

VOTE FOR THE CROOK

Written by

John C. Fitzgerald

One Hour Pilot

"The Boys From Alabama"

The following is based on a true story.

FADE IN:

MAIN TITLES

MONTAGE -- archival footage of the third-world style South Louisiana campaign season.

Super: Cajun Country, 1991

1. Dilapidated sharecropper shacks straddle an old dirt road. The DIRT POOR sit on their porches. Kids play out front. All eyes are on white men on horseback, escorting a pickup truck that carries an enormous PA system strapped to the truck's cab. Campaign signs on the truck read: "Re-Elect Sheriff Zerinque!"
2. A motorhome stationed outside a small town *superette* (cajun grocery). Red, white and blue bunting adorn the awning. A cast iron smoker is hitched to the motorhome; several pigs are cooking. A live cajun band plays off to the side. It's a party in a parking lot. Teams of election canvassers come and go.
3. A lone CAJUN *pirogues* (a cajun skiff) up the bayou. There are handmade election signs attached to tree trunks along the banks. Makeshift billboards for boats on the bayou. CLOSE ON one that reads, "Vote David Duke - Governor".

CLYDE V.O.

Following his 17th federal grand jury, former Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards decided to enter the 1991 gubernatorial race. His opponent was former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke. Eddie came up with his own campaign slogan:

5. In the background, we see the Louisiana SUPERDOME. In the foreground, a BILLBOARD bears the slogan: "Vote For the Crook"

CLYDE V.O. (CONT'D)

"Vote For The Crook!". Eddie coined the phrase. He knew that the choice between a Criminal and a Nazi was an easy one for the Cajun people.... And he won his unprecedented 4th gubernatorial election. In fact, Fast Eddie never lost an election in his life.

END OF MAIN TITLES

COLD OPEN

Super: Gastonia, North Carolina - Twenty Years Earlier.

EXT. INTERSTATE 85 - NORTH CAROLINA - EARLY MORNING

A silver Oldsmobile is pulled over on the shoulder. Behind it is a South Carolina State Police cruiser. Two men, U.S. SENATOR T.A. THOMPSON and TROOPER HITCHENS stand alongside the Olds.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

The SENATOR's WIFE sits in the passenger seat. In the back seat are two little girls - MARY ANN (6) and EMILY (8).

MARY ANN
Mommy, I'm scared.

SENATOR'S WIFE
Oh Lord, Mary Ann! Everything's fine! Your daddy was just driving a little fast is all.

EMILY
Why's that policeman yelling at Daddy? Doesn't he know who Daddy is?

EXT - HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

As the two men argue, we INTERCUT with a SEMI-TRAILER TRUCK barreling up the highway behind them.

SENATOR THOMPSON
Don't you know who I am? ... I'm a god-damned United States Senator!
You can't give me a god-damned ticket!

TROOPER HITCHENS
I don't care if you're Jesus H. Christ, sir. Anybody driving 90 m.p.h. on my highway gets a ticket. Period.

The SEMI is getting closer as Trooper Hitchens gestures towards the kids, who are now peering at them through the window.

TROOPER HITCHENS (CONT'D)

Especially a national leader such as yourself. And especially someone with a family in the car. You sir, oughta know better!

As Trooper Hitchens finishes his sentence, the Semi buzzes by, sucking both the State Trooper and the Senator up under its belly. The scene is gruesome. Both men are instantly killed. We close on the horror of the kids' faces as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. ATCHAFALAYA RIVER BASIN - EARLY MORNING

CHYRON: Baton Rouge, Louisiana 1971

MUSIC: Nathan Absinthe's "Jolie Blond"

A beautiful Atchafalaya swamp sunrise. Smoke on the water. Herons. Gators. Morning on the bayou.

EXT. - THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BATON ROUGE - EARLY MORNING

The antebellum mansion is bathed in dawn's light. We HEAR a phone ringing and ringing, echoing throughout the halls.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, D.C. (CONT'D)

We HEAR an angry Richard Nixon screaming at his secretary Rose Mary.

NIXON (O.S.)

"Goddamnit, Rose Mary! I don't care if you have to call the goddamned National Guard. Just find that Cajun son-of-a-bitch!"

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - SECRETARY'S ANTE ROOM

ROSE MARY (mid 60's) is re-dialing the phone.

INT./EXT. THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION - CONT'D

Louisiana State Police Commander WILLARD FONTENOT pulls up in his cruiser. He pulls around to the rear of the mansion and parks behind the kitchen's door. QUINCY JOLIVETTE (70's), an elderly, stern, savvy black man in a butler's uniform opens the door. He's seen it all, and the two men greet each other cordially.

*NOTE: As will become clear, the Governor's Mansion is staffed with convicts from Angola State Prison.

QUINCY JOLIVETTE
Sure is early. Even for you,
Commander.

WILLARD FONTENOT
Jolivette, I got a four star
general hollerin' into my ear at
5am. He woke up to the goddamned
President of the United States
tearing him a new asshole!

JOLIVETTE
(Interrupting)
He ain't here, Commander. And I
don't know where he is, neither.

Commander Fontenot lights a Pall Mall and drops the cordiality.

WILLARD
Well, you've got about one minute
to find someone who does know where
he is, or you'll be sleeping back
at The Farm tonight. And you know
what they'll do to your Uncle Tom
ass up there.

But Jolivette has already spun on his heels. FONTENOT'S eyes gaze over to the garage, where another black convict, CURTIS MALVEAUX (60's) is preparing to wash an already clean gold Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham.

JOHNSON (40's), yet another black convict dressed in servant's clothes, comes to the door and hands Cmdr. Fontenot a cup of coffee.

JOHNSON
Sir, you might wanna step inside
for a moment.

Fontenot follows Johnson through the kitchen, past the pantry and into a butcher room.

He and Johnson watch as yet another convict in chef's clothes--SLEEPY DUNBAR (40's)--is bent (his head pinned) over a butcher's block. Sleepy wears a patch over his left eye. A very large butcher's knife is pressed in the fleshy area just below his right eye. The force of the blade's point is such that the skin is on the verge of being punctured.

Quincy Jolivette holds the knife. He appears both calm and sure. There is little doubt that he will cut Sleepy's eye out if he doesn't like what he hears.

SLEEPY

I honestly don't know where he is,
Mr. Curtis.

Quincy looks over at Commander Fontenot. The Commander glances down at the knife against Sleepy's face, then back to Quincy. It is a moment of unspoken understanding.

QUINCY

In my experience? Whenever somebody uses what they call a adverb like that? They're generally lying motherfuckers. Like, "I *really* or *truly* or *seriously* or *honestly* don't know." That means they lying. So now listen up you ignorant fool. Tell me where they at or I will cut out your fucking eye.

SLEEPY

(sighs)
Man, he's gonna have my hide...

A very long pause as Sleepy plays out the scenarios in his head and makes a decision.

SLEEPY (CONT'D)

They in Las Vegas. The Las Vegas Hilton. Under Clyde's name. I sent them with some ducks, a goose, and ten links of boudin. The hotel chef called me just last night wondering how to cook it all. That's all I know.

Quincy looks in Sleepy's eye to make sure he's not lying. Satisfied, he releases the knife and nods towards the Commander. Quincy is pissed to have been put in this position, but he swallows his anger. He does not want to return to "The Farm" at Angola Prison.

QUINCY

(To Inmate Johnson)

Whip up some breakfast for the Commander.

(To Sleepy)

Find out where the damned phone operator is at. If she were answering phones, the Commander would still be asleep in his bed, I'm sure.

Sleepy and Johnson exit. Quincy grabs an ornate ashtray (bearing the seal of the State of Louisiana} from a nearby counter and hands it to Commander Fontenot, who is just now finishing the cigarette he lit outside.

The two men walk towards the switchboard room.

FONTENOT

(to Quincy)

Find someone to get the hotel on the phone while I call the General and give him a status update.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE VEGAS HILTON - LAS VEGAS - CONTINUOUS

We see the hotel gleaming in the pre-dawn light.

