

CHAPPAQUIDDICK

Written by

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Based on the true story

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Patient was admitted 19 June at 16:45 by ambulance after an airplane accident near Barnes Municipal Airport. Patient presented with puncture wounds, as well as visible broken arms, and legs. Patient was unable to move - probable spine fracture or dislocation. Patient was conscious and reporting a 6 on the Pain Scale, even though which is exceptionally low considering the extent of the Patient's injuries. Patient was believed to be in shock, though surprisingly lucid. Patient complained of being unable to breathe normally - signs of respiratory issues perhaps due to a punctured lung.

totals 20
racial 27-31
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One MORNING EDITION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 1968

RFK Shot at Calif. Victory P Bullet in Brain, Condition Cri

EXTRA

kitchen corridor at the Am-
bassador Hotel.

A second man was re-
portedly shot by security

PROLOGUE



EXT. DIKE ROAD - NIGHT

A pair of FINE LEATHER SHOES, soaking wet, SQUISH along a gravel road. With each step, water seeps through the tongue, reflecting the amber hues of a nearby porch light.

Distant at first, the faint sounds of strained breathing grow into loud gasps for air. Glimpses of an exquisitely tailored suit drenched from head to toe. Water drips from the sleeve past a dead, gold Rolex.

Beads of sweat fall from a masculine brow revealing SENATOR TED KENNEDY, 37.

EXT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Ted stumbles toward a quaint, Martha's Vineyard vacation home, which would resemble an Edward Hopper painting if it weren't for the raucous party bursting from inside.

He lumbers over to an empty, WHITE PLYMOUTH VALIANT out front. Opens the rear door and sits in the back seat. A figure approaches, but Ted doesn't look back.

TED
Get me Joe Gargan. We got a problem.

INT. TED KENNEDY'S SENATE OFFICE - THE PREVIOUS DAY

A phone SLAMS down --

TED
Get me Joe Gargan! We got a problem!

A SECRETARY rushes to her desk and dials frantically. Ted's aide DUN GIFFORD, 30, peeks his head through the door.

GIFFORD
They're ready for your interview,
Senator.

TED
(to secretary)
The second you have him, patch him
through to me.

Ted storms out of his office as Gifford trails behind.

INT. SENATE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

STAFFERS and CAMERA CREW add to the chaos as Ted plows ahead.

DAVID BURKE, 33, Ted's loyal chief of staff comes running up.

DAVID BURKE
Just spoke with the Majority Leader.

Ted scowls. Gifford hands him a sheet of paper with a bulleted list of talking points.

TED
(to Gifford)
When does this interview air?

DAVID BURKE
Senator, you're not going to like it.

GIFFORD
Sunday. Just before Apollo 11 starts its descent.

TED
And *these* are the talking points?

DAVID BURKE
Senator. Your health care bill is making us enemies in the party leadership --

Ted shoves the talking points in David Burke's face.

TED
This is why we're focused on national news. My name gives me a platform into every American home. I can speak directly to the people instead of waiting for the leadership to know shit from Shinola.

Ted picks up a phone on a corner table, smashes a few buttons.

TED (CONT'D)
Did you get Joe yet?!

SECRETARY (V.O.)
He's not answering.

TED
Well, keep trying him!

Ted slams the phone down and enters through a double doorway.

INT. SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A TV CREW with multiple cameras overrun the conference room.

DICK DRAYNE, 31, Ted's press secretary, catches up to him at the entryway and guides him past the lights and cables. Ted reviews the talking points with growing frustration.

TED
What are they thinking I can say
that's remotely intelligent about
the moon landing?

DRAYNE
They just want you to talk about
President Kennedy. I don't think
they're expecting anything
intelligent.

Ted tosses the talking points aside.

TED
My point exactly.

They reach an empty chair across from an ABC REPORTER. Ted
shakes his hand.

TED (CONT'D)
So, you're the man they got to
represent all three networks.

ABC REPORTER
Well, I represent ABC. But this event
is so historic that we're licensing
your interview out to the other two.

Ted settles in while a MAKEUP GIRL powders his face and an
AUDIO TECH mics him up.

TED
Good! I don't get out of bed for less
than two networks worth of coverage.

The reporter and crew all force smiles and strained chuckles.

ABC REPORTER
Alright, I think we're set. Let's
roll camera.

The red lights of the cameras turn on, capturing Ted's
signature politician smile.

ABC REPORTER (CONT'D)
"We choose to go to the moon not
because it is easy but because it is
hard." What does your brother's
promise to America mean to you?

TED
Well, he always was someone who kept
his promises.
(beat)
My brother committed his life to the
idea that the United States was the
beacon of democracy for the world.
(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)

And so too, for my family, I think he was a beacon. Someone we all looked up to, aspired to be, and ultimately hope to live up to.

(beat)

I know I sure did.

ABC REPORTER

He said this mission would have, quote, "a great impact on the minds of men across the nation."

TED

I think my brother set the course for the whole nation in a way that we can never abandon. You see it in the space program, sure, but you can see it in the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the passage of the Immigration Act...even in my own life, I often ask, "What would Jack have me do?"

(beat)

Jack Kennedy cast a long shadow; and he still does. It's one I walk in every day.

ABC REPORTER

What's it like walking in that shadow?

Ted gives this question a moment of reflection before he removes his lapel mic. Stands up.

TED

I think you have what you need.

INT. SENATE HALLWAY - DAY

Ted exits the conference room and finds himself immediately flanked on both sides by David Burke and Gifford.

DAVID BURKE

I got Mansfield's support on the health care bill.

TED

Did we find Gargan, yet?

DAVID BURKE

I'm not sure. I was more focused on salvaging our relationship with the Majority Leader.

TED

You're worrying about the wrong thing.

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)
Mansfield's smart enough to know I'm
going to be his boss in three years.

INT. TED KENNEDY'S SENATE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ted enters his office. His secretary shoots to her feet.

SECRETARY
Joe Gargan is holding for you.

Ted heads straight for his phone and picks it up.

TED
Joey!

EXT. SHIRETOWN INN - DAY

JOE GARGAN, 39, Ted's cousin, stands in a phone booth outside
a small, seaside hotel.

He slicks back a comb over hiding the early signs of a
receding hairline. This makes him stick out like a black
sheep at Kennedy family gatherings. Along with his glasses.

GARGAN
What's going on, Teddy? I've been
on hold here for ten minutes.

INTERCUT

Ted leans back in his chair and gives a childlike shrug.

TED
I really needed to talk to you.

He puts his feet on the desk.

GARGAN
Well, it must have been something
pretty damn important.

Gargan's eyes roll; he knows it's not.

TED
The hotel on the Vineyard is
overbooked.

GARGAN
I just checked in. I'm holding the
key to our room right here.

TED
Not our hotel room. The girls! Mary
Jo just called me.

GARGAN

I'm sure she can find all of them another place. Mary Jo *was* the most resourceful of Bobby's old secretaries.

TED

They don't know the island! I need this handled properly.

GARGAN

What do you want me to do? Slap an injunction on the desk clerk until he coughs up a room?

TED

I don't need a lawyer, I need my advance man!

GARGAN

I've still gotta rig the hull. The regatta is this afternoon --

TED

I know when the race is. I'm sailing the damn boat with you.

GARGAN

But what about the party?

TED

There's no party if the Boiler Room Girls aren't there.

Ted stands up from his chair. He grabs a FRAMED PHOTO sitting on his desk: Ted, no older than thirteen, plays by the pool with his brothers Jack and Bobby.

In the photo, Gargan lies on the ground and takes a punch in the jaw from Bobby. All the Kennedy brothers appear to laugh and smile. Ted especially.

TED (CONT'D)

Listen, Ole Joey'll fix it, right?

GARGAN

When your dad said that --

TED

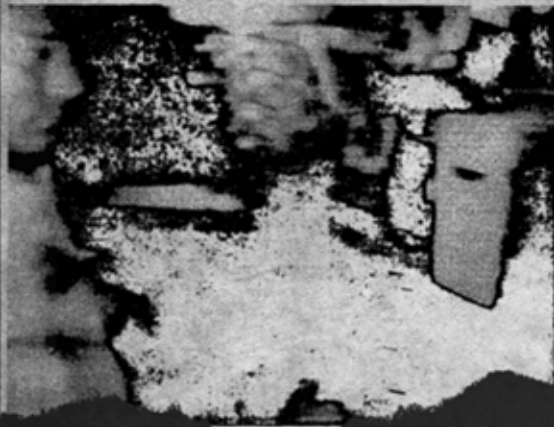
When my dad said that, he said that I could always count on you. Now, can I count on you?

Gargan grits his teeth.

GARGAN

Yep. "Ole Joey'll fix it."

APOLLO COASTS ON TOWARD MOON; ROCKET FIRED TO REFINE COURSE; ASTRONAUTS SHOW CAPSULE ON TV



MIDPOINT PASSED

Main Engine Operates
Well in a Brief Test
—Crew Relaxed

Excerpts from conversations
will be found on Page 12.

By JOHN NOBLE WILFORD

Special to The New York Times

HOUSTON, Friday, July 18—

The moonbound Apollo 11, its

systems sound and its aim true,

was coasting far past the half-

way point of its 240,000-mile

outward journey early today,

amid rising expectations of suc-

cess for the first lunar-landing

attempt by men.

Three astronauts fired the

ship's main rocket yes-

terday to sharpen its aim and

the engines that

enable it to get

into lunar



CHAPTER 1:

The Regatta



EXT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD - EDGARTOWN - DAY

As seen from above, a raven BLACK '67 OLDSMOBILE sedan pierces through winding roads leading to a picturesque seaside vacation town filled with brightly colored houses.

Even more brightly colored sails fill the harbor as the car reaches the ferry landing.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

A shadow engulfs Ted, who sits in the backseat, wearing reading glasses, reviewing a piece of legislation.

A *New York Times* newspaper rests on the seat next to him.

The date reads: "FRIDAY, JULY 18TH, 1969".

The headline reads:

- "APOLLO COASTS ON TOWARD MOON"

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - DAY

Ted's car rolls off the ferry with great caution. There is little sign of civilization, except back across the bay. Until --

EXT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - DAY

TED'S DRIVER, 63, opens the rear passenger door. He unloads the luggage and a case of beer. Ted, ever the man of the people, grabs his own box of assorted hard liquor.

INT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - DAY

Hands place bottles (and more bottles) on an entryway table. This must be a party for dozens of people, or at least one hell of a rager for any fewer.

INT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - BEDROOM - DAY

Ted catches a glimpse of himself in the mirror as he changes into a bathing suit. He turns around more fully revealing a BACK BRACE. A damaged man.

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - DAY

The car bounces along an unpaved road, jostling the two men inside.

It drives towards the beach across a rickety, single-lane bridge with no guardrail. DIKE BRIDGE.

Ted opens his door and takes his first step into the sand.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Scattered tourists line the narrow beach.

ESTHER NEWBERG, 26, wears a fashionable bikini and rubs tanning lotion on the back of her more modest, but more eye-catching, blonde friend, MARY JO KOPECHNE, 28.

Mary Jo lays on her stomach looking over her shoulder at Esther. Behind her, Gargan and another man, RAY LAROSA, 41, cavort with FOUR YOUNG WOMEN in the water. Wearing a divers mask and snorkel, the fit LaRosa dives back under the surface.

ESTHER

I still can't believe you stayed up
all night by yourself working on
Bobby's Vietnam speech.

MARY JO

I had company.

Esther raises an eyebrow.

ESTHER

I hadn't heard this part.

MARY JO

Not the whole night, of course.

Mary Jo turns back and looks out over the ocean.

MARY JO (CONT'D)

I was just trying to make sense of
all of Sorensen and Burke's notes.
So finally, I just call Burke and
see if he can't explain himself.
And that's when he tells me, "All
that stuff comes straight from Ted.
Why don't you go ask him yourself?"

Ted spots the girls from afar, starts to stroll up behind them.

MARY JO (CONT'D)

And would you believe it? It's past
two in the morning, and there's
Teddy...in his office...answering
letters from mothers, wives, and
widows begging him to put an end to
the war.

Ted steps lightly, trying not to intrude on the girls' conversation. He can't help but eavesdrop.

MARY JO (CONT'D)

So I ask him, "Senator. What did you mean when you said this war made you think, 'What has happened to America?'"

(beat)

And then he looks up at me...with a lump in his throat...and he says --

TED

Revealing state secrets is an act of treason, you know.

Mary Jo spins around. She's caught off guard by Ted but quickly recovers.

MARY JO

Well, if the state secret is that Ted Kennedy has a heart, then I'm guilty as charged.

Ted CHUCKLES and offers a conciliatory shrug. Mary Jo gets up and embraces him with a warm hug. A very warm hug.

ESTHER

How're the kids, Senator?

Ted clinches his jaw and speaks through gritted teeth.

TED

Fine. Just fine. Thanks for asking, Esta'.

ESTHER

And your wife?

TED

At home on bedrest, I'm afraid. Doctor's orders. Say, wouldn't you like to go for a swim with the other girls?

ESTHER

Mary Jo, want to come along?

MARY JO

I...

(glances at Ted)

I actually can't swim.

ESTHER

Suit yourself. Good luck in the race this afternoon, Senator.

Esther shoots Ted a glib smile and heads for the water, joining Gargan and her friends. Mary Jo snickers as Ted lays down on his stomach next to her.

TED
That was a hell of time working on
Bobby's campaign together.
(beat)
So, why haven't you found your next
race yet?

Ted flashes her a signature Kennedy smile. Mary Jo looks away and Ted's smile fades quickly.

MARY JO
It's never going to be the same.

TED
I know.
(beat)
The offer I made still stands. Come
to Washington. Work on *my* staff.

MARY JO
I've got too many memories there.

TED
We can make new ones.

MARY JO
I can't work on another
presidential campaign.

TED
I don't know that you have to.

Mary Jo sets her head on Ted's shoulder but continues to stare out into the distance.

TED (CONT'D)
The race this afternoon...

He puts his arm around her.

TED (CONT'D)
I want you to know...I'm racing for
Bobby.

Mary Jo looks up at him and smiles.

EXT. EDGARTOWN HARBOR - DAY

A dozen sailboats navigate the choppy waters, circling the marks in the Annual Edgartown Yacht Club Regatta. A row of spectator boats filled with men in cotton suits and women in fashionable dresses look on with great anticipation.

A large swath of locals hold signs reading, "KENNEDY #1", "KENNEDY TO VICTORY", and "AMERICA NEEDS TED".

The bow of the *Victura* crashes through the waves. Ted skips the 26-foot sloop, with Gargan and PAUL MARKHAM, 39, and HOWIE HALL, 12, as his crew.

TED
Ready to jibe!

GARGAN/MARKHAM
Ready!

They approach the reach mark with great speed.

TED
Jibing!

Ted pulls the tiller towards him and quickly ducks as the boom swings over his head. Gargan and Markham pull ropes and tie knots in expert harmony, as the *Victura* makes a perfectly executed turn.

Ted peers around the main sail -- No other boats in front of him, the leeward mark is in his sights. He looks behind him.

The *Victura* has a comfortable lead, but Ted remains uneasy.

Ted squeezes the tiller so tightly the blood rushes to his hands. He takes a swig from his beer and makes eye contact with no one as he barks out more orders.

GARGAN
Teddy, we should let down the
spinnaker.

Gargan and Markham untie a knot and begin to lower an auxiliary sail.

TED
Stop right there. I don't wanna
rest on our laurels, goddammit. I
want a clear win.

GARGAN
It's too big a risk. We'll need
some drag if we're going to turn
the mark clean as we go windward.

TED
This boat's been in my family
longer than I have. If anyone knows
how she turns, it's me.

Ted glares at Gargan. His grip tightens on the tiller.

Gargan reluctantly pulls the rope.

The spinnaker goes back up and fills with more wind, nearly whipping the rope from Gargan's hand.

He leans back with all of his weight in order to secure the sail. The *Victura* punches through the choppy water with newfound vigor.

From overhead Ted's boat speeds past the midpoint of the two marks, just as his competitors begin the turn behind him.

Gargan and Markham move port side, jump the rail and lean all the way off the boat with their bodies parallel to the water, straining to keep the sail under control. The waves crash into them, but their concentration never breaks.

Gargan sees a knot unraveling. Just as it loses its hold, Gargan swings up and grabs it with his other hand. He expertly ties the knot and looks to see the mark just ahead.

He turns back to see Ted polishing off his beer with a big smile on his face and starting the turn.

GARGAN

We're coming in too fast. We need to drop the spinnaker.

TED

It's fine, Joey. Nothing to it.

GARGAN

Our approach is all wrong. We should've dropped the sail 100 yards back.

Ted grabs the tiller with both hands, putting all of his weight into it. The bow heads directly for the mark.

GARGAN (CONT'D)

Ted!

The boat slams into the buoy, which scrapes along the port side of the hull. Gargan jostles wildly from the impact.

Markham loses his toe hold. SLAMS his knee against the rail.

Ted slips and falls to the floor. Gargan jumps off the rails and into the cockpit, taking control of the tiller.

GARGAN (CONT'D)

(to Markham)

Take down the sail and let's swing the jib port side.

MARKHAM

Let the kid take care of this one.
I can't move my goddamn knee!

Ted watches in humiliation as another boat passes by them. It turns the mark with ease. The skipper, ROSS RICHARDS, and his first mate, STAN MOORE, give Ted a mocking salute.

EXT. EDGARTOWN HARBOR CHANNEL - SUNSET

The Chappaquiddick ferry drifts across the water. Ted stands outside of his car nursing a drink. His eyes are fixed on the docked sailboats across the empty harbor.

EXT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - NIGHT

The quaint bungalow barely contains the muffled sounds of a raucous party.

A RED LIGHT from the volunteer fire house across the street glows brightly, casting a red haze over the front lawn.

Kennedy's Oldsmobile creeps towards the entrance without a sound just as Markham stumbles out the front door. Trailing somewhat seductively behind him, MARYELLEN and NANCE LYONS, 27 & 26, laugh amongst themselves.

MARKHAM

I know you two can keep a secret
'cause you're sisters. Sisters are
great secret keepers.

Markham takes off his wedding ring and opens his front breast pocket. He hobbles backwards on his injured knee and fumbles the gold band, which CLINKS down the wooden porch.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

The rear passenger door opens. Ted's fine leather shoes step down onto the gravel next to the ring. He picks it up with his free hand and holds a scotch on the rocks in the other. Strolls over and gives the ring to Nance.

TED

I trust you ladies to keep this
safer than the U.S. Attorney, here.

Ted steps past the Lyons sisters, who exchange a look of quiet satisfaction at the shoulders they've just rubbed.

INT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Ted enters the foyer revealing an even more boisterous party than it appeared from outside. He surveys the room with a quiet reticence at odds with his surroundings.

Esther turns the knob on the radio, making the music louder. She saunters past two girls her age flirting with a much older man as she makes her way to the main room.

Esther hops on top of the coffee table, joining a woman in a mod mini dress and flashy, gold chain belt with her back facing Ted. The two women dance without reserve, enjoying their place at the center of attention.

Esther catches a glimpse of Ted looking their direction.

ESTHER
Care to join us, Senator?

The other woman on the table spins around revealing Mary Jo, equally stunning as before but with an elegance and ease previously unseen. Ted locks eyes with her, magnetized.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
C'mon, Teddy. You should be used to losing races by now. Have some fun.

TED
It's not every year that my crew finds a way to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

MARY JO
Well, the captain's the leader.

TED
Right. I lead. They listen.

Mary Jo stops dancing.

MARY JO
Aren't more races won by leaders who *inspire* their team?
(beat)
I don't know. I'm new to sailing.

Ted flashes a sly but appreciative smile. Gargan walks up to Mary Jo with a tray full of hors d'oeuvres.

GARGAN
Oh, don't worry. Ted knows I find his insults very inspiring. Plus, if he couldn't insult me, he'd have kicked me off the team years ago.

TED
Joey, you're family! I could never kick my cousin off the team.
(beat)
My dad would never allow it!

Ted gives a loud, hearty laugh and slaps Gargan on the back.

The girls laugh too but only to be polite.

GARGAN
Well, he wouldn't keep me around if
you were a better sailor.

TED
I'll drink to that!

Ted grabs Gargan and gives him an overly enthusiastic side hug as he swings back his drink.

GARGAN
As long as we're raising glasses,
we ought to raise a few more for
the Boiler Room Girls.

TED
Quite right!

Ted steps up on the coffee table with Mary Jo and Esther.
Puts his arms around both.

TED (CONT'D)
Someone peel Paul away from the
Lyons sisters! I want them to hear
this too!

Gargan turns down the radio. The Lyons sisters saunter in.
Markham hobbles behind with his shirt now untucked.

TED (CONT'D)
Family.
(raises glass)
There's no more important word.
(beat)
I was lucky to be born a Kennedy.
But family is more than just a
name. Joey Gargan and I don't share
a name. We share a lifetime bond.
He's family.
(beat)
We named you the Boiler Room Girls.
Working on Bobby's campaign, people
thought we gave you a name like
that because we put all the
pressure in the world on you. And
we did.
(beat)
Me, I like to think we called you
the Boiler Room Girls because you
had such a fire in your bellies...
it burned so hot, wanting to live
up to the name on that ticket...
(beat)
...the Kennedy name.

Ted looks at Mary Jo.

TED (CONT'D)
 You wanted to prove yourself worthy
 of it.
 (beat)
 Not of the name. Of the ideas. The
 ones my brother stood for. And
 you've proven yourselves more than
 worthy.

He looks back down.

TED (CONT'D)
 We miss him everyday. His memory
 endures. His ideals will endure.
 We...we will persevere.
 (beat)
 Because that's what Kennedys must
 do. And I want you to know
 that...that you're all part of the
 Kennedy family now.
 (raises glass)
 To family.

Ted takes a big long drink. The room erupts into loud cheers.

MARKHAM
 And to Teddy! To the White House in
 '72!

THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. Twice as loud. Ted doesn't react.
 Markham's words reverberate as Ted stares with an all-
 consuming focus into his glass.

The SOUND NEARLY DROPS OUT. Ted's fixation intensifies as the
 cheers become muffled --

INT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - LATER

Ted remains motionless, still staring into his glass. The first
 audible sound is the familiar yet haunting instrumental opening
 of the popular Frank Sinatra song playing on the radio.

FRANK SINATRA (V.O.)
*And now, the end is here / And so I
 face the final curtain / My friend,
 I'll say it clear*

The SOUND COMES BACK INTO FOCUS as Ted finally looks away
 from the glass.

He surveys a much more chaotic party than was last seen.
 Knocked over lamps cast ominous shadows along the wall. The
 table of liquor covered in mostly empty, overturned bottles.
 A May-December couple sucks face in the corner.

TED
Paul, turn it up, will ya?

Markham turns up the volume. Ted, quietly revels in this song, singing it quietly into his drink.

