

McCarthy

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FADE IN:

CLOSE on a pair of piercing blue eyes, cold. Shifting.

Their owner - SENATOR JOSEPH McCARTHY, 42.

He gazes into the distance, the noise of A DEBATE rattling off in the distance.

He's disinterested, weary.

PULL BACK SLOWLY to reveal the enormity of...

INT. RUSSELL SENATE BUILDING, SENATE FLOOR- DAY - 1950

...where the Senator sits alongside dozens of colleagues. Anonymous.

CHATTER fills the air. It leads us to --

INT. RUSSELL SENATE BUILDING, LOBBY- DAY

Bustling. A throng of reporters crowd around SENATOR WHERRY, a strong, iron jawed man.

He entertains their queries casually. Accustomed to this type of attention.

McCarthy gazes at the spectacle. Envious.

CUT TO:

A lonely glass of bourbon. An ICE CUBE drops into it violently.

INT. APARTMENT- NIGHT

The steady voice of a NEWSCASTER blares from the television.

Joe sits on a couch, bourbon in hand. At his side -- a plate with a half eaten sandwich.

On the TELEVISION -

NEWSCASTER
...and was met with resistance from
President Truman.

A pause...the broadcaster shifting gears. Joe rises, walks to the television.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The House Committee on un-American
Activities will resume its work on
Monday.

He holds the channel dial, prepared to change it. Holds for a moment.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
This will mark the first session of
the year which will mark what
Chairman Wood is calling "our most
important work yet."

Back to the TV -

STOCK FOOTAGE OF CHAIRMAN WOOD, presiding over a hearing.
He's animated, motions angrily at a witness.

MCCARTHY (V.O.)
We don't have anything.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- DAY

The room is dark, blinds closed. Joe leans against a makeshift bar adjacent to his desk.

Across from him is DON SURINE, mid 30s, a friend first and colleague second. Generally optimistic.

MCCARTHY
Immigration.

DON
Without the Puerto Ricans,
Milwaukee might be a ghost town.

MCCARTHY
What about gun control?

DON
Morse beat you to that one.

MCCARTHY
What's left? What's out there?

DON
We don't need "an issue". We're
doing fine.

MCCARTHY
Fine?

DON
Yeah, fine. What's wrong with fine?

MCCARTHY
Fine gets us unseated in eighteen
months. Fine doesn't get us out
there.

DON
Out there...?

MCCARTHY
On the radio, on television.

DON
We'll get there.

MCCARTHY
When?

A brief silence that serves as an answer to Joe's question.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
What if we reached out to Wood?
Tried to get a seat on his
committee.

DON
We'd have to take a number and wait
in line.

MCCARTHY
They love him.

DON
And they'll love you. In time.

Joe shakes his head, discouraged.

INT. HUAC HEARING- DAY

A spectacle. The room is packed to the brim. Joe sits amongst a group of interested spectators. The buzz in the crowd is palpable.

CONGRESSMAN WOOD reigns above the hearing. He's addressing a SUSPECT, a nervous looking man in his late 20's.

WOOD
Are you a threat to this country?

The suspect is silent, humiliated.

WOOD (CONT'D)
This committee demands an answer.

ON MCCARTHY - watching carefully.

CUT TO:

A prestigious GOLD PLATED LOGO...

Georgia. "The Empire State of the South". We're in...

INT. CONGRESSMAN WOOD'S OFFICE- DAY

The pictures that adorn the office reflect a shrine to the Congressman's state...and to the Congressman himself.

The Georgian plains. Wood with President Truman.

The campus of UGA. Wood with Sinatra.

Oh, and there's MARLENE, late 50's, hunched over her desk.

Across from her sits DANIEL, a fresh faced 23 year old with patience that would confound Confucious.

Joe approaches the desk.

MARLENE
Name.

MCCARTHY
Joe McCarthy.

Marlene flips through an appointment book.

MARLENE
I don't see your name, sir.

MCCARTHY
I saw the Chairman this morning. He told me...

MARLENE
There's nothing here. You can wait if you'd like.

MCCARTHY
Check again. Senator Joe McCarthy.

This has no effect on Marlene.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Just ask Wood.

MARLENE
Congressman Wood is on a call at
the moment.

MCCARTHY
I'll wait.

Joe reluctantly takes a seat adjacent to Daniel.

DANIEL
Take a number, sir.

MCCARTHY
You've been waiting?

DANIEL
Yes.

MCCARTHY
Ah.

A fleeting silence.

DANIEL
17 days.

MCCARTHY
Excuse me?

DANIEL
That's how long it's been.

MCCARTHY
And you haven't --

DANIEL
No.

MCCARTHY
I hope you didn't have an
appointment.

Daniel shakes his head.

Joe surveys him with curiosity; notices a paper in his hand.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
What's that?

Daniel hands it over - it's his resume...sterling, of course.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Four years at Marquette?
Impressive. You're familiar with
Senator Wood's work?

DANIEL
I wouldn't say familiar.

MCCARTHY
What would you say?

DANIEL
Name a date.

MCCARTHY
June 10th.

The wheels are turning in Daniel's head.

DANIEL
Monday June 13th. Docket number
801306-004. Interrogation of Albert
Mills and Donna Lattimer.

MCCARTHY
Impressive.

DANIEL
(staring at Wood's office)
You think he'll say so?

MCCARTHY
I'd hope so.
(pause)
Why Wood?

DANIEL
He's not afraid.

MCCARTHY
I suppose not.

Joe leans in to Daniel, covertly --

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
What do you say you let me pick
your brain over a drink. I'm
buying.

DANIEL
No thanks. I have a good feeling
about today.

MCCARTHY
You think he'll see you?

DANIEL
I can't. Sorry.

MCCARTHY
One drink and I'll make sure he
gets your resume.

DANIEL
Doesn't exactly seem like he's
dying to meet with you either. With
all due respect.

MCCARTHY
Maybe not, but we've got a caucus
on Thursday. I'll make sure he gets
it then.

ON DANIEL -- slowly bending...

DANIEL (V.O.)
That's not the problem.

INT. ANONYMOUS BAR- DAY

Daniel, a few drinks deep, is animated. McCarthy, on the other hand, seems much less enthused. The conversation hasn't been very productive.

MCCARTHY
I know, it's Hiss. Listen, I should
be heading out.

DANIEL
There's one place he hasn't cleaned
up.

Joe rises, takes his coat in hand. He flips through his wallet for cash.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
That's how I'll pitch it - I know
what's next.

MCCARTHY
And what might that be?

Joe throws a ten dollar bill on the table. Begins to put his coat on.

DANIEL
The State Department.

MCCARTHY
Oh yeah?

DANIEL
57 of them. Still working.

MCCARTHY
How'd you come up that one?

DANIEL
I didn't come up with anything. The
FBI did it for me.

Joe stops...slowly takes his seat.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
57 names. That's what Rob Lee
found. It's all in the records.

MCCARTHY
What records? Where?

DANIEL
The House Appropriations Committee.

MCCARTHY
You're sure?

DANIEL
Case file 104963.

MCCARTHY
What do you say we get another
round?

INT. READING ROOM, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS- NIGHT

Eerily quiet. Less than a dozen readers populate the room.
Among them, Joe, who flips through a large file rabidly.

He turns page after page, searching for something. No luck.

A moment passes. More pages turned.

And finally...Joe stops. Moves his face closer to the page.
Concern washes over his face. It's fleeting.

He keeps reading, can't contain his smile.

CUT TO:

A discarded piece of YELLOW PAPER strewn on the floor. As we take in more of our surroundings, we see dozens of discarded pages in --

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- NIGHT

Joe scribbles on a legal pad. Drops his pen and rises from his seat.

He moves to the bar, pours himself a drink. He raises it, clinks his glass against an empty one that rests in front of him.

A toast of sorts.

He moves back to his desk. Picks up the phone. Dials.

MCCARTHY

Did I wake you?

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT

Don sits at the edge of the bed, pops a cigarette in his mouth.

At his side, a restless BRUNETTE. She looks at him, incredulous.

DON

Yeah.

MCCARTHY (V.O.)

I'm sorry.

DON

No you're not. What's going on?

MCCARTHY (V.O.)

I need you to come in.

Don rises, grabs a shirt from his closet. Begins to button it.

DON

What's wrong?

MCCARTHY

I've got it.

DON

Got what?

MCCARTHY
Our issue.

DON
Give me twenty.

Don hangs up the phone. The brunette shakes her head, far from happy. He pretends to not notice.

MCCARTHY (V.O.)
Where do we go next?

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- SUNRISE

Don peruses an appointment book. Joe paces around the office, very excitable.

DON
West Virginia. Should draw two hundred.

MCCARTHY
Press?

DON
The locals. I can try and pull some strings with Lott. Maybe get Reuters down there.

MCCARTHY
Good. Who else?

DON
That's all I've got.

MCCARTHY
Call in some favors.

DON
Not many favors left.

MCCARTHY
Better than none.

A roll of the eyes from Don. Joe doesn't understand how difficult this is.

DON
Are you sure this is the one?

ON MCCARTHY -- a faint smile. Wavering, perhaps...but confident enough.

CUT TO:

A banner. Large, bland...as if little care has been placed into imp its appearance.

THE OHIO COUNTY WOMAN'S REPUBLICAN CLUB.

It hangs in the...

INT. WHEELING TOWN HALL- DAY

A room set up for three hundred that probably seats a little more than half of that at the moment.

Joe stands at the podium, clears his throat. A palpable silence.

He glances to the back of the room. Don stands next to a reporter.

MCCARTHY

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight as we celebrate the one hundred forty-first birthday of one of the greatest men in American history, I would like to be able to talk about what a glorious day today is in the history of the world. I would like to be able to speak of peace and of world-wide disarmament. These would be truly appropriate things to be able to mention as we celebrate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln. It saddens me to say that I cannot do so.

McCarthy examines the room...nothing. Don and the reporter exchange words.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

This is not a period of peace. This is a time of "the cold war." This is a time when all the world is split into two vast, increasingly hostile armed camps-a time of a great armament race. Six years ago, we outnumbered the Soviets 9 to 1. Today, it is 8 to 5 in their favor.

(MORE)

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

This indicates the swiftness of the tempo of Communist victories and American defeats in the cold war.

As one of our outstanding historical figures once said, "When a great democracy is destroyed, it will not be from enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within."

And now interest is beginning to pique. What is he talking about?

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our powerful enemy has sent men to invade our shores...but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. Those that have betrayed us have had all the benefits that this nation has to offer...the finest homes and the finest education. The finest jobs in government. This is glaringly true in the State Department. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been most traitorous.

McCarthy pauses for dramatic effect. He's commanding the crowds attention and he knows it.

He picks a piece of paper off of the podium and waves it defiantly in the air.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

I have here in my hand a list of 57...a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM- NIGHT

Packed to the rafters. McCarthy holds two sheets of paper in the air.

MCCARTHY
I have here in my hand...a list of
108 names...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CONVENTION CENTER- NIGHT

Even larger. Bulbs flashing. Four sheets of paper raised high.

MCCARTHY
205 names -- and it is my mission
to root each and every one of them
out. This will not stand.

An eruption of applause. Joe savors it, looks up to the rafters.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
It cannot.

INT. DRESSING ROOM- NIGHT

Joe unbuttons his dress shirt, perspiration stains under the armpits.

A DISTANT RUMBLING. Joe looks to the closed door, puzzled. The noise gets LOUDER. A mixture of many voices.

DON (V.O.)
The Senator can only take one
question each, understood?

Joe quickly throws on a new shirt, buttons it. He wipes his forehead. Heads to the door. Opens it.

INT. HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Over a dozen reporters crammed into this space, muscling to get close to McCarthy.

MCCARTHY
Good evening folks.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- DAY

Joe gazes at his subordinates through his window shade.

There's an ever growing bullpen of desks. Things are frantic, incredibly busy. Workers scramble around. Phones ring constantly.

He smiles. Something seems to have caught his eye.

He watches a WOMAN unpacking contents from a brown box. She's moving in. This is JEAN KERR, 28. She has Grace Kelly's looks and Joe's ambition.

Joe exits the frame. We remain in the room as Joe approaches Jean, introduces himself with a smile.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE OFFICE- LATER

It's late. Tranquil. Only a few left burning the midnight oil. Jean types busily at her desk. She removes a page from her typewriter.

CUT TO:

A thick stack of papers as they SLAM onto a desk.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- MOMENTS LATER

Joe surveys the stack, amused. His gaze shifts to Jean, arms folded.

MCCARTHY

(reading)

"Marshall's Plan: Neglect and
incompetence. How the Secretary of
State endangered those he was
supposed to be protect."

Jean nods.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

Did Don ask you to write this up?

JEAN

No.

MCCARTHY

I don't remember assigning
anything.

JEAN

You didn't. Call it extra credit.

McCarthy smiles, thumbs through a myriad of pages.

MCCARTHY
You wrote all of this?

JEAN
Is that surprising?

MCCARTHY
It's a lot of writing. Case
studies. Research.

JEAN
That's what you hired me for.

MCCARTHY
What's the angle here?

JEAN
Excuse me?

MCCARTHY
You're young...attractive. You
could be out having fun. Dancing.

JEAN
I don't like to dance.

MCCARTHY
What do you like, then?