INT. THE VEGAS HILTON - PENTHOUSE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Hotel Manager DICKIE DELUCA (40s) steps off of the elevator and approaches a door which reads "Presidential Suite." From his vantage point we hear the faint sounds of the phone ringing off the hook.

Dickie knocks on the door, waits briefly, then pulls out a ring of keys and lets himself in.

INT. THE VEGAS HILTON - PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

The room is a disaster. Empty liquor bottles and stewardesses' uniforms litter the place.

DICKIE DELUCA

Hello? Mr. Vidrine?

Dickie walks to the telephone and takes it off the hook, then calls out:

DICKIE DELUCA (CONT'D)
Governor Edwards?

One of the bedroom doors opens. A naked STEWARDESS comes out mumbling, followed by a very large man with a comb-over. He is CLYDE VIDRINE, 42-year-old confidant, security guard, and bag man to Governor Edwin Edwards. He's got a towel around his hulking waist and is clearly and extremely hung over. He eyeballs his guest while pouring Crown Royal into a coffee mug. The Stewardess quickly dresses and leaves the suite while the two men talk.

DICKIE DELUCA (CONT'D)
I'm very sorry to just let myself in like that, Mr. Vidrine. But there's apparently been an accident, and the State Police are looking for you and the Governor.

Clyde dismisses the apology and gets straight to business.

CLYDE
What's the emergency?

DICKIE DELUCA
I'm not exactly sure, sir...

Clyde places the rotary phone back on the hook to regain a dial tone, then lifts it and starts dialing.

DICKIE DELUCA (CONT'D)
...but I was told to find the Governor and have him call The White House immediately...

CLYDE
The White House, huh? Shit. And you don't know why?

DICKIE DELUCA
No, sir. Is he here? The Governor?

Clyde gestures towards the master bedroom with a nod of the head and a shrug, as if to say, "I dunno. Check and see."

CLYDE
(into phone)
It's Clyde.

Dickie Deluca exits the master, shaking his head: No Governor.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Got it. We'll call as soon as possible...I don't know when exactly that will be...Because the Governor's indisposed at the moment...Well. That's not really any of your fucking business, is it? Just tell the White House that we're working on a solution and will call very soon.

Clyde hangs up the phone.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Have you checked the tables yet?

DICKIE DELUCA

Yes. He's not playing cards in the hotel right now.

CLYDE

Shit. Can you spare some bodies and start calling the other casinos? We gotta find him but quick.

Dickie exists. Clyde pours himself another Crown Royal and looks out of the window at the desert sunrise.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Dammit. Eddie. I told you we shouldn't have come here...

CUT TO:

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nixon is seated in a wingback chair, across from Senate Majority Leader ROBERT BYRD.

PRESIDENT NIXON

I don't think you have to postpone the vote.

SENATOR BYRD

The Senator who sponsored the bill was just killed, and there's 40 million in Louisiana oil revenue on the line. As much as I'd like to postpone, it would create a lot of enemies.

PRESIDENT NIXON

We're already being held hostage by that silver-tongued son-of-a-bitch. To hell with him. The Senate votes tomorrow and Louisiana's oil gets a tax increase. Make it happen, Senator. I've wasted too much time on this bullshit already.

CUT TO:

EXT. - GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BATON ROUGE - CONTINUOUS

The Governor's gold Cadillac is now in the front of the mansion. The car is running, the rear door is open and CURTIS MALVEAUX (mid 40s) - the prisoner we saw washing the car earlier - is standing next to the open door. Four MOTORCYCLE COPS are poised to escort the vehicle.

ELAINE EDWARDS - The 37-year-old, beautiful and clever-like-a-fox wife of Governor Edwin Edwards - exits the mansion and walks towards the car.

ELAINE

Good morning, Malveaux.

MALVEAUX

Mornin' Mrs. Edwards.

Elaines steps into the Cadillac and Malveaux shuts the door.

INT. - CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

Malveaux gets behind the wheel as Elaine cracks the window and lights a cigarette.

MALVEAUX

Where to, Mrs. Edwards?

ELAINE

Oh, Malveaux! I'm so excited today! The Life Magazine is going to do a cover story on Governor Edwards! I thought it might be nice to meet the reporter at the airport.

MALVEAUX

Show them yankees what real southern hospitality looks like, huh Mrs. Edwards?

ELAINE

Just being polite is all. I thought we could tour the area a bit to give him a sense of place. Perhaps we could take the river road on the way back? He might like to see the plantations along the river.

MALVEAUX

Yes'm, Mrs. Edwards. I'm sure he'd enjoy that.

Malveaux rolls down his window as MOTOR CYCLE COP #1 pulls up to the Cadillac.

MALVEAUX (CONT'D)

(to motorcycle cop)

The airport, officer.

The small motorcade begins it's journey as we

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SANDS HOTEL - LAS VEGAS - CONTINUOUS

The valet is already hopping. The Vegas Hilton's limo pulls up and Clyde Vidrine steps out.

The Sand's General Manager, Bobby Restaino, and his head of security Arthur Zambelli, are waiting to greet Clyde at the front door.

BOBBY

Mr. Vidrine. I'm Bobby Restaino, and this is my head of security, Arthur Zambelli.

CLYDE

Nice to meet you.

ARTHUR

You as well. Please, follow us. I believe we have your man.

INT. THE SANDS HOTEL - VEGAS - CONTINUOUS

The three men walk across the casino floor.

BOBBY

I find it interesting that your Governor doesn't drink alcohol. Not many people gamble like that sober.

CLYDE

I think I can speak for all of us
drinkers when I say that a drunk
Edwin Edwards would be a very
dangerous thing.

ARTHUR

Well, everyman has a vice.

From behind we see a COUPLE walking towards a bank of elevators. She's a tall, leggy SHOWGIRL. A short, silver-haired and confidant MAN in a suit is leading her towards the elevator. Without stopping, he shakes the hands of a few well-wishers along the way.

Clyde begins to jog towards the elevator, his almost-250 pounds can't disguise his high school linebacker-cum-alcoholic athleticism. He hollers towards the couple just as the doors close on them.

*NOTE: we don't see the Governor's face in this scene.

CLYDE

Eddie!

Bobby and Arthur catch up with Clyde at the elevator.

BOBBY

(to Arthur)

Do you know where they're going?

ARTHUR

I have a pretty good idea.

The three men enter the next elevator car. A huffing Clyde lights a Pall Mall.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

CLYDE

I'm too hungover for this shit.

CUT TO:

EXT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

A KOREAN AIRLINES JET lands as we HEAR air traffic control.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL (O.S.)

Korean Air 002 cleared for landing
on runway 5.

(MORE)

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Please stay aboard the aircraft and
await US Customs Officials, over.

INT. KOREAN AIRLINES JET - MOMENTS LATER

The jet taxis to a stop. There are three PILOTS, one STEWARDESS and only one passenger, a middle'd aged, dark-suited Korean bureaucrat named TONG SUNG PARK.

Two US Customs Officials - OFFICER MOSELY and OFFICER BECKER - board the plane.

OFFICER BECKER
(to Becker)
Well, this is certainly suspect.
One passenger and 85 empty seats.

OFFICER MOSELY
Let's call in a team and sweep the plane.

The Koreans all look very confused, not least of all because neither officer has actually addressed them.

INT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

The camera trucks past three interrogation rooms, each containing a pilot. We land on the fourth room, which contains Tong Sung Park seated and smoking a cigarette. On the table in front of him is his opened and throughly-searched suitcase. A stack of unopened boxes with diagrams of very expensive electronics on them (cameras, TVs, etc) are piled on the corner of the table.

The door opens as Officer Mosely steps in, reviewing a dossier.

MOSELY
Tong Sung Park? Do you speak English or do we need a translator?

TONG SUNG PARK
I speak English.

MOSELY
Good.

Mosely removes a handwritten list from the Dossier.

MOSELY (CONT'D)

I have some questions about these electronic goods. They weren't listed on your customs form?

TONG SUNG PARK

They are gifts.

MOSELY

Right. May I ask for whom they are intended?

TONG SUNG PARK

Family friends.

MOSELY

I see.