TED (CONT'D)
*"Regrets, I've had a few / But then
again, too few to mention / I did
what I had to do and saw it through
without exemption"*

As the song builds so does the bluster with which Ted sings it.

TED (CONT'D)
*"I planned each charted course,
each careful step along the byway
And more, much more than this, I
did it my way"*

Ted circles the room, passing by nearly every guest, grabbing Gargan and Mary Jo particularly. When he grabs them, its obvious he's singing this song from the deepest and darkest place in his soul. Then the horn section comes in.

TED (CONT'D)
*"Yes, there were times, I'm sure
you knew / When I bit off more than
I could chew"*

Ted sings with absolute gusto as he stands at the center of everyone's attention. Though he performs entirely for himself.

TED (CONT'D)
*"But through it all, when there was
doubt / I ate it up and spit it out
I faced it all and I stood tall and
did it my way"*

Ted hits the crescendo with the force of an opera singer. Out of breath, he nearly collapses into a nearby chair. The room erupts into a polite applause.

Markham comes up behind Ted and pats him on the shoulder.

MARKHAM
That was great, Ted! Are you even
sure you want to be President?

Ted continues to face forward as Markham smiles, oblivious.

TED
Well...I sure as hell don't want to
get my ass shot off.

INT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - LATER

Ted sits alone on the couch, the party in full swing around him. He tosses back the last few drops in his glass. Ted gets up and spots Gargan in conversation with Mary Jo, who laughs hysterically.

GARGAN

You should come up for a Red Sox game. We could get Ethel and the whole family together. They'd love to see you again.

MARY JO

You just want me there to babysit those eleven kids of hers.

GARGAN

Yastrzemski's on fire. Can you blame me?

MARY JO

I've been offered the chance to run a mayoral campaign in Jersey City. If I'm coming all the way up to Boston, I'm watching Yastrzemski.

GARGAN

A girl who re-wrote speeches by the great Ted Sorenson shouldn't be wasting her time on mayoral campaigns --

Ted walks over and pulls Mary Jo gently away by the hand, cutting Gargan off mid-sentence.

TED

Want to step away with me, dear?

MARY JO

Sure. Want to go for a walk?

TED

How about we go for a drive?

Mary Jo smiles. As they exit, she grabs a silk scarf from her purse on the entryway table and follows Ted out the door.

EXT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The gravel crunches beneath Ted's shoes as he steps into the driver's seat.

The V8 engine roars to life. The car idles for a moment before it pulls out of the driveway and into the darkness.

CHAPTER 2: THE STATEMENT

In July 18, 1969, at approximately 10:00 AM, I was driving my car on Main Street on my way to get the ferry back to Edgartown. I was unfamiliar with the road and turned right on Pike Road instead of leaving and left on Main Street.

After proceeding for approx. 1/2 mile on Pike Road, I saw a car that was stuck on a narrow bridge. The car went off the side of the bridge. There was no person in the car. Mary J. Kennedy



INT. EDGARTOWN POLICE STATION - DAY

A pair of rubber flip flops SLAP against cheap linoleum tile. The pace quickens as the flopping echoes through the hall.

Blood drips from the man's big toe. A weathered SECRETARY, mid-50s, startles as he approaches.

MAN (O.S.)
Hold all my calls.

The man pushes through a door with a sign that reads: "Chief of Police Dominick Arena".

INT. CHIEF ARENA'S OFFICE - DAY

A small, wood-paneled room with bright fluorescent lighting.

Ted sits behind the chief's desk, looking like he's dressed for a photo shoot with his sailboat. Every hair in its place and a white sweater tied around his neck.

Markham stands by Ted's side in the ruffled suit from last night, unkempt hair and bloodshot eyes.

TED
Good morning, Chief.

CHIEF DOMINICK ARENA, mid-40s, stands in the doorway wearing a wet, DARK-PLAID BATHING SUIT. His police shirt is unbuttoned revealing a damp, white undershirt.

CHIEF ARENA
Senator.

TED
I have a statement I'd like to read
if that's, okay.

CHIEF ARENA
Go ahead.

Ted reads from a sheet of paper filled with scribbled handwriting.

TED
"On July 18, 1969, at approximately
11:15 PM in Chappaquiddick, Martha's
Vineyard, Massachusetts..."

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - SCHOOL ROAD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

From overhead, Ted's Oldsmobile cruises along a paved street. The headlights pierce through pitch black darkness. The brake lamps ignite, casting a red haze over the brush behind them.

TED (V.O.)
"I was driving my car on Main
Street on my way to get the ferry
back to Edgartown."

The car creeps towards an intersection. A paved road curves slightly to the left. A dirt path juts off to the right.

TED (V.O.)
"I was unfamiliar with the road and
turned right onto Dike Road instead
of bearing hard left on Main Street."

The car makes a methodical hard right turn, rolling off the pavement and onto the unpaved dirt of Dike Road.

The headlights pass over a sign reading "FERRY" with an arrow pointing back the opposite direction.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DIKE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Ted sits behind the wheel with his hands at ten and two.

TED (V.O.)
"There was one passenger with me."

Mary Jo sits on the far side of the bench seat, a polite stranger. This behavior is in stark contrast with what has come before.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - DIKE BRIDGE - NIGHT

The Oldsmobile rolls steadily down Dike Road.

The car turns slightly past the dense treeline revealing Poucha Pond. Despite its name, as seen here, the current rushes like a raging river.

Tires kick up dirt as the car starts to roll down a slight hill. It rapidly picks up speed as it approaches Dike Bridge.

IN SLOW MOTION --

The Senator and Mary Jo have a perfunctory conversation. The hood of the car crosses over the bridge...

Tires punch up against the edge of the bridge's wooden slats.

Ted flashes his signature politician smile to Mary Jo. Both completely unaware.

A loose board rattles. The surrounding planks flex. The car lumbers over Dike Bridge.

BACK TO REAL TIME. A series of horrifying, visceral moments:

- Ted's foot SLAMS on the brakes.
- Rubber burns tire tracks into the wood.
- Mary Jo SCREAMS in terror.
- The car launches off the bridge, flying through the air.
- The weight of the engine pulls the car into a forward roll.
- Mary Jo SLAMS her head against the windshield.
- Ted squeezes his eyes shut, bracing for impact.
- The car flips upside down as it crashes.
- Water surges through the air.
- Bubbles rise to the surface as the car sinks below.

The current flows over the remains of the Oldsmobile for one more extended beat.

TED (V.O.)

"I attempted to open the door and window of the car but have no recollection of how I got out."

The only thing out of place in this serene summer coastline is the ghostly visage of headlights creeping below sea level.

Ted BURSTS to the surface. GASPING for air.

His body is immediately ripped away from the car by a rush of water. He pushes through it, kicks his legs and pulls forward.

Ted nears the shoreline. He stands up, still waist deep in the water. Immediately, he grabs his back, in severe agony.

He scans the surroundings, uncertain of his bearings. A look of dread washes over his face as he sees the headlamps.

TED

Mary Jo! MARY JO! MARY JO!

Ted dives headfirst back into the water. With every stroke, he winces in pain but inches closer to the submerged vehicle.

TED (CONT'D)

Mary! Mary Jo! Can you hear me?!

Ted swims to the middle of the pond surrounded by complete darkness. He splashes frantically around the lights below him. His hand suddenly finds a grasp. The rear wheel well.

Holding himself in place, Ted feels around for a door handle.

TED (CONT'D)

HELP! HELP! SOMEONE PLEASE!

His fingers strain to hold on. The current pushes Ted with such great force he must let go. Undeterred, he dives down.

UNDERWATER

Ted plunges into the darkness. He moves around the perimeter of the car, but can't see his own hands in front of his face.

He finds a door handle. Pulls it as hard as he can. Nothing budes. The strain on his face masks his sheer desperation.

SURFACE

Ted rushes back above water, coughing and fighting for air.

TED (CONT'D)
Please. Please. God. No.

Ted takes a giant breath and dives down again.

UNDERWATER

Ted circles the car. He struggles through the darkness to find a way inside. Out of breath, he returns to the surface.

TED (V.O.)
"I...repeatedly dove down...in an attempt to see if the passenger was still in the car."

Ted reenters view and continues searching for an entry point. He bangs on the window, but underwater his fists can't break the glass. He resurfaces again.

He dives down once more with no clear objective.

TED (V.O.)
"I was unsuccessful in the attempt."

EXT. POUCHA POND BEACH - NIGHT

Ted trudges up the beachhead. Every step through the water and deep sand, a struggle. Exhausted, he collapses.

Ted sits up and buries his head in his knees. After a long silence, he lifts his eyes and peers out to the water. He can barely process what is happening, let alone what will happen.

CUT TO:

EXT. POUCHA POND BEACH - LATER

Ted still sits on the beach. His breathing now returned to normal. His hair no longer wet, his body no longer cold.

He just sits there. Staring. For a long beat.

An uncomfortably long beat.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - DIKE ROAD - NIGHT

A pair of fine leather shoes, soaking wet, SQUISH along a gravel road. With each step, water seeps through the tongue.

The entire area surrounding Ted is dark and desolate. There is NO AMBER HUE, in contrast with what was seen before.

TED (V.O.)
"I recall walking back to where my
friends were eating."

EXT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Ted approaches Lawrence Cottage, resembling the peaceful beauty of an Edward Hopper painting. Through a window, all the party guests enjoy a nice steak dinner with large glasses of water in front of their plates.

Ted walks over to an empty, white Plymouth Valiant. Opens one of the back doors and takes a seat.

IN THE CAR

Ted looks at his watch. Taps it a few times. It's dead.

He looks up to the dash. An ornate analog in-dash clock reads 12:20 AM. A shadow passes in front of the dashboard.

Ted turns to see Ray LaRosa standing outside.

TED
Get me Joe Gargan. We got a problem.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - SCHOOL ROAD - NIGHT

The Plymouth Valiant races towards the intersection where the paved road continues along a curve.

TED (V.O.)
"I then asked someone to bring me
back to Edgartown."

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - FERRY LANDING - NIGHT

The quiet city lights of Edgartown shine across the harbor, blocked by a metal gate with a sign reading: "FERRY CLOSED".

The Valiant, with open doors, sits parked in front of the blocked ferry entrance. An argument ensues. Gargan shoves Markham to the side and gets inches from Ted's face.

GARGAN

There's no two ways about it! You
have to report this to the police.
You. Not me.

Ted barely listens. Practically waving Gargan off.

TED

Alright. I'm tired of listening to
you. I'll take care of it.

He hops over the gate and walks toward the water.

GARGAN

So you're going to report it?

TED

(without looking back)
I'll take care of it.

Ted leaps into the water, splashing into the flowing current.

Gargan and Markham exchange shocked looks of confusion. They
stand baffled and motionless as Ted recedes into the dark.

EXT. EDGARTOWN HARBOR CHANNEL - NIGHT

Ted struggles to keep himself moving forward. With each breath,
he heaves in all the air he can. He's only halfway to shore.

EXT. EDGARTOWN COASTLINE STREET - LATER

Ted strains as he climbs up the shoreline to an empty street.

TED (V.O.)

"I remember walking around for a
period of time and then going back
to my hotel room."

EXT. SHIRETOWN INN - LATER

Ted trudges up the stairs towards the entrance.

A MONTAGE OF EXTREMELY QUICK CUTS --

- IN THE STAIRWELL, Ted takes out his key.
- IN TED'S ROOM, he peels off his soaking wet clothes.
- IN THE CLOSET, Ted grabs pants, dress shirt and jacket.
- IN THE COURTYARD, a HOTEL CLERK passes by Ted.

TED

Do you have the time?

HOTEL CLERK

Oh. Sure. It's...uh...2:25.

- BACK IN TED'S ROOM, Ted removes his dry clothes.
- IN THE BATHROOM, Ted showers, warm water rolling over him.
- IN TED'S ROOM, he collapses in his bed, the phone right in front of his face. He shuts his eyes.
- MORNING. Sunlight fills the room. Ted turns over. AWAKE.
- OVER BRUNCH, Ted laughs with fellow socialites.
- OUTSIDE AT FERRY LANDING, Ted speaks into a pay phone.
- ON THE FERRY, the wind blows through Ted's hair.
- AT THE POLICE STATION, Ted pulls open the door.

END MONTAGE.

INT. CHIEF ARENA'S OFFICE - PRESENT

Behind the chief's desk, Ted pauses. Sets down the paper he's been reading from and looks directly into Chief Arena's eyes.

TED

"When I fully realized what
happened this morning, I
immediately contacted the police."

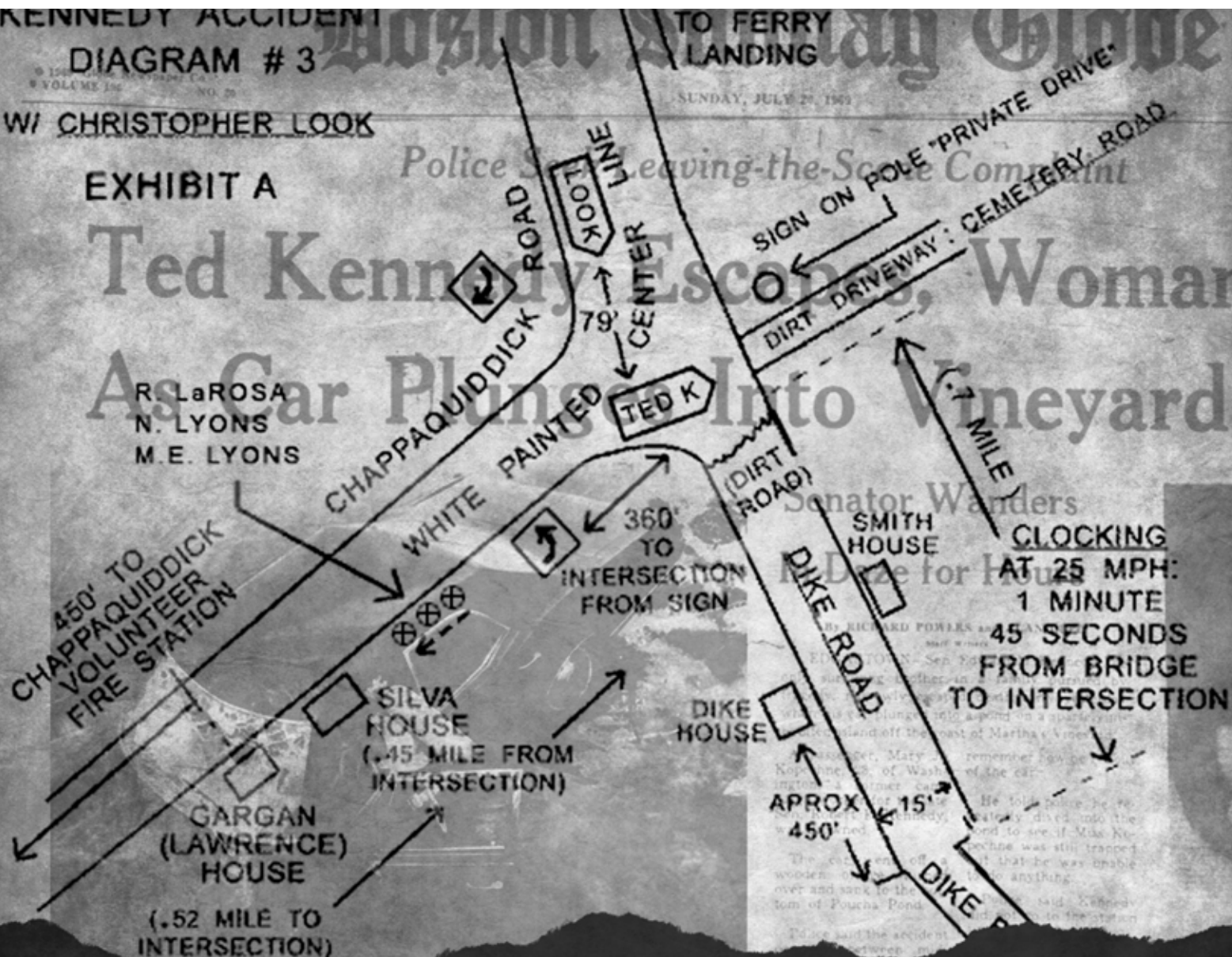
Chief Arena takes a long beat, his brain racing and yet slowly processing all this information.

CHIEF ARENA

Well, I'm glad you're okay, Senator.

W/ CHRISTOPHER LOOK

EXHIBIT A



CHAPTER 3: The Incident

EXT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - NIGHT

The gravel crunches beneath Ted's feet as he steps into the driver's seat. The V8 engine roars to life. The Oldsmobile idles and pulls out of the driveway and into the darkness.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - SCHOOL ROAD - NIGHT

From overhead, Ted's Oldsmobile cruises along a paved street. The brake lamps ignite, casting a red haze over the brush.

This time, far from the intersection, the car turns left onto a dirt path leading into a secluded wooded field.

INT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - NIGHT

The raucous party remains in full swing as "Sweet Cherry Wine" by Tommy James and the Shondells blares on the radio. All the girls dance sensually with their partners.

Gargan pours a drink at the wet bar. He sees CRICKET KEOUGH, 23, in a corner by herself, nursing an empty glass.

He takes a deep breath, fixes his comb over, and walks as confidently as he can over to her. Hands her the drink.

GARGAN

Thought you looked a little thirsty.

CRICKET

Thanks.

Cricket takes a sip. His confidence bolstered, Gargan goes with a more direct approach and puts his arm around her side.

GARGAN

So...is this your first time in Martha's Vineyard?

Cricket gives a polite, uncertain smile to the older gentleman she knows mostly as "the host of the party".

CRICKET

Yeah, I've always dreamt of coming here. What about you? Is this your first time here too?

Gargan can't hide his befuddlement at this absurd question.

GARGAN

No...actually, I've been sailing in the race with Teddy for years.

CRICKET

Oh, wow. Did you know Bobby too?

GARGAN

Uh. Yes. He's actually the one who taught me and Teddy how to sail.

Her eyes widen not recognizing Gargan's patronizing tone.

CRICKET

Wow. I'll bet he was a great sailor.

GARGAN

You know, he actually wasn't a great sailor.

CRICKET

(incredulous)

Really?

GARGAN

It's okay, I can say that kind of thing. We were brothers.

Cricket rolls her eyes.

CRICKET

Nice try.

He slouches, crestfallen.

GARGAN

...I'm adopted.

CRICKET

Guess that explains why you don't have that trademark Kennedy charm?

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - FIELD - NIGHT

Mary Jo's naked body writhes into frame. She runs her hands down Ted's chest and up along her own as the sensations rise to a climax.

She rolls off Ted, and they stare up at the sky. Rolling black clouds block whatever stars there might be beyond the trees surrounding them.

MARY JO

Should we go back to the party now?

TED

Not just yet.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - FIELD - LATER

From the roadway, the car blocks the view of Ted and Mary Jo.

The moment now passed, Mary Jo fastens her light blue bra.
Ted refastens his back brace.

MARY JO
Do you know how long you'll have to
wear that for?

TED
It might be for my whole life. I
don't really know.

MARY JO
That seems like a long time.

TED
Well, for surviving a plane crash,
I'd call it a fair trade-off.

Ted slips his arm through his shirt. Mary Jo slips into her
blouse but pauses. She gazes at Ted, who buttons up, unaware.

MARY JO
You know that I think you're funny.

TED
Good.

MARY JO
I don't know if you do...but I want
you to know that you don't have to
feel like you need to make a joke
out of everything with me.

TED
Well, I appreciate the option.

MARY JO
Why do you?

TED
"Why do I" what?

MARY JO
Make a joke out of everything.

Ted reaches his top button and looks Mary Jo in the eye.

TED
I lead a serious life. I don't want
everything in my life to be serious.

MARY JO
That's not a choice most people
feel like they have to make.

Ted turns his back as he stuffs himself into his blazer.

TED

My dad told me..."You can have a serious life or a non-serious life, Teddy. I'll still love you whichever choice you make. But if you decide to have a non-serious life, I won't have much time for you."

MARY JO

Sorry. I can't believe he'd say that.

TED

It's okay.

(beat)

I was just a kid.

Mary Jo looks at him stunned, trying not to seem horrified. Ted misses this completely as he turns toward her. With a huge grin, he runs his hands down both her sides, making his way to her uncovered lower half. Unamused, she rolls away.

TED (CONT'D)

Are you getting what you want out of this?

MARY JO

Yes, actually, I am.

TED

And what is that exactly?

MARY JO

I get to see things you don't want me to see.

Ted raises an eyebrow, concerned.

MARY JO (CONT'D)

Plus, you know, I'm the envy of all my girlfriends ever since I told them I've been sleeping with one of the Kennedys.

Ted clinches his jaw to contain his rage.

MARY JO (CONT'D)

What? You're the only one who can make a joke, Teddy?

Ted grins even wider. He grabs her by the waist and runs his hands towards the sides of her chest. Mary Jo laughs.

TED

(smiling)

Well, what kind of a joke is that?

MARY JO
Well, what kind of a question is,
"Are you getting what you want out
of this?"

Mary Jo playfully pushes him away.

TED
A serious one! You told me to be
serious!

MARY JO
Well, I *seriously* enjoy spending
time with you, Senator. I don't
think that should be any mystery.
Practically, the whole country
loves you.

TED
They love the name.

MARY JO
Maybe.

TED
(hurt)
Thanks.

MARY JO
No, seriously. You might be right.

TED
I heard you the first time.

MARY JO
You asked me if I was getting what
I want out of this.

TED
And you said some shit about seeing
things you're not supposed to!

MARY JO
And *that's* what I like about you.
You're more than just a name.
You're a man...you're willing to
show me that the life you've chosen
isn't easy.

TED
The path that you're on isn't
always the path that you choose.

MARY JO
What's stopping you from choosing
for yourself?

Ted gives this question some hard thought. He stands up and grabs a beer from the backseat. Cracks it open. Takes a sip.

TED
Did you know I went to Harvard?

MARY JO
(sarcastic)
No.

TED
Did you know I got expelled?

MARY JO
No!

Ted sits back down, elbows on his knees, facing Mary Jo.

TED
Yeah. Well, I did. I had this Spanish exam. And, you know...I don't speak Spanish. But my buddy Warren O'Donnell, his roommate spoke Spanish real well. So I tossed him a few bucks and had him take the test for me.

MARY JO
And you got caught?

TED
No. *He* got caught!

Mary Jo smiles but tries not to encourage Ted further.

TED (CONT'D)
Either way, we both get called down to the dean's office, and before I even had a chance to get myself out of it...we were both expelled.

MARY JO
So what did you do?

TED
Well, that's the whole choice thing we were talking about.

MARY JO
Right.

TED
So, then I went to my father. And I tell him, "Dad, I've screwed up."
(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)

But I've already come up with the solution." And I tell him I'm going to Notre Dame, and I'll be able to keep playing football and Joey's there, and he'll keep me on the straight and narrow.

