrupt you! Well, now you have no excuse. You're gonna come to Versailles and you're gonna blow those snobby French motherfuckers off the stage. They don't respect YOU, they don't respect ME -- well, that's gonna change. I want American fashion to take over the globe and it starts at Versailles.

*

Halston leans on the desk, heaving a deep sigh. Cornered.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Dollface. Look at me. It's the right thing to do. For your art, for your *business*, and you know it. You don't even have to thank me. Although, really, you absolutely *should* thank me.

(CONTINUED)

Halston sits into his chair, turns and gazes out the window, exhausted but also enervated by the thought of it all.

HALSTON
How many designs?

ELEANOR
(with a shrug)
Two dozen.

HALSTON
(wheeling on her)
Fuck *me*. ELEANOR -- when is this
all gonna happen?

ELEANOR
I'll let you know. In the meantime?
Chop chop...
(standing)
Thank you, Halston. Or rather,
you're welcome...

She sashays to the door and turns nailing it down.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
So it *IS* a yes, right?

HALSTON
It's a yes.

ELEANOR
(as she goes)
Atta boy...

Halston watches her go, slightly worried. Off his anxiety -- *

A21 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT A21

Halston is on his couch, sketching. *DING!* The doorbell. Halston sets aside the YELLOW LEGAL PAD that he has been sketching on and opens the door to reveal A VERY FUCKING SEXY young SOUTH AMERICAN GUY with a mustache and coal black eyes in black pants and a black tee shirt.

HALSTON
Hello. I'm Halston.

Super-charming, with a molasses-thick accent:

VICTOR
I know who you are. My friend Dante who you call every night, he says, go to this guy, Halston. I say -- in my mind -- *oh I've heard of him.*

(CONTINUED)

The guy pushes his way into Halston's apartment and shuts the door behind him. Halston is amused by his bravado.

 HALSTON
And...*your* name?

 VICTOR
Victor Hugo.

 HALSTON
Like the writer.

 VICTOR
Yes yes yes, *I'm* a writer too;
poems. Books. Drawings. DREAMS.
Only difference with Mister 'Les
Miserables' is no one ever called
him Victor HUGE-O. I'll make your
fucking dreams come true.
(beat)
Want some powder? Wanna have a good
time?

Victor pulls out a vial of great cocaine. Halston considers it.

 HALSTON
Not really my scene.

 VICTOR
Oh, she's fancy, is that right?
Sorry papi, I didn't bring any
creme de menthe.

Victor taps a line of coke on the top of his hand, approaches Halston like a panther.

 HALSTON
(a beat, turned on)
I was making chicken.

Victor presses Halston against the wall. Grabs his ass.

 VICTOR
Fuck your chicken.

Halston smiles. Victor puts another line of coke on his fist. Halston pauses, then SNIFFS IT. Everything goes slow, then fast, he is euphoric.

Halston sits, to steady himself. Victor stands proudly before him. Victor unzips. Pulls himself out. Halston's eyes widen.

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CONTINUED: (2) A21

VICTOR (CONT'D)
...Did I lie to you?

HALSTON
No. No you didn't.

B21 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER B21

Halston is settling himself back onto the couch post-sex with a cigarette, glass of white wine, and sketch pad. He smiles. He laughs a little, to himself. Victor opens the front door.

HALSTON
Can I call for you again?

VICTOR
You can do anything you want. *

Victor blows a kiss. Shuts the door. On the slam we CUT TO: *

21	OMITTED	21	
22	OMITTED	22	
23	OMITTED	23	
24	OMITTED	24	*
25	OMITTED	25	*
26	OMITTED	26	
27	OMITTED	27	*
28	OMITTED	28	

29 INT. 68TH STREET -- WORKROOM - DAY (3 WEEKS TO VERSAILLES) 29

Halston drapes on a HOUSE MODEL. Joe chatters.

JOE
They're absolute titans, all of them. The other Americans -- let's just say you've got nothing to worry about. Except maybe De La Renta. But the French! A thousand bucks de Givenchy has something weird but chic as fuck -- Structure! Beading! And house of Dior, I mean I've always thought Marc Bohan was a genius...

