

**WARM SPRINGS**

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. A BODY OF WATER - LATE AFTERNOON**

1

1

A glimpse of sunlight desperately tries to force its way through a gray sky before being obliterated.

4

A MAN, sunburned and bearded, lets himself fall from the edge of a boat and into the ocean.

**D**

UNDERWATER, through shafts of light, white limbs are FLAILING. The MAN struggles, alone. Bubbles stream upward.

He breaks the surface and gasps for air.

He begins to swim. His massive arms and shoulders grab at the tide in large, hard strokes. His legs and feet are buried beneath the dark ocean water.

**EXT. HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS**

2

2

A floating tenement.

A crane LOWERS a fishing net into the water. The MAN swims into it. The net is RAISED as he lays, motionless, within its grip.

**EXT. BOAT DECK - CONTINUOUS**

3

3

The crane swings around with the MAN in the net.

He is EMPTIED out onto the deck like a fish.

AHIVERING on the rotting wooden planks he FLIPS himself over on his stomach. Slowly, using the palms of his hands, he DRAGS his trunk and withered limbs across the deck in a labored lobster-walk.

He uses his chest muscles to swing his legs around the edge of the boat. They dangle like pieces of rope, his feet white and flaccid.

A towel, a bottle and a glass are wordlessly placed next to him by a CREW PERSON. He pours himself a generous amount of scotch and begins drinking.

**ISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT**

**4**

The same MAN is illuminated by the light of a single candle.

He is dancing, holding on tightly to a WOMAN.

**2.**

Though the light is dim it is clear that he is clean shaven, with his hair neatly trimmed.

Their connection is powerful and alive. They stop dancing, overwhelmed with mutual desire.

He holds the WOMAN's face in his hands and KISSES it all over, moving into a realm of feeling that is foreign to him.

He kisses her passionately on the mouth.

**MAN**

Oh, my dear...

His fingers run softly over the outside of her breasts. She begins to undo the back of her dress and slips it down around her ankles. Wearing only her tight corset she brings his hands to the laces and together they undo it.

**WOMAN**

(whispering softly)

It's all right, darling. It's all right.

**INT. HALLWAY - MORNING**

**5**

**5**

OSCAR, a manservant, is carrying both a silver tray and a pair of pants over his extended arm.

**A VOICE (O.S.)**

Oscar! Where the devil are you?

Deftly, Oscar opens the door to a spacious bedroom.

**OSCAR**

My apologies, Mr. Roosevelt.

**INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

6

6

There with his bare legs, muscular and lean, sporting black socks held up with garters is FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT, 39.

He projects a natural elegance and the confidence of a man who can have anything he wants.

Right now... he wants his pants.

**FRANKLIN**

I've been standing here for five minutes.

Oscar offers the tray to Franklin which bear cuff links and a Tiffany watch which Franklin grabs.

3.

**OSCAR**

Did you sleep well, sir?

**FRANKLIN**

Don't remember. That's good, isn't it?

**OSCAR**

Yes, sir.

Franklin takes his pants from Oscar and steps into them, pulling the suspenders up and over his shoulders.

7

7

**INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING**

Striding into the dining room, Franklin lifts a silver lid off a breakfast plate. He dismisses it and instead pours himself a cup of coffee from a silver pot on the sideboard.

He overhears a voice from the nearby sitting room.

**WOMAN (O.S.)**

I could not be more delighted to have received your most charming letter. It has been far too long since we last corresponded. However, it is with great reluctance I must decline your kind speaking invitation...

8

8

**INT. SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, 34, is dictating a letter. Her enormous

eyes, liquid and blue, reveal a woman of extraordinary intelligence and depth.

**ELEANOR**

Unfortunately, I would be of little assistance to the Junior Assistance League. Particularly if my purpose were to appear as an alumna who is gifted at public speaking.

She is dictating to LUCY MERCER, 27, deeply feminine with a head of soft dark hair and an accommodating nature. She is Eleanor's social secretary and closest friend.

She is also the WOMAN dancing with Franklin the night before.

**LUCY**

And what do you really want me to say?

**ELEANOR**

Thank you and if you ask again I shall scream?

4.

They share a laugh -- which is not shared by the homely rumpled mess of a man draped over a sofa in the corner.

**LOUIS**

Why don't you ask your husband for some pointers? He's a pretty gifted public speaker, don't you think?

LOUIS HOWE, 48, is a wizened man of limited stature and unlimited soul. Franklin's political advisor extraordinaire -- part consiglieri and part priest. He is the mastermind behind what he believes will be the greatest political career of the twentieth century.

He gets up and leans in closely to Eleanor. A cigarette dangles off his lip and the smoke rises up and curls in her face.