(referring to list)

It appears that this list of names we found in your briefcase belongs to you? The handwriting matches your signature on the customs form. That's the form that doesn't mention the several thousand dollars in redundant electronics you're smuggling into my country.

Tong Sung Park looks nervous at the mention of the list.

MOSELY (CONT'D)

There are three U.S. Congressmen, 2 Senators, and a state Governor on this list.

Tony Sung Park shrugs.

MOSELY (CONT'D)

Six names of government officials, and six boxes of expensive electronics. It doesn't look good, Mr. Park. In fact, it looks like you've been sent here on a mission to perhaps bribe US Officials, and that upsets me.

TONG SUNG PARK

This is not my list.

Mosely tosses the dossier, list and Tong Sung Park's passport on the desk.

MOSELY

Really? I find that hard to believe.

(MORE)

MOSELY (CONT'D)

But I suppose we'll wait for a federal judge to hear the results of a handwriting analysis before we settle the matter.

Tong Sung Park picks up the list and studies it. Mosely turns his attention to a pack of Korean cigarettes on the table. He pulls one out and lights it. While doing so, and without Mosely seeing him. Tong Sung Park SHOVES THE LIST IN HIS MOUTH and quickly CHEWS and SWALLOWS.

Mosely only realizes what's happened once the list has actually disappeared into Tong Sung Park's mouth (but before he's actually swallowed it).

MOSELY (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch! Spit it out!

Mosely tries to physically remove the list from Tong Sung Parks' mouth, but it's too late. The list is gone.

TONG SUNG PARK

(nearly chocking)

I don't know what you are saying, sir. I don't recall any lists. These gifts are for family friends, that is all.

MOSELY

Goddammit!

Mosely is furious - as much with himself for allowing the evidence to be eaten as he is at Tong Sung Park for actually eating the list. He turns and punches the wall, then sweeps the packages of electronics to the floor and begins to kick them.

EXT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - NEW ORLEANS

The columned Federal building looms imposingly.

INT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Federal Prosecutor JOHN VOLZ (40s) is standing behind a stately mahogany desk piled high with files. His back is to the camera as he paces and talks on the phone.

INT. - DULLES CUSTOMS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Officer Mosely is on the phone with John Volz. Mosely narrates as we INTERCUT the phone call with surveillance images of Tong Sung Park's arrival in Baton Rouge.

OFFICER MOSELY

He arrived in D.C. on a Korean Air jet at 10:00am this morning.

INT. FEDERAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The camera lingers on John Volz' face.

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)

(cont'd)

He had six palettes of consumer electronics and a list - in his handwriting - with the names of six US political figures.

JOHN VOLZ

What are the names?

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)

I got a good look at the list and I can remember five of them, sir.

1) EXT. SOUTHERN HILLS COUNTRY CLUB - GOLF COURSE - DAY

We see a GOLFER (mid 60s) swing and miss. He throws his club in a fit of rage. We FREEZE FRAME on the enraged Golfer:

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)

...Senator Murtha...

2) INT. STRIP BAR - DAY

A man in a business suit, CONGRESSMAN WILLIAMS (early 40s) and two blonde strippers are on a red velvet sofa behind an ornate curtain. STRIPPER #1 is tapping cocaine from a vial onto her breast. The Congressman snorts a bump, raises his head and crazily looks into the lens as we FREEZE FRAME on him.

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)

...Congressman Williams...

3) INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Two men in suits. A briefcase full of cash. SUIT #1 shakes CONGRESSMAN MCNEELY's (40s) hand and lights a cigar.

SUIT #2
Like taking candy from a baby!

The two assholes laugh as we FREEZE FRAME on the Congressman.

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)
...Congressman McNeely...

4) EXT. WOODS - DAY

A lone HUNTER sits in a deer stand. 200 yards away is a small clearing with a feeder at it's center. A large buck steps to the feeder and begins to eat as the hunter drops him with a single shot to the head. The hunter waits a moment, then begins to laugh maniacally as he unloads several more rounds into the deer's corpse. We FREEZE FRAME on the hunter. He is CONGRESSMAN DOWD.

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)
...Congressman Dowd...

5) EXT. HOOVER DAM - DAY

A helicopter rises over the lip of the enormous dam. The chopper is facing straight into the camera. The PILOT a bears shit-eating grin. The SHOWGIRL from the casino rises into the frame and wipes her mouth. She's just blown the pilot.

The Camera slowly CRASH ZOOMS into a CLOSE UP of the cockpit.

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)
...And Louisiana Governor Edwin
Edwards, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

John Volz sits at his desk and sighs.

JOHN VOLZ
Who else knows about this?

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)
Just my boss, the Attorney General
and you, sir.

JOHN VOLZ
So everybody, basically....Okay.
Thanks for the call, officer.

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)
My pleasure, sir.

JOHN VOLZ
Oh, Officer? One more thing: What
happened to the list? You said you
could only remember five names?

OFFICER MOSELY (O.S.)
(sheepishly)
He ate the evidence, sir. Then he
identified himself and claimed
diplomatic immunity. We had to let
him go.

JOHN VOLZ
I see. And what is the evidence-
eating Korean diplomat's name?

OFFICER MOSELY
His name is Tong Sun Park, sir.

JOHN VOLZ
(writing name)
Got it. Well, if you remember the
sixth name, please give me a call.

Volz hangs up the phone and stares out of his window at an enormous, mossy old oak tree.

JOHN VOLZ (CONT'D)
Oh, Edwin. I'm coming for your
crooked ass.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATON ROUGE METROPOLITAN AIRPORT - ESTABLISHING

In the foreground we see Tong Sung Park walking down the staircase of the Korean jet. A motorcade arrives on the tarmac as AIRPORT PERSONNEL wheel a rolling staircase and attach it to a Delta Airlines jet in the background.

Elaine and Malveaux exit the Cadillac and position themselves to greet their guests.

The last two passengers off of the jet approach the motorcade.

He is a rumpled, hung-over East Coast writer - DANIEL HALPERN (30's), accompanied by an artsy, bohemian photographer - SONYA COLE (27).

ELAINE
Mr. Halpern?

DANIEL
Please, call me Dan. And you must be the First Lady?

ELAINE
Oh, my. I'm still not comfortable with that term. Please, call me Elaine.

Tong Sung Park is approaching Elaine as she introduces herself to Dan and Sonya. It becomes clear to him that Elaine's motorcade is not the Tong Sun Park welcoming committee. He walks past Elaine and Malveaux to the only other car parked on the tarmac. Both Elaine and Malveaux take notice as Malveaux takes Dan's bag and places it in the trunk.

DANIEL
With your husband's recent re-election, it may be time to grow accustomed to your title.

ELAINE
My lord. I hope that never happens!

Elaine's attention is now directed at Sonya, who lingers aside Daniel.

DANIEL
I'm sorry. Elaine, this is Sonya Cole, one of Life magazine's best photographers.

Elaine extends her hand. It is obvious from her faux and over-excited greeting that she doesn't like the idea of another attractive woman hanging around.

ELAINE
(to Sonya)
Oh! How unexpectedly nice to meet you! Welcome to Baton Rouge!

Malveaux grabs Sonya's bags.

SONYA

It's my pleasure, Mrs. Edwards. I look forward to photographing you and your family this week.

ELAINE

I'm sure it'll be so much fun!

Elaine and Daniel get into the back seat of the Cadillac. Sonya takes the front seat as Malveaux shuts all the doors.

SONYA

Nice car! You know, we recently did a piece on Elvis, and he had this exact same one.

Elaine fake-smiles at the comment and re-sizes up Sonya, certain that she was seduced by Elvis Presley.

ELAINE

(to Sonya)

It belongs to the state. To be honest, I prefer my Oldsmobile!

(To Daniel)

Are y'all hungry? I've got a little plantation tour set up, but we can stop to eat at one of my husband's favorite lunch spots if y'all are hungry?

DANIEL

We're fine for food, I think. I do need some cigarettes, though. Could we stop somewhere?

ELAINE

Of course! Malveaux, please let the officers know that we need to get this gentleman some cigarettes.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SANDS HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - CONTINUOUS

We HEAR the sound of someone BEATING on a door.