NO. FUCK IT. Halston pulls the silk off the model, tries a different tack, tries to tune Joe out.

(CONTINUED)

JOE (CONT'D)

...and speaking of Dior, I was actually at Yves' first show when he was running the place before he got drafted -- can you imagine *that* queen in uniform? Holy FUCK that man was obsessed with bubble dresses. I remember saying, Yves, babe, it looks like a bubble, we get it, *move on* --

HALSTON

Joe, my darling? Could you very kindly shut the fuck up?
(then: quiet and kind)
Thank you, sweetheart. Now. Start sketching. Joe. Pin here.

30 INT. 68TH STREET -- WORKROOM - DAY (2 WEEKS TO VERSAILLES) 30

Tight on Halston. He's STARING. We see: a lineup of HOUSE MODELS. They're wearing rough models of gowns for Versailles. Halston lights another cigarette. Blows smoke. Stares. Joe stares, too, right behind Halston.

Halston stares at the gowns: they're not "Halston."

HALSTON

They're shit. Take 'em off, ladies.

JOE

I don't know what you're doing with all this weird structure, anyway. Suddenly what *you* do isn't good enough?

Elsa motions to the GOWN she's wearing.

ELSA

What should we do with these?

Halston rubs his eyes, upset he has to start from scratch.

HALSTON

Burn them?

He lights his cigarette as the models and Elsa wait, unsure.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Sorry, I misspoke. *Burn them.*

Off his face, exhausted --

31

INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

31

Halston sits with Liza. They're ensconced side-by-side on Halston's couch with TV TRAYS in front of them, eating CHICKEN in front of a re-broadcast of "Liza With a Z." The "I GOTCHA" number plays softly onscreen. Halston looks between the glamorous Liza on TV and the Liza curled up right next to him in a little silk robe.

HALSTON

I was right about the dress.

LIZA

Well. Yeah. And *now* I'm in trouble because everyone thinks my legs *really* look like that.

HALSTON

Well they do because they're on TV, and I'm watching them *right now*.

She snuggles close to him. He sets down his fork. Halston has something to ask.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Liza, my love? I have a favor to ask you, and it might be something completely uninteresting to you. I know you're busy as hell.

She nudges him, playfully.

LIZA

Sweetheart! Just ask!

This is a deeply vulnerable moment for Halston. We can sense his nerves, his readiness for rejection.

HALSTON

Well this thing is happening, you know. This...fashion show.

LIZA

...in Paris?

Halston turns, deciding to bare himself to her:

HALSTON

Ever feel like everything you have could just disappear in an instant?

LIZA

Oh honey, every day.

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

It's just... this show might be the most important thing I've ever done. I only get one shot at my European debut. Dior, de Givenchy... that's such star power. I could use a little more wattage on *my* side, frankly.

(beat)

So. I was thinking. If, if... you... were willing to...

Liza practically LEAPS on him.

LIZA

Halston!! Are you asking me to perform in your show?? Why didn't you ask me earlier?? I could've been working on something!! Of course I'll do it, I'll get Kay to choreograph. What're you even so shy about??

Halston's relief is so completely palpable, almost childlike.

LIZA (CONT'D)

You silly, silly man.

Liza takes Halston in her arms, kisses him all over his face as Bryan Ferry's cover of "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" starts to play and we SMASH TO:

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT -- DAY

In 48fps, the flash of cameras popping, Halston and Liza, David and Bobbi, Joe, Elsa and the Halstonettes strut through the airport like movie stars, every one of them with that Halston look. They smile, and laugh, excited but nervous -- none more than Halston -- a deep current of dread running beneath a veneer of cool and American class.

PHOTOGRAPHER 1 (PRE-LAP)

Closer! Please!

PHOTOGRAPHER 2

Halston, look here?

He does and smiles thinly. Something to his LEFT gets his attention, a COMMOTION coming from another just landed flight. PHOTOGRAPHERS race in that direction as the camera WHIPS to see --

BILL BLASS and STEPHEN BURROWS' entourage exiting their plane, smiling, all wearing sunglasses. The cooler kids.