Mary Jo's face goes sullen, knowing where this may be headed.

TED (CONT'D)

He doesn't respond to any of this. He doesn't look at me. The first words out of his mouth are: "The dean called about an hour ago. The next call I had was with Fort Dix. You're in the army, son. They're expecting you tomorrow at oh eight hundred."

Ted laughs.

MARY JO

That's not funny. That's cruel.

TED

That's Camelot.

They continue to stare into each other's eyes but now with an uncertain tension.

MARY JO

You ready to go back to the party?

TED

I'd rather go for a walk on the beach with you.

MARY JO

I'd like that.

Mary Jo stands up, nude from the waist down. She quickly grabs her pants and slides each leg into them as she walks, not bothering with underwear.

Ted follows behind closely, fastening his belt buckle as he hops into the driver's seat.

The tires spin as Ted guns the accelerator. The car swerves onto the main road, leaving the field deserted except for a few empty beer bottles.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - SCHOOL ROAD - NIGHT

From overhead, Ted's Oldsmobile cruises along a paved street. The headlights pierce through pitch black darkness. The brake lamps ignite, casting a red haze over the brush behind them.

This time, instead of taking a right turn, the car continues straight. Headlights from a nearby POLICE CRUISER shine onto Ted and Mary Jo as they pass through the intersection.

They don't seem to notice. Ted SLAMS on his brakes.

TED

Shit!

MARY JO

What?

TED

I missed the turn!

The police cruiser continues along the main road, driving in the opposite direction of Ted's car. The driver, DEPUTY SHERIFF "HUCK" LOOK, 40, looks in his rear view mirror.

The dopey smile on his face disappears as he notices the Oldsmobile stopped behind a cloud of dirt.

Sheriff Look pulls over to the side of the road. He steps out and fumbles with his hat. He walks towards the car.

SHERIFF LOOK

You folks having some car trouble?

The reverse lights come on. Sheriff Look reacts, puzzled.

Suddenly the car GUNS IT BACKWARDS, barrelling towards the sheriff. Ted gives the wheel a hard turn to the left.

The black sedan takes off forward towards the fateful dirt road. Sheriff Look, dumbfounded, only catches a glimpse of two shadows in the front seat, the license plate, and an elaborate, floral decoupaged LUNCH PAIL on the rear dash.

The headlights pass over a sign reading "FERRY" with an arrow pointing back the opposite direction. Beneath the sign, Look stands in the intersection, uncertain of what he just witnessed.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DIKE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The seats rattle as Ted speeds down the bumpy road. Mary Jo turns around to see Sheriff Look staring back.

MARY JO

I think that was a policeman back there, Teddy.

TED

I don't stop for the police.

Ted turns off the headlights. The car is now surrounded by nothing but darkness.

MARY JO
Ted, what are you doing?

TED
Hang on. We're losing him.

Ted looks into his rear view mirror. Sheriff Look disappears into the black distance.

The car continues bouncing wildly as Ted speeds down the now invisible dirt road. Mary Jo tenses up.

MARY JO
Teddy, come on. You can't see.

TED
We're almost home free.

Mary Jo looks through the windshield. Not even the hood of the car is visible.

BAM.

The car jolts upwards.

MARY JO
(scared)
Ted.

TED
All right, all right, I hear ya.

Ted flicks back on the headlights. Blinding. Their eyes adjust. The headlights pass over a small cottage with an amber porch light to the right. DIKE HOUSE.

Ted's focus returns to the road. He leans back into his seat. Holds the wheel with one hand and rests his arm on the open window frame. His bleary eyes glance down at Mary Jo as she curls up close to him.

Ted looks back to the road and stares out. The background becomes even more of a blur as the car picks up speed. Staring. A look of contentment crosses his face. Staring.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - DIKE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The car leaps off Dike Bridge in a horrific forward roll and crashes upside down into the water. It slowly sinks below the surface.

The ripples drift away returning the pond to an eerie silence.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Mary Jo hangs upside down by her seatbelt, unconscious. She bleeds from a gash on her forehead. Water rushes in from all sides around her.

The CRACKS on the windshield continue to splinter, expanding until the glass gives way.

A SURGE OF WATER SPILLS INWARD.

Within seconds Mary Jo's head is completely submerged. The water chokes her back to life.

Mary Jo flails wildly, turning towards the empty driver's seat. She glimpses Ted's legs escape out the window.

UNDERWATER MARY JO SCREAMS.

She frantically tears at her seatbelt. Somehow, it unclasps.

The car still upside down, Mary Jo turns over and heads towards the floor to keep herself upright. She pushes to the back seat to find the last remaining air pocket. She's waist deep.

She coughs up a fistful of water from deep in her lungs. She HYPERVENTILATES unable to fully catch her breath.

BELOW THE SURFACE

Mary Jo's bare feet hover just above shards of razor sharp glass.

Unaware, she puts all her weight on her feet for the first time. The glass pierces deep into her skin.

BACK ON MARY JO

She SCREAMS and retracts both her feet in pain. She squeezes both knees into her chest and holds back fresh tears.

MARY JO

Ted!

EXT. POUCHA POND BEACH - NIGHT

Ted sits on the beachhead with his chin resting on his knees, staring out. He doesn't move.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo braces herself against the rear passenger window. She grabs the door handle and pulls with all her strength. Nothing budes.

She wades over to the rear driver's side and grabs the other handle. The door CREAKS as she tries to force her way out. Still nothing.

MARY JO

TED!

Mary Jo pulls herself into the front seat. Here, she's neck deep in water. Her two sandals and a FLORAL LUNCH PAIL float past her, but she remains focused on an escape.

She feels beneath her for the passenger door handle. Grabs on to something and pulls as hard as she can.

Her hands slip from the handle. Bright red from exertion. She looks around, trapped.

MARY JO (CONT'D)

TED!!!

EXT. POUCHA POND BEACH - NIGHT

The beach is empty and silent. Ted is gone.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo resurfaces in the back seat, pinching her nose. With her other hand she holds the two sandals.

She shivers as she puts on her right sandal. The other floats away in front of her. She stands with her full weight on the car for the first time.

It CREAKS loudly, then settles.

Mary Jo's eyes dart around with concern. She presses against the edge and tries to slow her breathing below a panic.

EXT. DIKE ROAD - NIGHT

A pair of fine leather shoes, soaking wet, SQUISH along a gravel road. With each step, water seeps through the tongue, reflecting the amber hues of a nearby porch light.

Ted slows his gait. A bright light illuminates his face.

He looks over towards it, squinting. A "WELCOME" mat sits below the front door of the Dike House.

He turns back towards the road and continues out of frame.

Everything around the Dike House remains still as the sound of Ted's squishing shoes recedes into the distance.

EXT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - NIGHT

Ted stumbles toward the cottage. Empty beer bottles litter the lawn. The music from inside is muffled but booms loudly.

Ray LaRosa holds back Cricket Keough's hair as she dry heaves into the bushes.

Ted lumbers over to the empty, white Plymouth Valiant out front. Opens the rear door and sits in the back seat facing forward. Ted SLAMS the door shut.

LaRosa looks up. Lets go of Cricket's hair and goes towards the car to investigate.

IN THE CAR

Ted looks at his watch. Taps it a few times. It's dead.

He looks up to the dash. The dashboard has a radio but no clock. Where previously an ornate analogue in-dash clock read 12:20 AM there is only wood paneling. LaRosa's shadow passes in front of the dashboard.

TED

Get me Joe Gargan. We got a problem.

LAROSA

Sure, Teddy. What's the trouble?

TED

Just get him.

LaRosa drops his smile, caught off guard by Ted's cold demeanor. He hustles back towards the cottage and enters. Ted sits in stone silence, not moving a muscle.

After a minute, LaRosa re-emerges with Gargan and the two approach the car. Ted continues staring forward, dripping wet.

GARGAN

What happened to you?

TED

(to LaRosa)

You better get Paul, too.

LaRosa runs back towards the cottage. Gargan stands over the window. Ted still doesn't look up.

GARGAN

C'mon. Tell me what's the big idea.

Ted looks Gargan straight in the eye for the first time.

TED

I'm not going to be president.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo holds the floral lunch pail. She unclasps the lock and opens the lid with great anticipation. It's a WOMAN'S PURSE.

Mary Jo's face sulks. She immediately rummages through the purse hoping to find something...anything useful. She tosses aside a hairbrush, which floats away. She digs deeper as --

The HEADLIGHTS GO OUT. DARKNESS.

The lights flicker illuminating a deeply concerned Mary Jo. They snap back on for one more hopeful beat.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - DIKE BRIDGE - NIGHT

From above, the wreck glows below the surface. The surrounding waters are dark reflecting the pale moon.

The headlights flicker off. The car vanishes like a ghost.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

A chilling, unexplained CREAK comes from the car's frame.

Barely visible by the faintest glimmer of moonlight, Mary Jo's breath quickens to a fever pitch.

INT. VALIANT - DIKE ROAD - NIGHT

Gargan hunches over the steering wheel. Hands at ten and two. He glances at Ted in the rear view mirror.

GARGAN

Ted. Where the hell are we going?

TED

The car has gone off the bridge.
Down by the beach.

(beat)

Mary Jo is in it.

Markham looks to Gargan for how to react. Gargan just steps on the gas. There's nothing to say.

The car barrels down the road, everyone in total silence.

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - NIGHT

The Valiant slowly rolls over the bridge. Gargan and Markham rubberneck, searching the surrounding waters for the crash site. They see nothing out of the ordinary.

Ted continues to stare ahead, unengaged.

GARGAN
Where the hell is it?

TED
It's down there.

The Valiant reaches the other side of the bridge, onto a man-made peninsula with reinforced wooden sides.

Gargan turns the car around. The headlights shine across the water and onto the Dike House, the amber hues still visible.

Gargan and Markham's shadowy figures emerge from the vehicle. They step in front of the car, their silhouettes between the two head beams.

They both look down to scan the murky water eight feet below.

Markham first catches a glimpse of the car's shadowy visage underneath the surface.

MARKHAM
Holy God.

Markham hobbles with great vigor to the water's edge, prepared to dive in for a heroic rescue. He's more than a little drunk and his knee injury hinders him immensely.

Gargan ably grabs Markham by the tail of his sport coat.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)
We gotta save her!

GARGAN
Paul, we don't know how this could play out. Going back to the party in soaking wet clothes limits our options.

Gargan starts to unbutton his dress shirt. Markham follows.

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The current flows at a slow pace, in stark contrast to the raging river seen before.

Markham overlooks this from the water's edge, silhouetted by the headlights and wearing only his underwear. Gargan, now shirtless, unfastens his belt and removes his pants.

Markham, determined, takes a flying leap off the peninsula. He crashes into the water with a drunken belly flop.

Gargan's head snaps up with concern. He sprints into action and takes a running jump. He flies over Markham and lands much closer to the car.

Gargan cuts through the channel. He arrives at the submerged vehicle not knowing where to start. Far behind him, Markham flops around with big splashes making little headway.

Gargan steadies himself on the back tire. He stretches his arm below the surface for a door handle. It's out of reach.

He takes a deep breath, pushes off the car and dives below.

UNDERWATER

Gargan scales the wreckage towards the front driver's side. He presses his feet against the side of the vehicle and pulls back on the door handle with all his strength.

It doesn't budge.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo sits in the corner shivering. The metal frame of the car gives off a low CREAK. Mary Jo looks up with her first bit of optimism.

MARY JO
Hello? Hello?!

EXT. POUCHA POND - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Gargan, desperate and running low on air, yanks the handle back and forth in rapid succession. With all his strength and body weight, he snaps back. The metal door dimples but stays locked in place.

Frustrated but not finished, Gargan climbs toward the surface.

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - NIGHT

Gargan emerges, gasping for air. He steadies himself on the car and tries to catch his breath.

Behind him, Markham only just arrives at the car.

Markham dog paddles over to the first thing he sees and grabs the rear tire. It spins out from beneath his hands, and he fumbles to pull himself back up again and again.

GARGAN
Just sit there, Paul. I can't save
us both.

Markham hops up onto the rear bumper, his head spinning.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER

The car rumbles and sinks lower into the pond. The water level rises around Mary Jo, but she doesn't notice as she pounds against the floorboard.

MARY JO
Help! Can anyone hear me?!

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - NIGHT

Gargan swims across to the passenger side. The only sounds he hears are of the waves crashing in the distance and Ted muttering to himself from the peninsula above.

Ted rests his head against the hood of the Valiant, in front of the headlights. A shadowed figure with a halo.

TED
(muttering)
...how could this happen to me...

Gargan's hand runs across another door handle. He presses the button and strains with all the force he can muster. His hands slip and he splashes backwards.

GARGAN
Goddammit.

Ted looks up, out into the water.

TED
If she's not out of the car by now,
she's already dead!

GARGAN
Maybe we'd know for sure if I had
some help down here!

Ted waves him off. Gargan grows angry and more determined. He takes a deep breath and plunges below.

UNDERWATER

Gargan dives head first this time. He can barely see anything in front of him beyond the murky black. He grabs the front passenger window frame.

Shards of glass poke from every edge he isn't touching.

He pulls himself in.

The razor sharp points rip into Gargan's arms, chest, and back. He struggles to go backwards, but the glass only tears in deeper.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo slams her fists against the floorboard. The car CREAKS again, and she doubles her effort in a moment of hope and desperation.

MARY JO
HELP! HELP!!! PLEASE!

Behind her, splashes can be seen behind the front seat.

BELOW THE WATER

Gargan tries to wrestle himself out of the window, panicking as he loses oxygen. He uses all his strength to propel himself out one last time. He pushes through as a large shard of glass cuts further along his back.

EXT. POUCHA POND - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Gargan dislodges his torso and races away from the car with his last breath.

A trail of blood follows him back up to the surface.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The CREAKING stops and Mary Jo pauses. She looks back down. The water level has risen to her chest.

She steadies herself and tries to slow her breathing.

EXT. POUCHA POND BEACH - NIGHT

Gargan climbs out of the water and up the beachhead. Blood drips from the gashes across his arm, back, and chest. Markham limps close behind in tremendous pain. They both look like they've had the shit kicked out of them.

Gargan hangs his head. Defeated.

He looks back out over the water one last time. He turns back.

The two men walk over the bridge towards the Valiant. The headlights still shine out over the water, but this time neither wants to look. Hope replaced with despair.

Gargan keeps his eyes locked on Ted.

The Senator hasn't moved an inch. He rests comfortably against the bumper.

TED
You guys gotta get me back to
Edgartown.

Gargan walks right past Ted in disgust. He offers no response as he gathers up his clothes.

Ted sits and glowers as the two men get dressed behind him.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo takes long, deliberate breaths, squeezing her eyes shut tight. Suddenly, they snap open.

She has an idea.

Mary Jo rushes forward, takes a deep breath, and pushes herself underwater.

She reemerges in the front seat, where the water level is up to her neck. Looking for leverage, she presses her arms against the car.

UNDERWATER

Her legs extend as far as they can. Her feet press up against the steering wheel.

ABOVE WATER

Mary Jo pushes her arms harder against the car.

The horn HONKS loudly.

Mary Jo's face lights up. The tension broken, she manages to let out a laugh as she honks over and over. She presses as hard as she can and just lays on the horn.

EXT. POUCHA POND BEACH - NIGHT

From high above, the muffled horn echoes through the pond and out across the beach.

The entire area is desolate. The Valiant is long gone.

The night sky reflects over the serene, calm current as the honking takes on a frantic, staccato rhythm.

The muffled sound becomes deeper as the horn takes on water and begins to malfunction.

It sputters and peters out in a slow death.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The horn gives off one last wail that rings out with finality.

Mary Jo's face turns dour. Her hopefulness and optimism now replaced with a looming terror as the water rises around her.

INT. VALIANT - CHAPPAQUIDDICK ROAD - NIGHT

Gargan and Markham ride in the front seat, their clothes soaked from the inside. They stare ahead blankly with a silent discomfort. In the back, Ted MUMBLES to himself.

GARGAN

You've got to make a report of the accident immediately, Ted.

Ted jolts upright, alert and focused.

TED

Are you fucking crazy? One of you needs to report it. Say you were driving.

GARGAN

But you said you were driving.

TED

We can't exactly have the guy reporting a car accident be intoxicated.

MARKHAM

That rules me out.

TED

He's got a point. I'm going to need your help, Joey. In a big way.

Gargan SLAMS on the brakes.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - FERRY LANDING - NIGHT

The Valiant skids to a stop several yards away from a metal gate with a sign reading: "FERRY CLOSED".

Gargan throws open his door and gets out ready for a fight. He opens Ted's door.

TED

I say Joey, what's the big idea?

GARGAN

The big idea?! When a person's killed in an accident, the D.A. is *required* to file charges. You're trying to put me on the hook for *manslaughter*!

Ted slowly climbs out of the car. Gargan stands his ground not offering Ted any breathing room.

TED

No. You got it all wrong. I'm trying to get myself off the hook for manslaughter.

Gargan steps forward, getting right into Ted's face.

GARGAN

How is that better?!

TED

You're not drunk. You don't have a mark on your driving record.
(beat)
You're not a Kennedy.

This cuts into Gargan, deeper than Ted knows.

GARGAN

So, because my last name isn't automatically front page news you think I should confess to a crime I didn't commit.

TED

Listen, with you it's not a crime. It's not news. It's a car accident. It goes away before it ever becomes a story.

Gargan looks closely into Ted's eyes. He considers this.

TED (CONT'D)

Whaddaya, say? Ole Joey'll fix it?

Gargan seethes with rage at this question.

GARGAN

Ted. I've got too much to lose. Not as much as you, but enough to matter.

Gargan walks away in contempt. Ted tries to chase after him but stumbles, catching himself on the open door.

TED

Okay, okay. What if we just say Mary Jo was driving?

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)
You call it in and say that you
just found the whole thing.

GARGAN
Christ, Ted. I can't file a false
police report!

Ted hoists himself back up on the Valiant door.

TED
Why the hell not?

GARGAN
I'm a goddamn lawyer, remember? I
could get disbarred.

MARKHAM
(drunk, mumbling)
Joey's right, Senator.

TED
(to Gargan)
It's not like this is the first
time I'm asking you to bear false
witness. Don't get all high and
mighty on me.

GARGAN
This is different.

TED
How?

GARGAN
There could be *real* witnesses!
Jeeze! We weren't exactly quiet
down there.

TED
I didn't hear you screaming for help.

GARGAN
That's not the fucking point!

MARKHAM
Joey's right, Senator.

GARGAN
Do we even know if Mary Jo has a
license? Do we even know if she can
DRIVE?

TED
I hadn't thought of that.

GARGAN

Exactly. And there's a million other things *I* can't think of now either because you put me in the middle of this shit storm.

(beat)

The only advice I can give you, and I give it to you not as your friend, not as your family, but as *your* lawyer...you've got to report this thing and you've got to do it now.

MARKHAM

Joey's right, Senator.

GARGAN

See! And now you've got the U.S. Attorney of Massachusetts saying the same thing.

Ted pushes Gargan to the side and climbs over the metal gate.

TED

Alright, alright. I'll report it. Jeeze.

Ted staggers towards a cheap fifteen foot boat with a motor attached. He attempts to untie it from a tangled rope.

GARGAN

Whose boat is that, Ted?

TED

What the hell does it matter? I need you guys to take me back to Edgartown if I'm gonna call the police, don't I?

Ted struggles with the knots, not making much progress.

GARGAN

Here, let me help.

TED

Thanks, Joey.

Ted pats Gargan on the back. Markham hurries over and takes cautious steps into the boat. He gives the motor a couple of quick tugs as Ted and Gargan untie the last knot and hop in.

The boat motors away from the island. As it recedes into the distance, a nearby pay phone is revealed in the foreground right next to the Valiant.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo presses against the sides of the backseat; the water level has now risen up to her neck. She stretches her body just to keep her head above water.

MARY JO
Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord
is with thee. Blessed art thou
amongst women, and blessed is the
fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Mary Jo pauses, unable to continue for a moment. Her eyes well up, but she forces her emotions back down to finish.

MARY JO (CONT'D)
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for
us sinners, now and at the hour of
our death. Amen.

Mary Jo gives a deep breath and does the sign of the cross. She stands strong.

MARY JO (CONT'D)
Hail Mary, full of grace...

EXT. EDGARTOWN HARBOR CHANNEL - NIGHT

From overhead, the light at the front of the boat enters frame. The three men sit in silence as the boat quietly motors through the harbor.

Ted whimpers in self pity, holding back a torrent of emotion.

Gargan keeps his focus on navigating, while Markham avoids eye contact with the Senator.

Ted bursts into undignified tears. His sobs break the silence.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo's heart races. Her breathing steadies and her resolve strengthens with each word of her prayer.

MARY JO
Our Father, Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom
come, Thy will be done...

EXT. EDGARTOWN FERRY LANDING - NIGHT

Ted wipes the last tear away from his eye. The boat nears the sleepy harbor. A large yacht can be seen in the distance.

TED
Do you think my dad can fix this?

The yacht's cabin light turns on, illuminating the nearby water. Gargan kills the motor, and the boat drifts slowly towards the shore. He signals to Markham to kill the light.

TED (CONT'D)
Well, do you?

GARGAN
I don't know, Ted.

The boat floats up to the shoreline. Ted stands up, unsteady.

TED
I just don't know, Joey. I don't know how this happens. I don't know how this happens to me. Maybe there really is a curse hanging over this family.

GARGAN
You're going to survive.

Ted gets out of the boat.

TED
But does it have to be like this?

GARGAN
This is the only way it can be.
(beat)
Just give your mother a call first.
Don't make her learn about another Kennedy tragedy on the news.

Ted closes his eyes and nods. He knows Gargan's right. Ted slowly starts to turn and walk away.

GARGAN (CONT'D)
So you'll report it?

TED
I'll take care of it.

Ted shoves the front end of the boat back into the water. The boat starts to turn, but Gargan keeps his eyes locked on the Senator. Ted turns and walks away, disappearing into the fog.

INT. SHIRETOWN INN - TED'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The keys jangle as the door opens and Ted stumbles in. He staggers towards the closet, shedding his clothes.

He grabs a fresh pair of pants and shirt, then heads to the bathroom. He looks into the mirror and combs his hair. Not satisfied till every hair is in place.

EXT. SHIRETOWN INN - NIGHT

Ted, wearing a fresh sport coat and tie, enters the phone booth outside the hotel. He shuts the door, attempting to make as little noise as possible.

He takes a deep breath before picking up the receiver. He drops in a dime and dials.

The phone rings. Rings.

A woman's voice answers, half asleep.

WOMAN (V.O.)
Hello?

TED
I need to speak with my father.

WOMAN (V.O.)
Ted?

TED
Now, Ann.

Ted taps his foot impatiently. He looks down and sees a cockroach scurrying about underneath him. He stops tapping his foot. The cockroach crawls underneath the door jam and escapes into the night.