**LOUIS**

You should get out once in a while. Accepting that invitation would be good for Franklin's career.

**ELEANOR**

Mr. Howe, wouldn't you be more comfortable waiting for my husband outside?

**LOUIS**

In the street, Mrs. Roosevelt?

**ELEANOR**

If you like.

Eleanor smiles oh-so politely at Louis, as Franklin enters from the dining room.

**FRANKLIN**

I see it's not even eight a.m.  
and already the gloves are off.

(kissing Eleanor on the  
cheek)

Good morning, Babs. Hello, Miss  
Mercer. L

**UCY**

Good morning, sir.

Quickly, she lowers her eyes to her work.

**LOUIS**

(annoyed)

You're late. Honestly, why do you  
enjoy keeping people waiting?

5.

**FRANKLIN**

Because they always seem more  
grateful to see me when I arrive.

He leans in and kisses Eleanor on the cheek.

**FRANKLIN**

Have a lovely day, Babs.

**ELEANOR**

Should I expect you for dinner?

**FRANKLIN**

I have the Navy reception this  
evening. I'll be home quite late.  
Unless you've changed your mind  
about coming?

Louis looks up from his paper at Lucy who is writing  
furiously.

**ELEANOR**

Do you wish me to come?

**FRANKLIN**

Well... whatever you'd like.

**ELEANOR**

(a beat)

Thank you, no.

**FRANKLIN**

Very well then.

(tipping his hat)

Good day, Miss Mercer.

Lucy nods and Franklin exits. Then Louis tips his hat to the ladies and follows him out.

**EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. SIDEWALK - DAY**

9

9

A car pulls over and Franklin is first out, followed by Louis, walking at a brisk pace as they cross the opposite side of the street. Louis struggles to keep up while consulting a small appointment book.

**LOUIS**

At ten you've got a meeting with representatives from Pittsburgh Steel. Their bid on the ship building contract has already been turned in and is on your desk for approval.

6.

**FRANKLIN**

What did I think of it?

An AFRICAN-AMERICAN man steps off the curb, letting Franklin and Louis pass.

**LOUIS**

You had some problems with it.

**FRANKLIN**

I better read it. Steel workers tend to vote democratic. Next.

**LOUIS**

Lunch with Secretary Daniels.

**FRANKLIN**

Must I?

**LOUIS**

He's your boss.

**FRANKLIN**

Anything else?

**LOUIS**

(a beat)

What if she'd said yes?

**FRANKLIN**

Who?

Louis shoots him a look that says "you know who."

**LOUIS**

People know. It's time to stop.

**FRANKLIN**

I can handle my own affairs, Louis.

**LOUIS**

Not this one. This is Washington,  
D.C., not the Harvard Club.

(off-put by Franklin's  
arrogance)

How can you be so cavalier?

**FRANKLIN**

You say that like it's a bad thing.

Louis takes a quick last drag on his cigarette and follows him inside a building.

7.

**INT. FRONT HALL - NIGHT**

10

10

A large grandfather clock reads 3:00.

The sound of a key in the front door turns and Franklin quietly enters. His hair is a mess and his clothing is slightly askew.

As he comes through the hall two eyes shine in the darkness. They belong to Eleanor sitting rigidly on a settee, listening to the sound of Franklin's footsteps going up the stairs.

11

11

**INT. UPPER LANDING - CONTINUING**

Franklin goes into his bedroom. Eleanor quietly comes up the stairs and stops for a brief moment by Franklin's door, then

goes off to her bedroom closing the door behind her.

**INT. FRANKLIN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING**

12

12

Franklin lays sleeping in his bed as Eleanor enters quietly so as not to wake him.

Carefully she picks up a set of keys on the dresser then turns and notices a packet of letters sitting on top of an open duffle bag.

Tentatively she reaches for them. She brings the packet, tied with a piece of ribbon, up to her nose. She is shocked by their familiar scent.

With trembling hands she unties the ribbon. Tears flood down her cheeks as she reads.

Franklin opens his eyes.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. HYDE PARK - DAY**

13

13

Springwood is the three-story Roosevelt mansion. It is surrounded by a thousand acres of forests, fields, bridal paths and a glorious view of the Hudson River.

THE FIVE ROOSEVELT CHILDREN are screaming on the front lawn playing a boisterous game of croquet.

**INT. SPRINGWOOD - DINING ROOM - DAY**

14

14

SARA ROOSEVELT, 65, sits at the head of the table. She is one for whom the expression "Grande Dame" was coined.

8.

Franklin is at the opposite end of the table, looking pale. Louis, as always, is by his side.