JEAN
Work.

MCCARTHY
A woman after my heart.

Ignoring the personal talk...

JEAN
So you'll read it then.

MCCARTHY
Of course. I assume you're not the
General's biggest fan.

JEAN
He's a fool.

MCCARTHY
Elaborate.

JEAN

He's too preoccupied with Berlin to
worry about our security.

MCCARTHY

He should have taken action.

JEAN

He's not a child. There's no excuse
for acting so passively.

MCCARTHY

No there is not.

McCarthy surveys Jean's hand. Her ring finger is discolored,
yet there's no ring on it.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

Forget your ring today?

JEAN

No ring.

MCCARTHY

But you wore one recently.

Jean looks at her finger, rubs it.

JEAN

Try to dull the mark every day in
the shower. No luck.

MCCARTHY

It'll fade. Give it time.

JEAN

I've given time.

MCCARTHY

I see.

(a beat)

So what did he do wrong?

JEAN

Marshall? Or my fiancee?

MCCARTHY

Either.

JEAN

Long term engagement. Couldn't take
the last step.

MCCARTHY
He should have taken action.

Jean's lips curl into a smile.

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT

Darkness. The silence is shattered. The SHRILL RING of a telephone.

Another ring. The room is flooded with light.

Joe picks up the phone. At his side, JEAN. Half asleep.

DON (V.O.)
Did I wake you?

MCCARTHY
Yeah.

DON (V.O.)
Sorry about that.

MCCARTHY
Uh huh. What's going on?

DON (V.O.)
Have something to tell you.

MCCARTHY
Too late for good news.

DON (V.O.)
No. It's not.

MCCARTHY
What is it?

DON (V.O.)
Joe Kennedy. It seems he's taken an interest in you. Dinner. Saturday night. Told him you were bringing Jean.

Joe smiles. Jean squints at him, curious.

MCCARTHY
Okay.

DON (V.O.)
Wipe that smile off your face.

MCCARTHY
Yeah, yeah.

He hangs up the phone.

JEAN
What was that?

MCCARTHY
You ever been to Massachusetts?

DISSOLVE TO:

Darkness. Sound asleep.

We hear the CRACK of a ball flying off of a baseball bat -- followed by a barrage of footsteps.

The WAIL of a child. Giddy, excited.

LAUGHTER.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD- SUNSET

McCarthy, shirt covered in dirt, holds a baseball glove at his side.

He looks very awkward as he trails behind two athletic and striking young men -- JOHN and BOBBY KENNEDY.

A number of others follow them, ages range across the spectrum. There are six year olds and sixty years olds. This is a family event.

They exit the field and head toward a beautiful Victorian in the distance.

John, smiling, slaps Bobby on the back. The two laugh; we've not privy to the joke.

McCarthy watches them closely.

JOE KENNEDY (V.O.)
Bless us, oh Lord, and these thy
gifts...

INT. DINING ROOM- NIGHT

JOE KENNEDY leads the family, numbering nearly a dozen, in grace. All heads bowed.

McCarthy and Jean follow suit.

JOE KENNEDY (V.O.)
...which we are about to receive
from thy bounty. Through Christ,
our Lord. Amen.

After a lingering moment of silence, the family begins to pile food onto their plates.

Joe and Jean, the outsiders, wait patiently. Wait until the family is done serving themselves...then dig in.

INT. DEN- NIGHT

McCarthy sits across from Joe Kennedy. He looks to an adjacent party room. Jean's socializing, all smiles.

JOE KENNEDY
I suppose you've asked yourself why
you're here maybe two, three
hundred times.

MCCARTHY
350.

JOE KENNEDY
Close enough.

MCCARTHY
Very.

A fleeting awkward moment.

JOE KENNEDY
Friends are a valuable commodity.

MCCARTHY
Of course.

JOE KENNEDY
I think we should be friends.

MCCARTHY
I'd like that. That's not a
problem...?

JOE KENNEDY
You're a good, Irish-Catholic kid.
There's not many of us in the
business. Gotta stick together,
right?

Kennedy removes an envelope from his jacket pocket. Slides it across the table to McCarthy. He opens it.

JOE KENNEDY (CONT'D)
A token of friendship.

McCarthy sips on a drink, tries to contain his surprise.
Plays it cool.

MCCARTHY
It's a very generous gesture.

JOE KENNEDY
I can be more generous.

MCCARTHY
I wouldn't ask you to be.

JOE KENNEDY
You don't have to. But if you were
to ever consider making a run at
it, friends support one another.

MCCARTHY
And if there's anything I can to
support you...

Joe nudges his head in Bobby's direction. Bobby's chatting with a guest amiably. The charm is visible.

McCarthy gives him a once over.

EXT. CAR- NIGHT

Joe speeds down an empty New England road. Nothing but the HUM of the engine. Tranquil.

JEAN
He said "making a run at it"?

MCCARTHY
He did.

JEAN
You're so calm. Unusual.

MCCARTHY
It's not like I won the nomination.

JEAN
Baby steps.

MCCARTHY

Fine. I almost spit up my drink.

JEAN

I knew it. You were probably jumping for joy.

MCCARTHY

Eisenhower likes to address us in football metaphors. Last month's little lesson was "when you score, act like you've been there before".

JEAN

And?

MCCARTHY

I figured I'd try it.

JEAN

Keep your composure. Play it cool.

MCCARTHY

Doesn't suit me.

JEAN

Why's that?

MCCARTHY

I just wanted to dance in the end zone.

A brief pause.

JEAN

I wonder if it's ever happened before.

MCCARTHY

What's that?

JEAN

Do you think Wilson, Harding, and Coolidge ever played a game of softball together?

MCCARTHY

I doubt Coolidge picked up anything that wasn't a tennis racket.

Jean smiles.

JEAN

You know what I mean.

MCCARTHY

Which one am I?

JEAN

Does it matter? You're Wilson.
You're Harding. You're Coolidge.
You're whoever.

MCCARTHY

Whoever? That sounds appealing.

JEAN

It's just strange. In twenty years,
I could have had dinner with three -
-

MCCARTHY

-- drunken Irishmen.

JEAN

Presidents.

Joe flashes a smile at her. He turns the radio on, pretends he's not thinking about what she just said.

A cheery pop song BLARES from the speakers. They drive on.

EXT. RUSSELL SENATE BUILDING- MORNING

The sun peaks over the horizon as suits of all kinds head up the steps.

INT. THE OFFICE- MORNING

Staffers work busily, field calls and type reports.

Jean's desk is chaotic; full of papers. Hunched over her desk is the fresh faced Bobby Kennedy. The pair converse inaudibly.

Joe passes Jean's desk, smiles at her. She nods, fakes cordiality. He plays along.

JEAN

Mr. McCarthy.

MCCARTHY

Morning. Welcome to the team, Mr. Kennedy.

BOBBY KENNEDY

Glad to be here, sir.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- MORNING

McCarthy is at his desk, door open. Don enters and throws a newspaper down at his side.

Its headline-

"BLACKBALLED STAR RAY HUDSON KILLS HIMSELF".

There's a picture of Ray. He's in his mid 30's, classically handsome. McCarthy glances at the paper with curiosity.

MCCARTHY

Guess he saw his last movie.

DON

Press is looking for a statement.

MCCARTHY

I'll be out soon.

EXT. SENATE HALLWAY- DAY

A rabid group of reporters walk rapidly alongside McCarthy. They attempt to both keep up with him and note every word he utters. This proves to be a difficult task.

REPORTERS 1 and 2, the most persistent of the bunch, butt in with questions.

MCCARTHY

His death is certainly unfortunate.
That being said, his record of
membership with the IWW is clear.

REPORTER 1

And what about the rally Sunday,
are you prepared?

REPORTER 2

Have you spoken to Eisenhower?

MCCARTHY

No, I haven't had the pleasure of
speaking to Dwight but I am more
than prepared for the occasion.

REPORTER 2

Any hint of what you'll say?

MCCARTHY
(smiles)
That's private fellas. Have a good day.

-- And with that, McCarthy strides past them and exits the building through a pair of double doors, leaving the reporters winded.

EXT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, WISCONSIN- DAY

A beautiful two story Victorian with acres of land surrounding it. It's complete with a porch and swing.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DEN- DAY

McCarthy sits comfortably in a chair. He attempts to complete the day's crossword puzzle. Appears to be struggling.

There's a lot of blanks on the page. He continues to stare intently at it- determined to complete it.

The RADIO booms in the background; white noise to Joe until a NEWSCASTER snaps him to attention...

NEWSCASTER
More grim news from Korea today as American air support has failed the deter the movement of forces just west of Chorwon. Casualties are expected to number --

He shakes his head weakly in disgust, flips the radio off. Returns to his crossword puzzle.

INT. KITCHEN- AFTERNOON

A small pillar of smoke billows from a boiling pot. Jean stands in front of it, stirs.

Joe sits a few feet away at the table, flipping through the day's newspaper.

A KNOCK on the door. Joe rises and heads for it.

From the kitchen, we hear the CREAK of the door opening. Voices in the other room.

Joe enters again, now with Don at his side.

DON
How ya doin, Jean?

He gives her a kiss on the cheek.

The men file through the kitchen; enter the backyard through a screen door in an adjacent room.

Through a window directly above the stove, Jean watches them outside as they light a pair of cigars.

She turns off the stove. Exits the frame.

A moment later, she joins the two in the backyard.

EXT. BACKYARD- SAME

Don and Joe sit on the deck comfortably, puffing away on their Cubans.

DON
Eisenhower wants to meet before the speech.

JEAN
Are we sure that's a good idea?

MCCARTHY
Fine by me. What's the worst that could happen?

Don shakes his head as if to say- "I guess".

DON
Already told his camp he doesn't want to be photographed with you.

JEAN
He's insufferable.

MCCARTHY
Toss the intro you've written. I'll prepare something myself.

Joe puffs on the cigar, inhales deeply.

EXT. HIGHWAY- MORNING

A nondescript three car caravan speeds down the empty highway. The vehicles maintain a close proximity to one another.

INT. CAR- MOMENTS LATER

McCarthy in the backseat. He dabs his forehead with a handkerchief. Not nervous but certainly not at ease.

EXT. HOTEL- MOMENTS LATER

A towering, elaborate complex filled with security at every step. The caravan comes to a stop.

Joe and Don exit the car. Walk toward the entrance purposefully.

A SECURITY GUARD, clipboard in hand, blocks the door.

DON

Senator McCarthy here to see
Senator Eisenhower.

(glances at his watch)
Have an appointment in five
minutes.

The guard nods, looks at the clipboard for a long moment.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm going to have to search you
before you enter the hotel.

Joe laughs. Looks toward the top floor of the hotel.

MCCARTHY

He tell you to do this?

SECURITY GUARD

Just protocol, sir.

MCCARTHY

Protocol...

The guard begins to frisk McCarthy; it's a bit of an embarrassing sight. He finds nothing.

Joe passes the security guard and enter the hotel.

INT. PENTHOUSE- CONTINUOUS

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, mid 50's, stands with his back toward McCarthy. He peers out a window with a beautiful landscape of Green Bay. It overlooks nearly the entire city.

A television BLARES -- on it, a football game.

McCarthy inches toward Eisenhower; without turning around --

EISENHOWER
Sit down.

McCarthy looks to his left; there's an empty chair waiting for him at a table. He sits.

Eisenhower turns around, looks at McCarthy with an obvious taste of reprobation.

An attempt to break the silence --

MCCARTHY
Good to see you, Dwight.

Eisenhower takes a seat across from McCarthy.

EISENHOWER
You're going to listen to what I have to say and keep your mouth shut until I'm finished. I want to reach an understanding. Is that clear?

McCarthy smirks, unable to contain himself. Eisenhower waits for a response. A moment passes.

MCCARTHY
Go on.

EISENHOWER
I'm not going to stand for your bullshit here or anywhere else. I don't like your methods and I'm going to tell the people I disagree with you today.

MCCARTHY
If you say that, you'll be booed.

EISENHOWER
I've been booed before and being booed doesn't bother me.

MCCARTHY
Do what you want.

Another uncomfortable silence.

EISENHOWER
You know where I spent Saturday night?

MCCARTHY
I don't know, an NRA convention?

EISENHOWER
You don't follow the news?

MCCARTHY

EISENHOWER

MCCARTHY

EISENHOWER

MCCARTHY
I guess I tuned out.

EISENHOWER
George Marshall's home. That's where I was.

MCCARTHY
Congratulations.

EISENHOWER

EISENHOWER (CONT'D)
They've hurt the family.

MCCARTHY
I guess truth hurts.

EISENHOWER
You're going to apologize. I've arranged for some flowers to be sent to his home. Katherine will appreciate the gesture.

Eisenhower looks to the football game. Observes a play.

EISENHOWER (CONT'D)
You know when I was a tailback at West Point, I never could beat the linemen. The linebackers and safeties -- the smaller guys -- they were easy to get past.
(MORE)

EISENHOWER (CONT'D)

Once I stood in the face of a two hundred twenty five pound tackle, I was finished. Went straight to the ground without fail. A few years after I graduated, I watched some old film and realized why. Every time one of those linemen charged at me, I slowed down for a split second. I was terrified of being hit. Of being taken down. I started playing in a men's league about three years after I graduated. First snap I took, I knocked the defensive end on his ass. Must have weighed close to 275. Ran right through him.