WOMAN (V.O.)
Okay, Ted, I have Joe for you.

The line goes quiet. Strained breathing can be heard coming from the other end.

TED
Dad...

Ted stops himself. He presses his head against the pay phone with nervous tension as he searches for the right words.

TED (CONT'D)
Sorry to be calling so late. I've gotten myself into the deepest kind of trouble. There's been an accident. And...well...one of Bobby's secretaries is dead. I was driving. I'm okay. No one else was involved.

(beat)

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)
I may have had too much to drink
this time.
(beat)
I need your help.

With a great deal of ache in his voice, JOSEPH KENNEDY, 80, struggles to get even one word out.

JOSEPH KENNEDY (V.O.)
...Alibi...

Ted shuts his eyes and nods. He knows he's right. He looks up.

INT. SHIRETOWN INN - COURTYARD - LATER

Ted leans against the wall, waiting at the bottom of the steps leading to his room. It appears he's been standing there for some time when a HOTEL CLERK passes through.

TED
Excuse me. There's a loud party
going on upstairs. Do you have the
time?

HOTEL CLERK
Oh. Sure. It's...uh...2:25.

Ted buttons his sport coat and tucks in his tie. The hotel clerk stares at him confused.

TED
I'm having trouble sleeping.

HOTEL CLERK
Oh. Sorry. I didn't realize you
were trying to sleep. I'll look
into that right away, Senator.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo shivers, submerged up to her chin. She breathes with quick, short bursts. Not due to panic, the oxygen runs low.

She looks around, sure she needs to make a move. Mary Jo takes the deepest breath she can.

She dives below.

BELOW THE WATER

Mary Jo heads straight for the rear passenger window. She paddles forward through the opening.

Her slim upper torso slides through the window with ease.

SNAG.

She jerks backwards and stalls. She's caught on something.

The gold chain around her waist is snagged on to a long, sharp piece of glass. She can't see this.

SHE THRASHES.

Her limbs convulse as she attempts to free herself. Her eyes burst open as she feels her lungs collapsing.

Mary Jo reverses course.

The chain loosens, freeing her as she reenters the car.

ABOVE THE WATER

Mary Jo explodes back above the surface. She GASPS a piercing wail of a lifesaving breath.

Her face contorts in terror, sure she can't do that again.

INT. SHIRETOWN INN - TED'S HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ted stands in the shower. He leans back with his eyes closed letting the warm water roll over him.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mary Jo leans back to get her mouth fully into the air pocket above her. The gap between the water level and the car has narrowed considerably.

INTERCUT

- IN THE BATHROOM, TED brushes his teeth with great care.
- MARY JO slips from her perch. She strains just to keep her mouth above water.
- IN TED'S ROOM, he folds clothes with meticulous precision.
- MARY JO's breath quickens, unable to get enough oxygen to last more than a moment.
- TED buttons up the last button of his silk pajamas.
- MARY JO pushes herself up toward the floorboard as the water rises slightly.
- IN BED, Ted crawls under the covers and turns off the lamp. The phone right in front of his face.
- MARY JO faces upward coughing as water starts to fill the last remaining pocket of air.
- TED sleeps peacefully.

EXT. POUCHA POND - DAWN

The sun makes its earliest peak above the horizon. Dike Bridge remains covered in nightshade.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - DAWN

Mary Jo makes incredibly quick, strained wheezing noises in the smallest air pocket yet. Less than an inch of space exists between the floorboard and the water. Her purple lips press against the fabric.

Mary Jo moans as she struggles to pull air into her lungs. Her eyes grow wide, a disturbing bloodshot red.

The car goes silent. Still.

Dark.

Mary Jo is dead.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER- DAY

Sun shines brightly in from the windshield revealing for the first time a full view of Mary Jo's body, bathed in chiaroscuro light.

Rigor mortis has set in; she remains in the same contorted position as when she gasped her last breath.

Her hair drifts in front of her face as the rest of the scene remains still.

EXT. POUCHA POND - DAY

A blue Ford station wagon sits parked on the man-made peninsula across Dike Bridge. Nearby, MR. SAMUEL, mid 40s, and his son, DONNIE, 8, dangle their legs off the side of the bridge, fishing rods in hand.

Mr. Samuel looks over at his son beaming with pride. Donnie turns to his dad with a smile, but a glint of light hits him right in the eye.

Donnie turns to the light reflection behind him. He stands up and walks over to investigate.

He looks deep into Poucha Pond but still only sees a shadowy, dark shape with a light reflecting off the metallic surface.

DONNIE
Dad! Come look!

Mr. Samuel strolls up and leans over to see.

The visage of the submerged Oldsmobile becomes immediately clear to him.

He jolts up. Deep concern in his face.

In one continuous take, he runs down the bridge. Pumping his arms to gain speed as he goes up the road to Dike House. He arrives out of breath at the "WELCOME" mat. Desperate knocks at the door.

MR. SAMUEL

There's been an accident off the bridge. I need to call the police, right away.

As the door opens, the amber porch light turns off.

INT. SHIRETOWN INN - PATIO - DAY

At this early hour, the Shiretown Inn patio has few patrons.

Fine linens and place settings surround Ted as busboys prepare for the most elegant brunch in Martha's Vineyard.

Ted leans back into his chair. He flaps the sides of his *New York Times* and puts his feet up on the table.

The date reads: "SATURDAY, JULY 19TH, 1969".

The front page headlines read:

- "NIXON PROPOSES U.S. AID IN BIRTH CONTROL"
- "MOSCOW SAYS THAT LUNA 15 WON'T BE IN APOLLO'S WAY"

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - DAY

Overlooking the submerged wreckage, the father and son lean over Dike Bridge joined by a few other locals. Behind them, a police cruiser door pops open.

Chief Arena walks up and looks out over the water.

CHIEF ARENA

So, that's the car there?

MR. SAMUEL

Yeah.

CHIEF ARENA

Someone ought to go down there. Survey the damage.

The locals shoot Arena incredulous looks.

CHIEF ARENA (CONT'D)
Well...does anyone have a bathing
suit I can borrow?

EXT. SHIRETOWN INN - DAY

Ted enters the phone booth outside the hotel. The street bustles with locals and seaside tourists. He shuts the door.

Ted pulls out a pocket-sized address book. He flips past the well-worn leather cover and straight to the middle. He scans his finger across a couple of names. Each name has an accompanying descriptor.

His finger taps on the desired entry:

"Ted Sorensen - Speechwriter, lawyer - 'My intellectual blood bank' - Jack"

Ted drops a dime and dials. The phone rings. His eyes dart back and forth at the many passersby.

RING.

One of the tourists makes eye contact with Ted.

RING.

The tourist grabs his wife and points in Ted's direction. They smile and wave with excitement at this chance encounter with a public figure.

Ted tightens his grip on the phone and grits his teeth.

SORENSEN (V.O.)
This is Ted Sorensen.

TED
It's Teddy. I've got a problem. It
needs someone with your legal and
public relation skills.

Commotion can be heard on the other end of the line.

TED (CONT'D)
Are you alone?

INT. TED SORENSEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

TED SORENSEN, 41, a sophisticated, intellectual man out of his element over a stove, wrapped in a phone cord. His THREE RAMBUNCTIOUS SONS wait impatiently for their breakfast.

SORENSEN
I've got the boys this weekend, but
I can talk.

TED (V.O.)
Okay, that'll do.

EXT. SHIRETOWN INN - DAY

Small beads of sweat have formed at Ted's brow. He cranes his neck to make sure no one stands too close.

TED
You're the first person I'm
telling. I'm not sure if the
authorities know yet --

INT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sunlight beams pierce through a crack in the curtains, illuminating a littered room filled with empty beer bottles.

Gargan sleeps, passed out with his face pressed against the floor. Above him, Markham lays sprawled out fully dressed on the couch.

SIREN.

Gargan jolts up. Markham snores as Gargan stumbles over to the window and pulls open the curtain.

A small fire engine tears out of the volunteer fire house across the street and races past the cottage.

Gargan looks at his watch.

GARGAN
Shit.

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - DAY

Chief Arena sits on the edge of the bumper in a dark-plaid swimsuit and a diver's mask, stripped of whatever dignity his uniform offered him.

Squad cars and the fire engine move through the growing crowd. Near the shore, Sheriff Look stands holding the radio out the window of his cruiser.

SHERIFF LOOK
Dive team's here, Chief.

Arena spins around to see JOHN FARRAR, mid-30s, a solitary athletic man in full scuba gear, stepping off the fire engine.

ARENA
"Team" implies more than one
person, Deputy.

Farrar pulls the scuba cap over his head and shouts back.

FARRAR
Don't you worry. If there's anyone
down there, I'll have 'em up in ten
minutes.

He pulls down his mask and jumps in. From above the bridge,
onlookers watch as he enters the car through the driver's
side window.

The chief looks around, feeling useless. He barks out to his
squad car.

CHIEF ARENA
What's taking so long to find out
whose damn car this is?!

Sheriff Look pulls his head out from the passenger window.

SHERIFF LOOK
It's coming over the wire now.
(beat)
Chief, the car is registered to
Edward M. Kennedy!

The chief nearly falls off his perch in shock.

CHIEF ARENA
Kennedy. Dear God. Not another
tragedy.

EXT. SHIRETOWN INN - DAY

Ted glances up, paranoid at the increasing number of people
passing by the phone booth.

He speaks softly with great, nervous strain in his voice.

TED
It was my car. It's registered to
me even though I never drive the
damn thing.

INTERCUT

SORENSEN
Well, who was driving?

Ted pauses as he thinks about how to respond to this.

TED
I'd say she was.

SORENSEN
Then I don't think you have
anything to worry about.

TED
Does that story play?

SORENSEN
That's what happened, isn't it?

Ted prepares his answer in his head.

STAN MOORE (O.S.)
Heeey, Teddy boy!

There's a quick knock against the glass. Ted spins around.

Stan Moore stands waving with his friend Ross Richards. The two men who beat Ted in the race yesterday dress in identical polo shirts and pants.

TED
(into phone)
I gotta let you go.

Ted hangs up the phone and throws on a smile.

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - DAY

Farrar resurfaces outside of the sunken Oldsmobile. He wades over to Chief Arena and pulls off his mask.

FARRAR
Chief...

Farrar leans in closer to speak in hushed tones. The crowd has grown larger with several children at the front.

FARRAR (CONT'D)
We've got a body.

CHIEF ARENA
A BODY?! It's not the Senator is it?

FARRAR
No. It's a young woman.

Chief Arena recoils at the implications of this revelation.

CHIEF ARENA
Somebody find the Senator! Get him
down here! We've got a situation.

An officer in the front of the crowd steps away, revealing Gargan and Markham. Gargan seethes.

GARGAN
He didn't report it, the son of a
bitch.

Gargan storms off towards the Valiant.

INT. SHIRETOWN INN - PATIO - DAY

The dining hall bustles with activity around Ted, who stares off with a vacant, grouched look.

Sitting across from him, Stan holds court at the table, which also includes Ross Richards and MARILYN RICHARDS, who feigns interest beneath a luxurious hat.

STAN MOORE
...so that's when I shove the guy.

From Ted's POV, Gargan and Markham walk past the entrance of the patio restaurant. They both appear to catch a glimpse of Ted as they pass out of view. Ted gives a deep look of concern, having been potentially spotted.

STAN MOORE (CONT'D)
And he's so drunk...he stumbles
eight feet back right through the
terrace. POW!

Gargan and Markham return back to the entryway. Gargan locks eyes with Ted and stomps into the main dining area.

Ted slumps in his chair. They definitely spotted him.

Amongst the many finely-attired diners, Gargan and Markham's wrinkled clothes, sweaty hair, and bleary eyes make them stick out like unwelcome guests.

STAN MOORE (CONT'D)
And, would you believe it? This guy
falls ass backwards right in front
of a *security guard*!

Gargan's face boils bright red. His eyes remain locked on Ted as he approaches the table. Markham limps slowly behind. He squints and rubs his head, hungover.

Ted's eyes drift up to Gargan, who hovers over the table. Stan only just takes notice.

STAN MOORE (CONT'D)
Oh, hey! Joey! You're going to want
to hear this!

MARILYN RICHARDS
 No. You really don't. This is my
 third time not wanting to hear it.

Gargan doesn't acknowledge anyone else at the table. He
 continues staring daggers into Ted.

GARGAN
 Ted. I need to speak with you in
 your room. Right. Now.

Ted settles into his chair. Leans way back, relaxed.

TED
 C'mon, Joey. Don't be rude. The
 Richards --

GARGAN
 TED. I need to speak with you. It's
 a matter of *some* importance.

TED
 Okay, okay. Let me pay the...

GARGAN
 Now Ted. I'd like to see you.
 Right. Now.

Gargan has attracted the attention of most of the diners now.
 He huffs and puffs with a combination of rage and exhaustion.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - UNDERWATER - DAY

The hair floats above Mary Jo's dead body, bathed in
 chiaroscuro light, in the same contorted position.

From below, Farrar enters the crime scene. He grabs a hold of
 Mary Jo's waist to pull her out, but she doesn't budge. He
 goes to pry away her hands. They are both gripped deep into
 the back passenger seat.

With some effort, he frees her corpse. It starts to float.
 Farrar pulls her buoyant remains back down with him.

He exits the car and pulls her out the window with ease...at
 least at first --

SNAG.

Mary Jo's body jerks to a full stop. Farrar looks back. Sees
 the gold chain around her waist caught on the same long shard
 of glass.

He quickly floats back and releases the chain. Hand over
 hand, he swiftly extracts the rest of her body.

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - DAY

From the view of the bridge, the body surfaces out of the water, face down. Farrar follows shortly thereafter. The crowd of onlookers at the bridge GASP, horrified at the sight. Parents cover their children's eyes.

Chief Arena looks on with a cold, dumbfounded intensity.

CHIEF ARENA

Do you recognize her? Is it one of the Kennedy clan?

FARRAR

I wouldn't know.

Off his annoyed look, Farrar flips the body over to have it ID'd, revealing Mary Jo's face. Her bloodshot eyes and purple extremities are the stuff of nightmares. From the shore, Sheriff Look and a few bystanders turn away out of respect.

CHIEF ARENA

I don't recognize her. It's not one of the clan. Thank God.

SHERIFF LOOK

What to now, Chief?

CHIEF ARENA

We ought to handle this thing by the book. Get me someone from the D.M.V. Get me the coroner and the medical examiner. And somebody, please, get me Senator Ted Kennedy.

INT. SHIRETOWN INN - TED'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Markham slams the door behind him. He locks the dead bolt. Gargan paces the room with pounding footsteps. He towers above Ted, who sits on the end of his bed staring up at him.

GARGAN

What the fuck is going on?!

TED

Now, just wait a minute here, Joey.

GARGAN

You were supposed to report the fucking accident!

Ted demurs with a petulant look.

MARKHAM

Joey's right, Senator.

GARGAN
What happened last night?

Ted gives a childlike shrug of non-remorse, as he reclines back on the bed.

TED
I didn't report it.

Gargan explodes.

GARGAN
What ON EARTH would make you think that was a good idea?

Ted offers little more than a passive shrug.

GARGAN (CONT'D)
We're ALL in real trouble now. How could you let this much time go by without saying a word?

TED
Did the police arrive at the cottage last night?

GARGAN
No.

TED
Well, don't you think they'd have gotten there within the hour if I had reported it?

Gargan drops his guard, thrown off by this question.

GARGAN
I guess. But --

Ted sits back up.

TED
I thought this matter had been handled, Joey. I thought I could count on you.

Ted roars to his feet and wags a finger in Gargan's face.

TED (CONT'D)
The moment the police didn't arrive at the cottage you should've known.
(beat)
It was your responsibility to alert the authorities.

Ted walks past Gargan and stares out through the French doors leading out onto his balcony.

GARGAN

Ted, I don't see how you can say --

TED

You completely bungled this, Joey.
Now I have to deal with this myself.

GARGAN

We're all three implicated now. You
can't just go off and pull this
John Wayne shit. They're treating
this like a crime. For Chrissakes,
there's a dead girl out there.

Ted turns to face Gargan, who speaks with a sobering intensity.

GARGAN (CONT'D)

I'm not going to sugar coat this.
The situation is worse now than it
was before. None of us need to lose
our jobs over this. Our families.
You can protect Paul and me...and
yourself...if you just do what you
know is right.

Gargan puts an arm on Ted's shoulder. Ted looks down and gives
this sincere thought. He puts an arm on Gargan's shoulder.

TED

Okay. I'll report it.

Ted pulls Joey in for a cathartic embrace.

TED (CONT'D)

I'm going to have to say Mary Jo
was driving, though.

Gargan topples back out of the embrace in shock.

GARGAN

TED. You can't --

TED

Joey. I love you...you know that.
(beat)
But we both know what's at stake
here.

Ted strolls past a speechless Gargan and a "too hungover to
care" Markham and opens the front door.

TED (CONT'D)

Now, c'mon. I need to get to a pay
phone I can use without people
breathing down my neck.

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - DAY

A black hearse rolls down the gravel road toward a group of growing spectators. Behind them, glimpses of Mary Jo's body can be seen on a gurney.

She doesn't lay flat. Stiff with rigor mortis, her arms remain outstretched towards the sky, her hands frozen in semi-claws.

She looks anything but peaceful.

The gurney arrives at a man holding a small bag of medical tools. Associate Medical Examiner, DR. DONALD MILLS, late 20s, waits impatiently.

DR. MILLS

Let's wrap this up. I've got a patient going into labor right now.

CHIEF ARENA

I haven't dealt with many fatalities thus far. You just tell me what's proper. I mean, you're the medical examiner.

Stepping out of the hearse, EUGENE FRIEH, late 50s, local undertaker and local curmudgeon, walks up ready to protest the chief's statement.

EUGENE FRIEH

Associate Medical Examiner.

CHIEF ARENA

What?

EUGENE FRIEH

Dr. Nevins is the resident medical examiner. Mills here is just the associate.

DR. MILLS

Yeah. Well, Dr. Nevins has the day off. And I'm very busy. So let's get this examination underway. Is that okay with you, Eugene?

EUGENE FRIEH

Of course.

The four men huddle around the body, forming a perimeter that blocks her view from the crowd. Dr. Mills starts by examining a cut on Mary Jo's head; he moves his hands through her hair looking for any other contusions. He looks up at Farrar.

DR. MILLS

You said you found her completely submerged, right?

FARRAR
Yes, that's right.

DR. MILLS
Well, this seems to be a pretty
open and shut case. Drowning.
(beat)
Eugene, take her down and start the
embalming process --

EUGENE FRIEH
If we're calling it a drowning,
shouldn't we at least check her
lungs first?

DR. MILLS
I didn't realize that undertakers
had medical degrees...

Chief Arena looks on, not realizing what he's gotten into.

EUGENE FRIEH
I don't...but I've seen enough dead
bodies to have my suspicions.

Dr. Mills scowls at Eugene and then turns back to the body.
He moves his hands down to Mary Jo's chest. Undoes her blouse
revealing her blue brassiere.

He places his hands on the flat part of her breast bone and
presses down. Water spills from Mary Jo's lips.

DR. MILLS
There. Are you satisfied?

EUGENE FRIEH
She's been submerged for hours. A
teaspoon of water in her mouth
means nothing.

Dr. Mills strains as he does several more chest compressions.
Hardly any more water pours out. Farrar is overcome by a sad
realization.

FARRAR
Dear God. I could've had her out of
that car twenty five minutes after
I got the call. But no one called.

Chief Arena looks back at the crowd, hoping none of them can
see he's in over his head. The doctor grows frustrated as his
diagnosis comes into question.

DR. MILLS
Turn her over.

The men flip the body over with great respect. Dr. Mills performs a forceful "chest compression" just above the small of Mary Jo's back. A handful of water pours forth.

DR. MILLS (CONT'D)
Water. Deep in the lungs. Just as I suspected.

EUGENE FRIEH
Couldn't that have been from her stomach?

Dr. Mills grows incensed at the second guessing.

DR. MILLS
Fine. Flip her over again. I'll press on her abdomen and prove it.

The men flip Mary Jo on her back. Her high waisted pants cover her naval. Dr. Mills unbuttons them and gives them a quick tug exposing her pubic area. He raises an eyebrow.

DR. MILLS (CONT'D)
No panties?

Arena wanting to protect the girl's modesty and prevent the situation from spiraling out of control puts his arms in front of Frieh and the doctor.

CHIEF ARENA
Eugene, I appreciate ya, but let's leave the medical diagnoses to the medical professionals. Okay?

DR. MILLS
Thank you. Now if you could start prepping her for the embalming, like I said Eugene.

EUGENE FRIEH
Whatever you say.

CHIEF ARENA
(to Eugene)
I'll be coming by shortly. We still need to ID the poor girl. I may have Senator Kennedy with me.

DR. MILLS
Kennedy?

CHIEF ARENA
Yeah. That's his car in the pond.

DR. MILLS
Cancel the embalming.
(to Chief Arena)
(MORE)

DR. MILLS (CONT'D)
 In light of certain non-medical
 factors and personalities involved
 here, I would prefer we had the
 District Attorney weigh in on this.

CHIEF ARENA
 Christ.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK - FERRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As the Chappaquiddick ferry recedes into the distance, the
 previously seen nearby pay phone sits in the foreground. This
 time Ted rushes towards it.

He picks up the receiver and flips through his weathered
 book. He creases it open to an entry reading:

"David Burke - Chief of Staff - "Reliable, doesn't seek the
 spotlight" - Jack"

Ted scans his fingers down a few telephone numbers until he
 reaches one listed as "Home". He dials.

Ted drops a dime into the pay phone. RING.

The line picks up. Ted doesn't wait for a greeting.

TED
 David. We have a situation over here
 on Chappaquiddick.

DAVID BURKE (V.O.)
 Ted? What kind of situation?

TED
 There's a firestorm coming your
 way. You need to be ready for it.

David Burke waits patiently for instruction. Then realizes
 Ted is done talking.

DAVID BURKE (V.O.)
 Okay, but I'd be more ready if I
 knew what this was all about.

TED
 The situation is...my car was in an
 accident...I'm going to say that I
 wasn't the one driving.

Ted turns and looks towards the road leading to the ferry.
 The black hearse waits for the arrival of the next ferry. The
 rear passenger window shade is up.

A sheet covers Mary Jo's body, but it's unmistakable what he's looking at. Ted can barely breathe. He just stares in its direction.

The SOUND NEARLY DROPS OUT. Ted's fixation on the hearse intensifies as David Burke's voice becomes muffled --

DAVID BURKE (V.O.)
(muffled)
Well...were you driving, Ted?
(beat)
Ted?

Ted gives a long hard look into the hearse. The sight of it has nearly turned him to stone.

DAVID BURKE (V.O.)
(nearly inaudible)
Ted? Ted? Ted, can you hear me?