Eleanor, like a prisoner who has accepted her fate, sits across from them, calm and composed.

**ELEANOR**

I have offered Franklin his freedom.

**FRANKLIN**

And I have accepted.

**SARA**

(to Eleanor)

His freedom is not yours to offer!

**FRANKLIN**

I am in love with Miss Mercer, Mama.

**LOUIS**

Lord save us from fools in love.

**SARA**

Falling in love is out of the question. Why do you think men have mistresses? Duty. Duty to their families and their careers.

Eleanor rises from the table.

**SARA**

Where do you think you're going?

**ELEANOR**

It's obvious that my input in this matter is of little importance.

She begins to exit the room, but Franklin is up like a shot.

**FRANKLIN**

Babs!

**SARA**

Come back here! Both of you!

**INT. ENTRY HALL - CONTINUOUS**

15

Franklin chases Eleanor. Midway up the stairs, she turns.

15

**E**

**LEANOR**

I don't know whether to hate you or thank you.

9.

**FRANKLIN**

For what?

**ELEANOR**

For forcing me to face my life honestly for the first time.

**FRANKLIN**

I didn't mean to hurt you, Babs.

**ELEANOR**

You never do. You live your life  
skimming the surface... never aware  
of the attachments beneath.

(finding her anger)  
It must be a luxury.

She goes up the stairs without looking back.

16

16

**INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Franklin slowly walks back into the room.

**SARA**

Divorce will finish your career in  
politics. How do you intend to  
support yourself?

**FRANKLIN**

My trust fund.

**SARA**

Divorce Eleanor and there is no  
trust fund.

Franklin turns away. He looks out the large picture window  
and attempts to light a cigarette, but his hands shake.

**LOUIS**

We've come so far, boss. State  
Assembly, Assistant Secretary of  
the Navy -- all pages right out of  
Cousin Teddy's play book. We're on  
the road to the White House. Don't  
do this.

Franklin sees his son, ELLIOT, 10, playing separately from  
the rest of his siblings. Elliot looks up at his father as  
Franklin bares his best politician's smile at him.

A ROAR begins to fill his ears. It becomes clearer that it is  
the sound of a CROWD CHEERING.

10.

**CROWD NOISE (O.S.)**

Rose-velt! Rose-velt! Rose-velt!

**INT. DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION HALL - SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT**

17

17

CONVENTIONEERS shout out Franklin's name holding up PLACARDS

emblazoned with:

**"COX/ROOSEVELT IN '20!"**

Franklin BOLTS, running vigorously down the center aisle of the hall lit by the circle of a spotlight. The CROWD goes wild over this unconventional entrance.

**W**

hen he reaches the edge of the stage he LEAPS onto it. This final act of daring pushes the crowd into frenzy.

**CLOSE UP - FRANKLIN**

18

18

Smiling for no one. For everyone.

**FRANKLIN**

(breathless)

I humbly accept your nomination for  
Vice-President!

The CROWD roars back in reaction to his less-than-humble stance.

**FRANKLIN**

They say the best way to get rid of  
a man is to have him run for Vice-  
President.

(he holds for the laugh)

You might well have asked my cousin  
Teddy if that's how they got rid  
of him!

Franklin stands on the stage, the music rising, the crowd cheering. Slowly, the sound of the convention fades to something far more delicate...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. TEA ROOM - WASHINGTON, D.C. - AFTERNOON**

19

19

A harp playing in an elegant tea room. The hushed tones of polite conversation wafts through the air.

Franklin sits with his cousin, ALICE ROOSEVELT, 36, daughter of Teddy. Brilliant and acerbic, she would have had a career in politics had she been born a man.

11.

**ALICE**

Of course you lost. A Roosevelt on  
the democratic ticket? Our ancestors

are turning in their graves.

**FRANKLIN**

Cousin Alice, if Teddy were alive  
he'd be a democrat -- and you know it.

**ALICE**

Rubbish. But I do know one thing:  
You're exactly like him. My father  
was born wanting only one thing: to  
be President.

**FRANKLIN**

And what's wrong with that?

They both share a laugh.

**ALICE**

Do you know what they're saying  
about you?

Franklin's smile fades.

**FRANKLIN**

No, but I'm sure you'll tell me.

**ALICE**

They say F.D.R. stands for  
"featherduster." That you're a  
lightweight. A dilettante with no  
substance; no point of view.

**FRANKLIN**

Is that what you think?

**ALICE**

You lead with your vanity. You  
talk when you should listen.  
Unless these are the qualities of  
a democrat?

**F**

**RANKLIN**

The democratic party is the party  
of the people. I am a man of the  
people.

**ALICE**

Darling, you're a Roosevelt. What  
do you know about people?

