



FORGIVE ME

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SMASH OPEN:

A WALL CLOCK in a bland room. Not sure where. All we know is it's 4:01 pm and that clock is LOUD --

TICK, TICK, TICK --

In the foreground we see MOVEMENT, but can't tell what it is. We slowly PUSH IN on the clock as a conversation starts, quick and sharp. A fencing match.

DR. KAPLAN (O.S.)
Why don't you start by telling me
why you're here.

MIKE (O.S.)
That's really your first question?

DR. KAPLAN (O.S.)
Is there something wrong with it?

MIKE (O.S.)
You already know the answer.

DR. KAPLAN (O.S.)
I know the simple answer. I'm
looking for the deeper one.

MIKE (O.S.)
See, that's a mistake, telling me
what you're really after.

DR. KAPLAN (O.S.)
You're not used to questions, are
you Mr. Wallace?

MIKE (O.S.)
Of course I am, questions are what
I do for a living.

DR. KAPLAN (O.S.)
Not used to answering questions, I
mean.

No response. TIGHT on the clock now. TICK, TICK, TICK...

DR. KAPLAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Why don't you start by telling me
what happened in August of 1962.

PRE-LAP: the MUSIC and CHATTER of a house party...

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (1962)

A MARTINI floats through a lively party taking place on the bottom floor of a large suburban home.

It's carried by MIKE WALLACE, 44 years old, dark hair and eyes, acne scars. One day he'll become arguably the most famous investigative journalist of his generation, but right now he's a middle-aged TV host and the spokesman for Parliament cigarettes. And he loathes it.

He weaves through the party, smiling and nodding at WELL-DRESSED PARTY GUESTS involved in their own conversations, heading towards --

LORRAINE, Mike's third wife, early 40s, dark hair, light skin, intriguing European features. She's making pleasant small-talk with a YOUNG COUPLE, but sees Mike coming and peels off to intercept him --

LORRAINE
Thank you, darling.

She takes the martini, kisses him on the lips, and takes a LONG GULP.

MIKE
You might want to come up for air.

She lowers the glass --

LORRAINE
I forgot how exhausting New Yorkers can be.

MIKE
We should have spent more time settling in. Stayed in bed.

Mike puts his hands on her waist, pulls her toward him.

LORRAINE
(playful)
You wanted the party.

MIKE
Maybe I changed my mind.

CULLMAN (O.S.)
If it isn't our wonderful hosts.

Mike turns to see JOSEPH CULLMAN, 30s, handsome, Philip Morris executive. The kind of guy with a wad of \$50s wrapped around a silver spoon.

CULLMAN (CONT'D)
Welcome back. Did you have an
enjoyable fucking vacation?

MIKE
Not vacation, it was an assignment.
Travel show for Westinghouse.

CULLMAN
So you were pretending to be a
reporter and got to bring your
gorgeous wife along, it must have
been horrible.

Lorraine removes Mike's hand from her waist --

LORRAINE
I'll leave you gentlemen to talk
shop.

CULLMAN
We don't have to talk shop, we can
talk about whatever you want.

Lorraine drains the rest of her drink, holds up the glass.

LORRAINE
I want to talk about another
martini.

She smiles and peels off. Cullman watches her go, then pulls
out a CIGARETTE CASE. He takes one for himself and offers
another to Mike, who takes accepts. They light up --

MIKE
Is this about my contract?

CULLMAN
One month left, you still owe us
four spots.

MIKE
Is it that many?

CULLMAN
You skip town all summer things
pile up.

A PHONE RINGS over the cacophony of the party --

MIKE
Can we figure it out Monday? I
just got back.

CULLMAN
I'm trying to put money in your
pocket, Mikey.

Mike doesn't look happy, but before he can respond --

CULLMAN (CONT'D)
Your wife wants you.

Cullman gestures, and Mike turns to see Lorraine standing in the doorway to the kitchen holding the PHONE, annoyed.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mike takes the phone from Lorraine, mouths "I'm sorry." She walks back into the party.

MIKE
(into phone)
Hey Kap. Yeah, it's just a little
get together, hang on --

Mike closes the door, cutting off about half the noise from the living room.

MIKE (CONT'D)
What's up?

Mike listens, a hint of panic creeping over his face as we PRE-LAP the DULL ROAR of an airplane cabin...

SMASH TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - BATHROOM - DAY

Mike staring at himself in the mirror of an airplane bathroom, still wearing his clothes from the party. The ROAR of the engine and Mike's labored breathing are all we can hear as he struggles to get his panic under control.

He takes a drag of a PARLIAMENT and braces himself against the plastic sink --

BING! A VOICE sounds over the LOUDSPEAKER, prattling in muffled GREEK.

Mike takes one last drag of his cigarette and DASHES it in the ashtray.

INT. AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS CABIN - DAY

Mike takes his seat on the aisle as a GREEK STEWARDESS (20s, gorgeous) approaches and touches his shoulder.

GREEK STEWARDESS
(thick accent)
Everything is alright Mr. Wallace?

He looks up at her, considering a moment.

MIKE
To be perfectly honest with you,
Alice, I'm not sure it is.

She gives a smile that indicates she understood about half of what he said, and starts to walk away --

MIKE (CONT'D)
It was Alice, wasn't it?

GREEK STEWARDESS
Alysa, Mr. Wallace.

MIKE
Alysa, of course. Thank you.

She blushes at his warm smile and moves off to assist another passenger. As soon as she looks away, his smile disappears.

EXT. ELLINIKON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - TARMAC - DAY

Mike walks down the plane's stairs with a day bag slung over his shoulder. The sun is practically melting the concrete and he's already sweating through his suit.

VOICE
Mr. Wallace. Mr. Wallace!

Mike looks out at the crowd and spots a short man with a moppy haircut waving frantically. This is the the AMERICAN CONSUL in Greece (30s).

He approaches as Mike reaches the bottom of the stairs --

CONSUL
My name's Arnold Frear, we spoke on
the phone?

MIKE
Of course, hi.

CONSUL
Sorry about the heat. Do you have
any other bags or is that
everything?

MIKE
This is it.

CONSUL
All right then. Car's out front,
we can head straight to the hostel.
Only about an hour from here.

INT. LIMO / EXT. GRECIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Mike and the Consul both sit in the back as the limo flies over rural country roads. Mike looks out the window.

CONSUL
How long's it been since you heard
from him?

MIKE
His mother said it's been a month.
Before that he was writing every
week.

CONSUL
A month, wow.
(beat)
Just because he was here a month
ago, it doesn't mean...

Mike turns to glare at the Consul, who elects not to finish his sentence.

CONSUL (CONT'D)
We're almost there.

INT. GREEK HOSTEL - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

The door squeaks open, spilling light onto a dusty assortment of bags and boxes. Mike and the Consul stand behind the HOSTEL CLERK, who clicks on a LIGHT SWITCH.

HOSTEL CLERK
(thick accent)
You recognize?

Mike steps into the room, looking over all the LUGGAGE. Paralyzed. The Consul looks at the Hostel Clerk, nervous.

Mike approaches the closest piece and looks at the TAG. Not it. He moves to the next one, his pace getting more frantic until he finds what he's looking for -- a BRIGHT BLUE BAG.

Mike looks back at the Hostel Clerk, jaw clenched tight.

MIKE
What happened to the boy who owns
this bag? Where'd he go?

HOSTEL CLERK
I don't...

The Consul SAYS SOMETHING to the Hostel Clerk in Greek. Mike fishes a picture of PETER WALLACE (19) from his pocket and holds it out for the Clerk.

MIKE

This boy, do you remember him?

The Clerk looks at the picture, then back to the bag. He ADDRESSES the Consul in Greek.

CONSUL

He says he remembers, he had a smaller bag too. "Blue like the Aegian Sea." He asked about hiking spots.

MIKE

Where?

CUT TO:

EXT. CORINTHIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY

Mike and the Consul ride MULES over mountain trails, led by a wiry GREEK GUIDE (16). Were it not for the circumstances, it would be a beautiful hike. Expansive views of the Gulf of Corinth, postcard-perfect mountaintops, switchback trails.

Mike takes it all in, realizing how much Peter would have loved it up here. But then his mule jerks to a halt.

MIKE

Why are we stopping?

The Consul ASKS the Guide in Greek. The Guide responds, and then the Consul turns to Mike --

CONSUL

This is as far as we go. Says there was a landslide up ahead.

Mike cranes his neck to see a patch of trail that's fallen away. He gets a bad feeling...

MIKE

When did it happen? The landslide.

The Consul ASKS the Guide. The Guide responds, and the Consul's face goes ashen. That's all Mike needed to see.

He hops off the mule and runs toward the landslide area --

CONSUL

Mr. Wallace, wait!

The Consul clumsily hops down after him --

Mike scrambles over the loose rock and dirt, slipping in his dress shoes. He gets right up to the edge and looks down --

At the bottom of a gully lies THE BODY OF PETER WALLACE. Ravaged by weather and animals, twisted and broken. A torn-open DAY PACK a few yards away, blue like the Aegian Sea.

The Consul comes up behind Mike, looking down into the ravine. He sees the decomposing body and immediately shies away, repulsed. But Mike just keeps staring as the dry wind whips his hair...

DR. KAPLAN (PRE-LAP)
Then what did you do?

MATCH CUT TO:

MIKE'S FACE

Holding the same expression, but 22 years older. Staring into the middle distance. Age and exhaustion have worn him down, deepened his wrinkles. We're in --

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - DAY (1985)

-- a non-threatening office. Bland art, soft carpet, CLOCK on the wall. Mike sits in an uncomfortable wood chair, and he's not only older, but harder. The bulldog reporter you'd see on *60 Minutes*.

Across from him sits DR. MARVIN KAPLAN (50s), nearly a decade younger than Mike, wearing a relaxed suit and holding a steaming mug. He takes a sip, inquisitive eyebrows arched over his wireframe glasses.

DR. KAPLAN
Mr. Wallace?

MIKE
Hm?

DR. KAPLAN
After you saw him. What did you do next?

MIKE
What do you mean what did I do?

DR. KAPLAN
Well you're sitting here with me now, so I assume you didn't spend the rest of your life on that mountaintop in Greece.

Mike looks at the doctor, incredulous.

MIKE
I found my son's body.

DR. KAPLAN
Twenty-two years ago. We have a lot of ground to cover.

MIKE
Aren't you're supposed to ask how I felt? I thought I'm here to talk about my feelings.

DR. KAPLAN
You're here to talk about whatever you like, but my secretary could probably take a fairly accurate stab at your feelings in that particular moment and would you like to move to the couch? I know this is difficult but that doesn't mean you have to be uncomfortable.

Stunned, Mike looks at the couch, then back to Dr. Kaplan.

MIKE
I'm fine.

DR. KAPLAN
Then please. What did you do next?

CUT TO:

INT. BILL LEONARD'S GREENWICH HOUSE - NIGHT (1962)

Mike sits on a couch across from NORMA LEONARD (early 40s, ex-wife, nickname "Kappy"), BILL LEONARD (late 40s, ex-wife's new husband, CBS News reporter), and CHRIS (Mike's younger son, 14). Norma SOBS as Bill discreetly holds her hand.

Mike struggles with the rest of what he has to say --

MIKE
The funeral's all arranged in the Kamari Village. It's a real sight up there, Kap, it's what he would've wanted.

Norma SOBS again, causing Mike to clench his jaw. He can't bring himself to look Chris in the eye. Bill pats her hand.

BILL LEONARD
Honey.

She pulls her hand away and wipes her nose. She can't look at either of them. She stands abruptly and walks down the hall. A moment later, a DOOR SHUTS. Chris gives Mike a long look and then gets up to follow his mother.

When he's out of sight, Bill turns to Mike --

BILL LEONARD (CONT'D)
I want to thank you for going all
the way out there. Not a lot of men
would do that. I know Norma'll
thank you too, when she can.

They both just sit there as Bill tries to articulate what he
wants to say. Eventually he comes up with --

BILL LEONARD (CONT'D)
Are you going back to work?

MIKE
I suppose. Haven't thought much
about it.

BILL LEONARD
Good, that's good. A man's got to have
a purpose. Got to know who he is.

Mike nods, not really listening.

BILL LEONARD (CONT'D)
This is -- god. It's a hell of a
thing.

Mike nods, grateful for the recognition. As much emotion as
these two men are willing to show.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A LINCOLN pulls up in front of a large house in a quiet
suburb in Rockland County, NY.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike enters the bedroom with a few newspapers tucked under
his arm, exhausted. Lorraine sits in bed with a book. She
looks up at him, trying to put on a smile.

Mike puts down the newspapers, takes off his jacket, and sits
on top of the bed fully clothed. He leans against Lorraine's
shoulder and she rests her head on his.

They sit for a moment, silent. Lorraine looks at the stack
of newspapers.

LORRAINE
Did you stop and get newspapers?

MIKE
Norma saved all Peter's articles,
Bill gave me copies before I left.
(closes his eyes)
I read a few in the driveway, they're
terrific. Were terrific. He could
have won a Pulitzer someday.

LORRAINE
He's his father's son.

Mike chuckles, hollow.

MIKE
Bill got him a job at the
conventions with Cronkite. Best I
could get for him was a copy boy
spot on the local fucking news.

LORRAINE
Mike.

She pulls away, trying to head off a destructive spiral.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
He was determined. He got that
from you.

MIKE
Yale with honors. They would have
accepted him. He could have worked
for the Globe, the Times. The
Post. He could have been a real
journalist.
(beat)
Best his old man can do is a couple
game shows a year and a few more
Parliament spots.

Mike fishes a cigarette out of the nightstand and lights one,
inhaling deep. Calming himself down. Lorraine glares at
him, and he notices her disapproving expression.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I know, I'm sorry. Just this one.

LORRAINE
Why don't you quit?

MIKE
Lorraine, don't do this now --

LORRAINE
Not smoking. You could quit the
game shows, the travelogues.
Philip Morris.

Mike looks at her like she's lost it. A curl of cigarette
smoke wafts toward the ceiling.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
You talk so much about wanting to
be a real journalist. Maybe it's
time to just start being one.

MIKE
I can't think about this right now --

LORRAINE
Stop, just --
(beat)
This is your only life. You can't be
afraid to do something worthwhile.

Mike considers her, knows she only wants the best for him.
He looks at his lit cigarette, considering...

CUT TO:

INT. PHILIP MORRIS OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Mike sits in the holding area, tapping his cigarette case on the arm of his chair. He's wearing a BLACK TIE with his suit, as he will almost every day until the mid '80s.

INT. PHILIP MORRIS OFFICE - CULLMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A secretary, BARBARA, shows him in. Joseph Cullman, the Philip Morris exec from the party, is pouring a drink at a side table. He turns --

CULLMAN
Mikey!

He puts down his drink and ambles over, offers his hand to shake.

MIKE
Joe, it's good to see you.

CULLMAN
Sit, sit. Let me get you a coffee.

MIKE
I'm fine --

CULLMAN
Barbara! Get Mr. Wallace here a coffee.

BARBARA
Yes Mr. Cullman.

She turns to leave.

CULLMAN
New girl. Her name's really Barbara, just like that Streiser broad you interviewed.

MIKE
Streisand.

CULLMAN
That's the one. Can't sing, though.
(thinks)
Actually I don't know. Barbara!

Barbara returns, holding a coffee.

BARBARA
Yes Mr. Cullman?

CULLMAN
Can you sing?

Barbara looks at Mike, puzzled, as she hands him the coffee he doesn't want.

CULLMAN (CONT'D)
Can you sing like Barbara Streiser?

BARBARA
I don't think too many people can
sing like her, Mr. Cullman.

CULLMAN
Come on, sing for me and Mikey.

MIKE
Joe --

CULLMAN
Shh, let her sing. She's dying to.

The look on her face tells Mike that isn't true. But she clears her throat anyway.

BARBARA
(singing off-key)
*I feel pretty, oh so pretty, I feel
pretty and witty and --*

CULLMAN
Stop, stop, Jesus. Stop
embarrassing yourself. Christ.

He dismisses her with a wave. Humiliated, she walks out.
Cullman plops down into his chair --

CULLMAN (CONT'D)
What can I do for my Parliament
guy? I'm glad to finally see you
here, by the way. You look great.
And I'm sorry about your son.

MIKE
That's what I wanted to talk about.

CULLMAN
You son? Jesus, Mike, I -- I'm not
dressed for that.

MIKE
I've been thinking over the past
week --

CULLMAN
Well no doubt you've got a lot
going on.

MIKE
I'm not renewing my contract.

Joe looks at Mike a moment, then starts to laugh --

CULLMAN
That's funny, that's real funny.
Lorraine put you up to this? At
your welcome home party she went
off and for a minute I thought I
was talking to the Surgeon-fucking-
General --

MIKE
Joe, I'm serious. No more spots, no
more plugs. I need to let this go.

Cullman realizes he can't laugh this off and his mood sours.

CULLMAN
Roger heard you were making
inquiries at the news networks. I
told him to get his fucking hearing
checked.

MIKE
Hard to seem impartial when I'm
hawking Parliaments for cash.

CULLMAN
(like it's a foreign word)
Impartial? Who the fuck's
impartial? Cronkite decides he's
not going to plug smokes anymore so
now you can't either? You're not
Cronkite, Mikey.

MIKE
This isn't about Cronkite --

CULLMAN
Listen to me, just listen. I'm
telling you this as a friend, we've
known each other a long time.
You're an actor.

(MORE)

CULLMAN (CONT'D)
They won't even let you in the door
and even if they did, you'd have at
most twenty years before they forced
you to retire. That's not a career,
that's an afterthought. So maybe
let's be honest with yourself a
minute.