INT. THE SANDS HOTEL - GUEST ROOM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Clyde, Bobby and Arthur are standing around the door to the Performer's Suite. Clyde rings the doorbell checks his watch as the three men chat.

CLYDE

I gotta say, I'm impressed with the way you *I-tal-ians* have made the desert bloom out here. Us Cajuns gotta figure out a way to turn our swamps into a party-town money mint.

Arthur corrects Clyde's pronunciation...

ARTHUR

It's Italian. Not *I-tal-ian*.

Clyde ignores him. Bobby finds the comment rude, and so intervenes...

BOBBY

Well, it seems like New Orleans is well on it's way to reaching that goal.

CLYDE

(beat)

So you say this is Sammy Davis, Jr's suite?

Clyde checks his watch again. Rings doorbell.

BOBBY

Sometimes. We reserve it for whomever is headlining in the Copa Room.

Clyde checks his watch and rings the doorbell yet again.

CLYDE

I don't think he's in there, fellas. Eddie's a smooth - but relatively quick - operator. He'd be done by now for sure.

(to Arthur)

Do you have a master key? Maybe we can just open this fucking door?

CUT TO:

EXT. BILLY'S BOUDIN BARN - RIVER ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Elaine's motorcade pulls up to a shack abutting the Mississippi River levee.

INT. CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

Elaine pulls a dollar from her pocketbook and hands it to Mr. Malveaux.

ELAINE

Mr. Malveaux, would you be so kind as to fetch Mr. Daniel a package of Pall Malls?

MR. MALVEAUX

Now Mrs. Elaine, you know I can't go in there.

ELAINE

Oh my! I'm so sorry. I keep forgetting!

MR. MALVEAUX

I can have one of the po-lice do it for you.

Mr. Malveaux exits the car and hands the money to Motorcycle Cop #1.

DANIEL

Why can't he go in there, Elaine? Is it really still that segregated down here?

ELAINE

Oh, not at all! Edwin has done so much for those people. It really is getting better every day... For both us women and the colored people...But that's not the particular issue with Mr. Malveaux. He just can't go into any store that sells liquor. Technically speaking, he's a prisoner at Angola. In fact, the entire Governor's mansion is staffed with Angola prisoners. It's so hard for me to fathom that our entire staff are all hardened criminals!

SONYA

You're pulling our leg, right?

ELAINE

Oh, not at all, dear. It's been that way since Huey Long's days.

DANIEL

May I ask what Mr. Malveaux was convicted of?

ELAINE

I don't really know. I'm sure you can ask him.

Daniel pulls out a small notebook and scribbles something as Sonya pulls a camera from out of nowhere and starts snapping shots of Mr. Malveaux waiting outside the door of the Boudin Barn. Elaine comments on Daniel's note taking.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

I don't see any need to mention that in your article, though. I'm sure Mr. Malveaux doesn't want his dirty laundry on every coffee table in America!

DANIEL

Oh, don't worry Mrs. Edwards. We document everything; it's just our nature. Sonya and I have been documenting all of our travels for the magazine as part of a larger film project. But I give you my word that the Life article is a pure puff piece meant to celebrate the magnificence of the State of Louisiana and you and your husband's storied role in it.

ELAINE

Now, Daniel! I told you to call me Elaine.

DANIEL

Yes. Sorry, Elaine.

Mr. Malveaux returns to the car with a pack of cigarettes. The pause causes a satisfied Daniel to think that he actually, successfully charmed Elaine. Malveaux cranks the engine and pulls out of the gravel parking lot as Elaine continues.

ELAINE

Now as you know, Daniel, my husband is a career politician in what the media claims is the most corrupt state in the union. So as you can imagine, I've seen and heard an extraordinary amount of bullshit over the years.

(MORE)

ELAINE (CONT'D)

I certainly have a keen ear for it. The funny thing is, the electorate still holds faith in it. The bullshit, I mean. Partly for inspiration, I suppose. Anyway, What I'm trying to say is that I'd appreciate it if you didn't try to bullshit me. And please make sure that you and Mrs. Cole keep the cameras of your other, larger project trained on our common goal here in Louisiana.

Both Daniel and Sonya are taken aback by the sudden-yet-still-somehow-polite frankness of the First Lady. Having sent her message (and without missing a beat), she deftly turns their attention to White Oak Plantation, a columned giant nestled behind mossy oak trees along the road.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Now on your left we have the fabulous old White Oak Plantation...

INT. THE SANDS HOTEL - PERFORMER'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

The door is open to the hallway. There is a spiral staircase heading upstairs. The three men search the place, but no one is home. They go upstairs as we...

EXT. THE SANDS HOTEL - ROOFTOP HELIPORT - CONTINUOUS

A door flies open as Clyde, Bobby and Artie run out onto the roof. Bobby looks at Frankie.

BOBBY

Where's the goddamned helicopter, Frankie?

FRANKIE

I don't fucking know!

(to Clyde)

Your governor wouldn't happen to be a chopper pilot, would he?

Clyde is even more pissed than the owners of the stolen helicopter, but he contains it with a strange bemusement at the lengths to which his boss will go to chase a skirt.

CLYDE

19 Months in Korea, another 2
shuttling oil executives to rigs
off shore. Your chopper's fine.
He'll be back soon.

BOBBY

He'd damn well better be.

CUT TO:

EXT. - U.S. CONGRESS - CONTINUOUS

A lone MARINE is raising the Stars and Stripes on the roof of the Senate. We HEAR elected leaders reciting the Pledge of Allegiance before the SARGENT-AT-ARMS addresses the chamber.

INT. - U.S. CONGRESS - CONTINUOUS

SARGENT-AT-ARMS

Hear ye! Hear ye! The 92nd United States Congress is now in session!

SPIRO AGNEW, the President of the Senate, takes the podium. He is addressing an unusually packed Congress.

SPIRO AGNEW

Good morning, Gentlemen. I'm afraid I have some grave news: This morning, our beloved friend and colleague, Senator T.A. Thomson of Louisiana, was killed in a motor vehicle accident on a South Carolina highway....

We hear GASPS and MUMBLING throughout the chamber.

SPIRO AGNEW (CONT'D)

Due to this shocking tragedy, and pursuant to the traditions of this institution, I call upon the 92nd Congress for an immediate, 1-day adjournment.

As Agnew begins an impromptu eulogy of the Congressman, we cut into a WHISPERED CONVERSATION between Alabama's seasoned SENATOR PARKMAN and Louisiana's young and dashing first-term SENATOR JOHN BREAUX (a former protege of Governor Edwards').

SENATOR PARKMAN

Wasn't y'all's federal oil tax bill up for vote today?

SENATOR JOHN BREAUX
(nods knowingly)

Yes, sir.

Senator Parkman gestures towards a man on the other side of the aisle seated behind a name plate that reads "Strom Thurmond- State of South Carolina".

SENATOR PARKMAN

This unfortunate calamity notwithstanding, it does seem like a three day adjournment won't benefit anyone but y'all's opponents.

SENATOR JOHN BREAUX

I was just thinking that myself, Senator.

SENATOR PARKMAN

Constitutionally, a Senator who passes away while in Congress is replaced by an appointment made by the governor of that state until such time as an interim election can be held.

SENATOR JOHN BREAUX

I remember that from my con-law class.

SENATOR PARKMAN

What is most interesting is that each particular state has it's own definition of when an interim election can be held. Do you recall what your state's constitution allows for the declaration of interim elections?

The seasoned SENATOR PARKMAN winks at Senator Breaux. He's passing on a political strategy, under the guise of senatorial-mentorship. John Breaux gets it in a "A-ha!" moment.

SENATOR JOHN BREAUX

Governor Edwards just ratified a new constitution, which he effectively authored himself.

SENATOR PARKMAN

It would be interesting to know if the state charter on elections carried over to the new constitution. What with Edwin having served 3 terms in Congress himself, I would imagine he redesigned the charter to reflect the changes of modern society. Most of the old constitution was still Napoleonic, I think.

SENATOR JOHN BREAUX

Napoleonic. You can say that again.