(brief pause)

I'm not afraid anymore.

Silence.

EISENHOWER (CONT'D)

When I'm elected, things are going to change. If you do what I say, I'll tolerate you. Treat me like you did Truman and I will burn you to the ground.

Eisenhower rises, returns to the window.

MCCARTHY

And how exactly are things going to change?

EISENHOWER

You'll find out soon enough.

MCCARTHY

Is that all I get?

EISENHOWER

You think you deserve more?

MCCARTHY

And if things don't change...

EISENHOWER

Then there will be consequences.

MCCARTHY

How ominous. What do you plan to do?

EISENHOWER

Nothing.

MCCARTHY

I may be a bit slow. I don't understand.

EISENHOWER

I don't need to do anything.

MCCARTHY

Then why should I stop?

EISENHOWER

Because if you don't, they'll turn on you.

MCCARTHY

Sixty eight percent approval rate. What are you at -- fifty nine, is it?

EISENHOWER

For now.

MCCARTHY

I think that you're lucky I'm a principled man. If Stevenson wasn't such a damned Communist, I'd be helping him hand out fliers after this morale booster of a chat.

EISENHOWER

Don't kid yourself. You're not an idealist, you're a vulture. And if there's one thing you're intelligent enough to know, it's when to back a winning horse. That's why you're staying with me. What's been said here isn't to leave this room.

MCCARTHY

I certainly would hope not.

EISENHOWER

Get out.

McCarthy slowly rises -- still a bit stunned from the encounter.

He thinks -- attempts to muster words that could puncture Eisenhower's bravado. He fails and reluctantly exits.

EXT. HOTEL- MOMENTS LATER

Several REPORTERS are now camped out at the entrance. McCarthy exits and they swarm.

REPORTER 3
Is it true that Eisenhower will condemn...

McCarthy stops for a moment, pauses --

MCCARTHY
We had a very, very pleasant
conversation. That's all,
gentlemen.

He continues walking and enters a car waiting nearby.

EXT. CAMPAIGN RALLY- DAY

An enthusiastic and jam packed crowd waits excitedly at the stage.

There's a considerable buzz amongst them -- a mix of both the young and old. Of course, the media is present as well.

McCarthy steps foot on the stage, heads toward a podium in the center.

The crowd cheers wildly. Anticipating his words.

McCarthy does little to hide his mood from his supporters. His words are terse and lack excitement.

MCCARTHY
I wish to present to the people of
my home city, the next President of
the United States -- General Dwight
Eisenhower.

McCarthy walks off the stage abruptly. Members of the crowd exchange looks of confusion as if to ask- "That's it?"

An uncomfortable moment passes.

Eisenhower emerges on stage. Reaches the microphone. He smiles and waves to the crowd. Appears warm and genial.

This is a different man than the one who just spoke to McCarthy.

Acknowledging the applause --

EISENHOWER
Thank you. It's great to be here.

MCCARTHY --

Watches Eisenhower from the side of the stage. The view isn't ideal but he's able to see the man. Don stands alongside him.

DON
You really tossed my intro for
that?

In no mood...

MCCARTHY
Did the job, didn't it?

EISENHOWER --

Continues his speech.

EISENHOWER
Senator McCarthy has spent a great deal of time discussing his fear that Communists have infiltrated some of Washington's most valuable and formative institutions.

McCarthy braces for a condemnation. Eisenhower

EISENHOWER (CONT'D)
We have spent two decades tolerating Communists as they have ascended to the highest levels in our bureaucracy. This has resulted in a contamination -- to some degree -- in every department, every agency, every bureau, and every section of our government. This...acceptance of communism has allowed national policy to be molded by men who have turned their backs on our country. We will not stand for this for one moment longer.

DON --

Turns to McCarthy. Beaming.

DON
This isn't a denunciation. It's a
goddamn endorsement.

A smile creeps across McCarthy's face. He stares at Eisenhower, intoxicated by his power.

EXT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, WISCONSIN- NIGHT

A furious rain beats down on the pavement. It's a gloomy evening.

Joe, jacket slung over his arm, lumbers up the driveway.

INT. BEDROOM- MOMENTS LATER

He removes his tie, tosses it on the bed. Jean enters, paper in hand.

JEAN
Left the message this morning. You
need to read this.

Joe glances at the paper dismissive. Until he continues to read --

MCCARTHY
Start packing.

JEAN
Already done.

Jean exits the room as Joe reaches for a phone on the dresser. He quickly dials a number.

A ring. Nothing.

Another ring. Still no answer.

Until --

VOICE (O.S.)
Hello?

We PUSH IN on the paper. It reads --

"Reds infiltrated Army. Signal Corps. Fort Monmouth."

EXT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT- SUNRISE

Joe and Jean enter a taxi that idles in front of the entrance.

INT. TRAIN- MORNING

Joe stares out the window of the train. The brim on his hat is low enough to nearly cover his eyes.

A conductor reaches his seat. Joe tilts his cap up ever so slightly, passes his ticket to the man.

As the conductor passes, he slides the hat back down.

INT. DINER- SUNSET

An empty dive. McCarthy sips on a cup of coffee, hunched over his table.

Across from him is CORPORAL RHODES, 45. He still can't believe he's doing this.

MCCARTHY

How many?

RHODES

Enough. I've seen them.

MCCARTHY

Have you tried to talk to others,
to your --

RHODES

Supervisors? Yeah. They don't want
to hear it.

MCCARTHY

What about others like 'em? Are
there any you outside of Monmouth?

RHODES

I can't speak to that.

MCCARTHY

And you work in the...

RHODES

Signal corps.

MCCARTHY

Communications, huh?

Rhodes nods.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Never could get a damn signal over
the islands when I flew. Real pain
in the ass. Lots of blind fire.

Rhodes is expressionless, disinterested; he's here for one reason and it's not to socialize.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
I'm glad you called.

RHODES
They told me you were the guy.

MCCARTHY
They?

RHODES
General Bradford. He's one of the few that listen.

MCCARTHY
(nods knowingly)
He was right.

Rhodes pulls a buck fifty from his pocket, lays it on the table. Begins to rise.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Wait. Where are you going?

Rhodes stops.

RHODES
We're done, aren't we?

MCCARTHY
Not yet.

He takes a seat again.

RHODES
What else do you need?

MCCARTHY
Names.

RHODES
I don't know.

MCCARTHY

You've come this far. All you have
to do is tell me what rocks to turn
over.

RHODES

My name will stay out of this?

MCCARTHY

Not a word.

Rhodes shifts in his seat, folding.

RHODES

What are you going to do to them?

MCCARTHY

Put 'em where they belong.

RHODES

What if you get scared?

MCCARTHY

I won't.

RHODES

Bradford's word ain't enough. I
need a little more than that.

MCCARTHY

And I need the same thing. That's
why this doesn't end here.

RHODES

What's that?

MCCARTHY

More.

A brief silence.

RHODES

Start by looking at Smith, Carroll,
and Morse. You'll find what you're
looking for.

Joe quickly jots down the names on a napkin.

RHODES (CONT'D)

Can I go?

McCarthy extends his hand. Rhodes shakes it and exits.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM- DAY

The mood is tense. Bobby and the other staffers sit quietly, waiting. A seat at the head of the table is empty. That is, until McCarthy enters with a note pad in hand.

He speaks to no one in particular.

MCCARTHY
Has this room been swept?

BOBBY dares to speak up.

BOBBY KENNEDY
Swept, sir?

MCCARTHY
Did I stutter? I ordered this room
to be swept for bugs.

Looks of confusion. A few wonder if McCarthy is just drunk.

STAFFER
We never received that order.

McCarthy sighs loudly. He rises from his chair and circles the room as if to search for a listening device. In actuality, he has no clue what he is searching for.

After he completes a circle and is satisfied --

MCCARTHY
Last night I received a call from a young man. We spoke, and I found it absolutely imperative to meet with him. So I hopped on a plane, a train, and off I went. This young man did something quite brave. He alerted me to a disturbing new reality. There is now significant Communist infiltration in our armed forces.

Staffers try to hide their collective shock. Some scribble notes furiously.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Starting this minute, I want each and every one of you to begin investigating this man's claims. This is your priority. The infiltration began at Fort Monmouth. That is where we need to begin digging.

(MORE)

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Look at Privates Smith, Carroll,
and Morse. If you search hard
enough, you should find that their
ties to the Communist party are
long standing and undisputable.
Your job is to pick up the trail
and bring it to me. Now lets get to
work.

ON BOBBY - very few notes in front of him, an air of
skepticism.

Around him, the staff disperses fairly instantaneously. Joe
lingers in the room for a moment.

DON (V.O.)
Who's the source?

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- MOMENTS LATER

Don puffs on a cigarette.

MCCARTHY
A corporal.

DON
Corporal -- who?

MCCARTHY
I told him his name would stay out
of it.

DON
How do you know he's not screwing
with you?

MCCARTHY
He reached out through Bradford.
Seems like a good kid.

DON
So you initiated an investigation
of the United States Army because
some kid had table manners?

MCCARTHY
He's not lying.

DON
Won't know that for sure until we
run a background check.

MCCARTHY

We've got the seed. That's enough
to raise eyebrows.

DON

And if the kid's a liar, you'll see
a lot of scowls below those
eyebrows.

A brief silence.

MCCARTHY

Rhodes.

EXT. RUSSELL SENATE BUILDING- DUSK

Another day on Capital Hill...this one isn't far from over.
Joe lumbers down the steps, hat in hand. As he reaches the
street --

BOBBY KENNEDY (O.S.)

Mr. McCarthy.

McCarthy whips around; Bobby approaches him, looks slightly
uneasy.

MCCARTHY

What's going on?

BOBBY KENNEDY

I need a new assignment.

McCarthy is thrown; he's unaccustomed to being spoken to so
bluntly by an underling.

MCCARTHY

Excuse me.

BOBBY KENNEDY

Sir, I just...uh, I really would
prefer to work on another issue.

MCCARTHY

There is no 'other issue'.

BOBBY KENNEDY

I see.

MCCARTHY

You find our work objectionable?
Unsatisfying?

BOBBY KENNEDY

Unsatisfying isn't how I would characterize it.

MCCARTHY

How might you characterize it, then?

BOBBY KENNEDY

I'd prefer not to --

MCCARTHY

Air your grievance.

BOBBY KENNEDY

I'd just be very grateful if I could work alongside you on the Employment Reform. I have some ideas that I really think --

MCCARTHY

What you have is an assignment. Nothing is more important than that.

BOBBY KENNEDY

Let me write a proposal for the workers comp reform. I can have it on your desk tomorrow.

MCCARTHY

No.

BOBBY KENNEDY

Just glance at, that's all I ask. If it's no good, forget it.

McCarthy is silent, unconvinced. Bobby's persistence has only caused him greater irritation.

BOBBY KENNEDY (CONT'D)

With all due respect, I'm asking for a favor.

MCCARTHY

And what exactly do I owe you?

Bobby takes a moment; nods ever so slightly in understanding. He's unhappy.

BOBBY KENNEDY

Have a good weekend, sir.

He exits. Joe watches him for a moment, shakes it off. Puts his hat on.

A classic 50's pop ballad begins to play over the following -- Something soulful. Think Doris Day's 'Que Sera Sera'. And now we're in a...

HALLWAY

McCarthy walks with purpose down the corridor, briefcase in hand. He reaches a door at the end and opens it.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- MOMENTS LATER

He unpacks his briefcase on his desk. Removes a flask. Takes a sip and places it to the side. Starts to pour over a series of papers that are stacked on his desk.

EXT. FORT MONMOUTH- DAY

A military checkpoint. McCarthy's car waits at the gate. A moment later, the gate is lifted and he passes through.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS LAB, FORT MONMOUTH- DAY

A frantic environment. McCarthy's presence, along with Don's, seem to go unnoticed as he tours the facility.

He surveys each engineer with suspicion. Paces through the lab, curious.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM- NIGHT

A late night. Staffers focus on a series of papers that lie on the table.

Isolated from the rest is Bobby. He stares at a file with obvious distaste.

McCarthy enters. The staffers nearly pounce on him -- eager to reveal what they have uncovered. They motion passionately toward the documents on the table.

Joe takes this all in for a moment -- then grins widely. Good news.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- NIGHT

Another glass. It's larger this time. The poison is scotch. Joe raises it to his lips and drinks it as if it is water. Reaches to pour another.

EXT. HOME- NIGHT

Two men, who both don black overcoats, rummage through a few trash cans that rest at the curb.

The home they stand outside of is quaint, completely ordinary aside from the large American flag that proudly hangs in its lawn.

Their search is unproductive.

One of the men accidentally tips the garbage can as he surveys its contents. The can CRASHES to the ground.

The men look toward the house -- a light turns on inside.

They quickly return to their car and speed away.

INT. RESTAURANT- DAY

McCarthy and Don sit across from a man dressed in full Army garb. His lapel is full of commendations. We'll call him The General.

McCarthy speaks to the man with passion, motions with his hands often.

The General doesn't like what he is hearing. Motions demonstratively. Looks very dissatisfied.

INT. OFFICE- DAY

Bobby watches his co-workers in the conference room. They're all smiles. He taps his pencil against his desk, contemplative.