(CONTINUED)

WHIP BACK TO FIND HALSTON, stopped, just staring. Another *
commotion to his RIGHT, photographers race past as we TRACK *
AROUND HALSTON and his stopped group TO FIND exiting from *
another tube -- *

OSCAR DE LA RENTA AND ANNE KLEIN, also with their entourages *
in tow. Slightly warmer, no sunglasses, but smoking. *

PUSH IN on HALSTON as he stares at De La Renta, already a *
legend. *

OVERHEAD: the two opposing groups walk towards the middle of *
the concourse where Halston and his group stand, watching. *

Then -- *

LIZA *
This is historic everybody, let's *
take a picture! *

The designers stiffly can't avoid one another. They gather in *
pecking order as we TRACK AROUND THEM as flashbulbs explode. *

ANNE KLEIN *
Should I be in the middle? *

PHOTOGRAPHER 2 *
Halston, step forward! *

Halston steps forward: **FLASH FLASH!** He looks over and catches *
a SCOWL on Bill Blass's face. *

PHOTOGRAPHER 1 *
And can we get Liza in the middle? *

LIZA *
Oh... *

Liza steps in. **FLASH!** Halston looks over at Oscar De La *
Renta, who is also scowling at him. *

PHOTOGRAPHER 1 BILL BLASS *
Bill, move to the side. The This is my bad cheek, I *
other side! Bill -- always need to be shot on the *
left. *

PHOTOGRAPHER 1 (CONT'D) ANNE KLEIN *
Halston, get in the middle! I really feel like I should *
be in the middle --

OSCAR DE LA RENTA *
Can we do one with just me? *

PHOTOGRAPHER 2

Okay, let's get one with the organizers?

DAVID and ELEANOR step in, in-between all the designers. More flashbulbs, then --

HALSTON

All right, I'm going blind. Thanks everybody.

He starts to walk away, Mahoney at his side.

MAHONEY

(quietly, to Halston)
Well that was uncomfortable.

HALSTON

That's because Bill and Oscar hate me.

MAHONEY

There may be rumors that you and I are about to make a deal.

HALSTON

Who would spread *that* rumor?

Halston looks ahead. ELEANOR LAMBERT leans up from a water fountain she's made her way to, waves.

A33

EXT. AIRPORT -- CAR -- MINUTES LATER

A33

Halston sits with David Mahoney. Mrs. Mahoney sits up front with the driver, quietly looking at the sites. Mahoney watches Halston page through the contract.

HALSTON

So my guarantee of aesthetic control is that I have final say on anything with my name on it.

MAHONEY

Exactly.
(lights cigarette)
Here's what I worry about. I think this thing tomorrow is going to be big. Oscar, Bill, Anne -- less so Stephen -- they're all much more established than you. They all have the capital to return home and exploit any openings that this event might make available.

Halston flips a page. *

MAHONEY (CONT'D) *

I'd love to be able to call Ben
Shaw from the theatre tomorrow
night and tell him Norton Simon
wants to get ten thousand model 704
shirtdresses in production, get
them ready to ship out to every
major department store in the
country. You wait a month, two
months -- that advantage is gone. *

Halston flips a page. Mahoney presses. *

MAHONEY (CONT'D) *

Let's do it, Halston. Now is the
time. *

Halston puts the contract away, lights a cigarette, he's
weary from the flight, from the competition. *

HALSTON *

David, I'm sorry, but the show. I
gotta get through tomorrow. I'll
take this, sleep on it, then, I
promise, I'll give you an answer. *

Halston looks out the window. Here he is, in Paris, and he
can't even enjoy it. *

33 OMITTED 33 *

34 OMITTED 34 *

35 OMITTED 35 *

36 EXT. VERSAILLES -- MORNING 36 *

The iconic palace glimmers in the sun. Loads of VANS and
BLACK CARS are parked as close as they can get. And a BUS.
PRE-LAP the sound of heels *clicking* down a hallway ...

37 INT. VERSAILLES - ENTRYWAY - MORNING 37

Halston and his entire crew -- staff and models -- enter and
are aghast at just how dilapidated Versailles is: the diamond-
patterned marble floor is faded and covered in dust, the
paint is chipped and yellowed. The models are hungover.
Everyone lugs garment bags and trunks.