SENATOR PARKMAN

Anyway, I'm terribly sorry to hear about Senator Thompson. He was one of the few good guys left, and I sincerely enjoyed his company. And his gumbo.

The muffled sounds of Agnew's eulogy start to take shape, as we push slowly into the podium from across the aisle.

SPIRO AGNEW

...with deep and terrible sadness.
Please, gentlemen: a moment of silence.

The entire chamber bows their heads in silence as we...

CUT TO:

EXT: LOUISIANA STATE CAPITAL - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

A school bus is parked in front of the Capitol steps. A group of schoolchildren are being led into the Capitol by WYNETTE ARDOIN (late 20's), a prim and slim school teacher.

INT. LOUISIANA STATE CAPITOL - CONTINUOUS

The schoolchildren form a semi-circle in the grand hallway. Miss Ardoin stands against a marble wall.

MISS ARDOIN

...and this is where Governor Huey Long was assassinated.

The schoolchildren GASP as Miss Ardoin points at two chips in the marble that appear to be bullet holes.

MISS ARDOIN (CONT'D)
One at a time, children!

From behind, we see two men walk into the wide frame. One of them speaks.

MAN
Now, that's not actually 100% accurate, ma'am.

Miss Ardoин's jaw drops. The two men are Clyde Vidrine and the prematurely silver-haired, incredibly charismatic Lothario known as GOVERNOR EDWIN EDWARDS.

MISS ARDOIN
Oh, my!

Governor Edwards walks slowly towards her while he addresses the children.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS
No. What actually happened was that a crazy man named Dr. Carl Weiss fired his pistol at point blank range, killing The Kingfish with a single shot. State Police then shot the assassin some sixty-three times. Now, Sixty-one of those bullets went into Dr. Weiss, but the other two bullets ricocheted...

The Governor is by Miss Ardoин's side now. He gently takes her hand and runs her fingertips over the bullet holes in the wall.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)
...and are buried right here in this wall.

Governor Edwards and Miss Ardoин's eyes lock for a brief moment. Within that moment it becomes implicit to each of them that they are going to have sex very soon.

Clyde stands against the far wall, witnessing it all.

CLYDE
(to himself)
Aw, shit.

Governor Edwards spins on his heels, releases Miss Ardoин's hands, and claps once towards the children.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS

Now, who wants to take a tour of
the Governor's mansion?

SCHOOLCHILDREN

I do! I do!

GOVERNOR EDWARDS

(to Clyde)

Clyde, will you please escort these
fine young voters-in-training to
the mansion while I introduce their
teacher to the Chairman of the
Department of Education?

CLYDE

C'mon kids! Who wants to sit in the
limousine?

THE SCHOOLCHILDREN follow Clyde, who lights a cigarette and
walks out of the Capitol.

CUT TO:

INT. STATE CAPITOL - PANTRY - MOMENTS LATER

Governor Edwards and Miss Ardoin are in the pantry. Her dress
is hiked up to her waist as the Governor buries himself
inside of her.

MISS ARDOIN

Oh, Governor!

CUT TO:

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - A LITTLE LATER

Elaine is walking through the gardens with Dan Halpern and
Sonya.

ELAINE

*Ma cher, re-decorating this old
house was quite the chore, I tell
you!*

Daniel and Sonya chuckle because they have to.

SONYA

Mrs. Edwards, can I get another
shot of you? Maybe this time in
front of the fountain?

Elaine proudly positions herself in front of the fountain. Behind her, we see a uniformed maid ORA DEE (20's), running towards them as Sonya snaps a few photos.

ORA DEE
Mrs. Edwards! Mrs. Edwards! You
have a telephone call, Mrs.
Edwards!

ELAINE
(sing-songy/faux polite)
Not now, Ora Dee!

ORA DEE
But they say say its very
important.

ELAINE
Oh, well. Duty calls!

Elaine walks briskly towards the mansion with Ora Dee in tow. As she gets closer, she begins to trot. Daniel and Sonya remain in the garden.

SONYA
Jesus, she's driving me crazy!

DANIEL
Really? I dunno. She seems sweet.

SONYA
You're so naive. That woman would
kill a baby if it got in her way.

DANIEL
Maybe so, but I don't see that part
of her.

SONYA
It's a superessed, toxic female
energy. She oozes it.

DANIEL
Well, we have another problem: we
need to get her and the Governor
together for some photographs. I
feel like we already got enough
today to write the piece.

SONYA
The Cajun Prince? He's gonna keep
us waiting for days, I assure you.

As Sonya speaks, she notices Mr. Malveaux behind the livery. She gestures towards him with a nod of her head.

SONYA (CONT'D)
In the meantime, there's a story
for you.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Clyde is at the front door, ushering the SCHOOL CHILDREN out of the mansion and towards a yellow SCHOOL BUS that is pulling up.

CLYDE
Alright, kids. Back to the bus.

Through the open door we see Miss Ardoin come down the bus' steps to greet children. She waves to Clyde as he closes the door. Once shut, Clyde leans against the door and removes a silver flask from his coat pocket. He takes a swig and sighs.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Daniel is talking to Mr. Malveaux while Sonya snaps photos.

DANIEL
How many years have you been here?

MALVEAUX
This my third administration right
here.

DANIEL
Damn. That's a lot of time. Mind if
I ask you a few questions about the
Mansion?

Daniel pulls out the pack of Pall Malls and offers one to Malveaux, who looks around to see they're alone before taking a cigarette. He then nods affirmatively at Daniel.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I'm curious, where do you and the
other prisoners bunk?

MALVEAUX
There be a old slave quarter back
behind the cistern. The ladies stay
up in the mansion on the third
floor.

DANIEL

Unbelievable. May I ask you what
you were sent to Angola for?

MALVEAUX

For life, sir.

DANIEL

You don't have to sir me, Curtis. I
meant, what was the crime?

MALVEAUX

Murder, sir.

Sonya stops photographing and jumps in the conversation.

SONYA

Were you guilty?

MALVEAUX

Oh, yes'm. I was guilty. I am
guilty.

DANIEL

Then how is it that you're on
furlough at the governor's mansion?

MALVEAUX

Oh, this ain't no furlough, sir.
Technically I'm very much still a
prisoner at Angola.

SONYA

Curtis, I have to ask: why don't
you just escape?

MALVEAUX

I gots people, ma'am. Ain't nowhere
I could go that they wouldn't find
me. But if for some reason I made
it hard for 'em, they'd for sure
hunt my people, and they know I
know that.

SONYA

Curtis, who was the victim?

MALVEAUX

My wife, ma'am.

DANIEL

Why'd you do it?

MALVEAUX

She beat on me with a baseball bat while I was knocked out loaded one morning. I came to and took the bat and hit her upside the head with it. I wasn't tryin' to kill her, I didn't know what was happening 'til it was over, sir.

There is a pause as Malveaux seems to be reliving the fateful night. Sonya lifts her camera and waits for the right moment. She snaps a photo.

PHOTO OF CURTIS

Extreme closeup of Malveaux's face. Sonya's PHOTOGRAPH magically captures the essence of his anguish.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Clyde walks into the study and finds Elaine just as she hangs up the phone.

ELAINE

Goodness! Don't sneak up on me like that, Clyde! You scared the living daylights outta me!

CLYDE

I wasn't sneaking up on you.

Elaine steps towards Clyde, reaches inside his coat pocket and pulls the flask out. She takes a good swing and returns it to Clyde, who slugs another shot as well.

ELAINE

Where have you and Eddie been for the past two days?

CLYDE

We were wherever he told you we were.

Clyde looks out the window and notices Malveaux talking to Daniel and Sonya.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Who are they?

ELAINE

That's the Life Magazine folks.
They're doing a piece on me and
Edwin.

CLYDE

And you let them talk to the staff?
Are you outta your mind?

ELAINE

It's just Malveaux, Clyde. He's not
going to say anything...

Clyde rolls his eyes behind Elaine's back.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

...but if you like you can break
them up. I have to go upstairs and
pack.

CLYDE

Where're you going?

ELAINE

Oh, you don't know? T.A. Thompson
was killed in a car accident this
morning....We're headed to
Washington, Clyde. Texaco is
loaning us their jet and all.