Mike stands and extends his hand. He's made his choice.

MIKE
That's what I'm trying to do.

Cullman just looks at him, annoyed.

CULLMAN
No one'll ever think of you as a
real journalist, Mikey.

Off Mike, hardening in his resolve --

CUT TO:

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - DAY (1985)

Dr. Kaplan regards Mike impassively.

DR. KAPLAN
Is that what you consider yourself?

MIKE
A journalist?

Dr. Kaplan gives a slight nod, genuinely curious.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I'm the senior correspondent on 60
Minutes.

DR. KAPLAN
I've never actually seen the
program.
(looks at file)
It says here you started at CBS in
early 1963. That means you were
unemployed for what, six months?

MIKE
Around that.

DR. KAPLAN
How'd you handle it?

CUT TO:

INT. CORNER GROCERY - DAY (1963)

Mike, unshaven and dressed in a ratty sweat suit, wanders the narrow aisles, placing assorted snack foods in a basket. He passes the CIGARETTE CASE and grabs a pack of Parliaments.

TED YATES (O.S.)
Those smokes seem to be interfering
with your ability to shave.

Mike turns to see a man standing with his arms crossed. Handsome, dark hair, muscular. This is TED YATES (late 30s), former rodeo cowboy, former Marine, former producer of Mike's, and current good friend.

MIKE
(lighting up)
Ted. What are you doing here?

TED YATES
I was meeting Mary for a quick bite
and she ripped her hose. Why the
hell are you in midtown?

MIKE
Lorraine made me get out of the
house.

TED YATES
Good for her. How's the hunt going?

Mike leans in, lowers his voice.

MIKE
I got an interview with KTLA.
Anchoring their evening news.

TED YATES
Hell of a commute from Rockland
County to Los Angeles.

MIKE
It's an anchor chair.

TED YATES
In the minor leagues. Been a long
time since we did Night Beat,
Wallace.

MARY (O.S.)
Mike?

Ted turns to his wife MARY (30s), who appears from the next aisle. Blonde and vibrant with all-American model looks, she's a perfect fit for Ted's easygoing swagger.

TED YATES
(to Mary)
Here he is, in the flesh.

MIKE
Mary. You look better and better
each year.

She approaches and Mike kisses her on the cheek.

MARY
(re: Ted)
Not much of a challenge next to
this one.

TED YATES
Hey, come on.

MARY
It's great to see you out. Did
Norma get the flowers?

MIKE
Every last bouquet.

Mike tries on a smile, but it's hard and Mary notices.

MARY
Come here.

Mary pulls Mike in for a big hug, rubbing his back.

MARY (CONT'D)
Call me if there's ever anything
you need, okay slugger?

TED YATES
All right, break it up. We got
reservations.

Mary releases and gives Mike a slight smile. He nods,
appreciative.

TED YATES (CONT'D)
Before you go in for that job,
think about whether you want to
play in Richmond or whether you
want to play in Yankee Stadium.

MIKE
I just want to play.

TED YATES
You're DiMaggio, Mike. Hold out
for the Cathedral.

Ted turns to go, and we see Mike doesn't have as much confidence in himself as Ted apparently does.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - MASTER SUITE - NIGHT

Mike brushes his teeth while Mary turns down the bed in the next room.

MIKE
(through toothbrush)
Would you at least consider LA?

LORRAINE
It's three thousand miles from here.

Mike spits out the toothpaste and turns to face Lorraine.

MIKE
Maybe that would do us some good.
It's an opportunity.

LORRAINE
It's three thousand miles from Chris.

That lands on Mike exactly as Lorraine intended. He looks around the bathroom, troubled.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
If this is what you have to do, of course I'll be there with you. But at the very least you have to explain it to your son.

Off Mike, pondering that --

EXT. BILL LEONARD'S GREENWICH HOUSE - YARD - DAY

WHAP -- a BASEBALL lands in a mitt. Chris Wallace reaches in and pulls it out. He's playing catch with Mike on a frigid Connecticut day.

MIKE
I always told your mom you were a tough kid. Resilient.

CHRIS
Thanks.

Chris tosses the ball back to Mike, who catches it. He opens his mouth to say something more, but just throws the ball instead. Chris catches, but instead of throwing it back --

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Can we go inside yet? It's freezing.

MIKE
I was hoping to talk to you about
something first.

CHRIS
Can we talk about it inside?

MIKE
Let's just stay a few more minutes.

Annoyed, Chris tosses the ball. Mike tosses it back.

MIKE (CONT'D)
So how's school going?

CHRIS
Dad, it's twenty degrees. If you
want to talk, talk.

Chris throws Mike the ball. Mike pulls it out of his mitt,
looks at it a moment. He can't bring himself to say what he
wants to say.

MIKE
Go on in. I'll be right there.

Relieved, Chris heads for the door --

INT. BILL LEONARD'S GREENWICH HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Norma stands in the kitchen, watching Mike out the window.
Bill walks in, munching a piece of JERKY.

BILL LEONARD
How's he doing?

Chris ENTERS the kitchen, surprising Bill --

BILL LEONARD (CONT'D)
Hey squirt. Jerky?

Chris wordlessly opens a cookie jar, takes a cookie, and
exits. When he's out of earshot, Norma whispers --

NORMA
He doesn't know how to talk to his
own son.

BILL LEONARD
He's trying, at least.

NORMA
Can you do something? Help him?

BILL LEONARD
It's between him and Chris, I can't
have the conversation for him --

NORMA
Not with the -- with a job.
Something at CBS. It wouldn't be a
favor, he's -- you know him.

BILL LEONARD
I don't know, Norma.

NORMA
Please. Even if he's useless, at
least he'd be here. For Chris.

She leans in and gives him a kiss. He sighs.

BILL LEONARD
I'll talk to Dick.

INT. CBS NEWS - MEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Bill and DICK SALANT (CBS News president, 50s, salty, lawyer)
stand side-by-side at the urinals as they relieve themselves.

SALANT
The cigarette guy?

BILL LEONARD
He's done interviews before, he had
a show on ABC. And did you ever
see Night Beat on WAMD?

SALANT
What the fuck's Night Beat? No.
Is this a favor? Does he have
something on you?

BILL LEONARD
Just meet with him. It's twenty
minutes of your day.

Salant shakes himself out, zips up his pants, and SIGHS.

SALANT
If it were anyone else asking...
(trails off)
Have him come in tomorrow. I want
to see how fast he hops.

Salant slaps Bill -- who's still peeing -- on the back and
turns to go.

EXT. 485 MADISON AVE - DAY

Mike's Lincoln pulls up in front of the nondescript 25-story
building that housed CBS headquarters until it moved to
"Black Rock" two years later.

INT. LINCOLN / EXT. 485 MADISON AVE - CONTINUOUS

Lorraine's behind the wheel as Mike looks up at the building from the passenger seat. He doesn't move.

MIKE
What do you think my chances are?

LORRAINE
Seventy-thirty.

MIKE
(turning)
Who's got the over?

Lorraine leans over and gives him a peck on the lips.

INT. 485 MADISON AVE - DICK SALANT'S OFFICE - DAY

Dick Salant sits across from Mike in his plush executive office. He's busy reading a sheet of paper, and Mike patiently waits.

SALANT
(still reading)
So. You're Mike Wallace.

Salant looks up with a wry smile, sizing up Mike.

SALANT (CONT'D)
Not much to look at, are you? For
some reason Bill Leonard thinks you
belong on CBS's air.

Mike takes Salant's aggressive tone in stride.

MIKE
What do you think?

SALANT
That you're not much to look at.
And you're old.

MIKE
Right back at you.

Dick grins -- he likes this guy after all.

SALANT
Why are you in my office?

MIKE
Because you're smart enough to see
I can be better than what I've been
doing with my life so far.

SALANT
What do you want to do instead?

MIKE
Something worthwhile.

Salant's gaze is penetrating, but hard to read.

SALANT
You axed your contract with Cullman?

MIKE
Yes sir.

SALANT
How much were you making? With the game shows and the sponsorships and all that.

MIKE
Do I have to answer that?

SALANT
I don't have a gun to your head.

Yes, you have to answer that. Salant leans back, waiting.

MIKE
A hundred and fifty thousand.

SALANT
(nodding, calculating)
I might have a morning news show opening up, and until then you can do a daily five minute radio piece. What would you say to forty?

MIKE
Forty thousand?

SALANT
Are you serious about this or aren't you?

MIKE
KTLA wants me in a nightly anchor chair and the best you can do is 40 thousand and *maybe* a morning show.

SALANT
A syphilitic queer in the Village wanted to tickle my balls this morning, but I'm still going home to my wife.

Mike has no idea how to react to that.

SALANT (CONT'D)

You can either take what the president of CBS News gives you or you can talk about the market price of orange juice and Anne Bancroft's tits at 6:30 Pacific every night. Do you want this or don't you?

Mike looks around Salant's office -- the office of the president of CBS News, the number one network in America. Mike might not yet have Dick's respect, but if he really wants journalism bonafides, this is the place to be.

MIKE

Yes. I do.

Salant cocks his head to the side, relishing his victory.

SALANT

Welcome to CBS, Mr. Wallace.

Salant holds out his hand for Mike as MUSIC KICKS US INTO --

INT. 485 MADISON AVE - HALLWAY - DAY

A few weeks later. Dick Salant leads Mike through the hallowed halls of CBS News, pointing out various rooms and features. As they pass SECRETARIAL DESKS and SMALL OFFICES, Mike becomes keenly aware that everyone other than Salant is younger than him.

SALANT

Kitchen's around the corner, men's room's right here, conference room's down the hall. Hi girls.

Salant waves at a pair of SECRETARIES walking towards them. They smile at Salant as he leads Mike around the corner --

INT. 485 MADISON AVE - OTHER HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- into an adjoining hall. The sounds of UNINTELLIGIBLE YELLING filter in from an ajar door further down.

SALANT

Lot of good looking gals around here, but if you want to bend one over a desk make sure to be quiet about it. Thin walls.

Salant gestures toward the door by way of explanation as the yelling gets louder --

SCREAMING MAN (O.S.)

-- this last minute shit is the last time, it will be the last fucking time --

Salant pulls open the door --

INT. 485 MADISON AVE - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- revealing about a dozen MEN getting SCREAMED AT by another man around Mike's age. The screamer is DON HEWITT (40s), veteran TV producer, workaholic, and actually quite the charmer. He invented cue cards, lower-third titles, and the rest of television news as we know it today.

DON
-- I ever walk into that goddamn
control room without a fucking
clipboard --

Don stops abruptly, noticing Dick and the stranger.

DON (CONT'D)
(completely charming)
What's up, Dick?

SALANT
This is Mike Wallace. He decided
he doesn't want to sell cigarettes
or do travel shows anymore, so now
he's here. Mike, this is producer
Don Hewitt, and --
(pointing)
-- that's Walter Cronkite and
that's Harry Reasoner and that's
about a dozen other kids whose
names I haven't bothered to learn.
(to Don, re: Mike)
I'm giving him the tour.

Mike looks around the room -- he recognizes WALTER CRONKITE (late 40s, America's favorite news man) and HARRY REASONER (40s, America's *third*-favorite news man, Iowan, drinker, skirt-chaser). Both already loathe him, Reasoner especially.

DON
Don't let these fuck-ups delay you
for one extra second.

SALANT
Carry on.

Salant gives a half-assed salute and shuts the door --

INT. 485 MADISON AVE - OTHER HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- as the SCREAMING resumes inside. Salant shrugs it off and leads Mike down the hall.

SALANT
You coming to my party next Friday?

MIKE
What party?

SALANT
Bring your wife. I'll make sure
you're on the list.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike adjusts his BLACK TIE in the mirror, ready for a formal night out. Lorraine sits in pajamas.

LORRAINE
Try the light blue one. It's more
festive.

MIKE
I'm not going for festive, I'm
going for professional. Which
would be easier with a beautiful
woman on my arm, by the way.

LORRAINE
Would it?

MIKE
It's my experience that everything
is.

Mike finishes his tie and turns. He looks sharp, and Lorraine's suitably impressed.

LORRAINE
Which beautiful woman did you have
in mind?

Mike's face goes from a grin to a sad puppy. Lorraine stands to adjust his tie.

MIKE
Come on, it's a first impression.
And it should be a fun party.

LORRAINE
It's a work party. You'll have
more fun without me.

She smiles up at him.

EXT. DICK SALANT'S MANSION - BACKYARD - NIGHT

WAITERS in white jackets serve hors d'oeuvres and champagne as a hundred CBS News staffers in rented tuxedos drink too much and talk over a four-piece string band.

The enormous backyard's set up with white linen-covered tables and white twinkle lights.

Mike notices Bill Leonard, Don Hewitt, and Walter Cronkite all sitting together. The big boy table.

Mike looks at his NAME CARD and sees he's at TABLE 10. Of twelve. He searches for his table and spots --

Ted and Mary Yates, dressed to the nines and working their way to another table.

MIKE

Ted!

Ted turns, waves, and starts approaching, Mary in tow.

TED YATES

You decided on the Cathedral after all.

MIKE

Who let you in here? I thought this was strictly CBS.

TED YATES

Dick still thinks he can woo Brinkley and this one can't say no to a party.

Mary goes in for a hug --

MARY

I just can't say no.

Mike kisses her on the cheek and they release --

MIKE

You look stunning.

MARY

Where's Lorraine? I haven't seen her in ages.

MIKE

She has an easier time saying no to parties. Say, are either of you friendly with Don Hewitt?

TED YATES

Never heard that name and "friendly" in the same sentence.

MARY

I am.

TED YATES

What? How?

Mary grins up at him --

MARY
Someone's got to keep me company
when you and David go overseas.

TED YATES
Watch it.

Mike watches their playful banter with a twinge of jealousy.

MARY
Why do you ask?

MIKE
Dick gave him a half hour at 10 in
the morning and I want to anchor it.

TED YATES
Why do you want to read puff pieces
at 10? I thought you were here to
be a journalist.

MIKE
I have to get on the air first.

TED YATES
You've been on the air for decades.

MIKE
I thought the minor leagues didn't
count.

Ted laughs --

TED YATES
Been at a network two weeks and he
already has it all figured out.

MIKE
(to Mary)
Why don't you introduce me to Mr.
Hewitt and we'll see?

MARY
I'd be delighted.

Mike extends his arm in an exaggerated swoop and Mary takes
it. They walk toward Don as Ted shakes his head, smiling.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - DAY (1985)

Mike has taken off his jacket, but he's still sitting in the
uncomfortable chair.

DR. KAPLAN
Why'd you wear a black tie to the party?

MIKE
That seems like a trivial detail.

DR. KAPLAN
You wore it to your interview with Mr. Salant. You wore it to the party and you're wearing it now. Do you wear one every day?

Mike looks down at his tie as a way to avoid answering.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Did you wear black ties before Peter died?

MIKE
I didn't go out and buy a dozen black ties when I got back from Greece.

DR. KAPLAN
But you didn't wear them every day.

MIKE
I don't think my tie choice is relevant.

DR. KAPLAN
I'm not particularly interested in what you think is relevant.
(scribbles note, looks up)
Did you get the morning show?

Mike's still thinking about his tie as we --

CUT TO:

INT. BLACK ROCK - STUDIO - DAY (1965)

A state-of-the-art news studio in CBS's brand new headquarters. CAMERAMEN stand behind their enormous BROADCAST CAMERAS, all trained at --

Mike, behind an anchor desk. Makeup, hair, the whole megillah. He's poised, in his element, and finishing up this morning's broadcast --

MIKE
-- and that's all we have for you this morning. I'm Mike Wallace, and this is CBS Morning News.

Mike holds a smug smile until...

DON (LOUDSPEAKER)
Okay, we're clear.

The lights change and the room breaks into dim chatter as Mike reaches into his pocket and pulls out a CIGARETTE. He lights it up as Don approaches --

DON (CONT'D)
You tripped on the intro to the
Cosmopolitan story.

MIKE
That's my fault?

DON
You sounded like Porky Pig.

Mike grabs a SHEET OF PAPER off the desk and reads as they walk toward the exit --

MIKE
"Yesterday the Hearst corporation
announced Helen Gurley Brown as the
new chief editor of Cosmopolitan,
hoping the salacious *Sex and the
Single Girl* scribe can pause the
magazine's plunging place in the
pantheon of popular periodicals."

DON
Alright, it's perhaps possible we
went overboard on the fucking
alliteration.

MIKE
Are they here?

Mike and Don exit the studio into --

INT. BLACK ROCK - NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- the adjoining newsroom. The morning show STAFF wraps the day's telecast as Mike and Don glide through.

DON
Been watching from the control
room. Where you planning to eat?

MIKE
Somewhere quiet. We won't go far.

STAFFER (O.S.)
Mr. Hewitt, I need you to look at
this a second.

Don looks off in the direction of the STAFFER and starts walking toward him, backwards, still facing Mike.

DON
Make sure you're back by two and
only a little drunk.

MIKE
(yelling across the room)
I'll piss a straight line to prove it.

Mike turns and opens a heavy door into --

INT. BLACK ROCK - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- a forest of knobs, levers, and CRT screens. TECHNICIANS sit at various stations while Mike's ex-wife Norma and son Chris (now 17) stand in the center, watching the activity in the studio through the giant window.

MIKE
Norma.

Norma and Chris both turn to see Mike as he approaches --

MIKE (CONT'D)
Chris. Good to see you.

Mike extends his hand and they shake. An oddly formal awkward pause. Mike breaks it with --

MIKE (CONT'D)
Hey, have you seen this before?