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT

It's dark, difficult to see anything but shadows.

A moment passes. Light floods the room.

In it are the two men we've just met. Once again, they are snooping. What they are looking for is unclear.

They rummage through drawers, search frantically.

INT. RESTAURANT- DAY

The General throws his napkin down on the table. Rises in anger and exits.

McCarthy says nothing. We get the sense that he's not too surprised at the outcome.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM- NIGHT

Another long night. A white board has been assembled in the middle of the room.

On the board lie pictures -- almost like mug shots -- of a number of young men.

They have one thing in common. All wear military uniforms.

INT. BAR- NIGHT

An office party, a celebration. Intimate. Two dozen or so in attendance. Joe, as per usual, is the center of attention. He holds a glass in the air.

MCCARTHY

-- this is just the beginning, but you've done a hell of a job. Enjoy it.

Joe drinks. The others follow. Conversation resumes, the room buzzing.

BOBBY

eyes Joe from across the room. He downs his drink in a single gulp. A hint of nervousness.

He places the glass down, navigates the crowd to reach Joe who is engaged in conversation with a small group.

BOBBY KENNEDY

Can I have a minute?

Joe laughs at a joke we've missed, he's not paying Bobby much attention.

MCCARTHY

Later. I'll come find you.

BOBBY KENNEDY
Now.

Catching Joe's attention with its urgency --

BOBBY KENNEDY (CONT'D)
Please.

EXT. BAR- NIGHT

Joe surveys the well lit, abandoned street. Puffs on a cigarette. Bobby faces him.

BOBBY KENNEDY
I asked you for an out. I tried to
do this the right way.

MCCARTHY
This?

BOBBY KENNEDY
We can't stand behind this any
longer.

MCCARTHY
We? Who is we?

BOBBY KENNEDY
I'm sorry. Desk is already packed.
I'll wait for the good-byes. Don't
want to disrupt the celebration.

MCCARTHY
Come on. I'm sure there's something
we can do.

BOBBY KENNEDY
Thank you for everything.

He extends his hand. Joe is confused, shakes. Bobby begins to walk away.

MCCARTHY
Immigration. Workers comp.
Whatever. Spearhead them. Do
whatever you want.

He stops. Turns back to Joe.

BOBBY KENNEDY
(nods to the bar)
And what about this? What about
what we're doing here?

MCCARTHY
What about it?

Bobby shakes his head - "you really don't get it, do you?"

BOBBY KENNEDY
I appreciate everything you've done
for me.

He heads down the street, leaves Joe in solitude.

INT. PHONE BOOTH- MOMENTS LATER

A RING. Another RING. Joe presses the receiver to his ear, anxious.

JOE KENNEDY (V.O.)
...hello?

MCCARTHY
Joe. It's McCarthy.

JOE KENNEDY (V.O.)
It's late.

MCCARTHY
I'm sorry if I woke you.

A silence.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
I just spoke to your son.

JOE KENNEDY (V.O.)
I see.

MCCARTHY
I think he had one too many drinks
tonight. Said some crazy things.

JOE KENNEDY (V.O.)
Did he now?

MCCARTHY
He wants to hang it up. Quit. We've
gotta get him back on the team.
Nothing a father son chat won't
fix, right?

JOE KENNEDY (V.O.)
He was sober. And he speaks for the
family. I'm sorry it had to happen
this way.

(MORE)

JOE KENNEDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(pause)
It's late. Goodnight.

CLICK.

INT. BAR- MOMENTS LATER

Joe enters to the raucous celebration uninterrupted. He puts on his best smile. To the crowd...

MCCARTHY
Who wants another round?

Cheers. As the attention fades, so does his smile.

INT. OFFICE- DAY

Joe makes his way through the bullpen on his way to his office when Jean approaches him, a look of worry on her face.

JEAN
There's somebody here to see you,
it's --

Joe reaches his office. The door's closed. Unusual. He looks at Jean curiously, opens it.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

Inside -- Don stands perched against Joe's desk. With his back to Joe is Corporal Rhodes. His expression is one of anger and betrayal.

DON
Joe, Corporal Rhodes here wanted...

Joe extends his hand to Rhodes. It is left hanging there. He pulls it back a moment later.

MCCARTHY
How can I help you, Corporal?

RHODES
You made me a promise.

MCCARTHY
Excuse me?

RHODES
I know you're a politician and all
but you made me a promise.

MCCARTHY
I'm sorry, I don't know what you're referring to.

RHODES
They made me pack up my things.
Sent me home. They knew -- they all knew we talked.

MCCARTHY
Who knew?

RHODES
Everyone.

MCCARTHY
What's the name of your C.O.?

RHODES
Esposito.

MCCARTHY
General, lieutenant...?

RHODES
Lieutenant.

Jotting the name down on a piece of paper...

MCCARTHY
I am going to talk to Lieutenant Esposito and get this whole thing straightened out.

RHODES
(confused)
You didn't tell?

MCCARTHY
Not a soul. Although my friend Don here knows now.

RHODES
But how do they...

MCCARTHY
I intend to find out. You have my word.

McCarthy extends his hand. Rhodes, unsure, takes it. They shake.

RHODES
Thank you.

MCCARTHY
I'll be in touch.

He smiles at Rhodes who takes the cue and exits. Don shakes his head, a smirk on his face.

DON
Poor son of a bitch actually thinks you're sincere.

MCCARTHY
Who said I'm not?

Joe crumples up the piece of paper with Esposito's name on it. Chucks it in the garbage can.

CUT TO:

A fist, clenched. It KNOCKS forcefully on a white door.

CUT TO:

INT. MCCARTHY'S HOME- SUNRISE

The door swings open. Don stands at the doorstep, all smiles.

Joe, groggy and half awake, gestures him inside.

INT. KITCHEN- MOMENTS LATER

Joe sips on a cup of coffee. Don leans forward in his seat, excited.

DON
Eisenhower's camp called.

MCCARTHY
Trying to ruin my morning?

DON
The hearings. They want to televise.

MCCARTHY
Fine. Which affiliate?

DON
This isn't local. They want a nationwide broadcast.

McCarthy sits up in his chair; he's awake now.

MCCARTHY
What's he after?

DON
Must think it's nothing more than a
wild goose chase. They'll never
admit it --

MCCARTHY
Trying to embarrass me.

DON
Seems that way.

MCCARTHY
What do you think?

DON
'60 is wide open. Bobby won't stop
blabbing about his brother. But I
don't see it.

MCCARTHY
Kid just got his diapers off. Maybe
'68.

DON
Either way, spotlight like this is
awfully rare. Could serve as a
launching pad. If you want the top
job, this is what we do.

Don looks around the quaint home.

DON (CONT'D)
But there is nothing wrong with
this. Nothing at all. If this is
what you're comfortable with --
then this is where we stay. Sleep
on it.

EXT. MCCARTHY'S HOME- MOMENTS LATER

Joe stands in the driveway, hand raised to say goodbye. Don
pulls away in his car.

Joe surveys the neighborhood carefully, pensive. Is this
where he wants to be?

INT. TAXI- DAY

A RADIO BLARES. The strong, potent voice of a newscaster.

The Driver, mid 40's, reserved, speeds down a busy street. Joe and Jean sit in the backseat. Both wear rings.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
...less than twenty four hours away
from the start of Senator Joseph
McCarthy's Army hearings.
Anticipation has reached a fever
pitch and for many Americans
outside of the Senator's home
state, this will be their first
real look at the man they have
heard so much about. Our first
witness, a General Zwicker, is
expected to testify as to the
discharge of accused private...

JEAN
I told Linda we couldn't do dinner
this week. She didn't even know
about the hearings.

MCCARTHY
If only we could use that one every
time.

ON Jean -- who smiles faintly.

And at the moment, through her window, we see a CAR just
thirty feet away moving with frightening speed headed
directly toward the cab.

The CAR SLAMS INTO THE CAB AT FULL SPEED. A SCREAM.
DEVASTATING IMPACT.

BLACK.

A PLUME OF SMOKE rises from the cab's engine.

We PULL BACK to reveal the totality of the crash. Wreckage.
Crumpled metal. Shattered glass. Jean's passenger side door
is crushed.

INT. CAB- MOMENTS LATER

Joe opens his eyes slowly. Appears serene for a moment. As if
he has forgotten where he is.

And then -- it hits him. He launches forward in his seat.
Places his hand on his throbbing head. Remnants of blood rest
on his fingertips.

He looks over to Jean -- she is unconscious, badly cut.

The Driver is in just as poor shape. His head is slumped on the steering wheel.

For anyone to hear...

MCCARTHY
Help!

EXT. STREET- MOMENTS LATER

The ambulance attendants have arrived and a small crowd gathers on the sidewalk to gawk.

An attendant attempts to treat Joe. Joe brushes the man away.

He runs over to Jean, who is being placed on a stretcher. A few feet away, the Driver is being given the same treatment.

The Driver is loaded onto the ambulance which idles a few feet away.

ATTENDANT 1 reaches to shut the door --

MCCARTHY
Hey -- what about my wife?

ATTENDANT 1
We've got a second ambulance on its way.

MCCARTHY
This is -- national security.

ATTENDANT 1
Excuse me?

MCCARTHY
I'm a United States Senator and I need her taken care of right now.

ATTENDANT 1
Sir, we have to take him now -- he's in bad shape. Someone will stay with you until it gets here.

The door slams shut and the ambulance speeds away.

Joe is utterly helpless. Unsure of what to do. He stands in the street, looks for an ambulance on the horizon. Nothing yet.

He clutches Jean's hand. ATTENDANT 2 idles nearby.

He snaps --

MCCARTHY
Aren't you going to do something?

ATTENDANT 2
She's going to be fine, sir.

MCCARTHY
No thanks to you two.

The attendant remains silent. Appears accustomed to this abuse.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Where is the goddamn ambulance?

He taps his fingers impatiently on the side of the gurney. A moment passes. Still nothing.

Finally -- a SIREN sounds in the distance. Joe sees the ambulance flying down the street. It reaches them and the attendant's exit.

Jean is loaded into the ambulance. Joe climbs in.

INT. HOSPITAL, WAITING ROOM- NIGHT

Nothing but more nerves. Joe paces around, unable to sit.

The DOCTOR, a man in his late 40's with an unusual enthusiasm, enters. He extends his hand.

DOCTOR
It's a honor to meet you, sir. A real honor.

Joe nods, feigns a smile. They shake.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Your wife suffered a concussion.
Has a few contusions in the sternum
and ribs...and we had to give her
some stitches. We're going to keep
her overnight for observation.
We're afraid that the amount of
blood being spilt internally is...
significant. Won't know for another
day or two what her prognosis is.
But we're going to take real
special care of her, sir. That's a
promise.

MCCARTHY

If she's bleeding, what does that mean?

DOCTOR

The blood can compress the organs and cause them to malfunction. We just need to make sure that doesn't happen.

MCCARTHY

Well when can I see her?

DOCTOR

Visiting hours ended at 9.

Sensing Joe's disappointment --

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

But I think we can make an exception.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM- MOMENTS LATER

Jean lays fast asleep in the bed. Her face is bruised. Skin discolored. Bandages cover her body. It isn't the prettiest sight.

Joe sits at her side, strokes her hair gently.

She turns over, rustling. Her eyes open briefly. Half awake.

JEAN

Don't leave.

He says nothing. Continues to play with her hair.

INT. HOSPITAL, WAITING ROOM- MOMENTS LATER

Joe sits in silence. It's difficult to discern if he's thinking a lot, or of nothing at all.

Don bursts through the door, worry on his face, a briefcase in hand.

DON

I'm sorry it took so long.

MCCARTHY

Don't worry about it.

DON
Is everything okay? What did they say?

MCCARTHY
Too soon to know.

Don takes a seat alongside Joe, slumps down in his chair. Unsure of how to react.

DON
If you want to postpone a few days, it's totally understandable. Nobody would argue -- you should be here...

Joe shakes his head vehemently.

MCCARTHY
Nothing changes.

Joe takes the briefcase Don has brought and places it on his lap. Opens it.

Inside are a series of papers. But that's not what Joe wants. He digs under them and removes a flask.

DON
C'mon.

Joe ignores him, unscrews the cap and begins to sip from it.

MCCARTHY
After today...

DON
We've got ten hours till the hearings.

MCCARTHY
Nervous?

Don smiles.

DON
Not one bit. I know you'll knock 'em dead. Always do.

Another sip from the flask.

DON (CONT'D)
My only concern is making sure you can walk in a straight line to the bench.

Joe musters up a weak laugh. The most he can possibly enjoy himself at this moment.

DON (CONT'D)
Give me some of that.

He grabs the drink. Takes a swig. They sit. Tranquil.

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING- DAY

The antithesis of tranquil. An absolute scene. The media is camped out outside. Protestors and spectators alike line the streets.

Merely entering the building without commotion is difficult in itself.

A car pulls up in front of the building. McCarthy and Don exit.

McCarthy begins to walk up the courthouse steps.

A loud cheer erupts from the crowd as they sight him. He ignores it and moves briskly up the steps and into --

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING- CONTINUOUS

Joe moves through an ornate corridor, vaulted with high ceilings and full of suits. The atmosphere is similarly frantic inside.

He moves through the crowd with speed. Reaches a door at the end of the hall and enters.