CLYDE

I know about Senator Thompson. I
just didn't know we were heading up
there.

ELAINE

Well, I'll let Edwin tell you the
rest of the exciting news then.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - LIVERY - MOMENTS LATER

Clyde warily approaches.

CLYDE

(to Malveaux)

Fire up the Caddy and pull her
around front, Malveaux.

MALVEAUX

Yes sir, Mista Clyde.

Malveaux does as he's told. Clyde stands and stairs at Daniel
and Sonya until one of them finally speaks.

DANIEL

Hi. I'm Daniel Halpern. Life Magazine.

CLYDE

(ignores Daniel)

Yeah, I'm gonna need that roll of film, lady. And from here on out neither one of y'all talk to any staff members without the press liaison present.

Sonya moves to object, but Daniel interrupts her.

SONYA

But...

DANIEL

It's okay, Sonya. Give the gentlemen the film.

(to Clyde)

And you are?

CLYDE

Clyde Vidrine, Governor Edward's Sargent-at-Arms.

DANIEL

And how might we find the press liaison?

CLYDE

I'm not sure. But let me know when you find one, cause we sure could use somebody like that around here.

Sonya hands her film to Clyde and shoots Daniel a dirty look for capitulating.

SONYA

(to Clyde)

Don't lose that roll, asshole.

Clyde is taken aback. After a pause, he grins at Sonya as we...

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - FOYER - A LITTLE LATER

Edwin Edwards enters the grand foyer. He is greeted by several servants and responds warmly to each.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - SITTING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clyde, Daniel, and Sonya are seated, facing each other. Edwin enters.

EDWIN EDWARDS

Mon Dieu, Clyde! I've been looking all over for you! Go pack a bag, we're heading to D.C. in a half hour.

CLYDE

Governor. This is the gang from Life Magazine here to do a puff piece on you and the Mrs.

Edwin shakes Daniel's hand.

DANIEL

Nice to meet you, sir. I'm Daniel Halpern from Life Magazine.

EDWIN EDWARDS

Well it sure is an honor to have y'all here.

Eddies sizes up Sonya before extending his hand.

SONYA

And I'm Sonya Cole.

EDWIN EDWARDS

The photographer?

Sonya is immediately flattered.

SONYA

Why, yes. You've actually heard of me?

EDWIN EDWARDS

Aw, mon fille. I look at your pictures every week. That one of the one-armed logger fellow up in Washington state? That almost makes me cry, I tell you.

Clyde looks at the Governor with disbelief. Sonya gushes as Elaine walks into the room. Eddie senses Elaine behind him, twirls and greets her with a kiss and an embrace. He begins to hum a ballad and the two begin to dance slowly. Eddie twirls Elaine, then dips her and kisses her.

ELAINE

Oh, Eddie!

CLYDE

(to Daniel and Sonya)

Well, I guess we're heading off to Washington. We should only be a day or two, right Governor?

EDWIN EDWARDS

Oh, I don't know how long this will take. But we do have a lot of state business to attend to here in Baton Rouge, so we'll likely make it *toot suite*.

CLYDE

(to Daniel and Sonya)

So I guess it's smarter for you two to stay here while we run up to the Capitol. We can pick up where we left off once we get back in a day or two?

DANIEL

Um, well we could do that, I suppose.

EDWIN EDWARDS

Oh, *ma non!* They got to come wit us Clyde. This is going to be a very exciting time for the readers of Life Magazine.

CLYDE

I feel like there's something you're not telling me, Governor.

EDWIN EDWARDS

(to Sonya)

Well, you already know I spoke with Senator Breaux about the tragic death of Senator Thompson. Awful, awful tragedy. Especially for his constituents down in Avoyelles Parish. The Senator was up in Washington looking out for them farmers and oil field workers. No, as sad as I am for the Thompson family, it concerns me even more that the good people of Avoyelles Parish don't have someone in Washington representing their needs.

(MORE)

EDWIN EDWARDS (CONT'D)

They're sitting on a lot oil down there, and we all know the federal folks will do everything they can to screw them out of their land rights...

Clyde interrupts the Governor.

CLYDE

Um, Governor? These folks are reporters from *Life Magazine*!

EDWIN EDWARDS

Well, I know that Clyde. Anyway, there is a very, very important bill that was to be voted on in Congress today. The sponsor of that bill was our Senator Thompson. Now, with his terrible, untimely death, the Congress is adjourning for a day, by which time I will by law have had to name an interim successor to Senator Thompson's office.

CLYDE

And you're sure you want to talk about this in front of the press?

EDWIN EDWARDS

Oh, I love the *Life Magazine*, Clyde. Been reading it most of my life. In fact, I think that Daniel and Sonya here ought to come with us to Washington to document this historic occasion. It'll only take a day. We'll be back here in time for supper tomorrow night.

SONYA

We'd very much like to do that, Governor.

Clyde shoots Sonya a look.

CLYDE

I don't think there's enough room on the plane for all of us.

EDWIN EDWARDS

Oh, yes. That's true.

(beat)

Good thing we're not taking our plane!

(MORE)

EDWIN EDWARDS (CONT'D)

The Texaco boys have loaned us their jet, so we have plenty of room. We should bring Malveaux with us, too. And maybe we should have Chef put some ducks in an ice chest. President Nixon ought to have bowl of duck gumbo, don't you think, Elaine?

Elaine nods her approval. She's focused on her husband, but he's focused on Sonya.

EXT. BATON ROUGE TARMAC - DUSK

Aerial shot of the sun as it sets over the Atchafalaya. The camera slowly pushes in on a motorcade as it pulls up to a jet parked on the tarmac. There is a limosine already waiting as the motorcade arrives. Governor Edwards jumps out of the Cadillac and walks towards the limo. Clyde looks confused but follows the Governor as Elaine, Daniel and Sonya slowly walk towards the jet. Malveaux removes the bags from the Caddy's trunk. Governor Edwards reaches the limo and taps on the window. The door quickly opens and TONG SUNG PARK emerges. He is not happy.

EDWIN EDWARDS
Tong Sung! It's so good to see you!

Edwin gives Tong Sung a hug, but Tong Sung does not return the embrace. Meanwhile, an UNDERCOVER FED pulls up in an Oldsmobile. He parks off of the tarmac, pulls out a long-lens camera, and takes a series of PHOTOS of the Governor hugging Tong Sung Park.

TONG SUNG PARK
I just flew here from Washington D.C.! I came here and you not here. I wait and wait. Now you call and say come to airport we go to Washington D.C.? I just come from Washington D.C.!

In the background Elaine, Daniel, Sonya and Malveaux are going up the stairs to the jet, while simultaneously rubbernecking at the screaming Korean.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS
Awfully sorry about that. I can only imagine your frustration. I do have some very good news regarding your trip, though. But first, I want you to meet my number two, Clyde Vidrine.

Clyde sticks out his hand but Tong Sung just bows. Clyde drops his hand and awkwardly bows back.

INT. - TEXACO JET - A LITTLE LATER

The plane is in flight. Sonya and Daniel sit on a sofa, quizzing Tong Sung Park, who is seated next to Elaine on another sofa. Eddie sits in a captain's chair. Clyde stands nearby, a drink in hand.

DANIEL

How did you two meet?

Tong Sung Park sips champagne. His mood is much improved.

TONG SUNG PARK

I shot his plane out of the sky!

Everyone laughs.

EDWIN EDWARDS

Well, now. He did shoot my plane, but I didn't crash it. I made an emergency landing right there on the Korean Army's runway.

TONG SUNG PARK

And Within three weeks of being our prisoner, Captain Eddie won everyone's money at playing cards! He used the money to throw a party for all the soldiers.

Everyone laughs some more.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS

What can I say? It was Mardi Gras!

Even more laughter. Sonya is captivated by The Governor and he knows it. Still, he plays to Elaine.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Did you know that they have crawfish in Korea? They come right out of the rice paddies. They're a little small, but they're not half bad!

Even more laughter. Eddie gets serious.

EDWIN EDWARDS

If it wasn't for Tong Sung here, I
don't believe I would have survived
that ordeal.