He guides Chris toward a huge CONTROL BOARD and references one particular LEVER.

MIKE (CONT'D)
It's a cross fader. There's a whole department that works up these titles and when you pull this lever it puts them on the screen.

Mike demonstrates, and a LOWER THIRD TITLE ("A faster way to clean the floors?") pops up over an image of the empty desk.

MIKE (CONT'D)
You want to try?

Chris looks at the lever and then up to Mike.

CHRIS
Sure dad.

He pulls the lever back down, making the title disappear.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
That's neat.

MIKE
Bill already showed you all this,
didn't he?

NORMA
He brought him in after the
conventions, introduced him to
everybody.

CHRIS
Yup.

Mike tries not to let it faze him.

NORMA
Well, you boys have fun.
(to Chris)
I'll see you tonight.

She gives Chris a kiss on the head and exits the control room. Mike taps on the FADER LEVER, then turns to Chris --

MIKE
Bill ever take you to Toots Shor's?

CUT TO:

INT. TOOTS SHOR'S RESTAURANT - DAY

A loud, crowded lounge. All three-piece-suits and cigar smoke -- not a single woman in the crowd.

A MAITRE D seats Mike and Chris at a booth, and Chris looks around the wood-panelled restaurant in awe. PHOTOS of movie stars and sports legends line the walls. Mike relishes in Chris's excitement.

Chris's gaze lands on one particular MAN at the bar --

CHRIS
Is that Joe DiMaggio?

Mike looks -- sure enough, famous Yankee JOE DIMAGGIO (51 but still spry) stands at the bar, laughing with the BARTENDER.

MIKE
Could be. Lot of ball players come
here.

CHRIS
That's Joe DiMaggio.

MIKE
You want to meet him?

Chris looks back to Mike, not comprehending.

CHRIS
What? How?

Mike flags down the Maitre D, who's showing TWO BUSINESSMEN to another table.

MIKE
Tommy!
(beckons him close)
Could you see if Joe has a minute to say hi? Tell him it's me asking.

The Maitre D nods and walks off with the other patrons. Chris remains dumbfounded.

CHRIS
You know Joe DiMaggio?

MIKE
Not well or anything, we've just met before. What do you want to eat?

CHRIS
Whatever you're having.

MIKE
Feels like a porterhouse day to me, how's that?

JOE DIMAGGIO (O.S.)
Mike?

Joe DiMaggio sidles up alongside their booth. Mike extends his hand --

MIKE
Mr. DiMaggio. This is my son Chris.

Chris is too stunned to say anything.

JOE DIMAGGIO
Very nice to meet you, Chris.
First time at Toots?

Chris can't come up with an answer, so Mike jumps in --

MIKE
Just thought I'd take him for a quick bite.

JOE DIMAGGIO
Well look at that. Famous face from the Parliament ads and still has time to take out his boy.

Mike's face visibly tightens (*Parliament ads?*) as Joe turns to Chris --

JOE DIMAGGIO (CONT'D)
Enjoy the time you got with your
pops, there's never enough.

CHRIS
(still stunned)
Yes sir.

JOE DIMAGGIO
Have a great lunch. The ribs are
terrific.

CHRIS
Ribs, yeah.

MIKE
Thanks for stopping by, Joe.

Mike plasters on a fake smile and shakes Joe's hand one last time before the sports legend wanders back to the bar. Chris watches him go, then turns back to Mike.

CHRIS
Joe DiMaggio knows who you are.

MIKE
Seems that way.
(nods to menu)
So. Porterhouse?

CHRIS
I think maybe I'll try the ribs.

MIKE
Ribs, sure.

Off Mike, ego bruised --

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lights out. Middle of the night. Lorraine snores lightly beside Mike, but he's wide awake and staring at the ceiling.

BRRRRRIIIING! The phone. Mike reaches over and picks it up as Lorraine stirs --

MIKE
(trying to be quiet)
Hello?

Someone is SOBBING on the other end --

FEMALE VOICE (PHONE)
Mike?

Terror flashes on his face, he knows something's wrong --

MIKE
This is him. Hello?

FEMALE VOICE (PHONE)
(still through sobs)
Mike he's gone.

MIKE
Norma? Who is this?

Lorraine is now fully awake and alarmed. She puts her hand on Mike's shoulder as he jams the phone into his ear.

FEMALE VOICE (PHONE)
He's gone, they shot him.

MIKE
Who's gone? Who is this?

FEMALE VOICE (PHONE)
They shot Ted.

Recognition washes over Mike --

INT. DINER - DAWN

Mike sits at a booth in the near-empty diner, two COFFEE MUGS already in front of him. He looks up as Mary Yates enters.

Mike can see her eyes are red from crying. She sits down across from him and he slides over one of the coffees.

MIKE
You still take it black?

She nods, appreciative, and takes a sip to warm up.

MIKE (CONT'D)
How are the boys?

Mary stares into her coffee, fighting another round of tears.

MARY
They've been with my mother in
Vermont. I didn't -- I couldn't call.

Mike reaches across the table and puts his hand on hers.

MIKE
It's okay.

MARY
It doesn't feel okay.

MIKE
No, I know.

The silence hangs for a moment.

MARY
I shouldn't have packed his khakis.

MIKE
(not understanding)
His khakis?

Mary breaks down into SOBS and Mike squeezes her hand. A DINER WAITRESS stares.

MIKE (CONT'D)
You want to go somewhere else? I can take you home.

MARY
No, no, I can't. Can't be there.

MIKE
This wasn't because of his khakis, Mary.

MARY
No I know, I know.

Mary takes a deep breath and composes herself. Mike gives her a moment.

MARY (CONT'D)
He was in Jerusalem on a story, something about the Hebrew-Arab tensions. He was outside his hotel and the Israelis started shooting. Al -- Al's his cameraman -- he said maybe they thought they were Jordanian because of the khakis. He said the bullet went through his neck clean.
(touches back of her neck)
Right here.

Mike looks at her for a long beat.

MIKE
It wasn't the khakis, Mare. Ted was a real journalist. It's what he loved. Who he was.

Mary nods, not really processing.

MARY
I know it's not the same as Peter, but... When does it stop?

MIKE
The sadness?

MARY
 Sadness isn't...
 (beat, can't finish)
 There are so many things I should
 have done different. Should have
 told him. That's what it feels
 like right now. When does that
 stop?

Mike looks at her, sees the glimmer of hope in her eyes.
 Sees her begging him. He takes her hand.

MIKE
 Never.

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - DAY (1985)

Dr. Kaplan interjects --

DR. KAPLAN
 Why'd you say that?

MIKE
 I wanted to be honest.

DR. KAPLAN
 But it had only been a few years
 since Peter died.

Mike tries to figure out if that was a question --

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 I'm saying never is a strong word.
 It's harsh. You could have said "I
 don't know" and it would have been
 just as honest.

MIKE
 No, it wouldn't.

DR. KAPLAN
 It wouldn't?

MIKE
 The feeling doesn't go away. The
 regret.

DR. KAPLAN
 It could. How do you know it won't?

MIKE
 I know.

DR. KAPLAN
 But how, Mr. Wallace? Peter's death
 was a tragedy. Ted Yates's death
 was a tragedy.

(MORE)

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 Of course you were despondent, of course it doesn't make any sense. But what gives you the right to tell anyone -- let alone a woman who's suffering -- that it can never get any better?

Mike looks out the window, unable to face the question, shamed. Dr. Kaplan realizes he may have pushed too hard.

MIKE
 I was wrong about the date.

DR. KAPLAN
 The date?

MIKE
 Ted Yates died on June 5th 1967, start of the Six Day War. I was off the morning news by then. Doing real journalism.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - INTERNATIONAL AMPITHEATER - DAY (1968)

A city-wide riot masquerading as the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

YOUNG PROTESTERS pack the streets with "END THE WAR" signs as RIOT-GEAR-CLAD CHICAGO PD OFFICERS try to force them back with CLUBS and TEAR GAS. It's the Yippies vs. the Man, and Mayor Richard Daley's police aren't taking any shit.

INT. INTERNATIONAL AMPITHEATER - DAY

The scene inside the convention isn't much better. ANTI-WAR DELEGATES scream and shove as DNC SECURITY tries to keep them in place or remove them from the premises.

We find Mike on the floor of the convention, wearing a SILVER MICROPHONE HEADSET supplying a soundbite.

MIKE
 Delegates from the anti-war contingent have erupted into chaos as the Democratic leadership announced the scheduled debate on the Vietnam War will be postponed once again, now not airing until after midnight, and many McCarthy supporters are crying fowl at the alleged tactic to silence the so-called "peace plank" --

ACROSS THE FLOOR

DAN RATHER (30s, scrappy, Texas twang) tries to approach a developing SCRUM --

DAN RATHER
A delegate from Georgia is being
ushered off the floor by --

A SECURITY GUARD shoves Dan away --

DAN RATHER (CONT'D)
Hey! Take your hands off me.
Unless you intend to arrest me
don't push me please --

The CROWD closes in around Dan and the Security Guard as Dan gets jostled forward --

DAN RATHER (CONT'D)
Wait a minute, wait a minute --

Dan reaches up to try to free his arm from the crowd and the Security Guard SUCKER PUNCHES him in the stomach --

BACK WITH MIKE

Mike starts pushing his way to where Dan is standing, 50 yards away through the thick crowd --

MIKE
What's happening? What is that?

INT. INTERNATIONAL AMPITHEATER - BOOTH - SAME

Walter Cronkite reports from the booth --

CRONKITE
I don't know what's going on, but
these are security people
apparently around Dan Rather, and
obviously he's getting roughed up --

INT. INTERNATIONAL AMPITHEATER - SAME

DAN'S ASSISTANT pulls him up off the floor and Dan straightens himself out, out of breath from the ordeal, but still trying to report --

DAN RATHER
We tried to talk to the delegate to
see why he was being hauled away
and who he was and what the
situation was and at that instant
the security people, well as you
can see, they put me on the deck.
(MORE)

DAN RATHER (CONT'D)
 (chuckles)
 I didn't do very well.

Mike pushes his way close enough to get in sight of Dan. He hangs back, watching.

CRONKITE (V.O.)
 I think we've got a bunch of thugs here, Dan.

Mike watches Dan as he continues to report -- Dan looks pleased with himself. A personal victory, taking a punch in the name of the news.

INT. HILTON HOTEL - BAR - NIGHT

After hours. The bar's open late to accommodate visiting DELEGATES and NEWS MEDIA. A few BEAUTIFUL WOMEN mingle, looking out of place among the sea of doughy white men.

At one end of the bar, Dan Rather is getting slathered with compliments by CORRESPONDENTS and STAFF, but only seems interested in talking to Don Hewitt.

At the other end, Mike and Harry Reasoner (last seen getting reamed by Don Hewitt) sit together nursing whiskeys. Mike's watching Rather, and Harry's watching an EASTERN EUROPEAN BLONDE sitting alone at a table.

MIKE
 You'd think he just got picked as the nominee.

HARRY
 Except he'll actually get laid. I doubt Muriel Humphrey'll be spreading those stumpy legs tomorrow. Think she's a hooker?

MIKE
 Muriel Humphrey?

HARRY
 The girl in the blue dress over there. Does she look like a professional to you?

Mike looks at the Blonde, then turns back to Harry and shakes his head.

HARRY (CONT'D)
 Don't give me that sour face, girls like her are why we're in this business. I love my wife, but life's more exciting on the road.

MIKE
That's not my kind of excitement.

HARRY
Well. You'll get there.

Harry claps Mike on the shoulder and stands to walk over to the Blonde woman's table.

Mike turns his attention back to Dan, who's laughing in the middle of the crowd. King of the bar.

He asks the nearby BARTENDER --

MIKE
Would you have done that?

BARTENDER
Done what.

MIKE
Got sucker punched for a story.

BARTENDER
Fuck no. But I'm not a reporter.

Mike takes a sip, still fixated on Dan Rather and Don Hewitt.

MIKE (PRE-LAP)
And after a full day's hearty
debate the Democratic leadership is
nearly done tallying the votes --

INT. INTERNATIONAL AMPITHEATER - DAY

The convention hall is even more raucous than the day before. Mike stands amidst the sea of people in his SILVER HEADSET, giving another report --

MIKE
-- on whether to accept the
minority plank for withdrawing from
the Vietnam conflict.

AT THE RAISED PODIUM

The crowd HUSHES as a PARTY LEADER takes the microphone. He looks down at the paper in front of him and reads --

PARTY LEADER
On the minority report, the "yays"
are one thousand forty one and the
"nays" one thousand five hundred
sixty seven and one half. The
minority report is not agreed to --

He barely gets out that last sentence before part of the crowd ERUPTS INTO CHEERS while a smaller contingent BOOS.

NEARBY

A DELEGATE is in a SCREAMING MATCH with a GUARD --

ORNERY DELEGATE
You don't get to tell me where the
fuck to stand, I get to stand where
I want --

SECURITY GUARD
I need you to stand back --

ORNERY DELEGATE
This is America! This is fucking
America!

Two CHICAGO PD officers carve through the crowd and GRAB the Delegate from behind --

BACK WITH MIKE

Mike turns to the commotion and approaches the Ornery Delegate as he STRUGGLES --

LANKY OFFICER
Sir, please come this way --

ORNERY DELEGATE
The American people must be heard!

Mike SHOVES through the crowd and extends his MIC --

MIKE
Sir, can you describe what's
happening?

The THICK OFFICER steps in front of Mike --

THICK OFFICER
Stay away, this is none of your
business.

MIKE
Certainly it's my business and this
is a public place.

Mike sees that police are about to leave and tries to sneak past the Thick Officer, who SHOVES MIKE BACK --

THICK OFFICER
Stay back!

Mike staggers backwards. "We Shall Overcome" has broken out among the anti-war section of the crowd.

Mike sees his chance. He puts on a big smile --

MIKE
Come on, officer, what are you so
upset about?

He reaches forward playfully TAPS the Thick Officer under the chin. The officer reacts, momentarily stunned, then PULLS BACK and SLUGS Mike across the face. His headset goes skittering to the ground, lost in the crowd --

The Lanky Officer LUNGES at Mike, TACKLING HIM --

LANKY OFFICER
You're under arrest!

MIKE
(woozy from the punch)
I'm under arrest?

LANKY OFFICER
Assaulting an officer --

The Lanky Officer PUNCHES Mike in the kidney, and Mike's face contorts in pain --

The Thick Officer SCREAMS at the enclosing crowd --

THICK OFFICER
Back! All of you back!

Mike lays still the Lanky Officer CUFFS MIKE'S HANDS behind his back. It's hard to tell through the commotion, but despite the pain, Mike is... smiling.

INT. POLICE STATION - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Mike sits alone in a holding cell, his jacket folded neatly in his lap and his black tie loose around his collar. His face is bruised, but he can't hide a slight grin.

TWO COPS appear with TWO PROTESTORS, one with a RIPPED SHIRT and the other with a BUSTED NOSE. Blood pours down his face, staining his chin and shirt.

The Cops open the cell and TOSS the protestors in. Then:

COP
You Mike Wallace?

INT. POLICE STATION - RECEPTION - NIGHT

Mike is led to the front of the station, where Don Hewitt is waiting. A beat, then --

MIKE
Did Humphrey get the nomination?

DON
Wasn't even close. And the cops
are still out there busting heads
of the hippies or Yippees or
whatever the fuck they are now.

MIKE
Probably not how Democrats want to
remember the evening.

DON
When there's blood in the streets,
don't hold a fucking primary.

INT. PIZZA PARLOR - NIGHT

Mike and Don sit in the nearly-deserted pizza parlor, each
with a half-eaten slice. Don's in the middle of a story --

DON
So I had on this stetson and this
little plastic star, and I just
walked up to their remote truck.
It was this crew from Omaha -- they
didn't know who the fuck I was --
so I walk right up and one of them
says, "Morning Sheriff." And I
don't miss a beat, I just say,
"Morning boys. What's going on?"
And one of the cameramen just
starts telling me everything. He
spends twenty fucking minutes
telling me every detail of NBC's
coverage plans, and he would have
kept going except the producer from
New York shows up and smacks him
over the head and says, "Why the
fuck are you talking to the
director of CBS News?"
(chuckles)
NBC tried to claim I was
impersonating an officer.

MIKE
Anybody file charges?

DON
Who the fuck knows. Haven't been
to Iowa since.

Mike laughs as Don wipes his hands on a napkin.

DON (CONT'D)
It's funny. Twenty years with your
head so far up Philip Morris' ass
you can taste the tar buildup and
you're finally climbing to some
level of respectability.

MIKE
Well, fuck you too.

DON
Why'd you take that punch?

MIKE
I didn't get punched on purpose.

DON
Bullshit. You saw Dan Rather get
floored and didn't want to get
shown up. I want to know why.

Mike stares across the table, realizing how smart Don really
is. He takes a moment to formulate his response --

MIKE
Every minute I'm on the air is a
minute I get a chance to make a
difference in people's lives. I get
a chance to change the way they
vote, the way they think, the way
they feel. Hell if I'm going to let
that Texan asshole get more minutes
than me because he got knocked on
his ass by a security guard.

Exactly the answer Don wanted to hear.

DON
I'm shooting a pilot. New kind of
show. So far we've got the daily
news, that's like a newspaper,
right? And then we've got the long
form docs, those are like novels.
But there's nothing in the middle.
I want to make a TV magazine.

MIKE
Life Magazine, the series?

DON
Exactly. Some long form, some
short form, some experimental
projects. I want you to co-anchor.