INT. COMMITTEE ROOM- MOMENTS LATER

McCarthy sits alongside CHAIRMAN MUNDT, even tempered and incredibly articulate.

The setup is the same as we've seen earlier. Mundt, McCarthy, and the other committee members take their seats at the bench.

The gallery is packed.

In contrast, the table that sits across from the bench is empty.

A bulky camera rests in the back of the room. A man behind it operates. This is what the nation will see.

Mundt slams his gavel on the bench.

CHAIRMAN MUNDT

This hearing has now been called to order. I'd like to welcome all of you today on behalf of the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations. We are here to explore charges levied against the Army as it relates to Communist subversion within its ranks. The first witness the committee seeks to call is General Ralph W. Zwicker.

GENERAL ZWICKER, late 50's, polished yet temperamental, rises from the first row of the gallery alongside his COUNSEL. They takes their seats at the witness table.

CHAIRMAN MUNDT (CONT'D)

Senator McCarthy will have the floor first. You have twenty minutes.

McCarthy shifts in his seat, repositions his microphone. Clears his throat.

MCCARTHY
General Zwicker --

The doors of the room swing open loudly.

A DOZEN GENERALS, in full uniform, station themselves in the back of the room. They stand. Their appearance is intimidating. That is the point.

The gallery buzzes over the theatrics. McCarthy attempts to ignore the distraction.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Irving Peress is a proud member of the American labor party, and a fifth amendment communist. He's also an honorably discharged member of the Army. The Peress case has come to your attention in the past year, has it not?

GENERAL ZWICKER
Yes.

MCCARTHY
Now, General, explain to me what steps you took against Peress.

GENERAL ZWICKER
That is a toughie.

MCCARTHY
You know that somebody authorized
an honorable discharge for this
man, correct?

GENERAL ZWICKER
I do.

MCCARTHY
The day the discharge was signed,
were you aware of the fact that he
had been questioned before our
committee one month earlier and
refused to answer certain
questions?

GENERAL ZWICKER
I was.

MCCARTHY
And you knew that Peress refused to
divulge whether he was a Communist,
did you not?

GENERAL ZWICKER
I don't recall.

MCCARTHY
You're a commanding General. When
one of your officers appears before
a committee and refuses to answer
such questions, would you not pay
rather close attention to that
story?

GENERAL ZWICKER
I read the press releases.

MCCARTHY
So you were aware that he invoked
his fifth amendment rights...

GENERAL ZWICKER
I knew everything that was in the
press.

His temperature rising with each moment --

MCCARTHY

Don't be coy with me, General. Did you take any steps to have Peress retained once the allegations against him arose?

GENERAL ZWICKER

No, sir.

MCCARTHY

Did it occur to you that you should?

GENERAL ZWICKER

No, sir.

MCCARTHY

Could you have taken such steps?

GENERAL ZWICKER

No, sir.

MCCARTHY

In other words, there's nothing you could have done. Is that your statement here today?

GENERAL ZWICKER

That is my opinion.

McCarthy shifts in his seat, readjusts the microphone. Signs of frustration.

MCCARTHY

I see. Let me ask you a question General. Perhaps I can help you understand the situation more clearly. Let's say one of your men is to be honorably discharged tomorrow morning. Tonight, he commits a crime. He goes out and he steals 50 dollars. Would he still be discharged tomorrow morning?

GENERAL ZWICKER

No, he would not.

MCCARTHY

Do you think stealing 50 dollars is more serious than being a traitor to this country as part of the communist conspiracy?

GENERAL ZWICKER

That is not my call to make, sir. I was never officially informed that Peress was part of the communist conspiracy, Senator.

MCCARTHY

But you read the papers.

GENERAL ZWICKER

I did.

MCCARTHY

And that wasn't enough?

GENERAL ZWICKER

There was no official notification.

A brief pause.

MCCARTHY

Let's try this one more time. John Doe is a major in the Army. There is sworn testimony to the effect that he is part of the communist conspiracy. His General...

(fumbling with his words)

General...Smith is responsible for discharging the man honorably, knowing this fact. Do you think General Smith should be removed from the military?

GENERAL ZWICKER

That is not a question for me to decide.

MCCARTHY

You are ordered to answer it. You have a rather important job. I want to know how you feel about getting rid of Communists.

GENERAL ZWICKER

I'm all for it.

MCCARTHY

Okay, then please answer the question. I don't care how long we stay here. You will answer.

GENERAL ZWICKER

I'm sorry, Senator, you've lost me.
Do you mean how I feel toward
communists?

MCCARTHY

I mean exactly what I asked you,
General; nothing else. And anyone
with the brains of a 5 year old can
understand the question.

GENERAL ZWICKER

I do not think the General should
be removed from the military.

MCCARTHY

Then, General, you should be
removed from any command. Any man
who says 'I will protect another
General who protected communists'
is not fit to wear the uniform. You
sit here and knowingly mislead this
committee as to your knowledge
about Mr. Peress' situation -

GENERAL ZWICKER

I did nothing of the sort. I don't
like to have anyone impugn my
honesty, which you just about did.

MCCARTHY

Either your honesty or your
intelligence; I can't help
impugning one or the other.

A deafening silence.

McCarthy takes a deep breath - looks down and notices that
his hands are trembling ever so slightly.

Zwicker, an icy glare, surveys McCarthy with a slight hint of
satisfaction.

GENERAL ZWICKER

Any other questions...sir?

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING- SUNSET

Joe strides down the corridor, walks right to the exit with a
head of steam.

REPORTERS 1 and 2, whom we've met earlier, follow him
dutifully. REPORTER 1 is especially rabid.

REPORTER 1

Will Peress be testifying before
the committee?

REPORTER 2

Senator, how do you feel about
today's proceedings?

REPORTER 1

Did General Zwicker prove that --

MCCARTHY

Sorry boys, I can't do this right
now.

REPORTER 2

How's your wife, sir?

MCCARTHY

I'm about to find out. If you'll
excuse me.

Joe reaches the exit. As he pushes the door open --

REPORTER 1

What do you say to those who claim
you acted like a bully today?

Joe turns around, lets the door close. Sensing an opening, another reporter or two mosey over.

MCCARTHY

I'd say that's ridiculous. The
American people are fed up. So am
I. If my words reflect that, so be
it.

A pause.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

Next question.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM- NIGHT

Joe sits with his head in his hands, exhaustion emanating from his every movement.

Our Doctor approaches once again, a smile on his face.

DOCTOR

Good news. CT checked out okay, and
the internal bleeding is minimal.
Should be home by Thursday.

Joe smiles, relieved. Shakes the doctors hand.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Hell of a job today. Snuck a radio
into the OR. Couldn't miss it.

MCCARTHY
Appreciate it.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY- NIGHT

The SHRILL BEEP of hospital machinery. We're just outside
Jean's door, a clear view through the window.

Joe sits at Jean's side. She's awake. They talk animatedly.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- NIGHT

Closer to sunrise than sunset. Joe's office is the only one
with a light on. The rest of the place is pitch black.

Joe sits at his desk, gazing at a file.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS in the darkness.

Joe looks up, a bit alarmed. Turns his focus back to the
papers.

A beat.

The footsteps grow louder. Closer.

Joe looks up again; he's lost his focus.

More footsteps. And then a SOFT CRASH. Sounds like metal
hitting the ground.

Joe rises from his seat. Creeps toward the door. Silence.

He moves into the darkness, leaving us at the door. A shadow
is half cast over it. It's proudly engraved with his name and
position. We HOLD there for a moment.

The LIGHTS flicker on, illuminate the office with an
abundance of brightness.

Joe stands at the switch, looking for the source of the
noise.

Empty desks are the only thing in sight.

He moves around the office slowly. Looks to the conference room on his left.

Papers are strewn across it, most disorganized on the table and a few on the floor.

This was not the way the room was left. A stapler lays on the floor, ajar.

Joe checks his peripherals and then cautiously enters the...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM- CONTINUOUS

...where he picks up a piece of paper on the floor.

The contents of the sheet alarm him. He leans over the table, scans the others.

And as he's doing this, he hears the SLAM of a DOOR. Unclear whether it has been opened or shut.

Joe looks to the bullpen of desks. Waits for a figure to emerge. And one does.

Don reaches a desk, suitcase in hand. He's surprised to see Joe, noticeably frightened. He walks over to him.

DON

Look like you've just seen a ghost.

MCCARTHY

Was that you? Trying to pull a prank on me or something?

DON

How much have you had?

MCCARTHY

Stop assing around. Was it you who did this?

He motions to the mess of papers.

DON

How much?

Joe ignores the question.

MCCARTHY

You're telling me you know nothing about this?

DON
No.

MCCARTHY
Someone was in here. The lights
were off, it was dark. I heard
footsteps. Loud. Then a crash. Came
in and found our files all over the
place.

DON
Are you sure somebody was here?

Joe nods.

DON (CONT'D)
We need to call security.

MCCARTHY
Get Nancy over here -- have her
make sure nothing's missing.

DON
Who do you think it was?

Joe looks over at the WHITEBOARD which remains in the corner
of the room, complete with pictures of military personnel.
Their targets.

MCCARTHY
Take your pick.

EXT. RUSSELL SENATE BUILDING- MORNING

Ominous clouds that hint at rain.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- MORNING

Don sits across from a visibly exhausted McCarthy, who
lounges with his feet on his desk and eyes closed. A small
towel is pressed against his forehead.

MCCARTHY
Where's the number?

DON
They'll call as soon as it's in.

MCCARTHY
Well what do you think?

DON

Maybe 8.5, 9 million. I don't want you to be disappointed if we end up closer to 4 or 5. It's early. Remember that.

MCCARTHY

Uh huh.

INT. MICKEY'S BAR- NIGHT

Packed, buzzing with a bridge and tunnel crowd. A place to be seen and heard.

McCarthy sits at the bar, alone for the moment. Perhaps preparing

DON (V.O.)

19.

He turns around. There's Don, a smile on his face...beer in hand.

DON

19.

MCCARTHY

Stop assing around.

DON

19.3

MCCARTHY

What...?

Joe breathes a sigh of relief. Clearly, to some extent, a weight has been lifted off of his shoulders.

DON

Don't be disappointed if we drop tomorrow.

MCCARTHY

Always managing expectations.

DON

Don't want you to be angry.

MCCARTHY

They won't drop.

Joe motions to the bartender.

DON
Lets hope not.

MCCARTHY
They won't.

DON
I like your confidence.

A new round of drinks appear.

MCCARTHY
Why do you think the ratings were
so high?

DON
I don't know if we can point to one
thing --

MCCARTHY
They're angry. They wanted me to be
angry. I was. It doesn't matter
why. They want to see it, they want
something to actually --

DON
I also got the poll numbers.
They're not as favorable as we
hoped.

A SUIT walks by, slaps McCarthy on the back cheerfully. Joe
gives him a perfunctory nod.

MCCARTHY
And...

DON
People don't know what to think.
There's been some backlash.

MCCARTHY
But they're going to keep watching.

DON
They might.

MCCARTHY
They will. Maybe a few will object,
sure. They don't understand yet.
But they're entertained. They still
watch. We've got 'em. All that's
left is reaching our destination.

DON
I'm worried about the journey.

MCCARTHY
Nothing more than a means to an
end. We'll get there.

McCarthy takes a hefty swig of his drink. He puts it down.
Don covers the glass, as if to command his attention.

DON
I was just thinking maybe if you
adjusted the way you spoke to the
witnesses...

MCCARTHY
I haven't done a damn thing I need
to be ashamed of.

DON
I'm not saying you should be
ashamed. You should be proud. I
just want the rest of the world to,
to -- sympathize with you. To see
you the way I do.

MCCARTHY
The people want a show.

DON
They want justice.

MCCARTHY
And I'll give 'em both. Now drink
up. Celebrate.

Don musters a weak smile. A moment passes.

A POP BALLAD blasts from the jukebox...an audible yell of
approval from the crowd.

INT. COMMITTEE ROOM- MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: DAY TWO

MARVIN BELSKY, another military man in his mid 40's, sits at
the witness' table. There is counsel at his side.

Jean sits a few rows behind him, jotting notes on a pad. A
heavy dose of makeup doesn't completely obscure her cuts,
bruises.

MCCARTHY

Just so that there is no question, you have received no orders either from President Eisenhower or your commanding officer not to testify, have you?

BELSKY

No.

MCCARTHY

So you are free to testify here today, unless, of course, you invoke the fifth amendment?

BELSKY

As free as I can possibly be.

MCCARTHY

When you were drafted, you applied for a commission, did you not?

BELSKY

Yes.

MCCARTHY

Why were you denied this commission?

Belsky leans over to his counsel, whispers something in his ear. They confer for a moment.

BELSKY

I received notice that my forms were not properly completed.

MCCARTHY

In other words, you did not answer questions about your Communist background and as a result, you were denied the commission?

Following another mini conference with his counsel --

BELSKY

They never told me why I didn't properly complete the form.

MCCARTHY

So you have no idea why you were rejected?

BELSKY

I couldn't venture on giving you an opinion.

MCCARTHY

I just want to know whether you have any idea why this happened.

BELSKY

I couldn't venture to give you any idea why I was denied.

MCCARTHY

I'm not asking you whether you venture. I'm asking you whether you have any idea. What do you fail to understand?