JOE

Who knew this place was such a
shithole?

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

This is our workspace?

FRENCH PA

...*Oui*.

Halston walks further in. Steps up to the windows. Joe and Pat are right behind him. To his right, a door leads to another room.

HALSTON

And we have that space too -- ?

Just then, a SEAMSTRESS appears on the other side of the door. Slams it shut. Joe laughs.

JOE

Or not.

*

40 OMITTED

40

*

41 EXT. VERSAILLES -- DAY

41

Halston stands outside a wall with large glass doors, smoking. Pissed at the working conditions. Nervous about the show. Bill Blass and Stephen Burrows spy Halston from inside, step out onto the small patio. They light cigarettes as well.

BILL

Halston, clear something up for us.

BURROWS

Liza's opening the whole American show, right?

HALSTON

No. She's opening *my* portion of the show, and then -- since I'm going last -- she'll close the show for everyone.

BILL

Except that Halston...

BURROWS

You're going fourth. Oscar is last.

Halston's face sours. He flicks his cigarette to the ground.

42 INT. VERSAILLES -- OSCAR'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

42

Halston steps inside. He eyeballs several models being fit in billowing gowns.

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

Oscar. There's been a mix-up. I'm closing the show.

*

OSCAR

No darling. I only agreed to do this under the condition that you would NOT close the show. So you're not closing the show.

HALSTON

How about this: you take my spot. *Fourth.* And *I'll* go last.

OSCAR

...And what on earth would motivate me to do that?

(to a model)

Twirl.

*

*

As she starts to spin, faster, then faster, the voluminous dress moving like a magical cloud and Halston just stares, anxiety starting to swirl like the garment we CUT TO:

*

*

*

Halston unloads on Eleanor, sotto but PISSED. Mid-argument:

ELEANOR

No no no no no. You listen to ME. Number one? You're sharing Liza. She performs top of the show, end of story.

(before he can talk)

SHUT UP I'm not finished. You're not going last. Oscar's going last, that's just how it is, that's the only reason he agreed to come.

HALSTON

Oh you gotta be fucking KIDDING me!

ELEANOR

STILL NOT FINISHED HALSTON. *I want five more designs.*

HALSTON

You're out of your mind.

ELEANOR

I asked for 24, you brought 19. FIVE MORE.

HALSTON

Well, I won't do it! You brought me here to prove to the world that I'm the greatest artist in fashion today and now you're *SABOTAGING* me!

ELEANOR

SABOTAGING YOU???

HALSTON

Yes. I brought Liza, she is *MY* friend. And you've stuck me in a tiny shitbox of a workroom stinking of rat piss -- *I can't work like this!!!*

ELEANOR

Oh yeah, you sound like a *REAL* artist, Halston. You think that's what Gauguin said? "I can't paint in this room! It's dirty! And Van Gogh's *MY* friend! Cezanne's not allowed to talk to him!"

HALSTON

That's a *FLAWED ANALOGY* --

ELEANOR

HALSTON! Listen to me. You're obsessing over ALL THE WRONG THINGS and you need to FOCUS! Are you the best artist here? You bet your ass you are. But nobody knows it. The French sure don't know it -- Yves St. Laurent -- do you know what he says about you?

*

A beat. This slams Halston in the gut.

HALSTON

Yes.

44 OMITTED

44 *

45 INT. VERSAILLES -- HALLWAY -- RESUME

45

She gently pounds her palms on his chest, encouraging:

ELEANOR

Get out there and PROVE HIM WRONG. Show them you're the biggest star in the world.

(as she goes)

I know you can do it.

(CONTINUED)

Halston stands a moment, then turns and sees David Mahoney at the end of the hall, walking towards him.

HALSTON

David! What are you doing here?

MAHONEY

Just wanted to stop in and see how it's going. You know. As a friend.

Halston puts on his GRAND SMILE. He positively purrs.

HALSTON

(stressed beyond belief)
Everything's *perfect*. Excitement is at a...*fevered* pitch.

MAHONEY

Just saw the guest list. Some pretty heavy hitters.

Halston's stomach flops. A flood of panic. He covers.