Don watches Mike's interest evaporate when he says "co-" --

DON (CONT'D)
Two anchors to play off each other.
One that's all smiles and sunshine,
and one that's willing to dig for
the dirt and ask the hard
questions. A tiger.

MIKE
I'm the tiger?

DON
Sharpest teeth I've ever seen.

MIKE
Who'd you have in mind for smiles
and sunshine?

DON
Harry Reasoner.

MIKE
Fuck you again. I'm not playing
second chair to that lazy sonnofabitch
because he's been here longer.

DON
I can't sell this to Dick with just
you, Mike. Someone's got to let
the light in.

Mike tries to think of a polite way to say no --

MIKE
Let me think about it.

DON
No. I need an answer at this table.

MIKE
Why?

DON
Because if you turn me down I'm
offering it to Dan.

That hits Mike exactly like Don knew it would.

DON (CONT'D)
I like competition. Breeds the
best in people.

Mike's impressed by how easily Don put him in checkmate.

MIKE
You're a devious sonnofabitch.

DON
(pounds table, stands)
There's my tiger. See you in New
York on Monday.

Don turns and walks out, leaving Mike alone with his pizza.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE - DAWN

A BLACK TOWNCAR pulls up in front of Mike's house.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

Mike enters the bedroom and notices the bed is still made. He looks around in the dark -- Lorraine is passed out in a chair, still fully dressed. An EMPTY TUMBLER on a nearby side table. *Hmm.*

Mike pulls back the covers, then lifts Lorraine to move her to the bed. She wakes en route, sees his BRUISED JAW.

LORRAINE
(half asleep)
What happened to your face?

MIKE
I'm anchoring a new show.

LORRAINE
It's bruised.

Mike sets her down on the bed, pulls the covers over her.

MIKE
It's fine.

He kisses her on the forehead, and she rolls over and promptly falls back to sleep.

Mike approaches the FULL SIZE MIRROR, loosening his black tie and unbuttoning his shirt. He carefully peels off his undershirt, revealing his whole side (where he got punched) is black, blue, yellow, and other painful-looking colors.

He lets out a STRAINED BREATH, eyes closed tight. Finally letting go, finally letting himself feel the pain.

CUT TO:

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY

The 9th floor of a nondescript CBS building on West 57th. A METAL BUCKET swings down the hallway, carried by a SECRETARY. She's walking toward the cracked-open door of the conference room at the end of the hall, where an argument is underway --

HARRY (O.S.)
It's a stupid idea.

MIKE (O.S.)
Why? What's wrong with it?

HARRY (O.S.)
You're going to completely disagree
with me.

MIKE (O.S.)
I already disagree with you and you
haven't said anything yet.

The Secretary pushes open the door --

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- into a conference room. SANDWICH WRAPPERS and COFFEE MUGS
litter the table, along with crumpled paper and every
imaginable color of pen. The 60 Minutes war room.

Don Hewitt paces at the head of the long table, clearly
itching to get out of there. Mike and Harry Reasoner face
off on either side while a half-dozen PRODUCERS and a NOTE-
TAKER sit further down.

Harry turns to the referee --

HARRY
Don?

DON
I'm waiting to hear your complaint.

The Secretary puts the silver bucket in front of Harry. He
opens the top, pulls out two ICE CUBES, and drops them in a
glass of WHISKEY. Stalling.

DON (CONT'D)
Spit it out, Harry.

HARRY
There's nothing wrong with our
democracy. And even if there was,
nobody wants to hear about it from
a bunch of Brits and frogs.

Don gives the Secretary a "please take me with you" look as
she exits.

MIKE
You're right --

DON
Oh Jesus.

MIKE
-- I completely disagree with you.
You were at the convention, you saw
the dirty tricks, the billy clubs,
the tear gas.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)
A thoughtful explanation from
actual respected intellectuals
might go a long way toward
illuminating what the hell is
really going on out there.

Harry takes a sip, knowing he's already lost this round.

DON
Mike's story wins.

HARRY
Of course it does --

DON
But you write it up. I want a
budget by lunch.

MIKE
Don, it's my idea --

DON
He'll make it palatable to the
middle parts.

HARRY
"The middle parts?"

DON
Nebraska, Iowa, states like that.

HARRY
Now you're insulting Iowa?

MIKE
Don --

DON
Fine, do it together. Christ.

Don wanders out of the room, leaving Mike and Harry facing
off across the table. The producers are too terrified to say
anything. Harry finally sighs, giving up.

HARRY
Can we find at least one American
intellectual?

CUT TO:

A SCREEN

Harry and Mike, both looking uncomfortable in '50s-modern RED
CHAIRS, sit in front of a poorly-comped beige background with
a GIANT MAGAZINE IMAGE. On the cover of the "magazine" are
TWO HELMETED CHICAGO PD OFFICERS under the title:

60 MINUTES
Sept. 24, '68

Harry looks at the camera and speaks in stilted cadence --

HARRY

Good evening. This is 60 Minutes.
It's kind of a magazine for
television, which means it has the
flexibility and diversity of a
magazine, adapted to broadcast
journalism.

Mike looks over at Harry. The show feels static, dull.

HARRY (CONT'D)

And our first cover story is about
cops, by the top cop.

CUT TO:

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - BULLPEN - NIGHT

The main bullpen area on the 60 Minutes floor has been transformed into a RAUCOUS OFFICE PARTY, with PRODUCERS and CBS STAFF drinking and laughing with their wives and girlfriends to LIVELY MUSIC.

Every TELEVISION in the room is tuned to the inaugural 60 Minutes broadcast, but no one is paying attention.

Near the makeshift bar, Lorraine and Mary are in the middle of a conversation --

MARY

It's been hard, especially with the
boys, but I started seeing someone
and that's really helped.

LORRAINE

(surprised)

You're seeing someone?

MARY

No, not -- I mean, okay, you're
going to make me say it.

(leans in, lowers voice)

I started seeing a psychiatrist.

LORRAINE

Oh, wow.

MARY

I know, but it's been good. It
helps to just talk about how I'm
feeling some days, I'm sure you've
seen that with Mike.

Lorraine looks at Mary like she's nuts.

LORRAINE
Mike Wallace.

MARY
He never talks about how he's
feeling?

LORRAINE
He goes to work. We've been
married thirteen years and I barely
know what he likes for breakfast.

MARY
Let me give you my doctor's number,
maybe you can suggest it.

She starts rifling through her purse for a pad and pen.

LORRAINE
He's not going to a psychiatrist.

MARY
(still digging)
I know he won't want to, but he
shouldn't have to grieve alone.

LORRAINE
He's not alone. He has me.

That hits Mary like a hammer to the side of the head, and
Lorraine immediately realizes she shouldn't have said that.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry, that was --

Mary closes her purse, choking back a rush of emotion --

MARY
It's alright.

LORRAINE
No, I'm sorry honey.

Lorraine goes in for a hug before Mary can protest. While
the two women embrace --

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
I'm just glad it's working for you.

Off Mary, troubled by the whole interaction --

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - DON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Party music filters in from around the corner. The 60
Minutes pilot plays on mute from the TV on the far wall.

Mike and Don both stand around his desk, Don with the phone firmly pressed to his ear. He's listening to something, and Mike's eagerly awaiting the response.

DON
What about the ancillary markets?
(beat)
Just get me the final numbers as
soon as you can, thanks Frankie.

Don hangs up. Mike might burst from the anticipation.

DON (CONT'D)
They're putting the estimate somewhere
between ten and fourteen million.

Mike clearly interprets that as bad news --

MIKE
Ten and fourteen?

DON
They're just estimates.

MIKE
That's Life does double those
numbers --

DON
It's the pilot. It's the estimate
of the pilot.

Mike turns to the TV, which is now showing HUBERT HUMPHREY standing in a hotel suite, surrounded by lackeys, waiting for his nomination to be announced.

MIKE
What the hell is this? Where's the
spark, where's the fire?

DON
Just wait for the segment on
European intellectuals. That's
some riveting fucking television --

MIKE
If you didn't like it you shouldn't
have greenlit it. You're the
goddamn executive producer here --

LORRAINE (O.S.)
Mike?

Both men swivel to the door, where Lorraine is standing. Who knows how long she's been there.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
My date keeps wandering off to work.

MIKE
I'll be right there sweetie.
(turns to Don, low)
I don't want ten million. I want
fifty. I want this to be the
number one show on television.

DON
It's not a game show, Mike. Let's
have some realistic goals here.

MIKE
No more watered down bullshit. No
more co-writing. I don't want to
work with Harry, I want to work
against him --

DON
You can't work against Harry, we're
making the same goddamn show --

MIKE
I thought you liked competition.
Breeds the best in people.

Don actually loves hearing his own words thrown back at him.

DON
Alright. What do you got?

CUT TO:

EXT. DUGWAY PROVING GROUND - DAY

A million-acre desert wasteland 80 miles southwest of Salt
Lake City. Wind whistles over burnt shrubs and gnarled trees.

JOE WERSHBA (O.S.)
(yelling)
We're rolling, Mike.

The camera finds Mike, a CAMERAMAN, and a producer named JOE
WERSHBA (50s, grizzled, old pro) standing next to a camo-
green MILITARY VEHICLE. Mike's wearing a BULKY GREEN SUIT
and holding something in his hands.

Mike pulls the object over his head -- a FULL TACTICAL GAS
MASK that completely covers his face. He takes a beat to
straighten the mask, then begins to give a stand-up --

MIKE
In the wars of the future, one
breath could mean instant death.
(adjusts mask)
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

An invisible, odorless cloud could be lethal. The uniform I'm wearing was specially designed to protect a man against nerve gas. The mask protects against both gas and biological agents.

MATCH TO:

A SCREEN

Mike continues his intro in close-up --

MIKE

If chemical and biological weapons are used in wars of the future, a man will have to have a uniform like this just to stay alive in order to fight.

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - SCREENING ROOM - DAY

The entire staff is crammed into a tiny screening room, where Mike's segment is being projected on a screen that takes up an entire wall. Mike sits alone in the back row.

Don sits in the center, with Harry right next to him. Harry leans over --

HARRY

Little over the top with the mask, don't you think?

DON

(in admiration)
Absolutely.

MIKE (ON SCREEN)

This million-acre desert moonscape is Dugway Proving Ground, 80 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. Here, the Army field tests the chemical warfare products developed at Edgewood Arsenal --

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - DAY (1985)

Mike's mood has improved. He's sitting up on the couch, leaning in, telling the story --

MIKE

It wasn't a hit yet, not by any means, but we were still only on Tuesday nights twice a month. Harry and I were even almost getting along until (he decided) --

DR. KAPLAN
(interrupting)
How was Chris doing?

Mike looks up, surprised at being cut off.

MIKE
Excuse me?

DR. KAPLAN
You took this job to be closer to
your son, right? You just haven't
mentioned him in a while.

MIKE
He was away at Harvard.

Dr. Kaplan clicks open his pen, scribbles in his book. Mike
sits back, unnerved.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I wasn't neglecting him.

DR. KAPLAN
That's not what I was suggesting.

MIKE
He could call me anytime, for
anything. He knew that.

Dr. Kaplan finishes writing, looks up. After a moment --

DR. KAPLAN
You said you and Harry were almost
getting along until...?

CUT TO:

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY (1970)

Not too big, not too small, and exactly the same size as
Harry's -- Don checked with a tape measure. Full of
tchotchkes and memorabilia, but no family photos.

Mike sits at his desk, DISSECTED NEWSPAPERS scattered in
front of him. He's squinting at the text when --

A SECRETARY hurries past his open door. He looks up, just
catching the tail end of the motion, when ANOTHER TWO
SECRETARIES hurry past after the first. Then a PRODUCER.

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY

Mike pokes his head out and sees all the SECRETARIES and a
few PRODUCERS crowded around Don's office. Muffled SCREAMING
can be heard from inside all the way down the hall.

Mike approaches the closed door, parting the sea of secretaries, and leans up close --

DON (O.S.)
(yelling)
-- because you're a fucking
traitorous shitbag.

The secretaries giggle. Mike pushes the door open --

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

-- into Don's office, where Don is hovering over a seated Harry, screaming at the top of his lungs --

DON
I stuck my neck out for you and
you're dumping me for the first
broad who shows a little leg --

Harry notices Mike before Don does --

HARRY
Don, calm down --

DON
Why should I be calm, you fuck?

Harry gestures behind Don, who turns and sees Mike. The secretaries and producers all suck back around the corner.

MIKE
Secretaries are lined up down the hall.

DON
Good. Leave it open. I want the whole world to hear that Harry Reasoner is a coward and a known fucker of farm animals.

MIKE
What's happening right now?

DON
(to Harry)
You fucking tell him.

Harry adjusts in his seat, exaggerates his professionalism in contrast to Don's insane ranting.

HARRY
My contract was up for renegotiation, and after a lot of thought and careful consideration I've decided to take an evening anchor position at ABC --

DON
 (interrupting)
 ABC. A-B-fucking-C. Apparently
 the number one news network in the
 known universe isn't good enough
 for Harry, he wants to haul his
lazy shit face to third.

Harry can't take it anymore, stands --

HARRY
 I don't have to sit here for this.

DON
 Sure. Walk out. Just walk the
fuck out.

Harry turns at the door, speaks directly to Mike --

HARRY
 It wasn't a hard decision.

Harry disappears out the door, leaving Mike and Don alone.
 Don struggles to regain his composure.

MIKE
 Was that necessary?

DON
 Fuck him. We don't need the lazy
 sonnofabitch.

MIKE
 What about the sunny side?

DON
 I'll find someone.

MIKE
 By tomorrow?

DON
 I'll find someone.

MIKE
 Who are you going to find?

Off Don, thinking...

DON (PRE-LAP)
 Alright everybody, listen up --

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Don holds court over an ALL-STAFF meeting. There are now
 about a dozen PRODUCERS -- twice as many as last time.

Mike and MORLEY SAFER (40s, a dandy) sit closest to Don. Morley's taste for expensive suits is on full display.

DON

Welcome to the new and improved 60 Minutes. Harry Reasoner is dead to us. If I hear anyone say the words "Harry" or "Reasoner" after this moment I will fire them back to whatever shit hole weekly periodical I hired them from.

(claps Morley on the back)

Our new co-editor is Morley Safer. He was shot down in a helicopter over Vietnam so it's unlikely he's going to put up with shitty ideas from you imbeciles.

Don leans on the table --

DON (CONT'D)

For the new faces, these are the rules. Story ideas get written up on blue sheets.

Don holds up a BLUE SHEET -- it's not blue, just a few typed paragraphs on regular paper. A young producer named THOMAS FULLER (30s) raises his hand but doesn't wait to be called --

FULLER

That paper's white.

DON

(ignoring the comment)

First person to get a blue sheet on my desk stakes a claim. I approve that idea, you get me a budget. I approve the budget, you make me a great fifteen minutes of television. Those are the only rules. Is that understood?

MURMURS of assent from the producer ranks.

FULLER

Should we take stories to Mr. Wallace or Mr. Safer first?

DON

What do I look like, your fucking parents? Jesus.

Don turns and walks out of the room without another word. The junior producers break into discussion.

Mike extends his hand to Morley across the table --

MIKE
Welcome to the team, Mr. Safer.

MORLEY
It doesn't sound like we're on the
same team at all. Excuse me.

Morley stands and surveys the producers --

MORLEY (CONT'D)
Hey. Hey.

The producers quiet down, and Morley spots who he was looking for -- the most senior producer in the room, the grizzled Joe Wershba (from Mike's chemical weapons segment).

MORLEY (CONT'D)
Are you Joe Wershba?

JOE WERSHBA
Yessir Mr. Safer.

MORLEY
In half an hour I can write up a
blue sheet for a story that'll
expose one of the biggest
conspiracies in modern American
history. You want in?

Joe's suddenly caught in a bad position -- he glances at Mike before looking back at Morley.

JOE WERSHBA
I usually work with Mike.

MORLEY
I usually work with the best
producer. That's you, isn't it?

MIKE
Joe.

Mike is glaring daggers, but Joe can't resist --

JOE WERSHBA
Yessir it is.

MORLEY
Good. My office in five.

Mike glares at Joe as everyone gets up in a cacophony of SQUEALING CHAIRS. Morley turns to Mike --

MORLEY (CONT'D)
Last year I nearly killed myself
convincing my wife to move to London
so I could be bureau chief.
(MORE)

MORLEY (CONT'D)
 I didn't drag her all the way back
 across the Atlantic to stand in your
 shadow.

Off Mike, realizing Morley's no pushover --

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY (1971)

A few months later. Mike sits back with his feet on his desk, leafing through a BUDGET PROPOSAL while producer Thomas Fuller waits nervously. Mike looks up from the budget --

MIKE
 You're five thousand under what Don
 approved.

FULLER
 I thought that was good.

MIKE
 We're interviewing a former
 president and what do you think
 happens with the money we don't
 spend? That we get to keep it?

Fuller waits for Mike to continue. When he doesn't --

FULLER
 Is that rhetorical?

MIKE
 No, I honestly can't figure out why
 you would hand me a budget that's
 five thousand dollars under what
 was already approved.
 (holds out papers)
 I want 15 thousand added back in
 here. One more full package and
 another week of post, at least.

Fuller grabs the papers, confused --

FULLER
 But Don's been badgering us --

MIKE
 Are you an idiot?

FULLER
 Don said we have to lower the
 budgets --

MIKE
 This story is going to pull back the
 curtain on the defining presidency
 of our era and you're pestering me
 about 15 thousand fucking dollars?

Fuller opens his mouth to respond, but can't think of anything.