The hearse drives out of Ted's field of view and the SOUND COMES BACK INTO FOCUS --

Ted looks back at the phone, still shaken.

TED
That's all you need to know for now.

Ted hangs up the receiver.

EXT. CHAPPAQUIDDICK ISLAND - FERRY LANDING - DAY

Ted staggers over to Markham and Gargan, in as much of a daze as moments after the accident. He tries to compose himself and speak with the authority of a leader but struggles.

TED
Alright, I'm headed back to town.
Gargan, don't upset the girls.
Don't let them get involved.

GARGAN
Of course.

TED
Okay. Good. Paul, why don't you --

GARGAN
Paul. Go with Ted. Run interference.
Make sure he doesn't talk to anyone
else.

Behind them a new, empty ferry arrives.

EXT. FERRY - DAY

The ferry drifts across the water toward Edgartown. Ted and Markham stand at the ferry's edge, wind blowing through their hair. A few other ferry patrons mill about behind them. A couple of men whisper and point at Ted.

MAN

He doesn't look like he was in an accident...

EXT. EDGARTOWN FERRY LANDING - CONTINUOUS

The ferry approaches the dock. Suddenly, Ted pushes through the crowd of people and leaps over the rail onto the landing. Everyone looks on, shocked and dumbfounded.

He books it up the street towards town.

The gate slowly starts to open. Markham tries to speed walk through the pain in order to catch up.

Ted turns the heads of every pedestrian he passes as he jogs up the street. Markham falls further behind.

MARKHAM

Ted! Wait up!

A local newspaper PHOTOGRAPHER approaches Ted. The senator avoids eye contact as they cross paths.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Senator!

Ted doesn't look back. A flashbulb goes off. A camera shutter snaps. Ted continues racing forward.

EXT. EDGARTOWN POLICE STATION - DAY

Ted hustles up the steps headed for the front door. He reaches for the handle just as --

The front door swings open. JAMES RESTON, 59, a grizzled *New York Times* reporter, exits and spots Ted immediately.

RESTON

Senator. I heard you were in an accident this morning.

TED

James. You're a long ways from New York, aren't you?

RESTON

On vacation. Thanks.

TED
Well, I'll let you get back to it.

RESTON
So, any truth to that story?

TED
Automobile accidents? Is the *Times*
putting all their Pulitzer winners
on the local traffic reports beat?

Markham hobbles up the steps. He pushes Ted inside.

RESTON
Just me I hope.

Markham slams the door. Reston flips his notebook closed.

INT. EDGARTOWN POLICE STATION - DAY

Ted's canvas boat shoes glide along the cheap linoleum tile.

EXT. DIKE BRIDGE - DAY

A tow truck pulls a chain attached to the submerged Oldsmobile.

The side door reads in hand-painted letters: "You Wreck 'Em -
We Fetch 'Em". The wheels spin as the tow truck drags the car
out of the water, releasing a large air bubble.

Chief Arena looks around with confused frustration. He dashes
over to his squad car and yanks the radio receiver towards him.

CHIEF ARENA
Can somebody tell me why we haven't
found Senator Kennedy yet!?

SECRETARY (V.O.)
He's right here at the station,
Chief.

Chief Arena shoots the radio an incredulous look.

CHIEF ARENA
Well, tell him to get his ass down here!

The radio crackles before the other end of the line goes
silent for a moment.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
Uh...the Senator would prefer that
you come to him.

Chief Arena stares, caught off guard by the gall of this
request. Water still drips from his bathing suit.

INT. CHIEF ARENA'S OFFICE - DAY

Markham shuts the door. He turns to Ted, who rests his feet on the desk.

MARKHAM
The Chief is on his way.

TED
Good. Thanks Paul. That'll be fine.

Ted takes his feet off the desk and leans in towards Markham. Out of his peripheral, the chief's phone glares back at Ted. He lifts the entire phone and pulls it directly in front of him before picking up the receiver.

TED (CONT'D)
If you could just give me a moment...

MARKHAM
Sure thing, Ted.

Markham steps out, leaving Ted completely alone.

Ted stares back at the phone, hovering his unsteady finger over the "0" key. The dial tone rings out until --

A loud, pulsing OFF-HOOK TONE screeches from the handset.

Ted startles at the sudden sound. He hangs up the receiver. He takes a deep breath and tries again.

His trembling finger moves swiftly to hit the "0".

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Directory Assistance. How may I direct your call?

Ted picks up a nearby pencil and starts doodling on a pad of paper.

TED
Uh...um...Kopechne...listing in New Jersey, please.
(beat)
I'm unsure of the spelling.

Ted draws wavy lines and shades them. It's a doodle of a sailboat in choppy waters.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
I'll connect you.

Ted puts his head in his free hand and closes his eyes.

RING. RING.

The line picks up. Ted squeezes his eyes shut tighter. He shakes with tension.

MRS. KOPECHNE (V.O.)
(cheery)
Hello.

Ted exhales and slowly opens his eyes. He hesitates.

TED
Hello. Is this Mrs. Kopechne?

MRS. KOPECHNE (V.O.)
Yes, it is.

TED
Mrs. Kopechne. This is Senator Ted Kennedy. I'd like to speak to your husband.

MRS. KOPECHNE (V.O.)
Oh. Uh. Senator. Joseph's gone to the store at the moment.

Mrs. Kopechne's voice cracks with prescient concern.

MRS. KOPECHNE (V.O.)
Can I take a message for him?

The swell in her voice pierces through Ted. He swivels his chair around to face the wall, away from the door.

TED
Mrs. Kopechne. Mary Jo...was in an accident.

MRS. KOPECHNE (V.O.)
Was it in a car?

Ted hangs his head in shame. He can barely get out the next words.

TED
It was an automobile accident.

Gwen, afraid what this could mean, audibly clutches the handset tighter. Ted's voice remains steady. Ted's voice remains calm. Tears slowly start to roll down his face.

TED (CONT'D)
Mary Jo was returning to take a ferry back to the mainland...when the accident occurred.

MRS. KOPECHNE (V.O.)
Was my daughter killed, Senator?

Ted keeps his eyes open and his trembling chin up. He won't allow himself to hide from this.

TED

Yes.

Silence. Not a sound comes from the other end of the call. Ted closes his eyes once more.

TED (CONT'D)

Mary Jo was an exceptional human being. She served my brother and my family with dignity...grace --

A loud CRASH from the other end of the line. Loud, uncontrollable SOBS from Mrs. Kopechne. Each one drills deeper and deeper into Ted. He shudders as --

CLICK.

The line goes dead. Ted stares holding the phone to his ear in complete stunned shock. He's barely present. A beat. A long, uncomfortable beat.

A loud, pulsing OFF-HOOK TONE screeches from the handset.

Ted snaps back to life. He warily hangs up the phone.

He slowly begins to circle the sailboat on his pad of paper. Again and again. Finally, he puts the pencil down before he picks up the receiver.

He dials the phone with no hesitation. His face exudes a somberness that seems to admit defeat.

RING. RING.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Hello. Kennedy Residence.

TED

I need to talk to my father again.

WOMAN (V.O.)

You put him in an awful spell the last time you spoke...he's resting...I'm not sure --

TED

(softly, resigned)

Now, Ann.

WOMAN (V.O.)

One moment.

Ted waits on the line. His pulse quickens as the anxiety of this moment weighs on him.

Commotion can be heard faintly from the other line. Ted grabs his wrinkled collar and presses it into a fine crease. He sits up straight at full attention, ignoring that his posture will go unseen during the call.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Ted. You're on with Joe.

TED

Dad. I'm at the police station.

The other line is quiet except for the sound of Joseph Kennedy straining with each breath.

TED (CONT'D)

Dad. I'm telling you this...I'm telling you this because I wanted to let you know...I'm going to explain what happened. I'm going to tell them I was driving.

JOSEPH KENNEDY

...No...

TED

I will protect myself. But I'm going to do what's right...and that's tell the truth.

JOSEPH KENNEDY

...Alibi...

Ted winces. The vein in his neck throbs. This one word increases the pressure on him insurmountably.

TED

I'm not going to be the one defined by my flaws.

An unsettling silence exudes the other end of the line. The sound of a low rustle moves slowly. Then faster, back and forth, as an eraser grazes against a chalkboard.

TED (CONT'D)

Growing up...you said...Jack's the charming one...Bobby's the brilliant one...and Joe Jr. was the favorite one.

(beat)

Well, what did that leave for me, Dad? The dumb one? The fat one? I'll tell you...the one who got in the most trouble.

(beat)

I'm charming. I'm brilliant. I'm the only son you've got left.

Through the receiver, chalk scrapes across the chalkboard.

TED (CONT'D)
I'm the one making this decision.
I'm the one.

The phone line clatters as the handset is passed off.

WOMAN (V.O.)
He's writing something. He says.
(beat)
"You're the head of the family now."

Ted can't process the enormity of this statement. The Kennedy legacy rests on his shoulders. He lets the phone move away from his ear as he sinks to the desk.

TED
Goodbye, Ann.

He gently places the receiver back into its cradle. Ted looks deeply at the phone, hoping for answers.

He turns back to the drawing of the sailboat. He picks up the pencil and scratches it out, tearing a hole in the paper.

He picks up the phone as he stands. Ted dials with confidence.

RING.

GIFFORD (V.O.)
Senator Kennedy's Office.

TED
Dun, I need you on the next flight
to Edgartown.

GIFFORD (V.O.)
I've been expecting your call.
David filled me in.

TED
We've made mistakes here. I need you
to understand that. I want to make
sure we handle everything going
forward with the utmost integrity.

Ted bites his lower lip in an empathetic manner.

GIFFORD (V.O.)
I understand.

Ted points as he speaks. He paces behind the desk with excitement as he barks his orders.

TED
We need to make sure this poor
girl's body gets to her family
right away. Can you do that for me?

GIFFORD (V.O.)

Sure. But there may be a delay if they want to perform an autopsy.

Ted slams his open palm down on the desk.

TED

Why do you think I want it out of here?! Can you handle this or NOT?

GIFFORD (V.O.)

No. I mean...yes. I mean I think I --

Ted tosses the receiver into its cradle. CLICK. He saunters around the desk and opens the door.

TED

Paul. I need you.

Markham stands up and hurries into the chief's office. Ted shuts the door behind him.

TED (CONT'D)

I need you to help me come up with a written statement. I'm going to say I was driving. But I don't want to drag you and Joey into this any more than I already have. So we're just going to leave that part out. And any part that could hurt my position with the police or the public. We're gonna leave that out too. Can you do that?

Markham looks at Ted with saucers for eyes. A nearly impossible task.

INT. EDGARTOWN POLICE STATION - DAY

A pair of rubber flip flops SLAP against cheap linoleum tile.

JUMP CUT TO:

Chief Arena pushes through the door with his name on it.

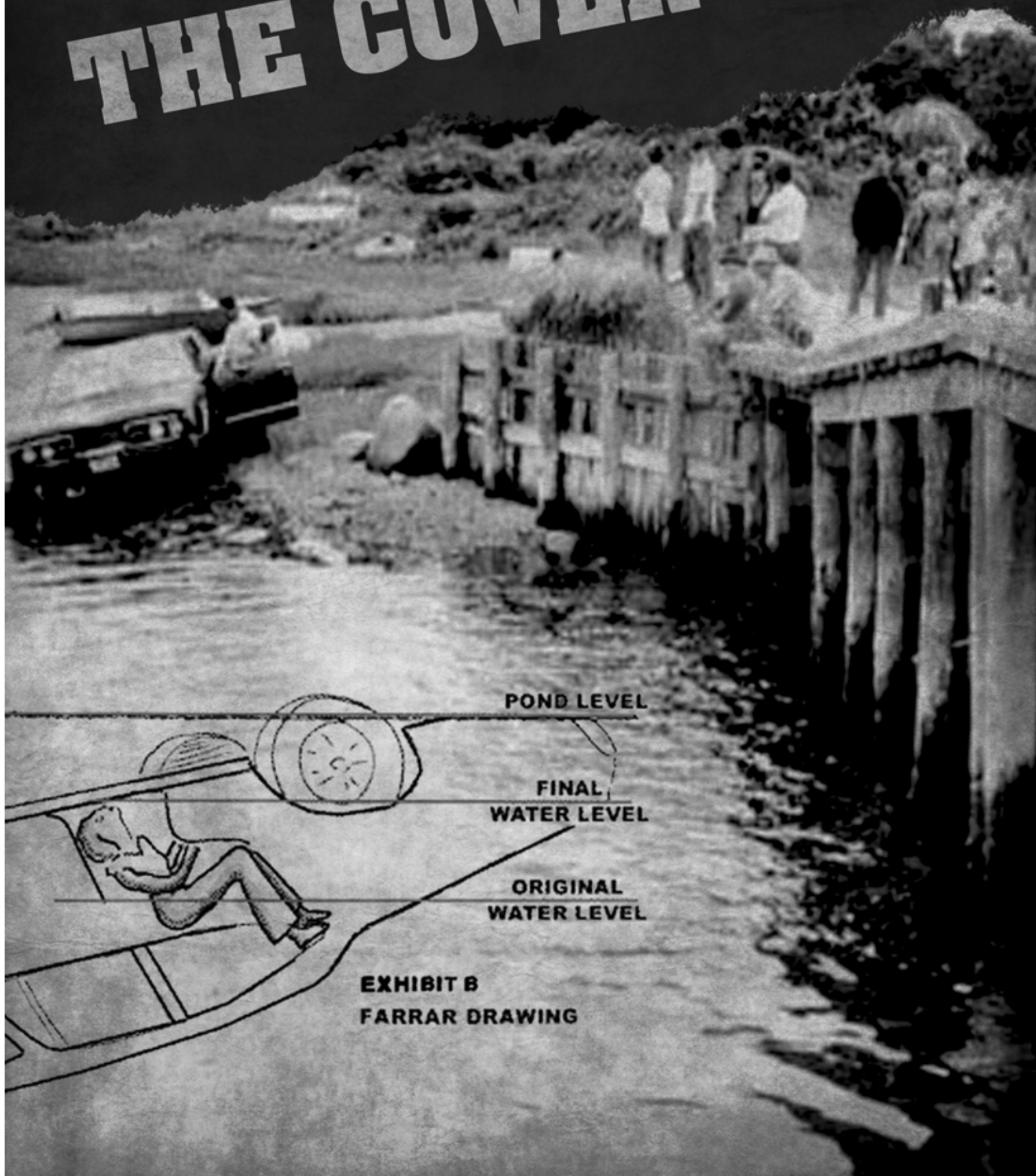
INT. CHIEF ARENA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Chief Arena stands in the doorway wearing his bathing suit.

TED

I have a statement I'd like to read if that's, okay.

CHAPTER 4: THE COVER UP



INT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The front door BURSTS open. Light floods into the living room. Esther and Nance Lyons squint their eyes, set down their coffee. Gargan barges past them CLAPPING his hands.

He moves to every closed door in the house and opens them.

CLAP. CLAP. CLAP.

From one of the bedrooms emerges Suzy Tannenbaum and Cricket Keough, still in PJ's. Gargan points at them.

Everyone stares at him completely baffled.

GARGAN

You two. Get dressed. Get packed.
We're leaving here as soon as
possible.

SUZY TANNENBAUM

What's this about, Joey?

He goes into the kitchen and pulls out two trash cans.

GARGAN

This garbage can here is for
responsible, non-alcoholic, upright
citizen's trash ONLY.

CRICKET

Has anyone seen Mary Jo?

GARGAN

THIS one is for everything else.
Every bottle. Every can --

The Boiler Room Girls grab their bags. LaRosa and Ted's driver toss assorted items into their respective trash cans. Only Esther defiantly stands her ground, refusing to help.

ESTHER

Joey, will you just tell us what's
going on, already? No bullshit.

Nance Lyons stands at the entryway putting her handbag over her shoulder. She picks up Mary Jo's purse.

NANCE

And where's Mary Jo? I haven't seen
her since last night.

Gargan lowers the two trash cans. He can't keep up the facade of control any longer.

GARGAN

There's been an accident. Senator Kennedy's car went off the bridge and into Poucha Pond last night...

Gargan hesitates. His head spins with emotion and lawyer platitudes. He blurts out an answer to fill the silence.

GARGAN (CONT'D)

...and we can't find Mary Jo.

The group murmurs with deep concern. They look at their feet unsure what to say next. Nance Lyons pipes up with helpful optimism.

NANCE

Has anyone called the authorities?

INT. EDGARTOWN POLICE STATION - DAY

The door to the Chief's office swings open. Out steps Arena proudly holding up Ted's handwritten statement. He hands it to his secretary.

CHIEF ARENA

Have this typed up for me.

Behind him, Ted and Markham shuffle out the door. Ted puts his hand on Chief Arena's shoulder.

TED

Chief, you mind not letting any press get a hold of that until I get the all clear from my lawyer?

CHIEF ARENA

No problem, Senator. I understand.

Kennedy puts his arm around Arena and ushers him away from the secretary for a more private conversation.

TED

Now, don't you think it's in everyone's best interest if I get back home to Hyannis Port right away?

A smile crawls across Chief Arena's face. He turns to Ted with great eagerness.

CHIEF ARENA

You know...I've got a friend who's a pilot. He'll get you there in no time.

Ted shakes the Chief's hand, gives him the signature politician's smile.

TED

That sounds fine, officer. Just fine.

CHIEF ARENA

Please let me know if there's anything else I can do.

TED

No, sir. You're doing a bang up job here, Dominick. A bang up job.

EXT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - DAY

The Valiant has left the driveway and the cottage lawn has been combed of any trash.

INT. LAWRENCE COTTAGE - DAY

Sunlight beams pour through drawn curtains, illuminating a sparkling clean room.

All the signs of the chaos from last night have miraculously disappeared. Lamps turned upright, beds all made.

In the center of the kitchen, sits one trash can. Inside:

Six bottles of Coca-Cola and an empty bag of chips.

INT. KATAMA SHORES INN - THE BOILER ROOM GIRLS' ROOM - DAY

The only cheap motel in Edgartown. The Boiler Room Girls pack their clothes and toiletries into their bags. Gargan sits on the nightstand, supervising.

Cricket enters with a look of confusion and concern.

CRICKET

Joey, I just went to Mary Jo's room. She's not there.

GARGAN

I know. Girls. You better sit down.

Everyone in the room falls into a hushed silence. The girls all sit on the two queen beds. Gargan stands at the front of the room, sweaty, exhausted, and disheveled.

GARGAN (CONT'D)

As I said before, the Senator's car was in an accident. It went off the bridge sometime after he and Mary Jo left the party.

The tension mounts as the girls hang on Gargan's every word. Nance Lyons squeezes a pillow for comfort.

Gargan pauses. Worn down. Uncertain.

GARGAN (CONT'D)

I want you to know that every single effort possible was made to save her.

Cricket, Suzy, and Nance burst into uncontrollable tears.

MARYELLEN

Mary Jo!

Gargan looks uncomfortable at the sight of the four women sobbing. Then he catches a glimpse of Esther. She's not crying. She waits patiently staring back at Gargan.

ESTHER

Okay. So what do we do now?

(beat)

What needs to be done to help the Senator?

Gargan is taken aback. It takes him a moment to recover.

GARGAN

You should get off the island as soon as possible. No one knows that any of you are here. So go home and keep quiet. The best thing that could happen for you is to never see each other, or me, ever again.

The girls look at each other with hesitant resignation. Cricket lets out a whimper, unable to keep up appearances. Esther continues to look on with a harsh, cold intensity.

GARGAN (CONT'D)

Let's remember what Ted said last night: We're family. We have to protect each other like family.

EXT. HYANNIS PORT - KENNEDY COMPOUND - DAY

The wrought iron gate opens and a black sedan passes through, revealing a sprawling white, Cape Cod waterfront property.

The car pulls around the circular driveway and stops in front of a flagpole. Ted steps out.

The American flag flaps in the wind, dwarfing the senator below as he gazes at his childhood home. He straightens his collar before taking a step towards the entrance.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - ENTRYWAY - DAY

The front door cracks open. Ted slips inside and shuts the door behind him. The entryway returns to a dark and imposing set of wooden bookcases and stained oak floors.

He takes a few steps forward towards a large staircase. Each step Ted takes echoes deep into the corridors around him --

A door CREAKS as it swings open down the hall. Carrying a tea tray, ANN GARGAN, early 30s, the shapely but serious-minded sister of Joe Gargan and nurse to Joseph Kennedy, Sr., startles when she sees Ted.

ANN

Oh. Ted. Your father wasn't expecting you so soon.

This is unmistakably the voice that was on the phone with Ted's father before.

TED

How is he holding up, Ann?

ANN

Uncle Joe is rather emotional. But physically, he's doing better.

Ted takes the first step up on to the stairs.

Ann takes two quick steps up the stairs in front of him. She puts a sympathetic hand on his hand. Her eyes well up, knowing what is coming.

ANN (CONT'D)

Wait here. He'd prefer to come to you.

She climbs the staircase and disappears behind the banisters.

Ted stands, left alone in the dark entryway once more.

From above, the distant SQUEAK of a wheelchair rolling grows louder. Each rotation of the wheel creates an extended squeal. Ted looks up.

Lording over him at the top of the staircase, a pair of fine leather shoes sit comfortably in the footrests of the wheelchair. They descend slowly down the stairs toward Ted.

Ted, stiff as a board, looks up with his face frozen.

JOSEPH P. KENNEDY, SR., 80, glowers from his wheelchair, staring down his son. Ann assists Joseph Kennedy down the stairs using a mechanical chair stair lift device. He slumps, a weathered shell of a man after suffering several strokes.

The left side of his face droops. The wrinkled skin and liver spots on his face partially obscured by his owl glasses.

He cannot speak clearly, but his every grunt and breath is felt with commanding authority.

Ted steps forward and gives his father a kiss on the forehead. Joseph Kennedy stares past his son, offering no emotion.

TED

I'm glad to see you, Dad. You're looking better.

(beat)

I want to tell you again how sincerely sorry I am that I ever let a thing like this happen.

Joseph Kennedy responds with one quick, short grunt. It doesn't sound supportive.

TED (CONT'D)

I want to reassure you that I have this situation, terrible as it is, under my complete control. I have my staff split off in every direction ensuring that we're not up at night worrying about surprises. Dun's looking after the --

Joseph Kennedy shakes his head.

TED (CONT'D)

I'm sorry that I got us into this. But if you trust me, I'm confident I can get us out.

(beat)

I believe what we did was right.

JOSEPH KENNEDY

...Ann...

Joseph Kennedy pulls out a piece of paper with scribbled handwriting. Ann takes it from him and looks directly into Ted's eyes.

ANN

Your father would like to tell you:

(reading)

"You've lost my confidence. Do as I say and never lose it again. Otherwise it will be a nearly impossible task to restore it."

These words hit Ted right in the gut. He slumps over, crestfallen. Joseph Kennedy wheels himself down the hall.