BELSKY

No; I have no idea.

MCCARTHY

Is that a truthful answer?

Belsky pauses. Consults with his counsel again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COMMITTEE ROOM- MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: DAY EIGHT.

ZACHARY O'BRIEN, a 20 something cadet, sits at the witness table.

McCarthy shuffles through a series of papers in front of him as he speaks. His attention is divided.

MCCARTHY

Mr. O'Brien, quite frankly...you should be ashamed of yourself. I think the evidence is rather damning and completely --

McCarthy stops speaking, stares intently at a piece of paper.

To those in the gallery, it's surely a legal document, a piece of evidence, etc.

Wrong. It's a NEW YORK TIMES article:

RATINGS FREE FALL AMIDST ARMY INVESTIGATION.

McCarthy's glued to the paper. His eyes scan it furiously. A beat. He catches himself? "Where was I?"

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING- DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: DAY 16

A throng of protestors have gathered. Many hold signs that read "Americans for the Army", "McCarthy = Traitor", and similar slogans to the same effect.

Joe walks up the steps, a Secret Service agent flanking him. The protestors scream words of hate as he passes.

INT. COMMITTEE ROOM- DAY

The crowd has thinned, however its presence is still notable.

COLONEL ADAM POTTER is being questioned.

MCCARTHY

When you were asked the question...
(looks to a paper at his
side)

...did you belong to an
organization that believes in the
right to overthrow our government,
how did you respond?

POTTER

I respectfully decline to answer
that question under the protection
of the fifth amendment.

MCCARTHY

Were you a member of the Communist
party at the time you joined the
service?

POTTER

I respectfully decline to answer
that question...

MCCARTHY

(cutting him off)

Have you attended meetings for the
Communist cause with other
personnel, civilian or military,
while stationed at your base?

POTTER

I respectfully decline..

MCCARTHY

Have you attempted to recruit any personnel into the Communist cause?

POTTER

I...

With considerable bite --

MCCARTHY

Let me guess, you respectfully decline?

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DEN- NIGHT

Joe stares emptily into space as the radio crackles softly in the background.

Jean lays on the couch, fast asleep. There are overturned files and a half empty glass of wine at her side. She's been working just as hard as he has.

He looks at her- peaceful. For the moment.

ON JOE -- envious.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DEN- NIGHT

Jean, now awake, leans on Joe. She senses his worry, preoccupation.

JEAN

Tomorrow will be better.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- NIGHT

Dark and silent. Joe sits at his desk in a vain attempt to work.

A loud BANG. Joe nearly jumps out of his chair. Startled.

He runs to the window, looks to the street. A car has backfired. He takes a deep breath.

SUPERIMPOSE: DAY 32

INT. COMMITTEE ROOM- DAY

The typical setup. A slightly thinned crowd.

JOSEPH N. WELCH, 64, lightning quick wit despite his age, stares at McCarthy. His responses are drenched in sarcasm and indignation. They are calculated, perhaps even rehearsed.

MCCARTHY

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank you for appearing here today Mr. Welch.

WELCH

It is my pleasure.

MCCARTHY

As you have surely been aware, at the beginning of these proceedings, we found it quite difficult to contact you.

WELCH

My apologies.

MCCARTHY

But you are here today --

WELCH

Rest assured, when I heard you were calling I came running.

MCCARTHY

Your cooperation is much appreciated.

WELCH

Anything for you, Senator.

McCarthy is put off by the response. Moving on...

MCCARTHY

As general counsel for the Army, you have a very important position in maintaining the integrity of the Armed Services. Do we agree?

WELCH

Yes.

MCCARTHY

And what are your feelings as to the Communist problem in our country?

WELCH

My feelings? Report 'em and get
every one of them out by sundown.

MCCARTHY

Is that how you feel?

WELCH

It is what I said.

MCCARTHY

Get them out by sundown, huh?

WELCH

(smirking)

That's right. Each and every one.

MCCARTHY

I think it is important to note Mr. Welch that you have been employing a young man named -- Fischer -- who for a number of years has worked for an organization that is the legal bulwark of the Communist party. This is an organization that swings to the defense of anyone that has been accused of being a Communist. Mr. Fischer is still in your law firm today.

(looks at his watch)

I expect you'll remove him by sundown today, time permitting. Whether you knew he was a member of that Communist organization or not, I don't know. I assume you did not, Mr. Welch, because I get the impression that, while you are quite an actor, you play for a laugh, I don't think you have any conception of the danger of the Communist Party.

Chairman Mundt leans over to McCarthy, whispers in his ear. They confer quietly as Welch speaks.

WELCH

Senator --

McCarthy nods as if to acknowledge Welch while still talking to Mundt.

WELCH (CONT'D)

May I have your attention?

MCCARTHY

I am listening to you. I can listen with one ear.

WELCH

I want you to listen with both.

McCarthy stops, stares at Welch.

WELCH (CONT'D)

Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness. Fred Fisher is a young man who went to Harvard Law and came into my firm and is starting what looks to be a brilliant career with us.

Little did I dream you could be so reckless and cruel as to do an injury to that lad. Fred is not a Communist. It is true he has done work with the National Lawyers Guild. The work he does is not for the sake of ideology. He practices law because that is what he loves. However, I fear he will stop doing so because he will bear a scar needlessly inflicted by you in front of millions of people.

The air is sucked out of the room.

MCCARTHY

You talk about being cruel and reckless but the truly reckless act here is the perjury you are committing. I have papers here that says Mr. Fisher has long been labeled a member of the party as far back as 1944 and --

WELCH

Senator, can we please drop this? We know he belonged to the Lawyers Guild.

MCCARTHY

Mr. Fisher was in contact with such well established Communist organizations such as --

WELCH

Let us not assassinate this lad further, Senator.

(MORE)

WELCH (CONT'D)
You have done enough. Have you no
sense of decency sir, at long last?
Have you left no sense of decency?

MCCARTHY
(exploding)
I will finish this, Mr. Welch,
whether you like it or not. Now,
you recommended Mr. Fisher as
counsel...

WELCH
Mr. McCarthy, I will not discuss
this with you further. If there is
a God in heaven, it will do neither
you nor your cause any good. I will
not discuss it further. You, Mr.
Chairman, may, if you will, call
the next witness.

Welch rises from his chair with defiance and exits -- his
back turned towards McCarthy.

CHAIRMAN MUNDT
We'll take a fifteen minute recess.

A loud chatter erupts in the gallery. McCarthy rises from his
seat in a huff and exits.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING- MOMENTS LATER

McCarthy walks down the crowded corridor. A large crowd has
gathered no more than forty feet away from him.

The attraction - a teary eyed Joseph Welch who is being
interviewed by an enormous contingent of the media.

McCarthy turns and walks in the opposite direction, eager to
get away.

EXT. THE MCCARTHY HOME - DAY

Joe walks down the driveway, on his way to retrieve the
morning's newspaper.

He reaches it. Picks it up. Gazes across the street
momentarily. Stops.

He sees a man leaning on his car -- staring in his direction.
A beat. The man gets in his car. Pulls away.

INT. MCCARTHY'S STUDY- NIGHT

Joe peeks out the window, drink in hand. He sees a car idling across the street again.

INT. GUN SHOP- DAY

A .38. Joe holds it in his hand. Feels comfortable.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DEN- DAY

The noise of water running from upstairs. Joe quietly reads the paper, gun at his side.

A loud, forceful KNOCK on the door.

Joe quickly reaches for the gun.

MCCARTHY

Jean?

No answer.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

Jean? Who's here?

He moves towards the door, gun behind his back. His hand shakes.

Joe looks out of the window -- can only see the shadow of a man. This does nothing to alleviate his fears.

He reaches the door. Flings it open as if to catch the person off guard with his gun drawn.

Standing in front of him is LEONARD HALL, 55, a genial Southerner. He is the Chairman of the RNC.

HALL

Joe, what the hell is going on?

Joe lowers the gun. Motions for Hall to come in.

MCCARTHY

I'm sorry. I thought --

HALL

Thought what? I was a damn thief? I came to check up on you for chrissake.

Hall takes a seat in the den. McCarthy follows suit.

HALL (CONT'D)

What, you're not going to offer me
a drink? I know you've certainly
got some.

A vain attempt at humor. McCarthy rises and pours Hall a
drink.

HALL (CONT'D)

How have you been holding up?

MCCARTHY

Holding up?

HALL

The hearings were...difficult.

MCCARTHY

I'm fine.

HALL

Good.

MCCARTHY

You don't need to ass around. Tell
me what's going on.

HALL

I, uh...have some news.

MCCARTHY

I do have a phone.

HALL

This is delicate.

MCCARTHY

Dwight again?

McCarthy hands Hall the drink. Takes a seat.

HALL

No. That would be cleaner.

MCCARTHY

Who?

HALL

It's Murrow.

INT. CAR- DAY

McCarthy and Don in the backseat, both dressed nicely.

MCCARTHY

I'm gonna tell Friendly where he can shove it as soon as he agrees to can this garbage. This -- this is about national security. That's what I'll stress. He can't really want war.

An uncomfortable silence.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

I'll take some sense into him. Turn on the charm.

McCarthy smiles faintly.

EXT. CBS HEADQUARTERS- DAY

A towering building that bears the CBS logo. The car reaches a security checkpoint just outside of the building.

INT. CAR- MOMENTS LATER

Don rolls down the window, addresses the Security Guard who holds a clipboard in his hand.

DON

Don Surine for Fred Friendly.

The guard checks the clipboard, nods and waves them forward. Don rolls the window up.

A beat.

The car rolls to a stop. McCarthy reaches for the door handle. Don puts his hand on Joe's shoulder, stops him.

DON (CONT'D)

Joe, I've been thinking...it would be better if I took care of this myself.

MCCARTHY

What -- what do you mean?

DON

(half convincing)

Like you said, we don't want to have to deal with the questions. If you walk in there, the secretaries call their friends. Friends call the press. You know how it goes.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)
That wouldn't be much fun, would it?

MCCARTHY
I've got a hat in the back. I could throw it on and...

Trying to lighten the mood --

DON
Nothing could disguise that ugly mug.

(pause)
I'll be back before you know it.

Don exits before McCarthy can protest. McCarthy sits quietly, troubled.

DISSOLVE TO:

McCarthy slumped over in the backseat. His tie is loosened, sleeves rolled up.

Don enters, feebly attempts to mask his disappointment. He offers nothing.

MCCARTHY
How did we make out?

DON
Who do we know higher up?

INT. RESTAURANT- NIGHT

The haze of cigarette smoke.

A five star restaurant. The type it takes months to get a reservation at. McCarthy and Don sit at a table with CHARLIE KORN, 60, a power broker.

CHARLIE
I hear they're pushing Kennedy as the next candidate.

MCCARTHY
Please. We may have to do something about that.

CHARLIE
You still want to take a shot at The White House?

MCCARTHY
Of course. It's only a natural
progression.

Charlie nods agreeably, does his best to conceal his surprise.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
About this Murrow affair.

CHARLIE
Appetizers first. We'll have plenty
of time for talk later.

Charlie raises his glass to Joe. Their glasses clink.

DISSOLVE TO:

Empty glasses. Scraps of food on fancy china. The aftermath of a feast. The men sit back in their chars, relaxed.

MCCARTHY
I won't beat around the bush any
long. Murrow, this special -- it
can't happen.

A WAITER approaches.

WAITER
Can I get you anything else?

CHARLIE
We'll take three Old Fashioned's.

The waiter scurries away. McCarthy surveys the empty glasses around them.

MCCARTHY
Finally, someone that can keep up.
Don has always had the stomach of a
teenage girl.

The men laugh.

CHARLIE
You know I'm very sympathetic to
the cause...

MCCARTHY
I knew we could count on ya.

CHARLIE

But -- as much sway as I may have,
I still have a man or two to answer
to myself.

MCCARTHY

What happened to "I run the
building", "I can push anything
through" --

His tone taking a turn for the worse, Don tries to deflect --

DON

Hey, bosses are a pain in the ass
right.

Not much laughter.

CHARLIE

I tried. They're going full speed
ahead.

MCCARTHY

I knew we were talking to the wrong
man.

The waiter returns with their drinks. McCarthy downs his in
one long, desperate sip.

He rises from his seat.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

Have to use the boys room.

He walks away. A silence.

Charlie removes a pack from cigarettes from his jacket,
offers one to Don who accepts it. They light up.

CHARLIE

When you need it, I'm sure we can
find you some good work.

DON

What do you mean?

CHARLIE

Sometimes we're too far in the
trees to see the forest.

ON DON, unsure how to react --

INT. BATHROOM- MOMENTS LATER

McCarthy stumbles in, heads straight for a stall. He lowers his head over the toilet. Clutches his stomach.

INT. RESTAURANT- MOMENTS LATER

CHARLIE
He's toxic.

DON
The hearings could have gone better
but our numbers still look good.
The base is strong.

CHARLIE
Are you familiar with John Morgan?

Don nods.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Looking for a director of
communications. He's throwing
together some new energy
conglomerate. I could put in a good
word.

DON
No. Thank you.

Reassuring himself until he believes it --

DON (CONT'D)
It'll be okay. He's gonna come out
of this alright.

He takes a long puff on the cigarette. The smoke trails upwards.