MIKE (CONT'D)
That one, that was a rhetorical
question.

DON (O.S.)
(yelling)
Hey everybody, come here and
fucking look at this!

Mike and Fuller both turn to the open door --

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - SCREENING ROOM - DAY

Mike and Fuller file into the screening room, where everyone else is already crammed in tight.

Don stands in front of the screen next to Morley and Joe Wershba, nearly bursting with excitement.

DON
This right here, this is a fucking
story. Now shut up and pay
attention because Morley and Joe
just set the bar.
(to the unseen booth tech)
Run it.

The lights CLICK OFF and the PROJECTOR FIRES UP. Don moves to stand next to Mike as the title of the piece is projected:

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN THE GULF OF TONKIN?

Don leans over to Mike --

DON (CONT'D)
Morley's about to discredit the whole
reason Johnson escalated against the
gooks in the first place. He's gonna
win this show a fucking Emmy. What
have you done for me lately?

Mike looks back at Fuller, who's transfixed by the segment.

MIKE
I'm going to sit down with Johnson
himself.

DON
Waste of fucking time. He won't
talk about Vietnam and otherwise I
don't care.

MIKE
How do you know he won't talk about
Vietnam?

DON
We already tried.

MIKE
I haven't.

Don turns to Mike, intrigued --

CUT TO:

EXT. ROBERT MUELLER MUNICIPAL AIRPORT - DAY

Austin, TX's podunk airport in 1971. A BOEING 727 touches down in the lazy heat.

EXT. ROBERT MUELLER MUNICIPAL AIRPORT - TARMAC - LATER

Don, Mike, and Thomas Fuller exit the plane and spot a WHITE CADILLAC CONVERTIBLE waiting on the tarmac. A TALL MAN in a STETSON and a TINY WOMAN stand in front of it.

FULLER
Holy shit, that's him.

DON
Is he picking us up?

MIKE
He's trying to intimidate us.

Don smiles and waves, and the tall man waves back -- it's former president LYNDON B. JOHNSON (60s), the king who reluctantly abdicated the throne. The tiny woman is his wife LADY BIRD.

DON
What an arrogant cocksucker.

EXT. LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY - DAY

The enormous gray monolith that is the LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY AND MUSEUM stands proudly in the Texas sun. A ten story concrete box perched on another big slab of concrete.

INT. LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY - GREAT HALL - DAY

Inside the cavernous space, the 60 MINUTES CREW is setting up for a sit-down interview. Lights are moved, power cables run, chairs adjusted. There aren't any visitors -- the library isn't open to the public yet.

Mike and Don stand off to one side, looking up at the enormous concrete room --

DON
What does this look like to you?

MIKE

A crypt.

Another PAIR OF FOOTSTEPS from behind Mike and Don. They turn to see Fuller approaching with a LAPEL MIC in his hands.

DON

Is he ready to go?

FULLER

Still fighting with Riccie about the makeup. Here.

Fuller helps string the lapel mic through Mike's jacket. Don takes a quick look around the room before confiding to Mike --

DON

I want you to lead with a Vietnam question. Right out of the gate.

MIKE

I can't do that.

DON

The hell you can't. Catch him off guard.

MIKE

I don't want him off guard, I want him coherent.

DON

And he wants to pretend like the whole thing never happened.

INT. LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY - CONTROL ROOM - SAME

Two TECHS adjust dials while Lady Bird watches the MONITOR, consternation on her face.

DON (SPEAKER)

You have to sneak up on him.

Lady Bird abruptly turns and walks out. The Techs look at each other -- *oh shit*.

INT. LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY - GREAT HALL - SAME

MIKE

What do you think I do, exactly? It's an interview with a former president, I'm not trying to catch a squirrel in my garage.

DON

You promised me Vietnam.

MIKE
I'll get you Vietnam, just let me
get it my way --

LBJ (O.S.)
(booming)
Hewitt.

LBJ storms around a corner, MAKEUP BIB still dangling from
his collar, headed straight for them --

DON
Oh shit.

MIKE
(to Fuller)
Is this mic hot?

FULLER
Oh shit.

LBJ gets right in Don's face --

LBJ
Goddammit I told you I wasn't
talking about Vietnam.

MIKE
You're wrong, Mr. President.

LBJ turns his wrath to Mike --

LBJ
I'm not wrong about anything,
Wallace. I was the goddamn
president of the United States for
six years --

MIKE
-- and you were wrong then too.

A uncomfortable silence as Mike's words echo in the great
hall. Everyone has stopped what they're doing to watch. LBJ
stares at Mike, the veins on his neck BULGING...

Then he RIPS off the bib and turns to walk toward the exit.
Mike gives chase, calling after him --

MIKE (CONT'D)
You took over this country during the
worst crisis of leadership since 1865.
You passed landmark Civil Rights
legislation, immigration legislation,
food stamps, Medicare, Medicaid, you
fought against poverty and for
education and improved the lives of
everyday Americans so much we started
calling it the Great Society.
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)
 But you mired this country in an
 unwinnable war for the better part of
 a decade and it's not unreasonable to
 ask you questions about that.

Mike stops walking. LBJ's almost at the door --

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Vietnam fucked you, Mr. President,
 and you fucked this country.
 That's something you can't avoid
 whether you talk to me or not.

LBJ pauses a moment at the front door. *Will he turn back?*

No -- he pushes through the doors and walks into the sun.
 Gone. Mike just watches...

EXT. LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY - DAY

LBJ stops walking about 10 yards from the entrance, all alone
 on the vast expanse of concrete. He paces a few moments,
 thinking about what Mike said. Looks back at the building.

INT. LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY - GREAT HALL - DAY

LBJ bursts back through the doors --

LBJ
Wallace. Let's just get this damn
 thing over with.

Mike turns to Don with a "told you so" grin.

CUT TO:

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Mike shoulders the door to his office open, file folder in
 one hand and a briefcase in the other. He stops when he sees
 a MAN sitting on his desk, looking out the window.

MIKE
 Who are you?

The man turns and we see it's CHRIS WALLACE, now mid-20s with
 a suit, tie, and mustache.

CHRIS
 Hello Mike.

MIKE
 (surprised)
 Chris.

Chris hops off the desk and approaches Mike, who sets down
 his briefcase to shake his son's hand.

CHRIS
How come you've never invited me
down here?

MIKE
I didn't know you wanted to come.
You always got so bored.

CHRIS
Can we grab lunch? I have big news.

A flash of concern on Mike's face --

MIKE
I... I wish you'd called, I'm late
for a meeting already --

CHRIS
It's 1:07. You have to eat.

MIKE
I'm sorry, I can't right now.

CHRIS
I drove in all the way from Boston
to tell you something.

MIKE
Can you tell me here?

A SECRETARY pokes her head in --

SECRETARY
I put Mr. Lando in the conference
room -- oh.

MIKE
Shelly, this is my son Chris.

Shelly smiles, approaches for a handshake --

SECRETARY
It's so nice to meet you, I didn't
even know Mr. Wallace had a son.

Chris nods, plasters on a grin -- *of course.*

MIKE
(to Shelly)
Tell him I'll be right there.

The secretary nods and slips out. Awkward beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I...

CHRIS
Work happens. I get it.

MIKE
What did you want to tell me?

CHRIS
(heading for the door)
Nothing. Good to see you.

MIKE
Chris, I'm sorry, please --

Chris stops in the threshold, turns around.

CHRIS
I got a job at NBC. On-air
correspondent.

Mike's taken aback by his sudden rush of pride --

MIKE
That's wonderful.

CHRIS
I know.

Chris turns and walks out. Mike looks at the empty door,
disappointed with himself.

LBJ (PRE-LAP)
-- but Kennedy was spared that.

CUT TO:

A SCREEN

LBJ speaks to a seated Mike in CLOSE UP --

LBJ
Vietnam was Mr. McNamara's war and
then it became Mr. Johnson's war.
I think it's very cruel to have
that burden placed upon a president
because he is trying to follow a
course that he devoutly believes is
in the best interest of his nation.
And if those other presidents
hadn't stood up for what was right
during those periods, we wouldn't
have this country what it is today.

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The interview plays quietly on a TV over the shoulder of
BARRY LANDO (early 30s, Canadian, convinced he's the smartest
guy in every room). Mike's reading his RÉSUMÉ.

MIKE
Harvard, Columbia... Chicago...
(looks up)
Were you at the DNC riots?

BARRY
Assistant manager of the midwest
bureau. I saw that punch you took,
Mr. Wallace.

Mike nods and points to the TV over Barry's shoulder --

MIKE
Have you seen that?

BARRY
(turning)
The Johnson segment?

MIKE
This is going to be a very short
interview if you think I'm pointing
at the cabinetry.

BARRY
I've seen every episode.

MIKE
That's what Don said, you keep
sending him stories and
suggestions. He has a trash can
labelled "Barry Lando's ideas".

BARRY
That's very flattering.

Mike leans back --

MIKE
In the fall 60 Minutes moves to
Sunday night and starts airing every
week, which means we need twice as
many segments and twice as many
producers. What's wrong with it?

BARRY
With 60 Minutes?

MIKE
With my Johnson interview. You've
seen it, what did you think?

BARRY
I don't think I should...

MIKE
Have an opinion?

BARRY
Express an opinion. Seems impolite.

MIKE
That is an opinion, first of all,
and second, if I don't want your
opinion I don't want to hire you,
and third, nobody in this whole
building gives a sideways shit
about being polite. But since
you're so eager to maintain a sense
of fucking propriety, the problem
with this particular interview was
that it was too (unfocused) --

BARRY
-- apathetic.

Mike pauses at the interruption.

MIKE
Did you just say pathetic?

BARRY
A-pathetic. Unemotional.

MIKE
I know what apathetic means --

BARRY
You got Johnson to talk about
Vietnam but we couldn't see the
weight of his decision. We
couldn't feel the toll it's taking.
If you're doing twice as many
episodes you need to start playing
with an emotional spectrum broader
than "righteous indignation."
That's what I can give you. That's
what's in Don's trash can.

Mike considers this scrappy Ivy Leaguer talking about *feelings*.

MIKE
How?

CUT TO:

INT. MIDWEST HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (1972)

All the furniture has been pushed aside in a midwest, middle-class home. FILM LIGHTS and a CAMERA are focused on GERTRUDE DUFF (late 50s), sitting on the couch opposite Mike.

Barry Lando stands behind a cameraman named WALT (20s) as various CREW MEMBERS mill on the periphery. Mike and Mrs. Duff are mid-interview, and she's already a bit upset --

MIKE

Mrs. Duff, forgive me, but what would you say to the millions of Americans who are saying to themselves, "Look, these boys turned their backs on their country, they ran from their duty. Let them stay in Canada and rot."

MRS. DUFF

That's a tough question because that's the way I always felt... But with my son... Sometimes I look at him and think he has more moxie than I ever did at his age. I had dreams, big dreams, but I never followed them through. I just...

Tears well in her eyes as she trails off. Barry gives Mike an approving nod and he drills deeper --

MIKE

And to the mothers and fathers of boys who fought and died in Vietnam, what would you say to them?

MRS. DUFF

Oh, I put myself in their place and I couldn't...

Mrs. Duff begins weeping. Barry's pleased. But instead of expressing sympathy, Mike hardens, in his own world.

MIKE

How is it fair that their sons are dead and yours is alive and well in Toronto, begging to come home?

Uh oh. Barry sees this is going south.

Mrs. Duff completely falls apart, sobbing. Barry signals for Walt to cut it and addresses Mike --

BARRY

We should take a break --

MIKE

How is it fair they're dead?

BARRY

Mike.

Mike snaps out of his trance, seemingly noticing this sobbing woman in front of him for the first time. He looks back at Barry for a moment, then stands and walks from the set --

INT. MIDWEST HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mike rests his forehead against the fridge, trying to control his breath. Attached to the fridge is a smiling PHOTO of Gertrude's son, a Vietnam draft dodger who looks like Peter.

Mike stares at the picture until he gets his breathing under control. He wipes his eyes.

DR. KAPLAN (PRE-LAP)
What made you think of Peter again
in that moment?

CUT TO:

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - DAY (1985)

Mike lays on the couch while Dr. Kaplan watches.

MIKE
Their son looked just like him.

INT. MIDWEST HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (1972)

Mike, composed, returns to the living room to see MR. DUFF sitting on the couch next to his wife, who's still sobbing.

Mr. Duff stands and approaches Mike --

MR. DUFF
You all have to leave now.
Gertie's a wreck --

MIKE
Mr. Duff I'm sorry, but you have an
opportunity to get your son back.
A lot of men don't have that. I
know it's painful, but letting us
tell his story to 20 million people
is his best chance at coming home.

Mr. Duff sees Mike's sincerity, thinks for a moment... then
nods. Okay.

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - DAY (1985)

Dr. Kaplan is still fixed on Mike --

DR. KAPLAN
Did you talk about any of this with
your wife?

MIKE
Lorraine? No. She... she preferred
to think about the future.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD HOUSE - DAY (1979)

Sailboats bob off the coast. Seagulls caw. Sun shines despite the chill. The camera finds a gorgeous WATERFRONT HOME on Martha's Vineyard, with sweeping views of the water off a huge deck.

Mike's not looking at the view, though -- he's on a DECK CHAIR nose-deep in the NEW YORK TIMES, the page open to a story on the IRAN HOSTAGE CRISIS.

Lorraine comes out on the deck holding a WHISKEY and a half-empty VODKA. She removes the newspaper from Mike's hands, replacing it with whiskey.

LORRAINE

You're missing a beautiful afternoon.

MIKE

I've already seen it.

(takes a sip)

How's Nancy?

Lorraine settles into the deck chair next to Mike.

LORRAINE

She's all in a tizzy because her favorite furniture store is closing.

MIKE

Since when are there furniture stores in Haiti?

LORRAINE

Stop.

MIKE

You're telling me they don't whittle their own?

LORRAINE

The shop sold beautiful furniture, most of it was from Paris. They couldn't even keep it in stock.

MIKE

Then why'd it close?

LORRAINE

(ignoring him)

Nancy thinks we could poach their supplier.

MIKE

Why'd it close, Lorraine?

LORRAINE

She could run the shop for now and
Pauline could be our buyer and we'd
just --

MIKE

This is already decided, isn't it?

Lorraine looks at him, sparkling. Mike sighs.

MIKE (CONT'D)

How much are we in for?

Lorraine leans over and kisses Mike, holds his face in her
hands. She climbs into his deck chair with him and rests her
head on his shoulder. They look out at the water together.

LORRAINE

It's beautiful down there. Mango
trees all around these old
Victorian homes, birds and dogs and
church bells... it's a perfect
place to retire.

MIKE

Now we're planning my retirement.

LORRAINE

Just four years until we can sleep
in late, walk down the dirt road to
the shop... We can finally just
live our lives.

She looks out at the water, enjoying the thought. Mike's
trying to avoid looking anxious.

MIKE

What are we naming said shop?

LORRAINE

I was thinking "Aura".

Mike LAUGHS --

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Oh be nice.

MIKE

Are we selling furniture or running
a seance?

LORRAINE

"Seance," that's good too. I like
the "nce" at the end.

MIKE

Patience?

LORRAINE

Ambiance.
(beat)
That's the one.

Mike nods and wraps his arms around her.

MIKE

Ambiance sounds like a wonderful
place to retire.

They lay together on the deck chair, watching the sailboats bob in the gentle breeze. After a moment, the PHONE RINGS inside.

LORRAINE

Just let it go.

RING... It's clearly tugging on Mike. RING...

Annoyed, Lorraine pushes herself up. Mike slides out from under her to answer the phone --

INT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mike picks up the receiver --

MIKE

Mike Wallace.
(listens, eyes go wide)
When's the flight?

EXT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD HOUSE - DAY

Lorraine wraps a BLANKET tighter around herself in the cool breeze, watching the sailboats. She looks back toward the house, but can't see into the windows due to the glare.

She waits for Mike a few more moments, but curiosity gets the better of her and she stands --

INT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Lorraine enters to find Mike TEARING APART the room, heaving clothes into a suitcase and rifling through drawers --

LORRAINE

Mike?

Mike whirls, frenzied --

MIKE

Have you seen my passport?

Lorraine's trying to figure out what's going on.

LORRAINE
It's at the house.

MIKE
Shit. Call Shelly at the office --
no. Call me a cab, then call
Shelly and tell her to meet me at
Heathrow with my passport.

LORRAINE
Heathrow... it's your week off.

MIKE
Ayatollah Khomeini's granting one
interview -- one -- and if I leave
right now I can get it.

LORRAINE
The boys are already on their way
here. We've been planning this trip
for months --

MIKE
What do you want me to do?

LORRAINE
I want you to tell them you're on
vacation.

MIKE
It's the Ayatollah of Iran --

LORRAINE
I don't care if it's the Ayatollah
of Atlantis, you promised we were
spending the week together.

MIKE
I'm sorry.

LORRAINE
I don't give a shit if you're sorry.

MIKE
Lorraine --

LORRAINE
It's fine. Go to London, go to
Iran. Do whatever you want.

Mike doesn't take well to her dismissive tone --

MIKE

There are 52 American hostages
sitting in an embassy right now and
I'm the only person who gets a
chance to grill the man that put
them there. I can't give that up.

Lorraine looks at Mike, indifferent to his wild passion.

LORRAINE

I know.

PRE-LAP: the WHINE of a JEEP ENGINE...

CUT TO:

EXT. IRANIAN DESERT - DAY

A caravan of THREE VEHICLES roars down a desert road, kicking
up rocks and dust.