As if on cue:

*

JOE (O.S.)

HALSTON!!! WE GOT A PROBLEM WITH THE BACKDROP!!!

Joe enters with Elsa.

HALSTON

What?

JOE

They gave me the measurements for the stage in...meters. And I designed the backdrop in feet.

ELSA

Quell disaster.

HALSTON

THAT'S IT. I'M GOING HOME.

He turns on his heel and storms out. Off their stunned looks:

OMITTED

EXT./INT. HALSTON'S LIMO -- MOMENTS LATER

Halston smokes as his models crowd around the limo and BANG on the door, begging him to come back inside. He looks like he's just finished running a marathon. Then Liza hops in.

(CONTINUED)

LIZA

Look, asshole. You know I adore you. But I didn't haul these tits all the way across the Atlantic to this miserable old hell hole just to have you drive off in a huff --

HALSTON

(emotional)

No. Liza? Listen. You know what I didn't come here for? To have *this* feeling. I've spent my whole life running from it -- I built a whole PERSON just so I didn't have to feel it --

LIZA

Feel what?

HALSTON

(crying now)

Unsafe. Unprotected. I feel like I'm four years old again in Indiana-

POP TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Halston's MOTHER screams as his FATHER yells and throws a skillet across the kitchen offscreen. Camera pushes in on the space beneath a side-table, where a SEVEN YEAR-OLD HALSTON, terrified and crying, runs under the table and sits cross-legged, rocking, his hand pressed against his ears.

BACK TO:

INT. LIMO -- RESUME

Liza's eyes well with tears, her heart breaking. She puts a hand on his knee.

HALSTON

I can't create feeling like this. I can't be *me* feeling like this...

LIZA

Oh, sweetheart, feeling like that -- that's what it *IS* to be an artist! I know what that feels like, *believe* me. That's how I felt on Cabaret -- I was scared and *exposed* -- I'm in tears telling Bob I don't like my costumes.

(then, tender)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZA (CONT'D)

Thank God I had you. And you've got
me.

Halston shakes his head, still rattled, something still not
right. He jumps out of the car.

LIZA (CONT'D)

Where are you going!? Halston!

50 INT. VERSAILLES -- HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER 50

Head full of steam, Halston rounds a corner and spots David
Mahoney. Urgent:

HALSTON

David.

David looks up puzzled. Halston hurries toward him.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Do you have a copy of the contract?

MAHONEY

Yeah, why...?

HALSTON

I need you to make me a promise. If
I sign that contract, you will
never, ever let me feel
underappreciated, underfunded,
unprotected, *unsafe*. Promise me
that, David, and you've got a deal.

*
*

MAHONEY

You have my word.

*

Halston offers his hand and they shake.

51 INT. VERSAILLES -- HALSTON'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 51

Halston, head clear now, enters the room.

HALSTON

(to an assistant)

I need my tux from the hotel.

(to Joe)

Figure out a new backdrop.

(to Elsa, still in her
ruined dress)

You're with me. Look through our
trunks and see what we can use.

PAT AST

Halston?

(CONTINUED)

51 "Versailles" Full Pink Revisions 8/28/20 35.
CONTINUED: 51

Halston glances over his shoulder, where Pat is holding up several yards of shimmery, silver fabric. Halston takes it, holds it up to Elsa's body. She frowns.

ELSA

You can make something good in an hour?

Halston steps back, stares at Elsa and the fabric.

HALSTON

No.

(twinkle)

But I can make something great.

TIME CUT:

CLOSE ON THE SHIMMERY SILVER SILK FABRIC as scissors SLICE through it.

CUT TO:

Halston pinning the fabric to Elsa's lower half. Pat is next to him with a pin cushion. Elsa's in her bra and underwear. Just as Halston picks up the first pin --

CUT TO:

52 INT. VERSAILLES -- HALLWAY -- THAT MOMENT 52

Joe sends a huge skein of white paper unrolling down the hall.

JOE

Careful, careful!

CUT TO:

53 INT. VERSAILLES -- HALSTON'S ROOM -- THAT MOMENT 53

Halston starts pinning the skirt to fit Elsa. In the hall:

JOE (O.S)

Last time I was in Paris I was at the fucking Plaza, and now I'm painting with a broom?!