TONG SUNG PARK

What ordeal? You had the whole
place in the palm of your hand!

EXT. - TEXACO JET - NIGHT

The jet is in flight. We hear more laughter as we...

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - MORNING

TIMESTAMP: 10:00 A.M.

Elaine, Clyde, Tong Sung Park, Daniel, and Sonya are all seated in the President's waiting room. Governor Edwards leans against Rose Mary's desk. She's laughing at something he said. The phone buzzes and we hear Nixon's voice.

PRESIDENT NIXON

Send them in, Rose Mary.

Rose Mary rises and opens the door to the Oval Office.

ROSE MARY

Governor Edwards, Mr. President.

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

President Nixon rises from his desk as Edwards and his entourage enter.

PRESIDENT NIXON

(to Elaine)

Please, let me be the first to
address you in your new role,
Senator Edwards.

Clyde literally gasps. Sonya snaps a photo as Nixon shakes Elaine's hand. TONG SUNG is in the background of the frame. Proof that an agent of the South Korean government is in the Oval Office.

ELAINE

Thank you so very much, Mr.
President.

Nixon turns and shakes Edwin's hand.

PRESIDENT NIXON

Only a coonass like you could pull
something like this off, Edwin.
Appointing your own wife to the
United States Senate? I must admit,
it is a helluva move.

EDWIN EDWARDS

You better hope she doesn't
filibuster in that Senate, Mr.
President. Trust me, she can talk
forever!

Everyone laughs. Nixon calls to Rose Mary, who is still
standing at the open door.

PRESIDENT NIXON

Rose Mary, could you please send in
Senator Agnew.

Rose Mary walks across the Oval Office to another door. She
opens it and Spiro Agnew enters. Agnew shakes hands with
Edwin and Elaine as ROSE MARY hands NIXON a Bible.

PRESIDENT NIXON (CONT'D)

Alright. Let's do this.

Elaine faces the President and puts her hand on the Bible.
SONYA takes PHOTOS throughout the Oath of Office. We
INTERCUT between the scene, Sonya's still photos, and
newsreel footage of American plight circa 1971.

Over NEWSREEL FOOTAGE of Viet Nam destruction.

PRESIDENT NIXON (CONT'D)

Repeat after me, please: I do
solemnly swear that I will support
and defend the Constitution of the
United States against all enemies,
foreign and domestic.

Over NEWSREEL FOOTAGE of war protesters in front of The White
House.

ELAINE

...that I will bear true faith and
allegiance to the same;
(MORE)

ELAINE (CONT'D)
that I take this obligation freely,
without mental reservation or
purpose of evasion; and...

Over NEWSREEL FOOTAGE of Cesar Chavez and The Salad Bowl Strike.

PRESIDENT NIXON
...and that I will well and
faithfully discharge the duties of
the office on which I am about to
enter: So help me God.

Over NEWSREEL FOOTAGE of Apollo 14's Alan Sheppard chipping a golfball on the surface of the Moon.

ELAINE
...So help me God.

QUICK CUT MONTAGE:

- 1)Photos of Agnew and Elaine;
- 2)Nixon, Edwin and Elaine;
- 3)Agnew, Cylde and Tong Sung Park;
- 4)Nixon and Daniel Halpern;
- 5)Nixon, Edwin, Elaine and Tong Sung Park

CUT TO:

EXT. CONGRESS - THE RAYBURN BUILDING - LATER

TIMESTAMP: 1:15 P.M.

Edwin, Clyde and Tong Sung Park are walking up the steps.

CUT TO:

INT. THE RAYBURN BUILDING - SENATOR PARKMAN'S OFFICE -
MOMENTS LATER.

EDWIN, CLYDE, TONG SUNG PARK and SENATOR PARKMAN sit in
wingback chairs around the fireplace.

SENATOR PARKMAN
Congratulations are in order. I
hear you just appointed your wife
to the Senate.

EDWIN EDWARDS

Temporarily. Until the people can
elect their own.

SENATOR PARKMAN

I heard a story recently about the
votng machines down in Louisiana.
Seems some of the older machines
were sold to Mexico, and when the
people in Tijuana went to vote for
president, you won!

EDWIN EDWARDS

Now, Senator. That's a very funny
joke, but you know I'd never have
to rig an election. Not with this
smile. But speaking of stories,
here's one I think you're gonna
like: We like to grow rice down in
Louisiana. So much rice, in fact,
that we can't consume it all. And I
don't just mean 'we' as the state
of Louisiana. I mean that we grow
more rice per annum than all of
America can consume. And we have a
lot left over. Now, what are we
supposed to with all that surplus
of extra rice?

CLYDE

Hey, I have an idea! Tong Sung,
don't y'all eat a lot of rice in
Korea?

TONG SUNG PARK

Yes. Very much rice. In fact, we
need to import nearly \$40 Million
worth of rice every year.

SENATOR PARKMAN is enjoying the show. He lights a cigar and
smiles.

EDWIN EDWARDS

Now, why doesn't Louisiana just
sell it's rice to Korea, you ask?
Well, it's not that easy. Several
other, more Republican states also
have a rice surplus, and they wanna
sell their rice to our Korean
friends. And they're considerably
undercutting our prices!

SENATOR PARKMAN
You don't say.

EDWIN EDWARDS
Now why don't they just buy the cheaper rice from Mississippi or wherever? Well, because Tong Sung here's president wants some old military hardware. He's looking to make a deal, see? Now Clyde, what was our budget shortfall this year?

CLYDE
Right at \$40 Million, Governor.

EDWIN EDWARDS
See? There's that number again!

SENATOR PARKMAN
I still can't get used to hearing you called Governor, Edwin. You'll always be the cocky junior Congressman in my mind....So, what can I do for the great state of Louisiana today?

Edwin nods to Tong Sung Park, who removes from his jacket a photo of a U.S. F4 Phantom fighter jet in flight.

EDWIN EDWARDS
They need 3 of these things here.
And guess how much they're willing to spend on them?

SENATOR PARKMAN
\$40 million?

EDWIN EDWARDS
Bingo!

Edwin reaches over and grabs a cigar from the Senator's stash and lights it.

EDWIN EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Now, all we need is the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee to give the go ahead.

SENATOR PARKMAN nods discreetly but affirmatively.

SENATOR PARKMAN
Could you folks leave Edwin and I to talk for a moment?

INT. THE RAYBURN BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

TIMESTAMP: 2:30 P.M.

Edwin is walking up the hallway, greeting SECRETARIAL WELL-WISHERS and EX-COLLEAGUES. Clyde and Tong Sung trail the Governor.

INT. THE RAYBURN BUILDING - OFFICE OF SEN. OTTO PASSMAN - MOMENTS LATER

Edwin barges in the door with Clyde and Tong Sun Park in tow. Congressional aides busy about. A blonde secretary, DOLORES (late 20's), sits behind a desk. The Senator's door is closed.

EDWIN EDWARDS

Delores!

Delores jumps up and runs towards Edwin. She gives him the embrace of an excited ex-lover, catches herself, then releases and straightens his lapel.

DELORES

Look at you, all Gubernatorial!

(to Clyde)

And hello, Clyde!

CLYDE

Hello, Dolores. Is Senator Passman available?

DELORES

He's in with the recently
inaugurated Senator from Louisiana!
But I'm sure they would-welcome the
interruption.

Delores opens the door to reveal Elaine and SENATOR OTTO PASSMAN (60s) standing by the fireplace viewing an old photograph that we cannot see.

SENATOR PASSMAN

Governor!

Edwin enters. He is without his usual cordiality. One look at his face and Senator Passman can tell something is up.

SENATOR PASSMAN (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

EDWIN EDWARDS

Elaine? Can you tell Otto why I'm
so upset?

ELAINE

Well now, unlike these girls
nowadays, I never really wanted to
be liberated from gardening and
decorating and raising a family.
But now that I'm here I suppose I
can test my political aptitude.
Hmmm. Let's see... Edwin's been
working very hard to secure the
Korean rice import contract. He had
a meeting with Senator Parkman this
morning. So I assume something went
awry there.