INT. JEEP / EXT. IRANIAN DESERT - DAY

The middle vehicle is an open-air Jeep. An ISLAMIC MOON AND
STAR NECKLACE hangs from the rear-view mirror.

Mike and Barry Lando bump along in the back, while cameraman
Walt sits in the passenger seat. All wear SUNGLASSES and
have BANDANAS covering their noses and mouths to protect from
the dust. An IRANIAN NATIONAL drives them toward --

The CITY OF QOM, emerging on the horizon like a mirage.

INT. JEEP / EXT. QOM STREETS - DAY

The caravan weaves through the crowded city, displacing
PEDESTRIANS and MERCHANTS.

Mike, Barry, and Walt have all lowered their bandanas, taking
in the mosques and other ancient buildings.

SUDDENLY --

The lead car in the caravan pulls over, and the Jeep follows
suit. Mike and Barry both tense up --

IRANIAN DRIVER

(thick accent)

You wear blindfold. Now.

Mike, Barry, and Walt all look at each other, then pull off
their sunglasses and tie their BANDANAS around their eyes.

The Iranian driver waves his hand in front of Mike's
blindfolded face. When he doesn't respond, he moves to PUNCH
HIM -- but stops just shy of his nose. Mike doesn't flinch.

Satisfied, the driver puts the Jeep in gear and drives off --

EXT. SMALL COMPOUND - DAY

The caravan pulls up in front of an unremarkable compound of BEIGE BUILDINGS. A few GUARDS with AK-47s mill around out front, with one on the roof.

The driver cuts the Jeep's engine. As soon as he does, the guards open the doors and start YELLING in Arabic, escorting the blindfolded Americans out of the Jeep.

Other GUARDS pull CAMERA AND SOUND EQUIPMENT from another vehicle --

INT. SMALL COMPOUND - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Blue carpet. Crappy built-in shelves.

Two ARMED GUARDS shut the doors behind Mike, Barry, and Walt. Walt's CAMERA EQUIPMENT has already been brought inside. The three pull off their blindfolds and see:

An INTERPRETER (30s), and a taller, balding man in a gaudy BLUE SUIT (40s).

INTERPRETER

The Imam will do interview right there.

The Interpreter points to a spot on the floor where a rug has been laid down. Barry nudges Walt, who snaps to and goes to set up the camera.

INTERPRETER (CONT'D)

You have one hour for talking. If you ask question that is not on list interview will be over.

The Interpreter digs through a BAG held out by Blue Suit while Mike speaks quietly to Barry --

MIKE

What list?

BARRY

We had to submit our questions in advance.

MIKE

Were you planning to tell me that?

BARRY

Not if I could avoid it.

The Interpreter hands a LEGAL PAD to Mike --

INTERPRETER
We crossed out all questions the
Imam will not answer.

Mike flips through the pad -- it looks like a redacted CIA document. Nearly everything's crossed out.

MIKE
This is it?

INTERPRETER
No questions about Iran politics
and no questions about freedom.

MIKE
Freedom?

INTERPRETER
You Americans think because we
follow teachings of Islam, the
Iranian people are not free.

MIKE
At the moment I think the only
freedom Americans care about is the
hostages'.

The Interpreter smirks and YELLS to a guard in Arabic, who exits the room from another door. The CBS team tenses up, unsure of what's going to happen.

A moment later, the guard returns with --

AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI. Black robe, black turban, white beard, grave expression.

All eyes on the Ayatollah. Even Walt looks up from his camera set-up. Mike extends his hand --

MIKE (CONT'D)
Imam, thank you for meeting with us
today.

The Ayatollah walks right past Mike without even looking at him and sits in the designated interview spot, followed by the Interpreter and Blue Suit.

Mike and Barry share a look. Barry whispers --

BARRY
Tear him apart.

INT. SMALL COMPOUND - INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

Mike sits cross-legged on the floor across from the Ayatollah. Blue Suit and the Interpreter complete the half-circle. Walt's rolling film and Mike's exasperated --

MIKE

Do you still say, Imam, that if the Shah -- the ex-Shah -- is not returned to Iran, that those American hostages in the American compound will not be freed?

The Interpreter leans over to the Ayatollah and whispers Arabic into his ear. Mike waits.

The Ayatollah nods, considering the question, and then begins a long STRING OF MONOTONE ARABIC. He never looks at Mike, his eyes fixated on a spot in the distance.

After what seems like an eternity, the Ayatollah finishes. The Interpreter looks down at his lap and starts reading a prepared statement --

INTERPRETER

In the name of god, the most merciful, and gracious, this issue has to do with the people. Thirty-five million population of Iran wants this, and we must investigate why the population wants the Shah returned. And unless he is returned, the hostages will not be free.

MIKE

Not under any circumstance?

Mike waits expectantly for him to translate, but instead --

INTERPRETER

The Imam already answered this question.

Mike looks at the Ayatollah, still refusing eye contact.

MIKE

Is the Imam going to at least look at me? Or is the wall too irresistably fascinating?

Barry can see Mike's about to lose it --

BARRY

We should change the roll.

MIKE

(to Interpreter)
Why won't he look at me?

BARRY

Mike, come here a minute?

Mike looks up at Barry, who's giving him a stern glare. Mike gets off the floor and joins Barry. They speak quietly --

MIKE

We've been here forty-five minutes
and he's reading off a sheet and
Khomeini won't make eye contact.

BARRY

So what? You can't yank his beard
to get him to look at you.

Mike thumbs through a THICK BINDER -- the research.

BARRY (CONT'D)

What are you looking for?

MIKE

The Sadat quote. Ah.

BARRY

You can't read him the Sadat quote.

Mike RIPS out a page and hands Barry back the binder --

MIKE

What's he going to do, take me
hostage?

Mike returns to the interview as Barry takes a deep breath.

BARRY

(to himself)

That is a possibility.

Mike sits on the floor and jumps right into his question --

MIKE

Imam -- President Sadat, of Egypt,
a devoutly religious man, a Muslim,
says that what you are doing now is
-- quote -- "a disgrace to Islam" --
and he calls you, Imam -- forgive
me, his words, not mine -- "a
lunatic." I know that you have
heard that comment.

Every English-speaker the room is looking at Mike like he's a madman, including the Interpreter. Mike digs deeper, amped on adrenaline --

MIKE (CONT'D)

That's, yes, that's what I heard
President Sadat say on American
television. That the Imam is a
disgrace to Islam, and he used the
word, "a lunatic."

The Interpreter looks at Mike like he just murdered his family. Barry holds his breath.

MIKE (CONT'D)
They're President Sadat's words --

INTERPRETER
It does not matter.

MIKE
(stern)
Tell the Imam what I just said.

Mike's stare could burn a hole through concrete. The Interpreter leans over to the Ayatollah and whispers in Arabic. When he gets to the "lunatic" part --

The Ayatollah's EYES WIDEN... and he finally turns to look at Mike in surprise. Mike smiles, on top of the world. He won.

CUT TO:

A SCREEN

The Ayatollah's face in CLOSE UP as he speaks in Arabic. After a moment, the voice of a TRANSLATOR comes in to translate what the Imam is saying --

TRANSLATOR (O.S.)
Sadat knows well what is occurring South of Lebanon, and with the Palestinians. He knows the crimes of Israel, yet he still considers Negin a friend, and himself a Muslim. You must try to evaluate what he's doing then through Islam. The Egyptian people do not back Sadat.

BARRY (O.S.)
Right there.

The image freezes --

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - EDIT BAY - DAY

Mike and Barry sit on a couch in a dark editing bay while the EDITOR cuts the segment in front of them. Mike's pouring CHAMPAGNE into three flutes.

BARRY
Trim it right after he looks down.

The Editor adjusts the edit as Barry leans back, satisfied.

BARRY (CONT'D)
(to Mike)
You have any notes?

MIKE
I trust you completely.

He hands Barry a glass of champagne, and they toast.

BARRY
(using the flute as a mic)
So Mr. Wallace, how did it feel to
call the most feared man in the
Western world a lunatic to his face?

CUT TO:

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - EVENING (1985)

The setting sun throws golden light through the window. Mike stares into the middle-distance, reminiscing...

MIKE
That year we were the most-watched
show on television. Number one.

INT. GOLDEN GLOBES BALLROOM - NIGHT (1979)

The camera finds Mike and Don sitting at a table with other *60 Minutes* faces, surrounded by the shimmering, drunk glamour of Hollywood. But we still hear the sound from Dr. Kaplan's office...

MIKE (V.O.)
We won the Golden Globe for Best
Dramatic Series. We had Emmys,
Peabodys, duPont awards... We
changed the face of television news,
and we were just getting started.

The audience soundlessly claps as a SPOTLIGHT finds the table. Don and Mike stand, shake hands.

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - EVENING (1985)

Mike seems troubled by his recollection --

MIKE
I was the proudest I'd ever been.

DR. KAPLAN
You say that like it's a bad thing.

MIKE
Because I forgot when pride comes.

DR. KAPLAN
When pride comes?

Mike stares into space, absent-minded --

MIKE
Before the fall.

CUT TO:

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - BASEMENT BARBERSHOP - DAY (1981)

Mike enters the two-chair barbershop in the basement of the CBS building. Harry Reasoner sits in a chair while the lone BARBER gives him a trim.

Mike enters and Barber looks up --

BARBER
Be just a minute, Mr. Wallace.

Mike's surprised to see Harry.

MIKE
Well if it isn't Harry Reasoner.
(sits in empty chair)
What's the matter, ABC doesn't have
their own barbershop? You have to
hoof it all the way out here?

HARRY
Don't insult Franklin like that,
he's an artist.

MIKE
And you're a Picasso.

Harry chuckles as the Barber remains quiet.

HARRY
I see your time with Don hasn't
dulled your rapier-like wit.

MIKE
You miss it.

HARRY
Sometimes. Then I come home to my
wife and kids at a reasonable hour
and any longing I have for that
bullshit instantly disappears.

MIKE
Well look at Mr. Reasoner, the
family man. We're making history
nine floors up and you're happy
with a hot meal and a foot massage.

The Barber tilts Harry's head to work on the other side. The two men look at each other in the mirror.

HARRY
I'm happy with sanity. Stability.
Things the all-powerful Don Hewitt
are incapable of providing.

MIKE
Don's a better journalist than any
man at ABC.

HARRY
Maybe. But he cares more about
being number one than anything else
in the world, and his true genius
is making you believe it too.

MIKE
Happy being third place, are you?

Harry turns to face Mike.

HARRY
I'm just happy.

MIKE
Then why are you still coming all
the way to CBS for a haircut?

A man KNOCKS on the door frame and pokes his head in. This
is GEORGE CRILE (30s), a ruthlessly ambitious producer who's
never been afraid to pick fights with bigger, stronger foes.

CRILE
Mr. Wallace?

Mike looks over --

CRILE (CONT'D)
Barry told me I could find you down
here. I'm George Crile from the
documentary unit.

MIKE
The CIA's Secret Army, I remember.
That was a good piece. Have you met
the Judas of 60 Minutes?

Crile couldn't care less about Harry.

CRILE
I was actually hoping to recruit you
for a piece I'm working on.

MIKE
Go ahead, twist my arm.

CRILE
I'd prefer to speak privately.

Mike looks at Harry, who finds Crile's secrecy amusing.

MIKE
My office?

INT. 60 MINUTES OFFICE - MIKE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mike and Crile sit in armchairs as Crile finishes explaining his documentary. Documents and photos are strewn out all over the coffee table, including pictures of GENERAL WESTMORELAND, who served as the U.S. commander in Vietnam.

CRILE
That's the deception. He deliberately ordered the report buried so he could tell Johnson we were winning the war.

Mike leans back, blown away by what he just heard.

MIKE
You're saying General Westmoreland cooked the books. Former Chief of Staff of the fucking Army.

CRILE
That's what my CIA source tells me.

MIKE
This is...

CRILE
The scandal of a lifetime. Westy covered up verified data on Viet Cong troop strength because he thought if the public knew how many of them there really were, he'd lose support for his war. And then he sent our boys to get gunned down in the jungle anyway.

A huge story. Monumental.

MIKE
You can prove all this.

CRILE
Beyond a shadow of a doubt.

MIKE
Because if I stick my face on this story and there are any cracks --

CRILE
Mr. Wallace, I can assure you what I have is airtight.

Off Mike, deciding whether or not to join --

CUT TO:

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - EVENING (1985)

Mike's sitting up on the couch now, bent over his knees. He looks physically ill.

DR. KAPLAN
Did you feel assured?

MIKE
At the time, I did.

DR. KAPLAN
When did the documentary air?

MIKE
January 23rd, 1982. He called it
"The Uncounted Enemy: a Vietnam
Deception."
(beat)
I poured over every transcript
myself. Every report. It looked
like a home run from every seat in
the park.

DR. KAPLAN
Except General Westmoreland's.

Mike looks up at Dr. Kaplan, pain in his eyes.

MIKE
I knew he wouldn't like it.
(beat)
I didn't know he'd file a hundred
twenty million dollar libel suit.

CUT TO:

INT. BLACK ROCK - BILL LEONARD'S OFFICE - DAY (1983)

Formerly Dick Salant's office, but Bill Leonard has made it a bit more inviting since he took over as CBS News President.

Bill paces in front of Mike, who's on defense --

MIKE
We embarrassed him. Of course he
wants to bloody us up a little.

BILL LEONARD

A hundred and twenty million dollars is more than a little blood, and you and Crile will get it all on your shirts if the roof caves in. I won't be able to put you back on the air.

Mike swallows, tries to be constructive --

MIKE

The facts aren't wrong. Let me defend this on the facts.

BILL LEONARD

It's not about facts. He's going after you for malicious intent.

MIKE

You know that's bullshit --

BILL LEONARD

Doesn't matter what I know. Crile coached subjects. He reshot interviews. He hired the king of 'gotcha journalism' to narrate for him.

Mike sinks back. Bill looks out the window.

BILL LEONARD (CONT'D)

Before Dick left, he sat me on that couch and made me swear up and down to protect the reputation of our beloved news organization. And now I'm in a position where we lose a single lawsuit and corporate will tear apart these offices and sell them for scrap.

MIKE

I can't just sit this out. That'll make us look worse.

BILL LEONARD

Us? Or you?

Mike chooses to not answer that question. Bill sighs and sits in his chair.

BILL LEONARD (CONT'D)

Your sixty-fifth birthday's in a few weeks, isn't it?

MIKE

Bill, no.

BILL LEONARD
It's policy. It's not like you'd
be leaving in disgrace.

MIKE
In the middle of a libel suit? What
the hell else would it look like?

BILL LEONARD
It's a CBS News policy that
mandatory retirement comes on your
sixty fifth birthday --

MIKE
Don't give me that policy bullshit,
you're still here.

BILL LEONARD
Only until Dan gets settled in
Cronkite's chair. That's the
promise I made.

Mike can't believe what's being asked of him. He explodes --

MIKE
I cannot -- I will not -- be forced
to retire in the middle of a bullshit
libel suit. I've spent every waking
moment of the past 20 years fighting
and sweating and bleeding for this
network. I got arrested for this
network. I built a hit show for this
network. I've spent two decades
doing great work as a journalist and
I'll be damned if a man who knowingly
endangered the lives of our boys is
going to rip that away from me
without a fight.

Bill looks at Mike, realizing --

BILL LEONARD
You don't want to retire, do you?

MIKE
Of course I don't want to fucking
retire --

BILL LEONARD
I don't mean now, I mean ever. You
want to drop dead at your desk at
West 57th. What happened to that
furniture shop Lorraine's always
talking about? What about visiting
Chris every once in a while?

MIKE

Fuck you.

Bill looks at Mike, finally understanding.

BILL LEONARD

I actually used to wonder why Norma left you. But never in my life have I seen someone so determined to keep the people who love him so far out of reach.

Mike fumes silently for a moment. Then, quiet, pleading --

MIKE

This place is my life, Bill.

Off Bill, deciding Mike's fate --

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike opens the door into his darkened living room, tired from the long day and the long commute.

MIKE

Honey? What's with all the cars on the street?

Mike CLICKS on a light --

Revealing TWO DOZEN PEOPLE standing in his living room around a CAKE SHAPED LIKE THE 60 MINUTES STOPWATCH. A "Happy Retirement!" banner hangs on the wall.

EVERYONE

Surprise!

Mike freezes, stunned, as Lorraine emerges from the crowd and grabs his face in her hands.

LORRAINE

I know it's not for a few weeks and I'm sure they'll do something for you at the office but Melinda gave me the idea for that cake and I just couldn't resist.

She kisses him on the lips.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Happy retirement, my love.

CHEERS from the crowd of friends and family. Someone POPS the cork on a champagne bottle. Mike spots Mary Yates, who seems to be the only person in the room picking up on his consternation.

Finally --

MIKE
So are we going to eat that thing
or stand around and gawk all night?

Everyone LAUGHS and someone DROPS THE NEEDLE ON A RECORD --

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The cake's been eaten through 10 o'clock. Guests are laughing and having a good time while Lorraine whirls around the living room, refilling drinks and bussing plates.

Mike stands off to one side nursing a slice of cake, watching the festivities. Mary sidles up next to him.

MARY
How you feeling, slugger?

MIKE
Like a wallflower at my own wake.

MARY
And all this time I thought you
were one of the chosen.

MIKE
Has to be a wake. Nobody listens
to Tom Petty while sitting shiva.

Mary LAUGHS and puts down her champagne glass.

MARY
How are you holding up? Really.

MIKE
Oh, it's a fine party.

MARY
I'm not talking about the party,
I'm talking about the lawsuit.

Mike looks at her, not pleased with this line of questioning.