CUT TO:

54 INT. VERSAILLES -- HALLWAY -- THAT MOMENT 54

Joe dips a broom into a bucket of black paint. He starts to sketch with the broom.

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON (O.S.)
Trying to concentrate, Joe!

CUT TO:

55 INT. VERSAILLES - HALSTON'S ROOM -- THAT MOMENT 55

Halston continues to pin Elsa as the skirt takes shape. Elsa loves the attention, flirts with him as he works.

ELSA
I like how you pin me. Like you mean it.

She flinches. Halston pauses. *Did he hurt her?*

ELSA (CONT'D)
(grinning)
Kidding.

Halston smiles. This is fun.

CUT TO:

Halston at the sewing machine, making the skirt.

CUT TO:

Elsa in the finished skirt -- it's beautiful and flows elegantly to the floor. And her bra.

PAT AST
Halston, it's beautiful.

ELSA
Yeah, but what about my tits? What am I supposed to wear on top?!

Just then, Joe hollers:

JOE (O.S.)
H, come see!

Halston motions for Elsa to stay still, then approaches the doorframe. People have crowded around Joe as he dips a BROOM into a can of BLACK PAINT and freehand draws the Eiffel Tower on white seamless paper. It's mesmerizing.

TIME CUT:

Elsa is *still* in just her bra as Halston and Pat search through various trunks for scraps of fabric they can use for Elsa's top. In the b.g., STAGEHANDS arrive to roll racks of clothes backstage as his room empties out.

(CONTINUED)

ELSA
Halston! Come on!

HALSTON
Elsa, I'm thinking.

Then: a BELL rings out. A signal for the audience to take their seats. Pat look extremely nervous. Halston pauses, then resumes sifting through trunks.

ELSA
I'm gonna look like a *fucking idiot*
out there in a just a skirt!

Halston lifts a LARGE FOLDING FAN from the trunk. He flicks his wrist and it unfolds with a *whoosh* - it's gorgeous, white with silver flowers, and matches Elsa's skirt.

Halston approaches Elsa with a fan. Holds it up to her chest... it elegantly covers her breasts. He smiles.

HALSTON
Now it's a dress.

TIME CUT:

56 OMITTED 56 *

57 INT. THE OPERA THEATER -- IN THE AUDIENCE -- NIGHT 57

The French half of the show is underway. Halston and Joe sit in a private box with David Mahoney, Bobbi Mahoney, and Eleanor Lambert. THREE OLDER FRENCH WOMEN sit in the box next to theirs.

ONSTAGE: Dior MODELS pose in front of an enormous ORANGE PUMPKIN made to resemble Cinderella's coach as the orchestra plays Sergei Prokofiev's *Cinderella*.

The gowns they show off look expensive but austere, black and beige. Very little color. The models move slowly and stiffly.

Halston stares down: the audience seems restless and unengaged. Across the space, in another PRIVATE BOX, an OLD MAN has fallen asleep.

JOE
This is the most boring thing I've
ever seen. And my mother did Man of
La Mancha in a barn.

Halston's clocks the tepid APPLAUSE from the audience. Only Marc Bohan himself stands and yells, *Bravo!* Halston sighs with relief.

(CONTINUED)

57

HALSTON

Thank God that's over.

JOE

Au contraire! There are four more
to go.

58

INT. THE OPERA THEATER -- BACKSTAGE WINGS -- LATER

58

Halston smokes with Joe as they wait for the French show to finish. The backstage area is expansive but dark and crowded with models, stagehands, and assistants.

Crowded around Halston and Joe are all the American models. A good THIRD of them are African American.

JOE

For the length of this French half
we could have driven into Paris,
eaten, and come back.

Halston gets Karen Bjornson's attention.

HALSTON

Karen, what's happening now?

Karen pokes her head through the backstage curtain. Then pulls it back.

KAREN BJORSON

All the French models are wearing
animal ears. And there's a huge
spaceship!

Halston and Joe start to giggle. Halston turns to see Liza directly behind him. She's nervous. They both smile, shyly.