CUT TO:

A PAIR of bloodshot, brown eyes open. They belong to McCarthy and we are in a...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM- NIGHT

A cup of coffee rests on a stand a few feet away from his bed. A small pillar of smoke rises from it.

McCarthy looks around, bewildered. Checks his body- unsure of his ailment. He searches for wounds on his arms. Legs. Nothing.

Don enters, relieved to see Joe conscious.

DON
How you feeling, sunshine?

MCCARTHY
What happened?

DON
Found you with your head in the
toilet at Robertos.

MCCARTHY
So why the hell am I here?

DON
You wouldn't wake up.

Panic rising...

MCCARTHY
Did anyone see?

DON
No. I handled it. Had to call Jean
though.

McCarthy rolls his eyes.

DON (CONT'D)
They made me.

A silence. A DOCTOR enters, his expression glum. He gives Don a glance that says "get out".

DON (CONT'D)
I'll leave you two alone.

We follow Don as he exits. He shuts the door on his way out. But peers through the WINDOW on it.

The doctor appears stern, as if he's delivering a lecture. McCarthy nods agreeably, his mind clearly elsewhere.

DON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What'd he say?

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- NIGHT

MCCARTHY
The usual. You know doctors.

DON
I know doctors?

MCCARTHY
Nothing too important. How's the response coming along?

DON
Still looking into Murrow. Might have some questionable associations.

MCCARTHY
Good. Find them and get me a draft by noon.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DEN- NIGHT

Jean sits on the couch sipping a glass of wine. She stares at the TELEVISION. Joe takes a seat alongside her, nonchalant.

On the TELEVISION --

EDWARD R. MURROW. His voice is strong, his words ring with conviction. He stares directly into the camera. A piercing glance.

MURROW
The Senator has traveled far, interviewed many, terrorized some. He has interrogated a varied assortment of what he calls "Fifth Amendment Communists." As Senator Flanders of Vermont said of McCarthy today: "He dons war paint; he goes into his war dance; he emits his war whoops; he goes forth to battle...and he proudly returns with the scalp of a pink army dentist."

ON THE COUCH --

Jean picks up her glass of wine, it's empty. She gets up; she definitely needs a refill.

McCarthy sits quietly...waiting for more.

BACK TO THE TELEVISION --

MURROW (CONT'D)

Upon what meat doth Senator McCarthy feed? Two of the staples of his diet are his investigation, protected by immunity, and the half truth. We herewith submit samples of both. First, the half-truth...

DISSOLVE TO:

On Murrow. A dramatic pause.

MURROW (CONT'D)

The actions of the Junior Senator from Wisconsin have caused alarm and dismay amongst our allies abroad and given considerable comfort to our enemies. And whose fault is that? Not really his. He didn't create the situation, he merely exploited it, and rather successfully. Cassius was right. "The fault dear Brutus is not in our stars, but in ourselves."

BACK TO THE COUCH --

McCarthy rises from the couch and shuts off the television. He sits back down for a moment, distracted...perhaps in a state of shock.

A long, lingering silence washes over him.

EXT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DC- DAY

The crack of dawn. McCarthy scoots down the driveway, grabs the newspaper.

The headline:

"MURROW TAKES COURAGEOUS, HEROIC STAND."

Joe gently lays the paper down on the ground, heads back toward the house.

INT. MCCARTHY'S STUDY- NIGHT

A madhouse. Hordes of people running around. Expansive lights. Microphones being set up. A camera focused on the chair in which McCarthy normally sits.

McCarthy's back is to us as he sits in his chair. He wipes his brow as sweat drips down from it. Looks at the notes he has prepared.

A moment passes. Don stands alongside the camera. Looks at Joe.

DON
We're on in three, two...

He gives a signal to McCarthy who begins to speak.

MCCARTHY

Good evening. Mr. Edward R. Murrow, Educational Director of the Columbia Broadcasting System, devoted his program to an attack on the work of the United States Senate investigating committee and on me personally as its Chairman. Now, over the past four years, he has made repeated attacks upon me and those fighting communists. Now, of course, neither Joe McCarthy nor Edward R. Murrow is of any great importance as individuals. We are only important in our relations to the great struggle to preserve our American liberties.

A pause for dramatic effect.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

Now ordinarily, I wouldn't take the time out of the important work at hand to answer Murrow. However in this case I felt justified in doing so because Murrow is a symbol, the leader and the cleverest of the jackal pack which is always found at the throat of anyone who dare expose communists and traitors.

In the corner, Jean nods in agreement, silently urging her husband on.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

I am compelled by that fact to say to you that Mr. Edward R. Murrow, as far as back as twenty years ago, was engaged in propaganda for communist causes. Mr. Murrow sponsored a communist school in Moscow...

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DEN- NIGHT

McCarthy picks at a plate of takeout. He isn't enjoying it, throws his fork down on the plate in frustration.

The RING of the telephone. Another ring. It stops.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS approaching. Jean enters, worry on her face.

JEAN

We need to go to the office.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- NIGHT

McCarthy sits at his desk, gazes out the window. Jean stands at his side.

Don faces them, a sheet of paper in his hand. He's at a loss for words.

JEAN

A censure?

DON

Yes.

MCCARTHY

For what?

DON

'Acting contrary to Senatorial ethics.'

A hearty laugh from McCarthy.

DON (CONT'D)

Impairing the dignity of the Senate. Obstructing constitutional processes. Abusing the members of the subcommittee including the Honorable General Ralph J. Zwicker.' It goes on.

JEAN

It's ludicrous. What does this mean?

DON

It's a public lynching. Our credibility, our poll numbers, any shots at running for higher office...it all goes right out the window.

JEAN

Is it going to pass?

A brief silence that could serve as an answer to the question.

DON

We need to go on the offensive...just to be certain. I'm scheduling face time with Wiley, Magnuson, Capehart. Anyone who might be on the fence.

MCCARTHY

Don't stop there.

DON

Who else?

MCCARTHY

Every one with a vote. The bigger we defeat this thing, the more they'll regret it.

CUT TO:

A series of rapid fire shots:

McCarthy exits a series of airports. Dulles, O'Hare, Logan, etc.

CUT TO:

McCarthy, in full salesman mode, giving his best pitch to an anonymous Senator off screen.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

It's lunacy.

Connecticut's PRESCOTT BUSH as McCarthy addresses him.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

What does it say about us --

The office of Nebraska's DWIGHT GRISWOLD.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
 -- if we allow this to pass? Who
 are we?

A meeting with Illinois' EVERETT DIRKSEN.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
 Who are we? ' Senatorial ethics'?

A lunch with Idaho's HERMAN WELKER.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
 I thought it was ethical to shake a
 Senator's hand; not step on his
 foot.

A pitch in a lobby to Delaware's JOSEPH FREAR.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
 We've done great work with these
 subcommittees. To censure would be
 to dishonor --

Over a cigar with Florida's GEORGE SMATHERS.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
 -- every minute we've spent in
 those rooms. Now let me ask you a
 question, George.

In the study of Utah's WALLACE BENNETT.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
 Do you regret fighting Communists,
 Wallace?

Even faster cuts:

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
 Do you regret what we've done,
 Mike?

Another office.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
 Francis?

Pitching in a restaurant...

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
 Earle?

...a hallway.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Lester? Do you regret showing
America's enemies no mercy?

And we're back in...

INT. PRESCOTT BUSH'S OFFICE- DAY

SENATOR BUSH
You make a strong case.

A grin falls across McCarthy's face.

MCCARTHY
So you're with us.

SENATOR BUSH
I'm still weighing my options. You
know how it goes.

...and that grin slowly fades.

MCCARTHY
Ah. Of course.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD- SUNSET

Bobby Kennedy shifts in his seat on a small set of bleachers, uncomfortable. Joe sits across from him. Waiting.

MCCARTHY
I need you here.

BOBBY KENNEDY
Let me think about it.

Joe smiles, slaps Bobby on the shoulder in an all too friendly way.

MCCARTHY
Don't play hard to get. Come on.
Who gave you a job?

BOBBY KENNEDY
Workers Comp reform. That's all I asked.

MCCARTHY
What?

BOBBY KENNEDY

You should have let me work on it.
Or the Flanders bill. Or the
immigration proposal. Anything but
the trial.

MCCARTHY

What?

BOBBY KENNEDY

We could have stuck together. Done
some good things. You got in the
way.

MCCARTHY

Bobby, don't make me beg here.

A sad silence.

BOBBY KENNEDY

I appreciate you making the trip.
It was good to see you.

He rises, pats Joe on the shoulder, and stalks off into the distance.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM- NIGHT

Back to the white board. The military photos are gone. In their place are three columns and a long list of names.

The columns read - "Yes", "No", and "Undecided".

The "Yes" and "No" columns aren't long. Nearly even. The "Undecided" column almost fills up the entirety of the board.

EXT. RUSSELL SENATE BUILDING- DAY

The lobby is bustling with traffic. McCarthy stands in a corner, secluded. He watches the passersby, one of whom happens to be Don.

McCarthy checks his watch.

DON

We've already got an abstention.

MCCARTHY

Who?

DON

Kennedy.

MCCARTHY
You've got to be kidding me.

DON
One vote won't make or break us.

MCCARTHY
What will?

DON
I talked to Frear.

MCCARTHY
And?

DON
They're voting in a bloc.

MCCARTHY
For or against?

DON
That depends.

MCCARTHY
On what?

DON
They want an apology. An admission
of guilt.

MCCARTHY
Guilt?

DON
If you apologize on the floor for
Zwicker and the rest of it, this
thing is dead in the water. Two
words. That's all it'll take. We
can salvage it all.

Confusion washes over Joe's face. A moment passes. That
confusion morphs into some certainty. Joe hardens.

SENATOR FLANDERS (V.O.)
The Senator has tainted the
prestigious history of both the
United States Senate --

INT. THE SENATE FLOOR- DAY

A packed hearing. Both chambers are full. McCarthy waits in
the wings, out of sight.

SENATOR RALPH FLANDERS speaks. He's 55, balding. There's anger in his voice.

SENATOR FLANDERS
-- and the great state of Wisconsin. He has badgered and abused our servicemen. He has denigrated any who stepped in his twisted path. He has hurled accusations at fine American citizens, regardless of their validity. And above all, he has brought out the worst in us. He has preyed on our fears and used them for his own political gain. He is a godless man.

Flanders roams the floor, appeals to his fellow Senators. McCarthy shakes his head in dissent.

SENATOR FLANDERS (CONT'D)
We must send a message. This behavior cannot stand. The censure must pass. Regardless of our political leanings, there is a standard to uphold. A standard of honesty and decency. This standard does not exist in Senator McCarthy's world. Let us show him that it most certainly does in ours.

The Senator takes a seat amongst his colleagues, some of whom shake his hand.

McCarthy walks towards the center of the floor. All eyes turn to him. As he takes his place at a podium, a silence falls over the hall.

MCCARTHY
Well, that was a vote of confidence.

Nobody laughs.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
I'm here today, whether I agree with it or not...

He trails off, loses his train of thought.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
What we have done has not been an easy task.
(MORE)

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

It has not been with a light heart nor a blind eye. And whether we're from St. Louis or New York, Jacksonville or Green Bay, there are things every person can agree on. One of those things is Communism. Nobody here contends that communism is not a threat. Our differences lie in our approaches to combating it. I have sought to never give Communists comfort. To never allow our security to be compromised and to cut the Communist support system at its throat.

(pause)

For this, I have no regrets. I do not apologize.

A very large group of his colleagues exit. It's a distraction. He continues on.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

I do not apologize for being tough on Communists. I do not apologize for doing what I think is right. I do not apologize --

A second exodus. Another dozen of his colleagues. Only twenty or so Senators fill the vast chamber. McCarthy may as well be talking to himself.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

Senator Flanders alluded to, uh, a great number of errors I have made. He speaks as if this is some sort of witch hunt. As if there is no evidence for our claims. As if I leafed through the pages of the phone book and designated communists at random. Despite the naysayers, there is much to be proud of. We have done good things. Important things.

('I am not over')

This is far from over.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- NIGHT

The room is dark, blinds closed.

McCarthy leans against a makeshift bar adjacent to his desk. He stares emptily into a bottle of vodka.

Don stands with his arms folded, speechless.

MCCARTHY

How many?

DON

We've got twenty one with us.

MCCARTHY

Twenty one, huh?

He shakes his head, smiles faintly in disbelief.

DON

They're spineless, the rest of
them. They don't understand...

MCCARTHY

All 70? They know what's best for
them.

DON

We've already started damage
control. Once the censure vote is
through, we'll torch 'em.

MCCARTHY

Forget it.

A stunned silence.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

No more fighting.

McCarthy reaches for the vodka, pours it into a glass. Fills
it to the brim.

DON

What about reelection?

MCCARTHY

Two years is a long time.

McCarthy raises the glass in front of him, looks directly at
Don.

DON

Stop.

MCCARTHY

What?

DON

Put it down.

McCarthy looks at Don as if he has three heads.

DON (CONT'D)
One more drop is all it'll take.

MCCARTHY
How do you --

DON
I spoke to the doctor myself.
Wanted to see if there was anything
I can do to help or...

MCCARTHY
You didn't trust me?

DON
Should I have? You could keel over
right here. That would be it. Is
that how this is going to end?