MIKE
Someone's been doing her homework.

MARY
I worry about you.

MIKE
A libel suit just means I was
asking the right questions.

Mary's not sure she believes that. She turns to face Mike, lowering her voice.

MARY

I thought it was odd when Lorraine called a few weeks back and told me she was throwing you a surprise retirement party. I thought, a Mike Wallace retirement party? That can't be right.

She looks over her shoulder. Everyone's laughing, talking, having a good time.

MARY (CONT'D)

But then I show up and here's this beautiful party all for you.

MIKE

Here it is.

Mary drains her champagne, gives him a worried look.

MARY

There's more to life than work, Mike. Remember that.

She kisses him on the cheek and walks off into the party. He watches her go, uneasy.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hours later. The music's off and the guests are gone. Lorraine tries to shimmy out of her dress, tipsy, while Mike watches from the bed.

After struggling for a few seconds, Lorraine gives up and lays down on the bed next to Mike, half-out of her dress. They both stare at the ceiling for a moment.

LORRAINE

Nancy found us a house. I thought I'd go next week to get us ready to move. Do we have plans next week?

MIKE

No.

LORRAINE

I don't think we should put this place on the market right away. Then we'd have more time --

MIKE

Honey.

LORRAINE
(ignoring him)
-- we'd have more time to move and
maybe once we're down there we'll
decide we don't want to be in Port-
au-Prince full time --

MIKE
Lorraine.

She hears his tone and gets up on her elbow to look at him.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I can't leave right now.

LORRAINE
I know, that's why I'll go down
next week and you can finish up --

MIKE
No, I'm not --
(on the precipice)
I can't retire. Right now.

Lorraine blinks at him. Doesn't understand.

LORRAINE
Your birthday's in a few weeks.
It's a mandatory retirement --

MIKE
Bill extended my contract five more
years.

LORRAINE
What?

MIKE
He waived the rules.

Lorraine finally gets what Mike is telling her. He's not
retiring. They're not moving to Haiti.

LORRAINE
Why.

MIKE
So I can stay through the trial.
The lawyers don't know how long
it'll drag out --

LORRAINE
No. Why did he extend it.

Mike can see she's about to boil.

MIKE
Because I asked him to.

Lorraine blinks at him for a few moments, then gets up and stumbles to the closet, pulling her dress back on.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Lorraine, hey.

She drags out a SUITCASE and starts heaping in clothes.

MIKE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

She ignores him, keeps packing.

MIKE (CONT'D)
It's two in the morning, we're drunk, can we just talk about this tomorrow?

She ZIPS the suitcase shut and struggles into shoes.

LORRAINE
You're in editing tomorrow.

MIKE
Tomorrow night then.

LORRAINE
You're flying to Boston at quarter to eight --

MIKE
I'll find some time --

Lorraine turns to him, suddenly apoplectic --

LORRAINE
No! You won't! Because everything else in your fucking myopic life is more important than me. Than us.

Mike realizes he should get up, try to comfort her --

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
You promised when the time came you were done. You promised me Haiti.

MIKE
(reaching for her)
It's just a few more years, I can't leave in the middle of the lawsuit --

She yanks away from him and walks out the door, dragging the suitcase. Mike chases her --

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- as she barrels through the room, knocking over glasses and party remnants with her luggage.

MIKE

Honey, please, it's the middle of the night, I don't understand --

Lorraine gets to the door and YANKS, but it's locked. She struggles to unlock in, still fairly drunk.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Please just stay and we can talk about this --

Lorraine BANGS the door in frustration. She turns to face Mike, single tear rolling down her cheek.

LORRAINE

Tell me why.

MIKE

I already told you it's just until after the lawsuit --

LORRAINE

Why does the lawsuit matter?

She's barely holding it together. Mike can see this is his last shot.

MIKE

Because if I leave they're going to remember me as a coward. They're going to remember me as a libelous fraud and a piece of shit reporter and everything I've been building for the past twenty years will have been for nothing.

Lorraine stares at him for a beat, finally understanding their great disconnect.

LORRAINE

I was building a *life*. For us.
For your son.

(realizing)

And this whole time I was doing it alone.

Lorraine clicks open the lock, opens the door, and walks out.

Mike just stands, paralyzed by the truth.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - DAY

A somber Mike walks through a spacious, beautiful, empty apartment, led by a REAL ESTATE AGENT.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
It's got a great view of the park.
Set up a telescope and you can
watch joggers bounce all day.
(awkward beat)
The kitchen might be a little small
though, depending on how much you
entertain.

Mike walks to the window and takes in the breathtaking view of Central Park.

REAL ESTATE AGENT (CONT'D)
Mr. Wallace?
(Mike turns)
I hope I'm not out of line, but I
have a niece in reporter school and
she'd kill me if she found out I
showed you a few places and didn't
get an autograph.

Mike's mood brightens -- he just got asked for his autograph, like he's Joe DiMaggio. The Agent holds out a pen and pad, which Mike takes --

MIKE
What's your niece's name?

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Margaret.

MIKE
Where's Margaret go to school?

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Yale. She's gonna graduate with
honors, we're all real proud of her.

MIKE
You should be. My oldest son went
to Yale.

Mike freezes, hearing what he just said.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Yeah? How's he doing now?

Mike finishes his note and hands back the pad of paper, struggling to hold it together.

MIKE
Let's draw up an offer.

INT. CRAVATH, SWAINE & MOORE - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Mike sits across from superstar lawyer DAVID BOIES (40s) in the conference room of one of the best law firms in New York. Boies is faux cross-examining Mike, both of them exhausted --

DAVID BOIES
What specifically were your contributions to the documentary in question?

MIKE
I was the narrator, and conducted the two major interviews.

DAVID BOIES
One of which being the interview with General Westmoreland.

MIKE
That's correct.

DAVID BOIES
Did you prepare your own questions for that interview?

MIKE
Mr. Crile and I worked out a script, yes.

DAVID BOIES
And you always read from a script during your interviews.

MIKE
No, the script's just a template. I go off-script all the time.

DAVID BOIES
How often did you deviate from the script when questioning General Westmoreland?

Mike realizes his mistake --

MIKE
Shit.

DAVID BOIES
That's what a trap looks like. It's easy to imply malicious intent if it looks like you went rogue.

MIKE
Let's go through it one more time.

DAVID BOIES
 (shaking 'no')
 It's late. You must have plans for
 the long weekend.

MIKE
 No, I want to get this right --

DAVID BOIES
 Make some. Plans. Trials like
 these are hard, opposing council
 wants to get a rise out of you.
 You have to be mentally prepared to
 take some abuse.

MIKE
 I'm prepared, let's just run
 through it again --

DAVID BOIES
 Mike I'm sorry, you aren't. Come
 back next week with your head right.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lavishly furnished, but empty. More like a model home than a
 human residence.

Mike sits in a chair, looking out the window at the park.
 Glass of WHISKEY on the side table next to him, cradling a
 PHONE in his lap. Thinking.

PRE-LAP: an IRRITATING PHONE RINGS --

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mary Yates washes dishes at the sink while the TV BLARES in
 another room.

The HORRIBLE PHONE rings again --

MARY
 (yelling)
 Anghee, could you get that?

ANGUS YATES (O.S.)
 What?

MARY
 My hands are all wet!

ANGUS YATES (O.S.)
 Mom I can't hear you.

Mary dries off her hands and grabs the KITCHEN PHONE --

MARY
 (covers phone, yelling)
 So turn off the damn TV --
 (into phone)
 Hello?

MIKE (PHONE)
 Mary?

MARY
 Yeah who is this?

ANGUS YATES (20s) appears around the corner and sees she's on the phone --

ANGUS YATES
 (whispers)
 What?

MIKE (PHONE)
 It's Mike Wallace.

Mary's surprised -- not at all who she expected.

MARY
 (whispering to Angus)
 Turn off the goddamn TV.
 (into phone)
 Hey there slugger. How are you?

INTERCUT:

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - SAME

Mike's still looking out the window with the phone to his ear, glass of whiskey in his hand.

MIKE
 I'm all right.

MARY
 I heard you got a new place uptown.

MIKE
 Where'd you hear that?

MARY
 You of all people know I can't
 reveal my sources.

Mike appreciates the flirtation. Mary waits for him to continue, but he doesn't. The TV NOISE stops.

MARY (CONT'D)
 Is everything okay?

MIKE
Of course, I was just... calling.

MARY
Yes you were.

MIKE
What are you doing for the long weekend? Are you busy, I mean.

Angus returns to the kitchen to watch the call, intrigued.

MARY
Just got the boys in town, Eames brought a girlfriend. You want to swing by and meet her? She's just your type.

Mike chuckles, squirrels up some courage --

MIKE
I'm going up to the Vineyard for a few days. I was wondering if you -- you and the boys, of course -- if you wanted to join me, maybe.

MARY
(for Angus's benefit)
Join you, famed 60 Minutes reporter Mike Wallace, at your home in Martha's Vineyard?

Angus raises his eyebrows --

MIKE
It's just a rental.

MARY
Well it sounds lovely. Thank you.

Mike takes a deep breath, relieved.

MIKE
I'll send a car tomorrow morning.
Oh, Mary?

MARY
Yeah slugger?

MIKE
Make sure Eames brings the girlfriend.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - KITCHEN - SAME

Mary hangs up the receiver and turns to look at Angus, who's crossing his arms and smirking at her.

MARY

What?

EXT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD - BEACH - DAY

Mike and Mary walk along the crowded beach, shoeless, enjoying the warm breeze and each other's company.

MARY

We were at this awards show one night, I forgot which one. Some local thing. Ted was in a tuxedo and I had on this ridiculous gown, and they're reading the nominees and I look over and he's bleeding all over his lap. Blood's just running down his arm because he couldn't stop picking his damn fingernails for five minutes. And then they call his name and he has to go up there all bloody like he got stabbed in his seat. It used to drive me crazy, that picking.

(chuckles)

Peter must have had something like that, something that just drove you up the wall.

MIKE

No, no.

MARY

You don't have to cover for him.

Mike musters a laugh, shakes his head.

MIKE

I'm sure he did. I just don't remember what it was.

Mike stops to pick up a smooth ROCK from the beach.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Why haven't you ever remarried?

MARY

That's a loaded question.

MIKE

Only kind that's any fun.

Mary laughs --

MARY

I don't know. It's hard to find someone who understands.

MIKE
Ted's a hard act to follow.

MARY
He didn't deserve what happened.
Neither of them did.

Mike considers the rock in his hand for a moment, then THROWS it into the surf. It SKIPS a few times.

MARY (CONT'D)
You were wrong, you know. In that diner all those years ago. The feeling does go away. It still hurts, it's just as strong, but it's not as often. And I know I can get through it.

Mike looks out at the ocean, doesn't respond. Mary picks up on his trepidation.

MARY (CONT'D)
You don't feel that way?

MIKE
Some days I do.

MARY
You should really talk to somebody, Mike. You have to talk to somebody.

Mike turns to face her --

MIKE
I just need to get through the trial. Get back to work.

MARY
Who's helping you do that?

MIKE
Our lawyer's very good, and Bill Leonard's doing what he can.

MARY
I'm sure Bill and the lawyer are both doing a great job covering their own asses.

She reaches out and grabs his hand.

MARY (CONT'D)
I'm asking who's helping you.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike opens the door to the dark apartment but doesn't turn on the lights. He's carrying a suitcase. Mary follows him in, eyes closed, carrying two more large bags. Moving in.

MIKE

Now put these down...

Mary sets down her bags and keeps walking as Mike guides her toward the window. He stops her right in front of it.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Okay.

Mary opens her eyes, reveling in the sight. The city looks beautiful on the other side of the glass. She turns to him, a sparkle in her eye, and he leans in for a KISS. Long. Passionate. Decades in the making.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN

Mary blinks awake in Mike's bed. Still dark outside. She looks over to his side and sees that he's gone.

Confused, she sits up --

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - PRE-DAWN

Mary enters the kitchen to see Mike at the table, dressed in a suit and his black tie. Dissected newspapers spread in front of him, a half-finished slice of DRY TOAST on a plate.

MARY

Dry toast.

MIKE

(turning)

Hm?

MARY

What you like for breakfast. When are they picking you up?

MIKE

Seven.

MARY

It's not even five. Do you want to come back to bed?

Mike plasters on an empty smile.

MIKE

I'm fine.

He turns back to his newspapers. She approaches him from behind and wraps her arms around him, kissing him on the head. He freezes -- stiff, cold.

MIKE (CONT'D)
You should get back to sleep.

Unnerved, Mary retreats back to the bedroom.

EXT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - DAY

TV VANS ring the perimeter of the courthouse while a MOB OF REPORTERS mill about, waiting for Mike to arrive.

At a podium, Westmoreland's attorney DAN BURT (40s, smarmy) gives a press conference --

DAN BURT
There's no doubt in my mind a jury will see that CBS and in particular George Crile and Mike Wallace have acted with clear and deliberate malice to libel General Westmoreland. You're all about to see the dismantling of a major television network --

INT. LIMO / EXT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - SAME

Mike sits in the back of a limo with Don Hewitt as it approaches the courthouse steps. They both watch Dan Burt speak to the reporters through the window.

DON
They're like a pack of fucking hyenas.

Mike remains silent, watching the crowd take notice of the limo and start approaching.

DON (CONT'D)
But you're still my tiger. And tigers eat hyenas.

MIKE
Tigers and hyenas don't even live on the same continent.

DON
Well if they did. Or if they both escaped the zoo at the same time or something.

The limo PULLS TO A STOP and Mike turns to face Don, unamused. After a beat, Mike opens the door --

EXT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

-- and steps out into the throng of REPORTERS shoving microphones in his face and SHOUTING QUESTIONS.

Mike carves his way through the crowd, keeping his head down and ignoring questions. David Boies meets him at the top of the steps and ushers him into the courthouse, shutting the door behind them.

BAILIFF (PRE-LAP)

All rise.

INT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - ROOM 318 - DAY

A flurry of motion as the packed court stands at attention.

At the defense table stands Mike, David Boies, George Crile, and BOIES' ASSOCIATE. At the plaintiff's table: attorney Dan Burt and GENERAL WESTMORELAND (70s), standing ramrod straight and staring dead ahead.

In the jury box are a dozen JURORS who all seem aware they're expected to rule on the libel trial of the century.

As JUDGE LEVAL (early 50s) crosses to the bench --

BAILIFF

The United States Court for the Southern District of New York is now in session, the honorable Judge Pierre Leval presiding. You may be seated.

Mike looks to the gallery and sees Mary. She gives him a little smile, but he can't return it.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - ROOM 318 - LATER

General Westmoreland sits on the witness stand, being questioned by Dan Burt. The testimony has been going on for a while, and Mike looks like he's been through an assault.

DAN BURT

You were interviewed by Mr. Wallace in May of 1981, is that correct?

WESTMORELAND

I believe so, yes.

DAN BURT

Did you consider yourself prepared for this interview?

WESTMORELAND
I didn't think much of it.

DAN BURT
Even though you knew you'd be
speaking with notorious
investigative reporter --

DAVID BOIES
Objection.

Dan Burt whirls to face Boies, smirk on his face --

DAN BURT
Is it too generous to characterize
Mr. Wallace as an investigative
reporter?

JUDGE LEVAL
Mr. Burt. How about you rephrase.

DAN BURT
Of course your honor.
(back to Westmoreland)
Despite Mr. Wallace's...
reputation, you felt prepared to
speak to him for the documentary in
question?

WESTMORELAND
Mr. Burt, I went toe-to-toe with
the Viet Cong for four years in the
jungle. A lying snake like Mr.
Wallace didn't cause me any
sleepless nights.

DAVID BOIES
(exasperated)
Objection.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT (1985)

The sun has gone down and Mike still looks sick on the couch.

MIKE
I had to sit there day in, day out,
listening to people call me a liar,
a thief, a cheat, a fraud --

CUT TO:

INT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - ROOM 318 - DAY

George Crile is on the stand and Dan Burt is pacing like a
shark, holding a SHEET OF PAPER.

DAN BURT
The plaintiff would like to enter
into evidence this memo, sent from
Mr. Crile to Mr. Wallace. Would
you please read the highlighted
portion, Mr. Crile?

Burt hands Crile the document, which he scans quickly. As he
does, his face falls. He looks up apologetically at Mike.

DAN BURT (CONT'D)
Mr. Crile?

Crile glares at Burt for a moment, then looks down at the
memo in his hands.

CRILE
(dry as possible)
It looks beautiful. Now all you
have to do is break General
Westmoreland and we'll have the
whole thing aced.

Mike lets out a sharp breath --

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT (1985)

MIKE
And then after getting beaten up in
court all day I went to David's
office every night --

INT. CRAVATH, SWAINE & MOORE - DAVID'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mike and David Boies sit around a COFFEE TABLE littered with
documents.

DAVID BOIES
Did you and Mr. Crile decide on
questions to ask the general in
advance?

MIKE
Of course.

DAVID BOIES
And you stuck to those questions.

MIKE
To the best of my ability.

DAVID BOIES
The best of your ability?

MIKE
It's an interview. You have to
listen, you have to engage, you
have to improvise.

DAVID BOIES
So it was you who decided -- in the
moment -- to press harder against
General Westmoreland.

MIKE
No --

DAVID BOIES
But you just told this court you
improvised --

MIKE
(pounding table)
God *dammit*.

Boies rubs his face, almost in disbelief.

DAVID BOIES
We have two weeks until you get on
the stand. Two. You cannot get
tripped up like that.

MIKE
I know.