The squeaks of the wheelchair recede into the distance as Ted absorbs the shock.

Ann leans closer to Ted, speaking in hushed tones.

ANN (CONT'D)
Your dad really does love you. He
hasn't been this active since
before Bobby died.

Joseph Kennedy grunts. Ann looks up and sees him sitting in front of a closed door. She dashes across the room and turns the handle. She pushes it open revealing a room filled with blinding sunlight.

ANN (CONT'D)
Ted, you'll want to see this.

Ann grabs Joseph Kennedy's chair and wheels him through.

Ted ponders this for a moment. Then shuffles towards them, afraid of what will come next.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ted enters the cozy, family living room. It has been overrun with an all star line-up of former cabinet members and top Kennedy advisors, past and present. Where Ted once celebrated Christmas and birthdays, he now observes a command central for all strategy devoted to Chappaquiddick.

Ted stands next to his proud father who sports a smug smile of satisfaction as the country's greatest minds try to find a seat amidst the floral curtains, low ceilings, and bay windows.

The BRAIN TRUST includes:

- ROBERT MCNAMARA, 53, former Secretary of Defense; he frowns with his hand dug deep into his face.
- Ted Sorensen, who looks in his element now that he's with Washington's elite rather than his rambunctious boys.
- BURKE MARSHALL, 46, former Assistant US Attorney General and current Senior Vice President at IBM.
- SARGENT SHRIVER, 53, Joseph Kennedy's son-in-law and US Ambassador to France; he puts a well worn wooden rosary in his front jacket pocket with the cross still hanging out.
- STEPHEN SMITH, 41, another Kennedy son-in-law, Bobby's 1968 campaign manager, and financial manager of the Kennedy fortune; he stubs out one cigarette while lighting another.
- JOHN CULVER, 36, US Congressman from Iowa.
- JOHN TUNNEY, 35, US Congressman from California.
- David Burke, the low man on the totem pole; he is merely the administrative aide to Senator Ted Kennedy.
- Several other men from various parts of the Kennedy machine.

Ann Gargan drags over a chair, which she offers to McNamara.

He sits down under a painting of a battleship sailing through choppy waters. Sorensen looks over at him.

SORENSEN

Well, Bob, you handled the missile crisis and Vietnam. Now let's see what you can do with this one.

Ted puts his hands in his pockets with a defiant glare. He looks down at his father.

TED

Looks like you're still the man with all the influence.

Ted steps forward to the center of the room.

TED (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, I appreciate you making the quick trip here on my behalf. However, I hope you understand that I prefer to handle this with my own team, since it's my political future at stake here.

MCNAMARA

You're not going to have a political future if you're in jail. You're fighting a war on two fronts, and you don't even know it.

TED

I think you need to cool it there. I know the problems I'm facing with the press and the people of Massachusetts --

McNamara shoots to his feet and charges towards Ted. He points a bullish, decisive finger in Ted's face.

MCNAMARA

That's just the half of it! You're also in serious legal trouble, son.

Ted looks back towards where his father was sitting. Joseph Kennedy is gone. The SQUEAK of his wheelchair can be heard faintly receding away. Ted looks down at his shoes, no choice but to take this verbal assault.

MCNAMARA (CONT'D)

If they find your negligence contributed to that girl's death...that's involuntary manslaughter. If there's even a whisper that you weren't as clean as Mother Teresa, you're getting charged.

(MORE)

MCNAMARA (CONT'D)

Not a lot of Senators charged with manslaughter who have gone on to become President.

TED

I understand but --

MCNAMARA

And that's to say nothing about being convicted. If you get indicted it won't matter what verdict comes back. The court of public opinion will already have your head on a stake.

TED

I'll put Sorensen on it; we won't have a problem.

MCNAMARA

Problems. *Problems*. Plural. They're threefold. ONE, the information we know that we need to make sure no one else knows; TWO, the information we don't know that we need to make sure remains *unknown*; and THREE, the information you've already admitted that we need to make sure people forget.

McNamara turns to the group, changing his focus from berating Ted to inspiring the troops.

MCNAMARA (CONT'D)

To the first point:

(beat)

A dead girl's body holds a lot of secrets. Those secrets can be the difference between guilt and innocence. So we need to be in control of them. The only way we can do that is if we're in control of the body.

Ted struts up to McNamara. He's already thought of this.

TED

I have my staffer, Dun Gifford, waiting at the funeral home now. That girl isn't going anywhere but back home to New Jersey without us knowing about it.

McNamara scoffs in Ted's face.

MCNAMARA

Having some gopher in a three piece suit sitting on his hands in a LOBBY isn't getting us anywhere! There are explicit procedures that must be followed in order to move a body across state lines. Do you know...has the death certificate even been signed yet?

Ted deflates; there's no good way to answer this.

TED

I don't know.

INT. EDGARTOWN FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Dun Gifford flips through a magazine in the drab lobby of the local mortuary. He wears a three piece suit.

On the side table next to him sits a telephone.

RING.

Dun looks around, confused. He answers.

GIFFORD

Hello?

TED (V.O.)

Gifford. Thank God you're there.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Ted uses the phone on the corner table by the staircase. He hunches over trying not to be heard by his father's advisors.

TED

We're in this thing deeper than I thought. I need you to get the death certificate signed as soon as fucking possible. Do whatever it takes.

GIFFORD (V.O.)

Uh...I'll look into --

TED

Check back in with me here at Hyannis as soon as it's done.

Ted drops the phone back into the cradle. He storms back towards the war room and swings the door open.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ted enters with his head held high and his chest puffed out.

TED
It's as good as done. Just waiting
on word back.

McNamara holds a legal binder. His finger firmly presses
against the page.

MCNAMARA
Now, as I was saying...

He turns back towards the group.

MCNAMARA (CONT'D)
...only one person can sign for the
death certificate...

INT. DR. MILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Gifford sits in a brightly lit doctor's waiting room. The
door reads: "Dr. Donald Mills - Family Medicine & Associate
Medical Examiner".

MCNAMARA (V.O.)
...the medical examiner who
inspected the body at the scene.

Gifford sits next to a PREGNANT WOMAN doing Lamaze exercises.

The exam room door opens. A NURSE steps out. Gifford puts his
hand on top of the pregnant woman's shoulder as he stands.

GIFFORD
I need to go first.

A series of quick cuts:

- Gifford waves the death certificate in Dr. Mills's face.
- Dr. Mills jots his signature onto the death certificate.
- As Gifford exits, he tips his hat to the pregnant woman.
- Gifford bursts into the funeral parlor and waves the death
certificate in Frieh's face. Mary Jo's body lays on the
table in front of them, a sheet covering all but her face.

INT. EDGARTOWN FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Gifford stands, holding the receiver to his ear.

GIFFORD
It's done.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ted enters from the door. He shoots McNamara a strong thumbs up and goes to sit in a chair in the corner.

McNamara SNAPS the book shut. All the advisors nod with satisfaction.

MCNAMARA
To my second point...

Ted settles into his chair, confident things are starting to go his way. McNamara turns back to the group.

MCNAMARA (CONT'D)
We need to parse through the
unknowns of this case to determine
if we've got any liabilities hiding
in the trees.
(beat)
What evidence could be used against
Ted to prove he acted negligently?

TED
Why are we just assuming that I
acted negligently?

STEPHEN SMITH
There's a dead body in the
Edgartown morgue that suggests it's
a possibility.

Ted shoots out of his chair, unable to take this "advice" anymore. He turns away from the group as he shouts at them.

TED
There were no witnesses! There's no
evidence. What proof could there
even be?

From behind Ted, Sorensen rubs his temple in frustration.

SORENSEN
Ted. Were your headlights working?

SARGENT SHRIVER
Were you wearing your safety belts?

Ted doesn't flinch at any of this. He doesn't react at all. The questions ping-pong around the room behind him.

STEPHEN SMITH
Was there enough tread on your tires?

MCNAMARA
Was your license in good standing?

A look of absolute dread immediately falls over Ted's face. If anyone could see him they'd stop right there.

JOHN CULVER
Did your tires leave skid marks?

JOHN TUNNEY
Could they determine how fast you were going?

Ted's face turns white.

TED
My license is expired.

SORENSEN
Your license is expired?!

Ted looks back over his shoulder at the group.

TED
Do you think that could be a problem? How is that negligent?

Half the room buries their faces in their hands.

MCNAMARA
Any time you get behind the wheel of an automobile you're in breach of the law. I'd say that's pretty negligent.

The room murmurs with distress at this revelation. In the corner, Burke Marshall removes his glasses and speaks with great authority.

BURKE MARSHALL
Who knows the department of motor vehicles inspector over there in Martha's Vineyard?

SARGENT SHRIVER
What's that got to do with anything?

BURKE MARSHALL
It's a fatal. You've got to have a D.M.V. inspector make a report in addition to the police. That's our key guy right there for any reckless driving charge.

Sargent Shriver and McNamara exchange impressed glances.

SORENSEN
And that's why this guy's the best lawyer in a room full of lawyers.

BURKE MARSHALL
Let's stay focused...what kind of
government connections do we have
in Martha's Vineyard?

STEPHEN SMITH
Joe Greelish runs the Hyannis D.M.V.
We can have him run it through his
connections in Edgartown for a price.

Ted pours himself a drink at the bar cart in the corner.

TED
Let's have Gifford talk to him.

McNamara throws his hands up.

MCNAMARA
Dammit, Ted. This can't be
connected to you!

Ted rubs his forehead as he looks up at the ceiling, reeling
from this latest beating.

STEPHEN SMITH
I know just the guy.

INT. HYANNIS DMV HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A FIGURE in a black suit holding a black leather messenger
bag walks past endless rows of desks manned by bored
government workers.

The figure approaches a much larger desk at the end of the
long passageway. A name plate sits on the edge: "Joseph
Greelish - Head of Hyannis Department of Motor Vehicles".

The frail JOE GREELISH, mid-40s, looks up and flinches at the
sight of the man in the black suit. The figure opens his bag.

STEPHEN SMITH (V.O.)
His name's James Steele.

JAMES STEELE, 42, looks up from under his hat, the florescent
light from above hitting only half his face. He pulls out a
manila envelope.

STEPHEN SMITH (V.O.)
He worked as an advance man for Jack
on the '60 campaign. Off the books.

Steele drops the envelope into Greelish's INBOX. He turns and
proceeds back down the corridor having never made eye contact.

STEPHEN SMITH (V.O.)
He liked it better that way.

Greelish opens the envelope and finds three items: A pair of Boston Red Sox tickets, a pair of hundred dollar bills, and a completed drivers license renewal form for Mr. Edward Kennedy.

Greelish slips the money into a drawer and locks it.

He creeps back down past the endless rows of desks, stopping at the first empty one. He looks over his shoulder before he wedges the completed form into the middle of a stack of papers inside the INBOX.

A series of quick cuts:

- The renewal papers get stamped with a loud THUNK. The form reads: "Edward M. Kennedy. License Valid from: 2/22/1968 thru 2/22/1978"
- The stamped form gets set on top of another INBOX.
- A new license with a Ted Kennedy photo gets spit out from a lamination machine.

INT. REGISTRY RECORDS ROOM - DAY

Greelish pushes open a door that reads "Registry Records Room". Behind a single front desk is a fastidious CLERK, 60s. Behind him, rows upon rows of alphabetized filing cabinets.

Greelish places the Red Sox tickets into the clerk's INBOX. The two men exchange a knowing look, and the clerk exits with his tickets.

A filing cabinet labeled "K" flies open. Greelish dives in and pulls out a document stamped "EXPIRED" in bold red. He tears it in half and stuffs it in his jacket pocket.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A thick cloud of smoke fills the room. It creates a haze, which hard beams of sunlight cut through. McNamara paces while everyone else sits.

MCNAMARA

Alright. We've sidestepped the immediate land mines. Now we can look back at the heart of the problem. The information you've already communicated to the police...in your own words...in plain English...paints the most damning picture of negligent behavior in this entire incident.

(beat)

You left the scene of an accident! And nary a word was heard from you for nine hours.

Ted squirms. Not willing to take this much longer.

MCNAMARA (CONT'D)
That's on the record. There's no
changing that.

Ted shoots up out of his chair. Heads straight for the door.

TED
I'm going to get some air.

No one in the room pays this much attention except McNamara.

MCNAMARA
Ted. We kind of need your help on
this.

Ted pauses with his hand pressed against the door.

TED
You guys were brought in by my
father to solve a problem. Solve it.

Ted storms out of the room. The door shuts with a resounding
THUD.

EXT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LATER

A red kite whips in the wind over a vast ocean. Below,
holding the spool, the Senator stands motionless. He stares
not up, but out, into the sea.

The kite shoots downward almost clipping the water. Ted
doesn't react, apathetic. A sudden gust of wind saves it,
pulling it back up safely skyward, despite the lack of
intervention from the man holding the string.

Back at the compound, the black sedan pulls into the circular
driveway. Stephen Smith storms away from Ted, passing in
front of the vehicle as he trudges up the steps to the house.
The rear doors pop open. Gargan and Markham step out.

GARGAN
Steve. What's going on?

Without looking back, Smith opens the front door of the house
and stomps inside. Markham chases after him.

STEPHEN SMITH
You talk to him. See if you can't
convince him to help himself.

Smith slams the door behind him. Gargan turns and sees Ted
flying his kite by the shore. From this distance, Ted looks
less like a man and more like a boy.

With the massive Kennedy compound looming in the background, Gargan marches over to Ted.

Gargan takes one last step forward and stands next to him. Ted glances out of the corner of his eye. Long silent pause.

GARGAN
You want to take the boat out?

TED
Maybe we'll go out tomorrow.

Beat.

TED (CONT'D)
I've been giving it a lot of
thought. You were right.
(beat)
We should have dropped the
spinnaker.

Gargan shakes his head and gives a half smile.

GARGAN
I've only ever had your best
interests at heart.

Gargan kicks a small pebble, and it skips into the water. He looks back at the compound and then to Ted.

GARGAN (CONT'D)
Seems like they want you back
inside.

TED
Those guys only have *their* best
interests at heart.

Gargan turns to Ted, staring him down now.

GARGAN
I can't let you do this to
yourself.

TED
Do what?

GARGAN
Self-destruct.

Ted swings the kite away from Gargan and takes a couple of steps with it.

GARGAN (CONT'D)
No one else is saying it...maybe
they just haven't seen it...
(MORE)

GARGAN (CONT'D)
But you've been on this path since
Bobby died.

TED
The expectations for your whole
life didn't change the moment he
hit the ground.

GARGAN
There were never any expectations
for me.

TED
Yes there were. There always were.
I've needed you...I need you to
protect me.

Gargan looks back down at the ground, drawing the courage to
say what he came to say.

TED (CONT'D)
You're the only brother I have
left, Joe.

GARGAN
This has to be the end of my
involvement. I wish "ole Joey"
could fix it, but I can't.

TED
Do you wish you'd never jumped in
the water?

GARGAN
Of course not.

Gargan waits for some sort of response.

GARGAN (CONT'D)
Do you regret saying you were
driving?

TED
Ask me in a week.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - DAY

All the king's men have crowded to one side of the room. On
the opposite side, DR. WATT, the Kennedy family physician,
sits in a folding chair looking overwhelmed.

David Burke tops off Sorensen's cup of coffee. Markham stands
in the corner nursing a hard drink. The rest of the men pour
over documents with fingers pressed firmly against their
foreheads.

MCNAMARA

What's the cut off for the national papers?

SORENSEN

On a Saturday? Five P.M. Why?

The door cracks open and Ted slinks into the war room. No one pays him much mind. He sits and tries to catch up to speed.

MCNAMARA

A story like this could dominate the headlines for a week. It would take nothing short of a man walking on the moon to keep this off the front page. Fortunately for us, Ted's big brother arranged for just that.

SORENSEN

If we can keep a tight lid on this for a couple more hours, then we'll be able to actually develop a decent P.R. strategy.

Ted slumps down deep into his chair.

STEPHEN SMITH

By the time the papers have room for Ted, they'll all be printing exactly what we want them to.

Burke Marshall stands and strides over behind Dr. Watt.

BURKE MARSHALL

That after a thorough examination, Ted's doctor here deduced he had suffered a concussion and was in a state of shock.

DR. WATT

But I haven't even examined the patient yet.

STEPHEN SMITH

That won't be necessary.

Sargent Shriver gives Sorensen a congratulatory slap on the back. He wipes the sweat from his brow.

SARGENT SHRIVER

There's nothing left to do but run out the clock, gentlemen. Come five P.M., we'll be back out in front of the problem.

The group all practically breathes a sigh of relief. All except for Ted.

TED

The *New York Times* already has the story.

MCNAMARA

WHAT?!

TED

On my way out of the station. I ran into a reporter. He seemed to know I'd been involved in an accident.

SORENSEN

Who was it, Ted? What was his name?

TED

James Reston.

MCNAMARA

RESTON!?

SORENSEN

He's their chief political correspondent and the executive editor!

STEPHEN SMITH

How could you not have mentioned that?!

Ted gives a childlike shrug of non-remorse.

TED

I was in a state of shock.

SORENSEN

AWWWW...BULLSHIT TED!

MCNAMARA

We need to get someone over to the Kopechne's A-S-A-P! Someone's gotta run interference with any press before one of her parents says something that totally sinks us.

The room heaves with tension.

TED

They're in New Jersey. Someone oughta get over there quick.

David Burke takes a loud sip from his coffee. The brain trust collectively shoots him a dirty look.

MCNAMARA

(to David Burke)

Why are you still here?

David Burke hops up and slips into his sport coat as he races out the door.

McNamara fires back at the rest of the group. Pointing his fingers in people's faces as he barks out orders.

MCNAMARA (CONT'D)

Markham. Get the Chief on the line.
Don't let that written statement get
released to the press. The *New York Times* may have this, but let's see
if we can't keep it an exclusive.

Markham doesn't hesitate. He hustles into the kitchen.

McNamara swings around to Ted.

MCNAMARA (CONT'D)

Ted. Get your press secretary to feed
a leak to the *Times*. Let them know
that you've been diagnosed with a
very serious concussion. That should
explain why you've been behaving like
a mental patient of late.

Ted hoists himself out of his chair. He rolls his eyes.

TED

Anything else, Bob?

MCNAMARA

Make it sympathetic. Tell 'em he's
got you on a prescription for all
the pain.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - KITCHEN - DAY

Markham peeks into the war room. McNamara and the others pump the doctor for more information on Ted's "condition". Markham spins away from the door as the chief answers.

CHIEF ARENA (V.O.)

"On July 18, 1969, at approximate --"
Hang on I need to take this. Hello?

MARKHAM

Chief. Thank God, I reached you.
Could I ask you to hold back that
statement a little longer?

INT. EDGARTOWN POLICE STATION - CORRIDOR - DAY

Chief Arena stands in the hallway, holding a typewritten copy of Ted's statement. A handful of reporters crowd in front and SHOUT as they scribble in their notebooks as fast as possible.

CHIEF ARENA
 You're going to have to speak up
 son, I've got a hallway full of
 reporters here.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Ted grits his teeth and holds the phone to his ear. He
 clinches his other hand into a tight fist.

TED
 Now remember, Dick, this is an
 exclusive! You don't need to overdo
 it. We're just trying to make sure
 this doesn't spin out of control
 into something about manslaughter...

INT. SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Dick Drayne clutches the handset of a multi-line telephone. A
 JANITOR dusts a nearby table. Ted's voice booms out of the
 receiver audibly throughout the room.

TED (V.O.)
 ...or an *AFFAIR*, God forbid!

Dick Drayne leaps up and shoos the janitor out the door.

DICK DRAYNE
 You don't need to say another word!

TED (V.O.)
 And throw in something about me
 being on sedatives too. Make it
 sound traumatic.

Ted hangs up. "Line 1" goes dark as "Line 2" starts to light
 up. Dick Drayne presses it.

RESTON (V.O.)
 This is James Reston of *The New
 York Times*.

DICK DRAYNE
 James. I was just about to call
 you. It's a terrible thing about
 this accident. The Senator has
 suffered a serious concussion.
 (beat)
 His physician has him on sedatives
 just so he can manage the pain.

"Line 3" and "Line 4" fire on. Suddenly, the whole
 switchboard lights up like a Christmas tree.

Drayne gets a lump in his throat.

RESTON (V.O.)
(incredulous)
Sedatives? With a concussion?

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ted strolls into the war room with his head held high. The entire brain trust hang their heads in defeat. Ted doesn't take any notice.

TED
It's done.

McNamara looks up with a scowl on his face.

MCNAMARA
Your friend the police chief just
sank this entire ship.

TED
What?

MCNAMARA
He read your written statement to
the press. Three times apparently.
The story will be hitting the wire
any minute. It's going to be on the
front page of every paper from
Mizzou to Missoula.

TED
Look. We're not sunk here. That
statement's pretty air tight.

MCNAMARA
Air tight, huh?

McNamara pulls out a copy of the written statement and
references it as he speaks.

MCNAMARA (CONT'D)
You contradict yourself in the
first two sentences!

SORENSEN
Main Road is paved, Ted! Dike Road
is not. It doesn't take an expert
cartographer to tell the difference.

MCNAMARA
We need to go through this thing
line by line.

TED
You're all overreacting. I told
you, Dick is running with the
concussion story. That'll explain
any inconsistencies.

KNOCK. KNOCK. Ann Gargan pokes her head in, looks at Ted.

ANN
Dick Drayne on the phone for you.

Ted darts over to a multi-line phone. He hits a button and
puts the call on speaker.

TED
Dick. Did the sedative stuff play?

DRAYNE (V.O.)
Did any of you guys actually
consult a physician?

TED
(defensive)
Yeah. We did!

DRAYNE (V.O.)
Well, according to Reston, you
don't give sedatives to a patient
who's had a concussion! It could
kill them!

Ted grimaces, Drayne's words deliver a final crushing blow.
McNamara tosses his binder aside.

MCNAMARA
Jesus. The Bay of Pigs was a better
run operation.

EXT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - DUSK

The windows of the war room overlook a peaceful sunset across
the harbor. The men inside hardly move. The flurry of
activity now slowed to a vanquished standstill.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - DINING ROOM - MORNING

Ted sets the newspaper on the table in front of him.

The date reads: "SUNDAY, JULY 20TH, 1969".

Ted leans back into his chair. He flaps the sides of his *New
York Times* and puts his feet up on the table.

Ted scowls with boiling frustration as he flips another page.

The front page headlines read:

- "ASTRONAUTS SWING INTO MOON ORBIT IN PREPARATION FOR
TODAY'S LANDING"
- "WOMAN PASSENGER KILLED, KENNEDY ESCAPES IN CRASH"

EXT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Ann Gargan steps out on to the front porch holding a tray of coffee and pastries. Receding down the porch, the entire brain trust sits reading the same *New York Times*. The headline "WOMAN PASSENGER KILLED" creates a recursive optical effect, all lined in a row along the veranda.