McCarthy raises the glass to his lips and chugs it until
there's nothing left.

He places it on the table. Don grabs it, takes it away.

DON (CONT'D)
What the hell is wrong with you?

MCCARTHY
What do you think you're doing?

McCarthy holds his hand out, waits for Don to give him back
the glass. Nothing.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
That's why they sell them in sets.

He takes another glass off the bar. Begins to pour a drink
into it.

DON
Stop it.

MCCARTHY
It's one drink.

DON
You think this is funny? You know,
there are other people invested in
your life besides you.

MCCARTHY
And I appreciate all two of them.

DON

You're not quitting now.

MCCARTHY

I think that's for me to decide.

DON

No, it's not. I have worked my ass off for you. I have done everything you've ever asked.

MCCARTHY

And I appreciate it.

DON

Yeah, well that's not enough. We've come too far to stop now. You said it yourself, this isn't over.

MCCARTHY

You think I believe that?

DON

You said it.

MCCARTHY

You know me better than that.

DON

We need to fight this.

MCCARTHY

I don't think so.

DON

If you were so tired of fighting, why didn't you just apologize?

MCCARTHY

It was never an option.

DON

It was always an option.

MCCARTHY

If I apologized, I'd look...

DON
Human.

MCCARTHY
Like a coward.

A silence.

DON

So what are you going to do with
the rest of your life?

MCCARTHY

According to your friend, the
doctor, I don't have much time to
begin with. So I suppose I don't
have anything to worry about.

Don shakes his head, disgusted. McCarthy raises his glass to
his lips again.

DON

Don't.

McCarthy drinks it defiantly. Don storms out, slams the door
shut. McCarthy takes a seat at his desk. A piercing silence.

INT. THE OFFICE- MOMENTS LATER

Don stands hunched over a desk, on the phone.

DON

Charlie, it's me. Tell John Morgan
I'm interested.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, KITCHEN- NIGHT

Joe stands over the sink, a handful of dirty dishes in it. He
picks one up, begins to scrub it.

The radio BOOMS in the background.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

...and The Dow Jones rose one
hundred and twenty today, marking
the first big gain in the ten days.
(a pause)
In political news...

Joe's grip on the dish tightens. He continues to scrub. A
little harder this time.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The Senate voted by an overwhelming
margin today to censure Senator
Joseph McCarthy.

Joe scrubs furiously, his anger pouring out.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The vote, largely uncontested by
the Senator's own party, passed by
a tally of 67 to 22.

The dish cracks. Joe puts it down, leans against the sink.
Inhales.

INT. THE OFFICE- MORNING

Joe heads toward his office, passes Jean on the way.

MCCARTHY
Tell Don I want to go over a few
things with him.

Joe keeps walking.

JEAN
Joe.

He stops, turns to her. She rises from her desk, almost
whispering.

MCCARTHY
What is it?

JEAN
Don isn't here.

MCCARTHY
Where is he?

JEAN
He's got an interview.

MCCARTHY
With who? The Post?

JEAN
Not that -- a job interview.

MCCARTHY
What?

JEAN
John Morgan.

MCCARTHY
I see.

Joe keeps walking, opens the door and enters his...

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

He shuts the door. Takes a seat at his desk. Idles. Unsure of what to do.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DEN- DAY

The television booms. Joe watches it from the couch. It's a news program. The image of Eisenhower delivering a speech fills the screen.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, KITCHEN- DAY

Joe enters, looks to Jean who lounges at the table.

MCCARTHY

Has he called back yet?

She shakes her head with a frown. Joe moves to the window. He sees

A SNOWFLAKE as it gently hits the ground.

JEAN

First snow?

Joe nods quietly, his glum expression reflected in the window.

EXT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, D.C.- DAY

The bleakness of winter. Fresh snow on the driveway. A gust of freezing wind.

EXT. WASHINGTON BOOKSTORE- DAY

A display window is pelted with snow. Among its contents, an issue of Picture Review. Its cover article: "Whatever Happened to Joe McCarthy?"

The snow continues to fall, slowly covers the display.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DEN- NIGHT

Joe rubs his forehead, grimacing slightly. A KNOCK at the door.

Joe rises and heads down a...

HALLWAY

...where he reaches the front door. Opens it. It's Don, bundled up with snow all over his coat.

MCCARTHY

Don, I wasn't expecting you --

DON

Figured it was best if we spoke in person.

MCCARTHY

I called.

DON

I know.

An uncomfortable silence.

DON (CONT'D)

You gonna let me freeze?

CUT TO:

The SHRILL WHISTLE of a teapot on the stove. A hand grips its handle and picks it up.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, KITCHEN- MOMENTS LATER

Don sits at the kitchen table, cigarette lit. Joe pours him a glass of tea, takes a seat across from him.

DON

Four months. That's how long I lasted at Morgan's firm.

MCCARTHY

You quit?

DON

Guess you're a hard boss to top.

MCCARTHY

I'm -- you know I'm not good at this.

DON

Good at what?

MCCARTHY
Apologizing.

DON
It's okay.

A silence.

DON (CONT'D)
Feeling alright?

MCCARTHY
Can't even drink anymore. And the
headaches -- two whiskeys and I'm
out.

DON
Maybe it's a good thing. Have you
stopped?

Joe says nothing.

DON (CONT'D)
I'm sure it just takes time.

MCCARTHY
Yeah. Time.
(shifting gears)
You haven't missed much.

DON
Things have been quiet.

MCCARTHY
I'm just as loud.

DON
What's changed?

MCCARTHY
Nobody will listen.

DON
We'll keep trying.

ON JOE -- processing the implication of "we". He smiles
faintly.

INT. THE SENATE FLOOR- DAY

Majority Leader LYNDON B JOHNSON sits at the head of the
room.

LYNDON B JOHNSON
We'll now hear the Senator from
Wisconsin.

McCarthy, standing at his podium, addresses his colleagues.

MCCARTHY
I'd like to put forward a motion in response to the President's plan to hold a summit in Geneva. I'm standing here to tell you that it is our duty to ensure that this summit does not go the route of Potsdam and Yalta. We cannot sellout again. I'd like to introduce Bill 6012 today which would require any summit to determine the status of the communist powers that have joined the Warsaw Pact. As you can read here on page twelve, paragraph three --

LYNDON B JOHNSON
Senator, I don't think we need to hear anymore.

MCCARTHY
With all due respect, we certainly do.

LYNDON B JOHNSON
Why don't we take it to the floor for a vote?

MCCARTHY
Great.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE SENATE FLOOR- LATER

Johnson stares down at a piece of paper.

LYNDON B JOHNSON
In response to Bill 6012, sponsored by the Senator from Wisconsin, there are 4 yays and 77 nays.

On McCarthy -- crestfallen but doing his best to hide the disappointment.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY- DAY

McCarthy and Don walk quickly, with purpose.

MCCARTHY

And what am I supposed to talk
about here?

DON

The usual stuff.

MCCARTHY

Usual stuff?

DON

You know what I mean. The room
seats about seven hundred. Ray
assured me it would be packed and
he's giving us more money than
anybody else.

MCCARTHY

Just seven hundred?

DON

Still plenty of people.

McCarthy looks as if he has just digested some bad food.

The two reach a set of doors with a sign labeled
'Auditorium'. They open them and enter the...

INT. AUDITORIUM- CONTINUOUS

There are no more than seventy people seated. They spread
themselves out amongst the auditorium. It's disconcerting for
both men.

MCCARTHY

What time were we supposed to give
the speech?

DON

3.

MCCARTHY

And what time is it now?

DON

3:15.

McCarthy reaches a small set of steps that lead to the podium in the room. As he ascends, he looks at Don like a lamb heading to the slaughter.

Joe looks at the crowd and smiles.

MCCARTHY

I want to, uh, thank you all for coming out tonight.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, DEN- NIGHT

McCarthy watches television with a glass of bourbon in hand.

MCCARTHY (V.O.)

There's no place I'd rather be.

INT. AUDITORIUM- MOMENTS LATER

MCCARTHY

In the army, I earned the nickname 'Tail-Gunner Joe'. I was proud of it. It was about my fight. My, uh, determination.

INT. MILITARY OFFICE- DAY

A 30 year old McCarthy sits back in a chair, places his feet on a desk.

MCCARTHY (V.O.)

I flew thirty two combat missions in the war.

INT. AUDITORIUM- MOMENTS LATER

MCCARTHY

My determination has not waned in the face of what I have encountered in Washington.

INT. MCCARTHY'S OFFICE- NIGHT

McCarthy and Don's argument is replayed inaudibly. Don storms out.

MCCARTHY (V.O.)

I have not lost my desire to fight.

INT. AUDITORIUM- MOMENTS LATER

MCCARTHY

For the past eight months, I have sat and watched as the communists in this country have grown more safe and prosperous. For the past eight months, I have seen first hand how government operates when it is run by the inept.

(pause)

President Eisenhower suggested last week in the New York Times that a summit conference with the Soviets would be held later this year.

McCarthy pauses, wipes his brow. Still nervous.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

I say to you that you cannot offer friendship to tyrants and murderers without advancing the cause of tyranny and murder. Our objective must be the eradication of communism from the face of the Earth. Coexistence with the communists is neither possible nor honorable.

A pause. He waits for any affirmation. Nothing.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

Communism cannot be, uh, tolerated.
It cannot be...

He trails off. Loses his train of thought.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

We cannot embrace it. We must fight. Thank you.

INT. BAR- NIGHT

A cloudy haze of smoke. The place is run down, only a few customers. The perfect hideout.

Joe sits at the bar, stares into his empty glass. Signals the bartender for another.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM- NIGHT

Joe sits at the edge of the bed, pale. The DOCTOR stands across from him.

MCCARTHY

How long?

DOCTOR

Hard to tell with any certainty.

MCCARTHY

Just give me an idea.

DOCTOR

Maybe four, five months. You need to think about a transplant.

EXT. HOSPITAL- NIGHT

Joe exits the building, a patients wristband on his arm.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, D.C.- NIGHT

Joe stumbles in the door, clearly drunk. He shuts the door.

He enters the...

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, KITCHEN- CONTINUOS

...where he's surprised to see Jean sitting at the table. There's a glass of wine next to her.

Jean's expression is stern. Her eyes immediately wander to his wristband.

JEAN

Where have you been?

Joe gives her a kiss.

MCCARTHY

Office.

Jean sniffs, can smell the booze from a mile away.

JEAN

The scissors are in the drawer. Cut the wristband off before I put you to bed.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, BEDROOM- NIGHT

Both husband and wife lie in bed, eyes open.

JEAN
What'd the doctor say?

MCCARTHY
Nothing to worry about.

JEAN
Good.
(as to reassure herself)
Good.

Joe turns over in bed, his back facing Jean.

MCCARTHY
Goodnight.

Jean turns over too, her back facing his. Her eyes begin to well.

JEAN
Goodnight.

INT. THE MCCARTHY HOME, STUDY- NIGHT

TAP. TAP. TAP.

Joe taps a pen repeatedly on the receiver of his phone. What the hell is he doing?

Jean enters, puzzled.

JEAN
What are you --

MCCARTHY
Breaks up the wiretap.

JEAN
The wiretap?

Still tapping away --

MCCARTHY
What's up?

JEAN
(stumbling)
I -- I'm headed to the store. You want the usual?

Joe nods. Jean walks over, kisses him. He stops tapping and embraces her.

JEAN (CONT'D)
I'll be back soon.

Jean exits. Joe hangs up the receiver. A beat.

We hear an ENGINE ROAR to life. Jean's car. Joe reaches into his pocket and retrieves a set of keys.

He inserts the key in the bottom drawer of his desk. Removes a pristine bottle of bourbon from it.

DISSOLVE TO:

Three shot glasses are filled with liquor. Joe looks at them, contemplative. He picks one up. Throws it back.

He reaches for the next. Drinks it.

And the third -- his hand shakes ever so slightly. Down the hatch.

A moment passes. He slumps back in his chair.

EXT. WASHINGTON MONUMENT- NIGHT

A beautiful view overlooking the capitol. Joe and Don sit on a bench, taking it all in. A long silence.

Joe surveys the monument and the pool of water that lies in its shadow.

DON
We've got another gig lined up for next Thursday. The crowd will be bigger this time. I promise.

MCCARTHY
I owe you.

DON
No, I'm still kicking myself about the last one. I should have made sure they could fill the space -- it was stupid.

MCCARTHY
You did the best you could.

DON
Just wait till Thursday.

Almost laughing, as if it's a year away...

MCCARTHY
Thursday.

EXT. BACKYARD- NIGHT

A fire pit. Joe stands over it with a glass of whiskey at his side.

In it -- A MIX OF PICTURES. DOCUMENTS. FILES. Pictures of people and places. General Zwicker. Fort Monmouth. Joseph Welch. Army records.

Joe steps back for a moment- takes it all in. He pours the remainder of the whiskey into the fire pit.

Lights a match. Holds it for a fleeting moment - hesitant. As if this is his life he is destroying.

He throws it into the pit. The pictures and files slowly burn.

His past disintegrates before his eyes. Joe waits until there's nothing left but blackness. Slowly walks away.

He shuts the door behind him.

A plume of smoke rises from the pit. It fades into the impenetrable darkness of night.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.

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