DAVID BOIES
I hope so. Because otherwise you
don't get to be a reporter anymore.

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT (1985)

Dr. Kaplan leans in --

DR. KAPLAN
I have a theory on why that
question tripped you up.

Mike looks up, waiting for Dr. Kaplan to continue.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
You're Mike Wallace, world famous
journalist. If you testify that
all you do is sit in front of a
camera and read lines... that's
what a cigarette spokesman does,
isn't it?

Off Mike, unable to avoid the painful truth --

INT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - ROOM 318 - DAY

Judge Leval BANGS his gavel --

JUDGE LEVAL
This court will adjourn until after
the new year. Happy holidays,
everyone.

As everyone stands to leave, Mike struggles to control his
breath. Deteriorating.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike sits at his kitchen table reading the New York Times. A
pile of OPENED LETTERS off to the side. We don't catch all
of what he's reading, but we see things like "Mike Wallace"
and "CBS" and "Westmoreland".

Mary emerges from the bedroom and puts her arms around him.

MARY
Have you given up sleep entirely?

MIKE
(not looking up)
I'll come in a minute.

She kisses him on the cheek and sits in a chair opposite,
staring at him. He tries to keep reading, but can't help but
feel her gaze. Eventually, he looks up.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Do you think any of this is true?

MARY
I think you need sleep to survive,
yes.

Mike pulls a LETTER from the stack --

MIKE
(reading)
"You, sir, are a paid shill with no
morals, a sniveling lap-dog press
whore/hypocrite of the first order --"

MARY
Mike --

MIKE
"Hundreds have experienced first-
hand your deceptive two-faced
approach with creative editing
which reversed the true essence of
the actual interview."

MARY
You can't read these. And that
last sentence is redundant in two
different places.

MIKE
Did I do something wrong?

MARY
Of course not. There's a handful
of angry people who don't like you,
and they're sending letters in the
mail like cowards have done for
centuries.

MIKE
I don't think the mail's been
around for centuries --

MARY
(ignoring him)
It'll get better once you take the
stand. You can defend yourself in
open court and on the record.

Mike looks over at the pile of letters -- probably a dozen.

MIKE
Defend against who?

Off Mary, concerned --

INT. MID-CITY DINER - DAY

Mike sits alone at a booth in a Christmas-decorated tourist
trap, hands clasped around a half-empty cup of coffee, waiting.

After a moment, CHRIS WALLACE (now in his late 30s) rushes in
with an OVERCOAT and a DAY BAG. He spots Mike and heads over.

CHRIS
I only have a few minutes, my
train's at 3:30.

Chris takes off his coat and sits across from Mike, gesturing
to a WAITER for a cup of coffee.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
How's it going in there?

MIKE
Fine, it's fine.

CHRIS
It's a lot of pressure.

Mike clearly doesn't want to talk about the trial.

MIKE
How are the kids?

CHRIS
Everyone's good. We were in
Florida over Christmas.

MIKE
That's great.

The Waiter sets a MUG OF COFFEE down in front of Chris. Mike just stares at it.

CHRIS
Is there anything you need to tell
me? Liz said you sounded... it
sounded urgent.

MIKE
I just wanted to see you while you
were in town. Catch up.

Chris takes a SIP of coffee as he waits for Mike to continue.
When he doesn't --

CHRIS
I... I really have to catch my
train soon.

MIKE
Just stay a few more minutes, talk
to your old man.

CHRIS
You're not talking.

MIKE
I feel like I haven't seen you.

CHRIS
Do you want to talk about the
lawsuit? Is that what this is?

MIKE
No, I just -- can't I just share a
meal with my son?

CHRIS
Of course you can. You just don't
usually want to.

Mike takes offense to that --

MIKE
That's a hell of a thing to say --

CHRIS

I can count on one hand the number
of times you've called me since the
wedding --

MIKE

I am always there when you ask me
to be. Always --

CHRIS

I shouldn't have to ask.
(beat)
It took me a long time to learn
how.

Mike sits back, stung. Chris stands, pulls on his coat --

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm going to be late.

MIKE

Please. Just one more cup of
coffee.

CHRIS

My family's waiting at home. Good
luck with the trial.

He drops some MONEY on the table, grabs his bag, and walks
away. Mike just watches him go. Devastated.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT (DEC. 30, 1984)

Mike lays awake in bed, staring at the ceiling, trying to
control his breathing, just like on the airplane on the way
to Greece. Mary dozes next to him.

MIKE

(whisper-singing quietly)
*Sh'ma Yisrael... Adonai Eloheinu...
Adonai Echad.*

Mike gingerly steps out from under the covers.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mike examines his face in the bathroom mirror. Dark brown
eyes and gray, thinning hair. Old acne scars. Wrinkles on a
66-year-old forehead. This is the face we recognize from
Mike's conversations with Dr. Kaplan.

Anxious. Troubled.

He begins to control his breathing, looking at his reflection
until it's normal. Until he's calm. Until he's decided.

Mike opens the medicine cabinet.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Still sleeping, Mary reaches her arm over to where Mike should be. When her arm hits the mattress, she wakes up.

She sits up and looks at the empty bed. Looks around the empty room.

MARY

Mike?

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mary comes around the corner into the living room. She looks around and spots --

Mike asleep on the couch. She relaxes and walks toward him.

MARY

Mike, come back to bed.

Nothing. She jostles him, but he doesn't stir.

MARY (CONT'D)

Mike?

Her adrenaline spikes. She SHAKES him, but he's completely out. Mary starts panicking.

MARY (CONT'D)

Mike, wake up --

Still nothing. She runs over to the PHONE, knocking it off the side table in her haste. She picks it up off the floor and dials, hands shaking. She holds the receiver to her ear, listening to it ring...

OPERATOR

Nine-one-one emergency response.

She opens her mouth to speak --

CUT TO:

EXT. UPPER EASTSIDE STREETS - NIGHT

A SCREAMING AMBULANCE bombs down Lexington Avenue in the middle of the night --

INT. LENNOX HILL HOSPITAL - ER HALLWAY - NIGHT

PARAMEDICS burst through the doors of the ER pushing Mike on a stretcher --

Mary trails behind them as they BURST through another door --

INT. LENNOX HILL HOSPITAL - ER - NIGHT

The Doctor wheels Mike into a bay while a few NURSES wait with a large TUBE-LIKE APPARATUS.

Mary watches in horror as the doctor and nurses work together to forcefully insert the tube down Mike's throat and pump his stomach. It's a horrible, violent procedure, especially when performed on a 66 year-old man.

Mary leans against the wall and sinks to the floor, crying.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. LENNOX HILL HOSPITAL - ROOM - MORNING (1985)

Eerily calm. Faint winter sunrise through a small window. All we hear are the STEADY BEEPS of a heart monitor.

Mike lays in bed on his back, unconscious, IVs in both arms. Mary sleeps in a plastic chair, resting her head on his thigh, holding his hand with hers.

Mike GROANS and STIRS, and Mary bolts up. When Mike blinks awake, she's hovering over him.

MARY
You missed New Years.

A wave of guilt washes over Mike's face. He closes his eyes again -- can't face her.

INT. LENNOX HILL HOSPITAL - ROOM - LATER

The light's changed. Mike wakes again and looks around the room -- it's empty. But through the doorway he can see Mary and Don Hewitt talking in harsh whispers in the hall.

DON (O.S.)
You have to get rid of the damn thing. If anybody finds it --

MARY (O.S.)
You know what he wrote? Bank account numbers. That's it. There's no explanation, no apology, I didn't even know it was a suicide note --

DON (O.S.)
Hey, shhh --

Don pulls her into the room for privacy --

DON (CONT'D)
You still don't know that's what it --
(sees Mike's awake)
Mike. How you feeling?

MIKE
Like a 66 year-old man in a
hospital bed.

Don approaches --

DON
Getting old ain't all sunshine and
waterfalls. Look, I don't know how
much you remember, but you're at
Lennox Hill. You've been admitted
for nervous exhaustion.

Mike looks at Mary, standing behind Don. She's fuming.

DON (CONT'D)
I think it's important we're all on
the same page about that.

MARY
(directly to Mike)
What actually happened is you
swallowed an entire bottle of
sleeping pills. You're depressed,
and we're going to get you help --

DON
Whoa whoa, let's be careful with
words here. You're not depressed,
are you?

MIKE
Of course not --

DON
(to Mary)
He's not depressed. He's a tiger.

MARY
Don, this isn't helping him --

DON
You think this is helping anybody?
I have my number one correspondent
laid up in a hospital room during a
hundred million dollar libel suit
and you're calling him a pussy?

MARY
That's not what I'm saying.

DON
Guys like Mike don't get depressed.
They don't have it in them.

Mary can't take it anymore --

MARY
Just get out.

DON
We need to protect Mike's image --

MARY
Get. Out.

Don can see she isn't kidding. He turns to Mike and gestures toward an EXTRAVAGANT VASE OF FLOWERS on a table.

DON
Everyone at the office chipped in, but
we didn't know what kind you liked.
(pats Mike's shoulder)
You're gonna be fine.

He gives Mike's shoulder a SQUEEZE and leaves the room as Mary glares. When he's gone --

MIKE
You didn't have to yell at him.

MARY
He's not looking out for you. He's
looking out for 60.

MIKE
What's the difference?

Mary takes a seat next to Mike's bed, concerned.

MARY
I need you to see a doctor.

MIKE
We're in a hospital, I'm sure we
can find one somewhere.

MARY
A psychiatrist doctor.

MIKE
Mary, come on, with the trial... I
just had a bad day. That's all.

MARY
What happens the next time you have
a bad day?

MIKE

I don't need to talk to a psychiatrist, I just need to rest and then I need to get back to work.

MARY

There might not be any more work, do you understand that? You have to deal with how you're feeling. You have to deal with what it's like to sit in that court room day after day. With what it's like to have multiple failed marriages. With what it's like to lose your oldest son --

MIKE

What are you trying to do here?

MARY

You can't hide behind 60 Minutes anymore.

MIKE

I'm not hiding behind anything --

MARY

Yes you are.

Mary's outburst cows him into silence.

MARY (CONT'D)

If you don't want to share your life with me, I can accept that. But I'm not Lorraine. I'm not going to pretend everything's fine while you die a lonely soldier in a 20-year-old battle.

She stands and heads for the door. Mike realizes she's leaving for good --

MIKE

Mary, wait.

She walks out without so much as looking back.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike opens the door to his apartment. It's cold. Sterile.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike opens the door to the closet -- half empty. All of Mary's clothes are gone. She's moved out.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike looks out the window. He turns his attention to the phone, where a NOTEPAD catches his attention.

He picks it up. Written in feminine handwriting:

DR. MARVIN KAPLAN
555-7289

As Mike considers the pad --

CUT TO:

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Finally caught up to the present. Mike and Dr. Kaplan look at each other, the whole story laid bare.

DR. KAPLAN
And here we are.

MIKE
And here we are.

DR. KAPLAN
(beat)
Why?

MIKE
You want me to tell it again?

DR. KAPLAN
A court didn't compel you here. No one's holding your dog hostage. Why are you in my office?

MIKE
I don't know.

DR. KAPLAN
Twenty years as a journalist and I bet you've never once accepted that as an answer. Why are you here?

A long pause as Mike considers.

MIKE
I guess I can't keep doing what I've been doing.

DR. KAPLAN
Why not? You convinced Bill to extend your contract and 60 is still one of the most watched shows on television. Seems like everything is looking up for you.

MIKE
Mary left.

DR. KAPLAN
So did your first wife. So did
Lorraine. How is this any different?

MIKE
Because it's Mary.

DR. KAPLAN
That's not an answer.

MIKE
Because I love her.

Dr. Kaplan laughs --

DR. KAPLAN
You were married to Lorraine for 28
years, you're telling me you didn't
love her?

MIKE
Of course I did.

DR. KAPLAN
Then quit fucking around and answer
the question.

MIKE
I don't know --

DR. KAPLAN
Why is Mary different?

MIKE
I don't know --

DR. KAPLAN
That's not good enough --

MIKE
Because she understands what I'm
going through.
(beat)
And I can't go through it alone
anymore.

Mike looks at the CLOCK, tears welling in his eyes. Tick,
tick, tick...

DR. KAPLAN
Good. This is what the first step
feels like.

CUT TO:

INT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Mike holds the receiver of a PAY PHONE to his ear in the opulent hallway. He's wearing a nice suit with his BLACK TIE. The phone rings, and rings...

MARY (PHONE)

You've reached the home of Mary Yates. If you want to leave a message for me or Angus, please do so after the beep.

BEEEEEP --

MIKE

Hi, it's, uh, Mike. Wallace. I just wanted to try you again, because, uh... I just wanted to talk to you. I'm testifying today, and I was hoping... I saw Dr. Kaplan yesterday.

(beat)

I miss you.

Mike hangs up the receiver. Stares at it for a beat.

INT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Mike PUKES in the toilet of the art deco stall, tie thrown over his shoulder.

He wipes his mouth with toilet paper, flushes, stands, adjusts his tie, and exits the stall into --

INT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- the courthouse restroom. A MAN is peeing at the urinal, but otherwise it's empty.

Mike approaches the sink and begins to wash his hands. He rubs water on his mouth, then drinks from the faucet and spits.

When he stands back up, Mike checks the mirror and sees the peeing man is General Westmoreland.

Westmoreland approaches the other sink and begins washing his hands. The two look at each other in the mirror, and the general notices Mike's post-puke ashen color.

WESTMORELAND

You feeling alright?

MIKE

To be perfectly honest with you general, I think I am.

Westmoreland nods, grabs a few paper towels, and exits the bathroom. Mike stares after him.

INT. MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Mike walks toward his court room, psyching himself up.

At the other end of the hall, he can see David Boies having a low conversation with Dan Burt as their respective LEGAL TEAMS wait. Boies spots Mike walking toward him.

As Mike gets closer, Boies shakes Burt's hand and the latter peels off with his team. Boies approaches Mike, arms outstretched --

DAVID BOIES
Congratulations. Westmoreland's
dropping the suit.

Mike looks further down the hall to see Dan Burt and Westmoreland talking. He can't believe it.

MIKE
I don't have to testify?

DAVID BOIES
He settled. Zero monetary damages
and you don't even have to apologize.

The word "apologize" registers with Mike... He abruptly turns and walks toward the exit.

DAVID BOIES (CONT'D)
Mike, where are you going? Mike.

Mike keeps walking without looking back --

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Mike's car pulls into the driveway of a modest suburban home. He gets out of the car, walks to the front door, KNOCKS.

After a moment the door opens, revealing --

MIKE
Mary.

He approaches and wraps her up in a hug before she can respond, squeezing tight. He sobs on her shoulder --

MIKE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

Mary softens, returning the hug, accepting his apology. He buries his head in her neck as we --

FADE TO BLACK.

In the darkness, we hear:

MIKE (V.O.)
You know what's interesting about
that, Bob?

BOB COSTAS (V.O.)
What's interesting?

MIKE (V.O.)
I think I'm going to tell you a
secret.

FADE IN:

ON A SCREEN (DEC. 10, 1988)

BOB COSTAS (30s), in an overstuffed red chair, interviews
Mike in an overstuffed blue one. Mike looks a bit older and
wiser than before -- and he's wearing a LIGHT BLUE TIE.

Bob leans in --

BOB COSTAS
What is it?

MIKE
Are you ready?

BOB COSTAS
I'm ready, what is it?

MIKE
I myself have actually suffered
from a serious clinical depression
in the past.

BOB COSTAS
Depression?

MIKE
That's right.

BOB COSTAS
You're telling me that Mike
Wallace, the toughest reporter on
television, is depressed.

MIKE
That's what I'm telling you.

BOB COSTAS
I never would have guessed that.

MIKE

That's what makes it a secret. But it's nothing to be ashamed of, it's a disease like any other. You can get treatment. And admitting you're depressed doesn't mean you're weak.

BOB COSTAS

Mike Wallace suffers from depression. I can't believe this.

MIKE

Some days I can't either. Some days it's all I think about. I still struggle.

(beat)

But you know what? I started going to a psychiatrist. And I found a woman who really understands me, understands what I'm going through. Letting her into my life, letting her know how I really feel -- that made all the difference. She knows how to help even when I don't know how to ask.

SMASH TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. DR. KAPLAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The CLOCK ticks in the empty office. TICK, TICK, TICK...

SUPER:

Mike continued seeing Dr. Kaplan regularly for the next two decades, struggling through several relapses as he learned to cope with his illness.

INT. AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS CABIN - DAY

Mike (in his 80s) looks out the window, lost in thought.

SUPER:

He remained at 60 Minutes until 2006. Over his 38 years there, he changed the face of television news and became one of the best investigative journalists of his generation.

Mike looks over to see Mary (also in her 80s) sitting next to him. He smiles at her. She takes his hand.

EXT. GREECE - VILLAGE - DAY

Mike and Mary wander through the tiny village, looking out of place among the GREEK RESIDENTS crossing back and forth.

SUPER:

He became an outspoken advocate for the treatment of depression, lending his name and face to numerous advocacy campaigns to encourage others to seek help.

EXT. CORINTHIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY

Mike and Mary ride MULES up a steep trail, led by a YOUNG GREEK GUIDE.

SUPER:

Mike and Mary married on June 28, 1986. They were together 26 years until his death in April 2012. She passed away five months later.

The mules crest the hill, revealing expansive views of the Gulf of Corinth, postcard-perfect mountaintops, switchback trails. Right where it all started.

Mike looks at the view and breathes deeply. At peace. Mary looks at him and smiles.

He smiles back. Happy.

SMASH TO BLACK.