Sorensen peeks out from behind his paper and glances at Ann. He then turns his gaze towards the front gate of the compound.

EXT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - GATE - DAY

A throng of REPORTERS mill around the wrought iron gate. A photographer with a large telephoto lens pushes his way to the front and sets up a tripod.

EXT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - PORCH - DAY

The brain trust sits, unmoved, still reading the paper. McNamara steps out of the front door. He slumps back into his chair and shakes his newspaper.

MCNAMARA

NBC and CBS are dropping the moon
landing puff piece with Ted.

Sorensen looks over his paper to McNamara.

SORENSEN

So much for controlling the press.

MCNAMARA

We need to rebalance this equation.

STEPHEN SMITH

I have an idea.

INT. EDGARTOWN POLICE STATION - DAY

Chief Arena passes through a congregation of lively reporters hovering in front of his secretary's desk outside his office.

CHIEF ARENA

As soon as I have more information,
I'll give it to you.

Arena enters his office, shutting the door behind him. He turns to see James Steele holding his black leather messenger bag, his hat casts a dark shadow over his face.

CHIEF ARENA (CONT'D)

Who are you?

James Steele takes off his hat, revealing a clean cut, handsome man with a cold, intellectual disposition. He extends a friendly hand to the Chief.

JAMES STEELE

James Steele, special prosecutor assigned to the Ted Kennedy case. The D.A.'s office felt that they needed someone with a little more objectivity.

The Chief breathes a sigh of relief and shakes his hand.

CHIEF ARENA

Thank God. We can use all the help here we can get.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Markham rolls a TV cart in front of the tightly huddled brain trust. He plugs it in and clicks through the channels.

Markham lands on ABC where archival footage shows newscaster Frank Reynolds reporting on the historic moon landing intercut with Ted's interview with the ABC Reporter.

ABC REPORTER

The following piece includes an interview with Senator Edward Kennedy, filmed on Friday morning.

SORENSEN

Turn it up, Paul.

Markham adjusts the volume.

ABC REPORTER

It is strictly on the subject of the moon landing.

The rest of the brain trust shuffle in their seats. McNamara rolls up his sleeves.

ABC REPORTER (CONT'D)

It has nothing to do with the incident at Martha's Vineyard.

Patriotic music plays, transitioning to Ted's interview. He looks handsome, confident, and even presidential.

SORENSEN

Anyone tuning in now would think
everything is business as usual
with the Kennedys.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - JOSEPH KENNEDY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joseph Kennedy and Ann Gargan's faces are lit by nothing but the glow of the TV screen. Joseph Sr. sits in his wheelchair, dressed in a robe with a quilt draped across his lap. Ann sits next to him sipping a cup of hot tea.

TED (V.O.)

I think my brother set the course
for the whole nation in a way that
we can never abandon.

Joseph Kennedy stares blankly at the screen.

Patriotic music plays over archival footage of JFK career highlights.

A heretofore unseen smile inches across Joseph Kennedy's face. He beams with pride and joy as the music swells.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - DEN - CONTINUOUS

The rest of the immediate Kennedy family packs around the TV. A dozen or more children, including Bobby's eight, spread out across floor. At the center, sitting on the floor with them, Ted holds his son TEDDY JR., 8, in his lap.

On the couch behind them, all the adults squeeze in, including Ted's mother ROSE KENNEDY, 78, Bobby's widow ETHEL, 41, EUNICE, 48, and JEAN, 41.

Gargan stands up behind the couch holding a drink.

FRANK REYNOLDS (V.O.)

We are all about to witness the
fulfillment of that promise that
President Kennedy made...

Ted looks down at his son. Teddy Jr. absorbs this information with an eager smile. Ted turns back to the TV, glum.

JOHN F KENNEDY (V.O.)

We choose to go to the moon in this
decade and do the other things, not
because they are easy, but because
they are hard.

Teddy Jr. turns to his father with eyes full of wonder.

TEDDY JR.
Uncle Jack could do anything, huh,
Dad?

Ted can't breathe.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The brain trust all lean in towards the TV, transfixed.

ABC NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
ABC News presents: "The Flight of
Apollo 11". Beginning 30 hours of
continuous coverage of the lunar
landing.

The war room exchanges brazen looks of satisfaction.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - JOSEPH KENNEDY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ann Gargan reaches over and grabs Joseph Kennedy's hand. She
squeezes it, knowing how proud her uncle is.

MCCANDLESS (V.O.)
Okay. Neil, we can see you coming
down the ladder now.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - DEN - CONTINUOUS

Ted stares blankly at the TV screen while the rest of his
family watches with excitement.

NEIL ARMSTRONG (V.O.)
Okay. I just checked getting back
up to that first step, Buzz...

INT. KOPECHNE HOME - CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH KOPECHNE, 56, and his wife GWEN KOPECHNE, 51, sit in
matching reclining chairs facing the TV. Mary Jo's framed
senior portrait sits on top of a small table between them.

WALTER CRONKITE (V.O.)
Boy. Look at those pictures. Whoa.

Mr. and Mrs. Kopechne peer out. Unmoved.

David Burke strolls in from the kitchen holding a hot tea. He
hands it to Mrs. Kopechne who accepts it graciously, but with
a vacant look.

On the TV screen, a chyron "ARMSTRONG ON MOON" is superimposed
on top of the moon landing footage.

The neighborhood erupts into loud, joyous CHEERS. Sounds of elation from the world outside makes the Kopechne's home feel that much more dour.

NEIL ARMSTRONG (V.O.)

Okay. I'm going to step off the LM now.

KNOCKS at the door.

Mrs. Kopechne starts to stand, but David Burke puts a comforting hand on her shoulder.

DAVID BURKE

Don't worry. I'll get it.

He treads over and answers the door. A NEIGHBOR stands holding a casserole.

NEIGHBOR

Oh. Hello? Are Gwen and Joe home? I heard about their loss --

Burke grabs the casserole out of her hands.

DAVID BURKE

The Kopechne's thank you for your kindness.

NEIGHBOR

If I could, I'd love to express my condolences in person --

David Burke shuts the door.

INT. EDGARTOWN POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Chief Arena and James Steele watch a TV in the station's breakroom. The Chief is particularly transfixed.

ARMSTRONG (V.O.)

That's one small step for man...one giant leap for mankind.

CHIEF ARENA

Well, I'll be damned. I never thought I'd see the day.

JAMES STEELE

I'm going to grab another beer. You want one?

Arena doesn't look up.

CHIEF ARENA

Sure.

Steele walks down the corridor, past a refrigerator and into another room. He picks up a phone.

INT. DINIS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A telephone on a living room side table rings loudly over the sounds of the moon landing. A pastel portrait of JFK hangs on the wall, alongside pictures of FDR, and Churchill, all inside old, ornate picture frames. The wrinkled hand of MRS. DINIS, 80s, reaches over and picks it up.

MRS. DINIS

Hello?

JAMES STEELE (V.O.)

Hello. I'd like to speak to District Attorney Edmund Dinis, please.

MRS. DINIS

My son can't come to the phone --

DISTRICT ATTORNEY EDMUND DINIS, 44, a handsome Latino firebrand, yanks the phone away from his mother.

EDMUND DINIS

This is Dinis. Who is this?

INTERCUT

JAMES STEELE

This is Steele. I'm down here in Edgartown with Chief Arena. He's been relying pretty heavily on my expertise with how to proceed.

EDMUND DINIS

That's good. He could use some expertise.

JAMES STEELE

I think the chief would feel more comfortable if I was assigned to the case as special prosecutor. Says he'd prefer someone more objective to --

EDMUND DINIS

Fine by me.

JAMES STEELE

Oh? Great. I'm glad you agree --

EDMUND DINIS

As far as I understand it...we don't really have the evidence to build a case.

(MORE)

EDMUND DINIS (CONT'D)
We don't have an autopsy report.
The girl's already been embalmed.
He's got an impeccable driving
record. And for God sakes the guy
had a concussion.

JAMES STEELE
You're very wise, sir.

EDMUND DINIS
Now, look. If you really are as
friendly with the Kennedys as you
say...pass along a message for me.

JAMES STEELE
What's that?

EDMUND DINIS
From me, *through you*, to Ted...and
no one else...I won't touch this
case unless Ted wants me to.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - DINING ROOM - DAY

Ted sets the newspaper on the table in front of him.

The date reads: "MONDAY, JULY 21ST, 1969".

Ted leans back into his chair. He flaps the sides of his *New York Times* and puts his feet up on the table.

Ted smiles broadly as he flips another page of his paper.

The front page headlines read:

- "MEN WALK ON MOON / ASTRONAUTS LAND ON PLAIN"

The entire cover is filled with moon landing stories.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - GARGAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ted studies himself in front of a full length mirror. He wears a black suit and makes one last adjustment to his neck tie. He cinches it close to a large neck brace.

Ted pulls the brace above his collar to make it more prominent.

In the background, Gargan sits on the bed reading from *The Boston Globe* (with headlines also completely dominated by the moon landing). He looks over his paper towards Ted.

GARGAN
What're you doing over there?

TED
What does it look like I'm doing?

GARGAN
Well whatever it is, it looks
ridiculous.

Ted offers a huge grin.

TED
I'm winning back the sympathies of
my constituents.

Gargan playfully grabs at the neck brace, but Ted equally
playfully slaps his hand away.

GARGAN
Take that thing off.

TED
Why? I wanna show the boys
downstairs. I think it's going to
really play.

GARGAN
(skeptical)
They're the brightest minds in
Washington --

Gargan snatches at the brace again, but Ted hops out of reach.

TED
Not for them! It's just gotta play
for the assholes shoving cameras in
my face.

GARGAN
It looks fake.

TED
It's as real as can be. It's a real
neck brace.

Gargan hooks onto the neck brace with one hand. Ted fights
back with an even tighter grip. The two men struggle in a tug
of war that quickly escalates beyond the playful.

GARGAN
Well, it looks fake on you!

TED
That's just because you know me!

Gargan overpowers Ted, and they both drop to the ground. No
longer playing, Gargan digs his fingers under the collar.
Tries to rip it off Ted's throat. Ted holds on for dear life.

GARGAN
Take it off, now!

TED
(strained)
They're gonna write about how I'm a
two time survivor. People will
think I'm one of the victims.

GARGAN
You're not a fucking victim!

Gargan rips the neck brace away from Ted and throws it on the ground. Not taking the assault lightly anymore, Ted pushes Gargan off of him.

They stand up. Catch their breath. Barely making eye contact.

Ted stumbles over and picks the neck brace up off the floor. He shoots a glare over his shoulder.

TED
I'm going to ask Dad what he thinks.

Ted stomps out of the room. Gargan tucks his shirt back in and tries to regain his composure.

TED (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What do you all think of me wearing
this to the funeral? We might be able
to gain some sympathy.

BRAIN TRUST (O.S.)
It looks phony. / You look like a
putz! / Jack would never want to be
photographed in his crutches! / Now
it looks like you have three chins,
you fat S.O.B.!

Alarmed, Gargan creeps down the hallway towards the voices.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - JOSEPH KENNEDY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gargan arrives at the open doorway to find the entire brain trust in a semicircle around Joseph Kennedy in bed. Ted stands in front, caught off guard by their verbal attack.

MCNAMARA
You're going to seem weak in front
of the Russians!

Gargan furrows his brow. His jaw hangs loose, stunned.

TED
AH, TO HELL WITH YOU GUYS! IT'S MY
LIFE! I'M DOING IT!

Ted clips Gargan's shoulder as he walks out.

INT. TOWN CAR - DAY

A shadow engulfs Ted, who rides in the backseat of a luxurious white town car. His wife, JOAN KENNEDY, 32, sits as far away as possible.

Ted's collar is undone. His tie is loose. He's wearing the damn neck brace.

He reads from his *New York Times*.

The date reads: "TUESDAY, JULY 22ND, 1969".

The cover is filled with moon landing related stories. There is no mention of Kennedy or Chappaquiddick.

Ted sets down his paper and turns to his wife. She looks elegant, dressed in a white, mod peacoat but more prominently wearing a seething scowl.

TED

Thanks for doing this, Joany.

JOAN

Go fuck yourself, Teddy.

INT. ST. VINCENT'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Organ music quietly echoes through the large sanctuary. Gwen and Joseph Kopechne tend to a somber line of people offering their condolences. David Burke ushers the queue along.

The Boiler Room Girls squeeze into the cramped pews, filled with MOURNERS and WELL WISHERS paying their respects.

David Burke walks the last person in line to their seat, leaving the Kopechnes alone. Gargan then steps up to the grieving couple, hat in hand.

GARGAN

Mr. and Mrs. Kopechne. I'm Joe Gargan.

The Kopechnes react puzzled.

GARGAN (CONT'D)

You may not know me. I was a good friend of your daughter.

MR. KOPECHNE

I'm glad. We're grateful to see how many lives she touched.

GARGAN

I don't know how to say what I want to say...I feel for you both very deeply. I lost my family...my parents...when I was young. I can only imagine how much worse this is.

(beat)

I need to tell you...I needed to tell you both...I did everything I could for her.

Gwen Kopechne offers little more than a glossy, hazed look. Joseph Kopechne puts a concluding hand on Gargan's shoulder.

MR. KOPECHNE

She appreciated all her friends very much. She was a very grateful girl.

GARGAN

I tried to save her, Mr. Kopechne. I did everything I could.

MR. KOPECHNE

(not paying attention)

What did you say your name was again?

The front doors of the church swing open. Ted enters hand in hand with Joan. The tumult of the reporters behind them reverberates throughout the holy place.

Mrs. Kopechne tugs on her husband's jacket.

MRS. KOPECHNE

Dear, the Senator has arrived.

MR. KOPECHNE

Excuse us, son.

Mary Jo's parents push past Gargan and beeline towards Ted.

MR. KOPECHNE (CONT'D)

Senator. Thank you so much. Thank you for trying to save our daughter.

TED

I'm so sorry for your loss.

Mrs. Kopechne shakes Ted's hand with great reverence. Gargan stands yards away but still overhears, dismayed.

MRS. KOPECHNE

Your family meant so much to her.

Ted hugs the tearful Mrs. Kopechne. This stings Gargan.

TED

Sorry for your loss. I can't imagine.

MRS. KOPECHNE

If anyone understands tragedy, it's
you Senator.

MR. KOPECHNE

We both deeply appreciate that
you're here. We know how much you
must have sacrificed.

TED

Thank you. Again, I'm sorry for
your loss.

Ted notices Gargan standing in earshot, arms crossed.

Ted turns back and clasps both of the Kopechnes' hands in one
final show of support. He then grabs Joan and they make a
break towards the pews, blowing past Gargan.

INT. ST. VINCENT'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH - LATER

Behind the altar, a PRIEST holds up the communion host. In
front, Mary Jo's body rests in an open casket wearing a blue
peignoir.

Ted squirms in his second row seat. His eyes locked on the
full view of Mary Jo, her body unsettling yet peaceful.

PRIEST

This is the Lamb of God, who takes
away the sins of the world.

Ted turns his neck as far he can to look at the congregation
behind him. Everyone chokes back their emotions.

The Boiler Room Girls can't mask their sadness any longer and
start to sob. But not Esther. She's not crying. She holds a
cold gaze on the casket.

Ted turns back to Mary Jo. He and Esther stay silent as --

ALL

Lord, I am not worthy to receive
you, but only say the word and I
shall be healed.

Ted remains silent. Fixed on Mary Jo.

A CANTOR plays the piano. The dulcet tones of her voice fill
the church with "Ave Maria".

The front and second rows stand up to receive communion. Ted
remains seated, lost in a trance. Joan grows impatient,
forcing Ted to snap back. He stands and follows the crowd.

Behind Ted, Gargan wipes tears from his eyes as they approach the priest handing out the host.

Ted steps up to receive communion.

PRIEST
The body of Christ.

TED
Amen.

The priest puts the wafer in the Senator's mouth. Ted steps aside and does the sign of the cross as he kneels in front of Mary Jo's casket.

He stays kneeled. Looking up at the altar. At Mary Jo. Her hands clasped around a crystal rosary.

PRIEST
(to Gargan)
The body of Christ.

The SOUND NEARLY DROPS OUT. Ted's fixation on Mary Jo intensifies as the priest's voice becomes muffled --

Ted remains motionless. He looks completely blank as he studies Mary Jo's face. The corner of her lips has a crack in her makeup. The skin underneath is a deathly purple.

ESTHER (O.S.)
(nearly inaudible)
Ted. Ted. Ted...

EXT. ST. VINCENT'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH - COURTYARD - LATER

Ted walks out a side exit of the church into a lush courtyard, reporters behind the church gates clamor to berate him. The Kopechnes stand to the side, surrounded by well-wishers who are again being handled by David Burke.

ESTHER (O.S.)
(muffled)
Ted.

The SOUND COMES BACK INTO FOCUS as Ted glances back to see Esther sidling up next to him.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
You were up there a long time.

TED
I was just lost in my thoughts.

Ted turns away, but Esther steps back up next to him.

ESTHER
How's your wife?

TED
She's okay.

ESTHER
No, really. I'm curious.

TED
Well, tragedy has a way of defining people.

ESTHER
How's that?

TED
It can split them in two. On the one hand, you got someone like Jackie...she goes out and practically becomes an ambassador...keeping the family legacy handed down to her alive. And on the other hand, a tragedy like this cripples some people. Reduces them until they curl up in a ball, afraid or incapable of dealing with their feelings.

(beat)
Joany's more the latter.

ESTHER
And which one are you, Senator?

TED
I think I've run out of feelings at this point.

ESTHER
Well...I believe there's a third kind of person. The kind of person who defines their own legacy in the face of tragedy.

TED
My chance to define my own legacy died with Mary Jo.

ESTHER
Ted. Look at Mr. and Mrs. Kopechne.

Ted looks over at the Kopechnes. Mrs. Kopechne dabs a few tears from behind her dark sunglasses.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
They don't blame you. Why should America?

Ted lets this sink in.

EXT. HYANNIS AIRPORT - DAY

Ted climbs down the stairs of his private jet inside a small hanger. Reporters flood the entrance, ready to pounce with questions.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A *New York Times* newspaper comes flopping down in the center of the coffee table.

The date reads: "WEDNESDAY, JULY 23RD, 1969".

The front page headlines read:

- "ASTRONAUTS COASTING HOMEWARD"
- "3 KENNEDYS ATTEND FUNERAL FOR DROWNED SECRETARY"

EXT. HYANNIS AIRPORT - DAY

Ted pushes through a sea of microphones and cameras. Reporters jockey for position as they lob questions at him.

REPORTERS

What was this party? / Was there alcohol? / How many girls were there? / What about these rumors that Ms. Kopechne was pregnant? / Do you think there really is a Kennedy curse?

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sorensen throws another paper on top of the other. The brain trust all huddle around the coffee table.

SORENSEN

(reading)

"Kennedy walked around with an open collar, showing off a *previously* unseen neck brace..."

EXT. HYANNIS AIRPORT - DAY

Ted scowls as he stomps the last few steps to his car. The reporters questions starting to get to him.

A particularly plucky female reporter, LIZ TROTTA, 32, breaks to the front of the pack.

LIZ TROTTA
What effect do you think this will
have on your political career?

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The stack of papers sits three high. Suddenly, another lands
on top with a THUD.

SORENSEN
(reading)
"For a man wearing a neck brace,
Kennedy seemed to have no trouble
craning around to see who was
behind him at the funeral..."

EXT. HYANNIS AIRPORT - DAY

Ted steps into the back seat of his car. He stops midway with
his face inches from Liz Trotta's face. He fumes.

TED
I'll make a statement at the
appropriate time!

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Another paper plops down on the growing stack in front of
Ted, who stares daggers back up at Sorensen.

SORENSEN
That's from the *Boston Globe*. Did you
wanna hear from the *New York Times*?

TED
That's enough. I get it.

Ted stands up and tamps his rage down to a simmer.

TED (CONT'D)
The neck brace was a mistake. I see
that now.
(beat)
But this country has a deep
connection to the Kennedy name. And
that's a valuable fucking thing.
You can't let that just go to
waste. We need to remind the
American people what this family
has been through and how much more
we have left to achieve.

Gargan stands in the corner clutching a twisted newspaper. He
furrows his brow with scorn.

MCNAMARA

How do you plan on doing that,
Teddy?

TED

A nationally televised statement.
All three networks. Prime time.

SARGENT SHRIVER

Is that all? Why not have Ted fill
in for Carson on *The Tonight Show*?

SORENSEN

It's actually not a bad idea. The
networks will donate the time if it's
part of their news coverage. We can
frame the national conversation the
way we want it framed.

SARGENT SHRIVER

And how do we do that? He's got to
look sympathetic.

STEPHEN SMITH

It'd be easier to get him to fill
in for Carson...

TED

We're going to tell the truth. Or
at least our version of it.

(beat)

It ends with an appeal. To the
voters. The people who elected me.
We're going to remind them that
this family perseveres.

Ted paces back and forth like a general.

TED (CONT'D)

We don't back down from a fight. We
don't get backed into a corner. We
have a true compass, and we follow
it.

The men of the brain trust start to nod, impressed by Ted's
command. Gargan twists the newspaper tighter.

TED (CONT'D)

I followed mine the best I could
that night. And me and Paul and
Joey did everything we could to
save that girl and prove there
wasn't a curse hanging over all the
Kennedys.

Sargent Shriver and Stephen Smith get up on their feet,
roused. McNamara pats Ted on the back.

MCNAMARA

We've got a winner there. Sorensen can dress that speech up, and you come out of this thing unscathed. Hell, he might even be able to make you *more* electable.

Gargan seethes. He pushes past Smith and Shriver. He throws the newspaper onto the top of the stack at the center of the room. It unfurls revealing the headlines:

- "TEDDY ESCAPES, BLONDE DROWNS"
- "JERSEY GIRL CRASH VICTIM"

The front of the paper is dominated by a full page photo of Mary Jo, which stares back up at Ted.

GARGAN

Should we really have Ted play the victim?

(beat)

Should we really have him pretend to be a fallen hero? When we all know damn well how this mess got started in the first place.

SORENSEN

This strategy is the only thing we've come up with that has a chance of saving Ted. We need to all get behind it.

GARGAN

These theatrics aren't going to hold up in a court of law.

MCNAMARA

He's right. We need to make sure this case is closed before talking to the press.

Gargan stares at McNamara sideways, confused at this sudden turn of the conversation.

STEPHEN SMITH

The hearing's not til Monday.

SORENSEN

We need that moved up A-S-A-P. We'll never survive the weekend.

STEPHEN SMITH

I'll contact Steele and see to it.

Gargan can't keep listening to this. He marches towards the door, glaring at Ted as he passes in front of him.

MCNAMARA
Make sure we've got a solid plea
deal in place first.