HALSTON

Ready to put on a show?

LIZA

You bet.

59

INT. OPERA THEATER -- IN THE AUDIENCE -- LATER

59

Halston and Joe are back in their seats as the LIGHTS DIM. David Mahoney catches Halston's eye and winks. Halston inhales. *This is it. This is the moment.*

Then, ONSTAGE: a SPOTLIGHT reveals LIZA.

Behind her is Joe's Eiffel Tower backdrop, which -- compared to the overdone French sets -- looks surprisingly chic.

(CONTINUED)

Liza's in Halston's gray wide-legged trousers and camel turtleneck, with a red sweater around her neck and a fedora on her head.

Halston gazes at Liza as "Bonjour, Paris" begins. She commands the stage. The audience gets an immediate JOLT.

LIZA

*I wanna step out down the Champs-
Elysees, from the Arch of Triumph
to the Petit Palais, that's for me:
Bonjour, Paris!*

This launches us into an AMERICAN FASHION MONTAGE, which plays out, intercut with Liza singing. Unlike the French show, it's quick, upbeat, optimistic.

Backstage, Kay Thompson yells out each designer's name into her headset to indicate whose clothes we're seeing: *Klein, go! Burrows, go! Blass, go!*

Over "Bonjour Paris" we're watching Halston see:

– Anne's "Africa"-themed sportswear, including black shirts and pleated skirts with elephant prints and two-piece dresses with coordinating turbans

– Stephen's signature "lettuce" ruffle gowns in wildly-colorful matte jersey, including his final piece: a canary-yellow gown with an endless train

– Bill's Gatsby-meets-Deauville collection: cafe society dresses and tailored jackets

The audience is engaged; intrigued; thrilled. The Americans are clearly stealing the show.

And then, backstage, Kay says: *Halston! Go!*

AND WE'RE IN HALSTON'S POV: A DEAFENING SILENCE, WITH JUST THE SOUND OF HALSTON'S BREATHING AND HEARTBEAT.

PAT CLEVELAND is twirling in the final rendition of the gown. She's twirling in SUPER SLO-MOTION from upstage straight towards the audience.

And as she's twirling we're intercutting with:

Pop! Chris Royer in a pale green sequin gown.

Pop! Alva Chinn in a one-shoulder toga revealing her breast.

Pop! China Machado in a white sequined gown.

(CONTINUED)

Pop! Elsa Peretti in the gown with no bodice and the fan held to her chest.

We finish the intercutting with PAT CLEVELAND halting at the VERY EDGE of the stage, twirling done, her gown fluttering back to her sides.

And the SOUND COMES BACK. And THE CROWD GOES WILD.

Liza strides back onstage in a black Halston cocktail dress belting out *Au Revoir, Paris!* as all the models and dancers take their bows. *

The audience ERUPTS into a standing ovation. Halston rises, with the others, to applaud the Americans. A sense of relief FLOODS over him as he looks around. *He did it.*

Halston's face erupts in a look of joy. Pure artistic achievement. Then, in the audience, he spots David Mahoney looking up at him, beaming. Halston nods, then as David looks away, Halston's smile disappears, replaced by a look of deep unease. *Why didn't he wait before he signed???* *

SMASH TO:

60 INT. CHARTERED TWA 737 -- NIGHT 60

Halston is now sitting with Joe. The entire plane is silent. EVERYONE is fast ASLEEP. There are ORCHIDS EVERYWHERE.

JOE

...but in exchange, you sold your name.

HALSTON

Not my name. My *trademark*.

JOE

Sweetheart, your trademark *IS* your name.

HALSTON

JOE. Seven *million* dollars in stock. Plus, all sorts of other things. I mean...*Halston* is funded.

JOE

And *Halston* is fucking *rich*.
(re: the flowers)
Rich enough to buy every fucking orchid in Paris.

Halston smiles but that stung. He covers. He turns and gazes out the window. Almost to himself:

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

Just imagine the things I can do.

Silence. He looks back to Joe and sees he's not there, he's walked back to the front. Halston looks around, as if seeing it for the first time, then back out the window, torn. CAMERA PULLS back on Halston, alone as we --

END EPISODE