EDWIN EDWARDS

You're goddamned right it did.

Otto gestures for everyone to take a seat. Once seated,
Governor Edwards continues his rant.

EDWIN EDWARDS (CONT'D)

We need that rice sale, Otto. And
we got the ok for a swap of some
old military hardware from House
Appropriations, but they're holding
the Koreans up for ransom! They
want \$40 Million for some old, out-
of-date, used-up airplanes. The
Korean's can't afford to buy the
rice and the planes for that kind
of money. The whole damned rice
deal just doubled to \$80 Million
dollars! What the hell are we gonna
do, Otto?

Senator Passman shakes his head.

SENATOR PASSMAN

There is nothing I can do on the
airplane front, Edwin. You know
that.

There is a silence in the room. Elaine speaks up.

ELAINE

Otto, don't you chair the Foreign
Operations Subcommittee?

SENATOR PASSMAN

Yes, but it's basically just a food-for-peace program.

ELAINE

Right. The PL-480 Food Credit Program. Low-interest loans to foreign nations to purchase food supplies. Those loans are repayable in something like 40 years, I believe?

Senator Passman sees what Elaine is trying to do. And he likes it.

SENATOR PASSMAN

If ever.

ELAINE

If ever. Right. So, it stands to reason that Korea's rice purchase could benefit from a program like that.

EDWIN EDWARDS

I don't know, Elaine. That isn't food-for-peace. It's more like food-for-planes!

Everyone laughs. The fix is in.

SENATOR PASSMAN

Governor, I must say that the Congressional Appointment of your wife might be the smartest thing you've ever done.

(to Tong Sung Park)

I assume you're government is in cahoots with these ne'er-do-wells?

Tong Sung Park nods affirmatively.

SENATOR PASSMAN (CONT'D)

Well, it looks like you're about to get a lot of free rice.

EDWIN EDWARDS

Well, not free. You still owe my state \$40 Million dollars.

TONG SUNG PARK
You will get it as soon as we
receive our \$40 Million dollar rice
loan from your federal government!
And those three old airplanes!

The group snickers and laughs. Governor Edwards shakes
Senator Passman's hand as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - PAYPHONE

TIMESTAMP: 4:30 P.M.

Daniel Halpern is on the payphone.

INT. OFFICES OF LIFE MAGAZINE - CONTINUOUS

Editor FRANKLIN LONGWELL (50's) sits at his desk in a large office. He answers the phone.

FRANKLIN LONGWELL
Longwell.

He listens for a moment.

FRANKLIN LONGWELL (CONT'D)
Go with him. I'll send another team
to cover his wife.

EXT. 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

Daniel hangs up the payphone. He doesn't look happy. Sonya walks out of a nearby coffee shop with two cups of joe. She hands one to Daniel.

SONYA
What'd he say?

DANIEL
He wants us to go back to Baton
Rouge.

Sonya seems to like the news, but didn't expect it.

SONYA
What? But the story is here! It's
Mrs. Smith Goes To Washington, for
chrissakes!

DANIEL
Maybe.

Just then a limousine pulls up. Malveaux jumps out and retrieves Daniel and Sonya's bags as we

CUT TO:

INT. TEXACO JET - IN FLIGHT - NIGHT

TIMESTAMP: 8:30 P.M.

We STEADICAM slowly through the jet. It is dimly lit and we see glimpses of Malveaux sleeping in a chair, Clyde and Tong Sung Park playing gin rummy, Daniel asleep on a sofa. The camera pushes further to the rear of the plane. We hear the muffled sounds of lovemaking.

INT. TEXACO JET - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Governor Edwards is supine on the bed. Sonya straddles him, writhing in orgasmic ecstasy.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOUISIANA STATE CAPITOL - ESTABLISHING

GARDNERS tend the grounds of the Capitol.

INT. STATE CAPITOL - CLYDE'S OFFICE - DAYTIME

Clyde walks through the ante room of his secretary, DORIS (20s, attractive). He stops to greet her.

DORIS
Hey, stranger!

She comes out from the behind the desk and Clyde dips down so that she can kiss him on the cheek.

CLYDE
Hey.

Doris returns to her desk.

DORIS
Y'all been all over the place, I hear.

CLYDE

Yup. It's been quite a week.

Doris hands Clyde a stack of phone messages.

DORIS

Well, there's a lot of mail and packages and things in there waiting for you!

INT. CLYDE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

There is a mountain of papers and boxes on and around his desk. In the corner sits a large pallet of electronic equipment, which we recognize from the Customs Officials' search of the Korean Air jet earlier.

CLYDE

What's this?

Clyde opens one of the packages. It has a photo of a digital clock radio on it. The text on the box is all in Japanese. Clyde opens it and pulls out stack after stack of \$100 bills.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Hmph. Campaign donation?

He opens another box, this one larger and bearing the image of a toaster oven. It too is filled with stacks of \$100 bills. He drags the pallet over to a large safe and stacks the boxes inside, not even bothering to open them all. He closes the door to the safe, pauses, then opens it again. Clyde takes a few stacks of cash from the one open box and shoves them in his pockets, then he closes the safe.

EXT. ATCHAFALAYA RIVER BASIN - LATE EVENING

A beautiful Atchafalaya sunset. Smoke on the water. Herons. Gators. Dusk on the bayou.

MUSIC: The L.S.U. Tigers Marching Band plays the TIGER FIGHT SONG.

EXT. TIGER STADIUM - NIGHT

Some 80,000 fans are entering Death Valley for the L.S.U. Vs. Alabama football game. All of the students are wearing jackets and ties, even the hippies.

The Governor's MOTORCADE beeps through the crowd and enters the stadium. The crowd CHEERS the motorcade.

INT. TIGER STADIUM - SIDELINES

Governor Edwards is jogging up the sideline. The crowd goes berserk whenever the Governor raises his arms. Clyde is trotting behind him, trying to keep up.

INT. TIGER STADIUM - GOVERNOR'S BOX - A LITTLE LATER

Clyde and Edwin are at the front of the box, which is filled with campaign-contributors and attractive young women. Daniel and Sonya are soaking it all in. All eyes are on the game, which is in full swing. Clyde leans into Edwin's ear and whispers...

CLYDE

Looks like the payment for the rice deal came in early.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS

You don't say.

The camera widens and we see that there is a box filled with Alabama fans right next to the Governor's Box.

INT. TIGER STADIUM - FIELD - CONTINUOUS

An Alabama WIDE RECEIVER catches a pass and scores.

INT. TIGER STADIUM - SCOREBOARD - CONTINUOUS

The clock is ticking down from 1:15 left in the fourth quarter. The scoreboard reads "Alabama - 21" and "LSU - 14"

INT. TIGER STADIUM - GOVERNOR'S BOX - CONTINUOUS

Clyde looks worried. Suddenly, Senator Parkman of Alabama sticks his head around the visitor's box and taunts The Governor.

SENATOR PARKMAN

Roll Tide, boys!

GOVERNOR EDWARDS

It might be too soon to celebrate,
Senator!

Governor Edwards gestures towards the field as LSU returns the kick off and scores. The players line up for a two point conversion.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS
(to Clyde, discreetly)
That money isn't for the rice,
Clyde. It's our brokerage fee.

Clyde nods. Holy shit.

CLYDE
Remember the girl we planted in
John Volz' office down in New
Orleans? She tells me that she's
been hearing your name a lot at the
Federal Prosecutor's Office. I
don't think we should keep all that
cash around.

The Tigers score the conversion. The crowd counts the clock
down to victory as the place goes wild, Governor Edwards
pulls Clyde closer.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS
That's why the package was sent to
your office. Find somewhere safe
for it. And make sure Senator
Parkman sees his cut.

Well-wishers are clamoring for the Governor's attention now.
He breaks free of Clyde, but turns to holler something to him
as people high five and hug around him.

GOVERNOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)
And Clyde? Don't worry too much...
(gestures towards field)
Cajuns always love a comeback!

The Governor becomes surrounded by the crowd. Clyde looks out
towards the field, pulls a flask from his coat pocket and
takes a swig.

ROLL CREDITS.

THE END