Gargan shuts the door behind him.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Gargan starts up the staircase. The door to the war room
CREAKS as it opens. Ted stands there.

TED
Joey. Wait.

Gargan turns back around to Ted, who pulls the door closed.

TED (CONT'D)
Joey. I meant it before. I need you
with me on this.

Gargan looks down at Ted.

GARGAN
I meant what I said before too. I
can't go any further. I'm packing my
bags. I'll be gone tomorrow.

TED
Joey. This is your family too.
Start acting like it.

Ted throws the door open behind him as he re-enters the war
room. He SLAMS it shut.

EXT. EDGARTOWN WOODS - NIGHT

The bright lights of Edgartown shimmer behind the thick trees.

A silhouette leans against a lone stump as two men approach.
They step into the moonlight revealing James Steele and Chief
Arena.

STEELE
It's done. The hearing's been moved
to Friday morning.

The man leaning against the stump stands upright into the
light -- Paul Markham.

MARKHAM
Good. The Senator will be there. He
is prepared to plead guilty to
leaving the scene.

STEELE

I'll then recommend he get the minimum sentence.

CHIEF ARENA

And then that sentence will be immediately suspended.

MARKHAM

Thank you, Chief. The Kennedy family greatly appreciates your assistance.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - TED'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ted stares out the window holding a glass with ice cubes. He grinds a cube between his teeth.

OUTSIDE

A large picket sign reads: "CAN YOU BUY JUSTICE?"

At the gates of the Kennedy compound, reporters have been joined by a group PROTESTERS. They each wave handmade signs:

- "SWIM! DON'T RUN! '72"
- "TALK TO THE PRESS TED"
- "WHAT REALLY HAPPENED ON THE ISLAND?"

AT THE WINDOW

Ted chomps through a final piece of ice. He storms out of the room and sets the empty glass on top of a newspaper.

The date reads: "THURSDAY, JULY 24TH, 1969".

The front page headlines read:

- "APOLLO 11 TO SPLASH DOWN TODAY"
- "PRESIDENT IS OFF TO WELCOME CREW"

IN THE HALLWAY

Ted marches past his father's bedroom. He peers inside through the open doorway as he passes.

The entire brain trust stands in a semicircle around Joseph Kennedy again. Their eyes track Ted as he exits view.

Ted hustles down the stairs now with a big kid grin.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - KITCHEN - DAY

The Kennedy children sit at the table with their breakfast.

Ted saunters into the kitchen and peeks inside the fridge. He lifts his head up from behind the door and looks back at the children with an even bigger smile.

TED
How'd you kids like to help out
your Uncle Ted here with a big
problem I'm having?

KIDS
Yeah! / Sure, Uncle Teddy!

TED
Great!

He shuts the door revealing he's holding a carton of eggs.

TED (CONT'D)
There's some folks outside with
signs saying some not so nice
things about me.

The kids nod with understanding.

TED (CONT'D)
Would you kids mind letting 'em
know how us Kennedys feel about
that?!

KIDS
YEAH!

TED
Well okay, then!

Ted hands an egg to each of the many children. He beams with particular pride when he hands Teddy Jr. his egg. He tousles his son's hair as he sends him on his way.

He hands the last egg to a spry, precocious girl, KERRY KENNEDY, 9. She curtsies as she exits, revealing the cutest and smallest of all the children yet.

CHRISTOPHER KENNEDY, 6, stands in overalls with rosy cheeks and big saucer eyes looking up at Ted.

CHRISTOPHER
Can I have an egg, Uncle Ted?

TED
Oh...I'm all out, son.

Christopher's face droops. He knows how to lay it on thick.

TED (CONT'D)
Let me see what else we can find.

Ted opens the fridge back up and rummages around a bit.

TED (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Here we go!

Ted comes back out from behind the fridge door holding a watermelon. Christopher holds both hands out. Ted gives it to Christopher, and the boy nearly topples over.

CHRISTOPHER
Thanks, Uncle Teddy!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HYANNIS PORT - KENNEDY COMPOUND GATE - DAY

An egg SMASHES against one of the protester's face. The scene quickly becomes chaotic; eggs seem to come from all directions. Yolk splatters across their clothes and faces, as the protesters try to use their signs for cover.

The assault seems to subside for a moment and one of the protesters holds down his sign to survey the damage --

SPLAT.

A watermelon explodes on top of the protester's head. Christopher smiles as broadly as his rosy cheeks allow.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - TED'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ted slaps his knee, leaning against the window. He laughs hysterically at the mess he's made. Ted holds a football with his one hand and wipes away tears with the other.

SQUEAK. SQUEAK.

He turns around to see Joseph Kennedy being pushed inside the bedroom by Ann Gargan. The father looks up at his son with a furious intensity. Ted's smile disappears instantly. He stands at attention.

TED
Dad.

ANN
Your father wanted to speak with you.

Ted looks at his dad, waiting for him to speak. Joe remains silent. The two men stare at each other so long it's almost unbearable.

TED
Dad. I was just trying to blow off
a little steam --

Joseph Kennedy GRUNTS. It sounds like he's attempting to say a word, but it's difficult to decipher.

TED (CONT'D)
What is it dad?

Joseph Kennedy HUFFS. Ted walks towards him, leans forward.

SLAP.

With all the force in his body, Joseph Kennedy slaps his son. Ted looks at him stunned and ashamed. A handprint still stings across his face.

Ted looks back at Ann. With as much dignity as he can muster --

TED (CONT'D)
Ann, I need you to leave us. It is very rare these days that I'm alone with my father, and the things I need to say to him I need to say alone.

Ann leaves, gently closing the door behind her.

Silence.

Ted and his dad stare at each other for a long beat. An uncomfortably long beat.

TED (CONT'D)
Dad, did you know that I never wanted to be President?
(beat)
Does that even matter to you?

Ted sets the football down. Joseph Kennedy doesn't react.

TED (CONT'D)
I want to make you proud. It's all I've ever wanted. But you've never been interested in me. Not until now.
(beat)
And this. *This* is the moment you finally show you care?

Ted gestures towards the window. Joseph Kennedy doesn't react.

TED (CONT'D)
I've spent my whole life chasing your dreams for you. Just like Joe Jr. Just like Jack. Just like Bobby. And look what happened to them.

With each name Ted steps closer and closer to his father.

He stands over him. Joseph Kennedy looks up at his son. His frail blue eyes draw Ted in closer. Ted kneels to eye level.

TED (CONT'D)

They were great men. But they weren't great because of who you were. They were great because of who they were.

(beat)

I want to be a great man. I just don't know who I am.

A tear rolls down Ted's face. His father puts a hand on his son's shoulders. He leans towards him.

JOSEPH KENNEDY

...You'll...

Ted leans closer. His head resting against his father's, completely vulnerable.

JOSEPH KENNEDY (CONT'D)

...You'll never...be...great...

Ted pulls his father into a full embrace. He weeps into his shoulder. Joseph Kennedy stares ahead not betraying any emotion.

Ted holds his father tighter.

He stands up. He exhales all the air from his lungs. Ted wipes his eyes and adjusts his shirt. Without looking back at his father, he walks out the door. Joseph Kennedy sits alone.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - GARGAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Gargan yanks clothes out of a drawer and stuffs them into one of his open suitcases. Ted bursts into the room.

TED

Joey. I need you.

Gargan SNAPS a suitcase shut. He moves on to the next one.

GARGAN

If it's about that statement, Ted, I want nothing to do with it.

TED

It's the opposite.

Gargan turns away from his luggage and looks Ted in the eye.

TED (CONT'D)

I need you to write me a resignation.

Gargan reacts stunned. He chokes out his next words.

GARGAN

I'll take care of it.

TED
Thank you. This'll be the last time.

Ted offers a handshake. Gargan accepts, sealing the promise.

GARGAN
I'm proud of you.

Ted breaks away. He walks back over to the open door.

TED
Thanks. Just don't tell anyone else
how proud you are.

Ted slams the door behind him.

INT. TOWN CAR - DAY

A shadow engulfs Ted, who sits in the backseat, as reporters swarm around him.

A *New York Times* newspaper rests on the seat next to him.

The date reads: "FRIDAY, JULY 25TH, 1969".

The headlines read:

- "ASTRONAUTS BACK FROM MOON; BEGIN 18 DAYS IN QUARANTINE"
- "KENNEDY TO ENTER COURT PLEA TODAY"

INT. EDGARTOWN DISTRICT COURT - DAY

Ted sits in a nearly empty courtroom. JUDGE BOYLE eyes him over. He looks from the defense where Ted sits with a LEGAL TEAM of about eight men, over to the prosecution which is just James Steele. Chief Arena stands on the ready.

JUDGE BOYLE
How does the defendant plead?

TED
Guilty.

STEELE
The prosecution recommends the
minimum sentence be offered.

JUDGE BOYLE
Proceed.

KENNEDY LAWYER
We ask that any sentence that the
court imposes be suspended.

STEELE

The ends of justice would best be served were the defendant given a suspended sentence.

JUDGE BOYLE

The sentence is suspended.

Judge Boyle SLAMS his gavel down.

EXT. EDGARTOWN DISTRICT COURT - DAY

Ted stands at a podium with a microphone on the court steps. A throng of reporters hurl questions, while a crowd of locals contribute a cacophonous mix of CHEERS and BOOS.

TED

I have made my plea. I have requested time on the networks tonight to speak to the people of Massachusetts and the nation. Your questions will all be answered then...

EXT. HYANNIS PORT - KENNEDY COMPOUND GATE - DUSK

The black sedan passes through the wrought iron gate where news vans park along the driveway. Cables run all the way up the steps and through the doors of the sprawling compound.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ted follows the path of the cables with his eyes. They lead past the staircase to a closed set of double doors. Ted swings them both open.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - STUDY - CONTINUOUS

A flurry of activity. Staffers and NEWS CREW hustle about the Kennedy family study, which has been converted into the set for tonight's live broadcast.

Ted brushes past David Burke as he steps into the light. Ted spins around to catch a glance of all the people and equipment.

DAVID BURKE

Let me run through the blocking we've come up with.

TED

Did you run this all by Sorensen?

David Burke leads him over to the center of the desk where the lights have all been positioned. Ted sits on top of the desk facing away from two heavy duty broadcast cameras.

DAVID BURKE
This whole thing is Sorensen's
baby. I think we've got a real
winner here.

TED
If you say so.

Burke hands Ted a small stack of papers.

DAVID BURKE
Do you want a few minutes to review
this draft?

TED
I can read *fine*, David. Just tell
me what to do for the cameras.

David Burke steps away from the desk and waves his arms.

DAVID BURKE
Alright, folks! I know you have some
work still left to do. But the
Senator needs a moment. If I could
have all the crew just wait outside.

The crew shuffles out the door, in no hurry. Gifford moseys up to Ted and David Burke, ready for a meeting of the minds.

DAVID BURKE (CONT'D)
Dun. Wait outside the door. We'll
tell you when to bring them back in.

Gifford deflates and slinks out of the room. He shuts the door behind him, leaving the room in a calm silence.

DAVID BURKE (CONT'D)
So, for the first half of the speech,
we felt it would seem more stately...
more proper for you to be reading.

David Burke points from the camera at the center of the room to the one near the entrance.

DAVID BURKE (CONT'D)
Camera One here is our wide. Camera
Two is our close-up. Here in
paragraph three when you start in on
the accident. That's where we felt
you should turn, and we'll cut for
the close-up.

TED
Why's that?

DAVID BURKE
More sympathy. More power. Gives the
viewer a sense you're in control.

Ted nods. He looks down at his feet as David Burke continues.

DAVID BURKE (CONT'D)
Then halfway through, we have you
make a direct appeal to the voters.
(beat)
And we think to get them to really
want to write in, mail letters, and
show their support for you and the
family...you should look straight
into camera, set the papers down,
and just talk from the heart.

TED
David, I'm not off book on this
thing.

DAVID BURKE
No, no...we'll have cue cards.
They're being done right now.

Ted nods. Staring down at his shoes. A pair of fine leather
shoes. He slips them off. They both land on the hardwood
floor with a THUD.

TED
Okay. I'm ready.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gifford stands guard in front of the study. The door behind
him opens just a crack and David Burke peeks out.

DAVID BURKE
We're ready.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - STUDY - CONTINUOUS

The news crew and staffers trudge back in. They scurry about
making last minute adjustments CALLED OUT by a FLOOR PRODUCER.

Ted sits at the desk focused on reviewing Sorensen's speech.

Gargan enters. He pushes through the confusion and heads
towards Ted. As he approaches, he notices Ted's shoes strewn
about the floor. He steps over them to lean in close.

GARGAN

Ted. I've got it. I've got it,
right here.

TED

Oh. Thanks, Joey. I really
appreciate that.

Gargan pulls the resignation out from his sport coat pocket.
He smooths out the crease down the middle. Sets it right on
top of Sorensen's speech. Ted keeps his eyes fixed on Gargan.

GARGAN

Well...you wanna look it over?

TED

I've been thinking...

Gargan looks over his glasses back at Ted.

TED (CONT'D)

Joey. Do we both not have flaws?

GARGAN

Of course we do. We all do.

TED

Right. I thought that myself --

GARGAN

What's right is what's here in
front of you.

TED

I don't know what's right anymore.

GARGAN

Ted. I didn't tell you before...but
I agree...the Kennedys do have a
true compass. And, it's because you
followed yours that we're here in
the first place.

(beat)

You told the police you were
driving. You told the truth. You
had me write this resignation.

TED

Sorensen's speech --

GARGAN

It's a lie! I was there. He made it
up. Every word. All the thoughts
and emotions. I was there.

(beat)

I've been there, with you...the
whole time.

TED
It may give me a chance...for a new beginning.

GARGAN
Bullshit, Ted.

Ted takes a deep breath. He considers his next words carefully.

TED
You have flaws, Joey. We all do.
You said so yourself.
(beat)
Moses had a temper. Peter betrayed Jesus. I have Chappaquiddick.

GARGAN
Moses having a temper never made him leave a girl at the bottom of the Red Sea.

FLOOR PRODUCER
We still don't have anyone to hold the cue cards!

Ted shoots up.

TED
Ole Joey'll fix it! He'd be a great cue card holder. Wouldn't cha Joey?

Ted deftly grabs the resignation speech and stuffs it back into Gargan's sport coat.

Gargan seethes.

FLOOR PRODUCER
And we're live in 10, 9...

The Floor Producer drags Gargan away from Ted.

FLOOR PRODUCER (CONT'D)
8, 7, 6...

He sets Gargan below the main camera and shoves the cue cards into his arms. Gargan stoops down and scowls back up at Ted.

FLOOR PRODUCER (CONT'D)
5, 4...

The producer holds up three fingers, finishes the countdown.

Ted looks down at Gargan. He straightens up the papers of Sorensen's speech. He's won. He's ready to begin.

Kennedy Labels as 'Indefensible' Conduct at Chappaquiddick

STON, Oct. 26 (UPI)—Edward M. Kennedy in an copyrighted inter- in The Boston Globe's issue that his conduct, diately after the 1969 in- at Chappaquiddick Island, which a woman companion ned was "irrational and trable and inexcusable, nexplicable."

ing his driving of the car as probably "criminal."

The Senator gave to The Globe a copy of a study made for him in 1969 by the Arthur D. Little Company, which concluded that "braking only" would not have prevented a car going 20 miles per hour from going off the bridge, and Senator Kennedy's head-

KENNEDY TO FACE

Night Of Kopechne Death--

Man Recalls Boat Dousing Lights In

NW BEDFORD, Mass. (UPI)—A Rhode Island bus- man, staying with his fam- ay on a yacht moored in Edg- town Harbor the night of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's auto ac- cident in which a young secre- tary was killed, says he saw a small boat with three persons go past him and then douse its running lights.

F. Remington Poling of Pro- vidence, said he was unable to identify the boat or its crew.

he said, a motorboat about 15- to 17-foot long "passed us on the Edgartown side, heading out. It went near a small sail- boat moored nearby and its lights were then doused and its engine turned off."

The boat passed only a few feet from his yacht, Poling said, and "we saw the forearms of three persons in the boat. I don't know whether there might have been more. It stopped to avoid a small boat."

just how red in a device in the reg- Asked about it, Poling said, "I was a at noon about it. now. W- lity that with it, I to avoid significant Poling

Mother of the Victim Backs Senator

BERKELEY HEIGHTS, N. J., July 25 (UPI)—Mrs. Josephine Kopechne, whose daughter

CHARGE IN CRASH

Lingering Tragedy

By James Reston

EDGARTOWN, Mass.—Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts said

Kennedy Feels Chappaquiddick Would Not Rule Out Presidency

By ROBERT BLAIR KAISER
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 17 — Senator Edward M. Kennedy reaffirmed today that he would not rule out the possibility of running for the Presidency in the aftermath of a fatal auto accident at Chappaquiddick 18-19 years ago tomorrow. But he said he did not believe that his performance that crisis meant that he could not be perceived of the Presidency if he is re-

has occupied the public ever since the accident: whether the events at Chappaquiddick represented a fatal blow to any Presidential hopes the Senator might harbor.

In the interview today, Mr. Kennedy said that his actions in driving the automobile off a bridge into the water, which resulted in Miss Kopechne's death despite his effort to save her by diving back again, and his failure to report the accident to the authorities had been "a terrible responsibility."

FOR LEAVING SITE

2 Friends Who Aided Kennedy Are Close Political Associates

By JAMES R. SIKES

The two men who Senator Frederick East month Kennedy said last the firm, ostensibly because night had aided him, during the work burden arrangi- the night of Mary Jo Kopechne's death, before the po- other duties for Senator Kennedy were notified the next day, Kennedy. He is now vice pre- are both lawyers and close po- of the Merchants Bank litical associates of the Sen- Trust Company of Cape Cod, Hyannis, Mass. He is in- One, Joseph F. Gargan, is a and lives in Milton, Mass. The other is John J. Markham, who che- of the Senate. Kennedy's a great

CHAPTER 5 : THE CONFESSION

TED'S BROADCAST IMAGE FILLS THE SCREEN

Ted holds a stack of papers in his hands and looks directly in the camera.

TED

My fellow citizens: I have requested this opportunity to talk to the people of Massachusetts about the tragedy which happened last Friday evening. Prior to my appearance in court it would have been improper for me to comment on these matters. But tonight I am free to tell you what happened and to say what it means to me.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

McNamara, Sorensen, and the brain trust crowd around the TV. Ted turns to Camera Two. The close up.

TED (V.O.)

On Chappaquiddick Island, I attended a cook-out I had helped sponsor for a devoted group of Kennedy campaign secretaries. When I left the party, I was accompanied by one of these girls, Miss Mary Jo Kopechne.

They watch with the same intensity that they would rooting for the Boston Red Sox.

INT. KOPECHNE HOME - CONTINUOUS

The Kopechnes sit in their matching recliners facing the TV.

TED (V.O.)

Mary Jo was one of the most devoted members of the staff of Senator Robert Kennedy. She worked for him for four years and was broken up over his death. For this reason, and because she was such a gentle, kind, and idealistic person, all of us tried to help her feel that she still had a home with the Kennedy family.

The Kopechnes share the first smile they've had in a week.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Chief Arena drives his police cruiser down a desolate main street of Edgartown. Ted's speech plays through the radio.

TED (V.O.)
There is no truth, no truth
whatever, to the widely circulated
suspicions of immoral conduct that
have been leveled at my behavior
and hers regarding that evening.
Nor was I driving under the
influence of liquor.

He turns a corner and passes the Shiretown Inn. The windows
all glow in unison with the same flicker of the TV screens.

INT. SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Dick Drayne is glued to the TV. He sits on pins and needles
through each and every one of Ted's words.

TED (V.O.)
I made immediate and repeated
efforts to save Mary Jo by diving
into the strong and murky current,
but succeeded only in increasing my
state of utter exhaustion and
alarm. Although my doctors informed
me that I suffered a cerebral
concussion, as well as shock, I do
not seek to escape responsibility
for my actions after lying
exhausted in the grass for an
undetermined time...

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Markham stands in the back corner of the war room. He looks
down at his glass of whiskey.

TED (V.O.)
...I walked back to the cottage
where the party was being held and
requested the help of two friends,
my cousin, Joseph Gargan, and Paul
Markham. Their strenuous efforts,
undertaken at some risk to their
own lives, also proved futile. All
kinds of scrambled thoughts were
reflected in the various
inexplicable, inconsistent, and
inconclusive things I said and did,
including such questions as whether
some awful curse did actually hang
over all the Kennedys, whether
there was some justifiable reason
for me to doubt what had happened
and to delay my report.

Markham takes a slug from his drink. Walks out of the room.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - DEN - CONTINUOUS

The Kennedy family packs around the TV. The children spread out across the floor. At the center sits Teddy Jr.

TED (V.O.)
This last week has been an agonizing one for me and for the members of my family. And the grief we feel over the loss of a wonderful friend will remain with us the rest of our lives.

ON TV

Ted turns back to Camera One. The camera cuts to the new wide angle as Ted puts down his papers and "speaks from the heart" as he looks directly into camera.

TED
These events, the publicity, innuendo, and whispers which have surrounded them and my admission of guilt this morning raises the question in my mind of whether my standing among the people of my State has been so impaired that I should resign my seat in the United States Senate.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - JOSEPH KENNEDY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joseph Kennedy stares back at his son on the TV screen.

TED (V.O.)
If at any time the citizens of Massachusetts should lack confidence in their Senator's character, or his ability...with or without justification...he could not in my opinion adequately perform his duties and should not continue in office.

(beat)
The people of this State, the State which sent John Quincy Adams, Henry Cabot Lodge, and John Kennedy to the United States Senate are entitled to representation in that body by men who inspire their utmost confidence.

He beams with pride and joy.

INT. KENNEDY COMPOUND - STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Gargan stares daggers straight through Ted as he flips to the next cue card.

TED (O.S.)
For this reason, I would understand
full well why some might think it
right for me to resign.

Gargan turns away in disgust.

TED'S BROADCAST IMAGE FILLS THE SCREEN

Ted looks directly into the camera. His eyes staring straight back at you.

TED (CONT'D)
And so I ask you tonight, the
people of Massachusetts, to think
this through with me. In facing
this decision, I seek your advice
and opinion. In making it, I seek
your prayers -- for this is a
decision that I will have finally
to make on my own. Thank you and
good night.

FADE OUT.

Over black:

Ted Kennedy went on to serve forty more years as Senator after a massive outpouring of support. Known as "The Lion of the Senate," he became the fourth longest serving Senator in U.S. history.

Joseph Kennedy suffered from the last in a series of strokes on November 18, 1969. He died in his Hyannis Port home...just four months after Chappaquiddick. Ted Kennedy felt his actions may have shortened his father's life.

Joseph Gargan became estranged from the Kennedy family. He has retired into private life.

In 1980, Ted sought to defeat incumbent President Carter for the Democratic Presidential Nomination...

...He was unsuccessful.

THE END.