She leans in conspiratorially.

**ALICE**

Of course, I can think of one person you did manage to find the time to invest in. A Miss Mercer, I believe?

**FRANKLIN**

Alice, stop.

**ALICE**

Don't misunderstand me, Franklin. Being married to Eleanor I think you deserved some fun. But you made the right decision. Especially since Miss Mercer has gone on with her life.

**FRANKLIN**

What are you talking about?

**ALICE**

Edward Rutherford is a wonderful catch for a girl like her.

**FRANKLIN**

(stunned)  
She's married?

**ALICE**

Last week. A small event, of course.

**FRANKLIN**

When I last heard she was governess to his children.

**ALICE**

(with a smile)  
And then love bloomed. As a "man of the people," I wouldn't be too hard on her, Franklin. We can't all have trust funds you know.

**EXT. STATEN ISLAND BOY SCOUT CAMP - DAY**

20

20

Franklin, Louis and a PHOTOGRAPHER disembark from a touring car.

**LOUIS**

We're not taking this defeat lying down, boss. We'll run you for Governor --

**FRANKLIN**

(kidding)

Really? Of which state?

Louis shoots him a look.

**LOUIS**

Very funny. No, this buys you time.  
It buys you experience.

**FRANKLIN**

What about Al Smith?

**LOUIS**

He's vulnerable. You're still a  
fresh face, boss. We'll use that to  
our advantage.

They walk down a hill towards some waiting Boy Scouts as the  
PHOTOGRAPHER follows them.

**FRANKLIN**

Boy Scouts, Louis? Hardly my  
political base.

**LOUIS**

They've got parents. Besides  
they're photogenic.

Franklin begins glad-handing the assembled group of mostly  
underprivileged children.

**FRANKLIN**

Franklin Roosevelt, happy to  
meet you.

Franklin masks his thinly veiled discomfort with an  
artificial good cheer. Meanwhile, Louis, in full political  
mode, makes sure the L

Photographer gets everything.

**LOUIS**

Over here!

Franklin poses with two Scouts. The picture is taken.

**SCOUTMASTER**

Okay, boys, lunch. Line up to wash!  
(to Franklin)  
Will you be joining us?

**FRANKLIN**

Of course!

**14.**

Franklin steps into a line before a large communal water barrel and glances sideways at GUISEPPE, 9, an immigrant child of the city streets. He wears his uniform proudly and smiles at Franklin.

**FRANKLIN**

What's your name, son?

**GUISEPPE**

Guiseppe.

Franklin puts his arm around Guiseppe, forcing the moment between them. He waits patiently as the cameras click away.

**FRANKLIN**

Guiseppe! Come sta, ragazzo?

**GUISEPPE**

(puzzled)

Okay, I guess.

The SCOUTS begin washing their hands together in the water barrel and Franklin joins in as Louis looks on admiringly.

As Guiseppe splashes some of the water on his face, Franklin, not to be outdone, does so as well. It's all for the cameras.

**ESTABLISHING SHOT - CAMPOBELLO ISLAND**

**EXT. ROOSEVELT SUMMER HOME - DAY**

**21**

**21**

A large but unpretentious house with a sweeping lawn that looks out over the icy waters of the Bay of Fundy.

**22**

**22**

**EXT. PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON**

Eleanor sits quietly on the front porch knitting -- in a world of her own.

A few feet away -- also in a world of his own -- sits Louis, overdressed for summer in a three piece suit. An overflowing ashtray is by his side and piles of newspaper lie at his feet.

He holds up a paper to Eleanor with the photo of Franklin and

the Boy Scouts.

**LOUIS**

He's a natural.

Eleanor gives it a cursory glance then looks out to where Franklin and the children come bounding up the lawn.

**15.**

Franklin and Elliot break out from the rest and begin racing up the lawn. Franklin, no match for his son's speed, loses. He doubles over, trying to catch his breath.

**ELLIOT**

Vae victis! ("Woe to the  
conquered!")

**C**

aught up in his victory, Elliot doesn't see Franklin sneak up behind him and tackle him to the ground.

**FRANKLIN**

Festina lente! ("Not so fast!")

One by one the other children all pile on top of Franklin and Elliot.

**ELEANOR**

Dinner is in one half-hour! Come in  
and change, children!

**FRANKLIN**

Up! Up, chicks! You heard your  
mother!

Everyone runs up the porch stairs and into the house except Franklin.

**ELEANOR**

Go wash up.

Utterly spent, Franklin lays on the grass, not moving.

**LOUIS**

Hey, boss! Are you all right?

Slowly, Franklin gets up and walks with great effort up the porch stairs.

**FRANKLIN**

I'm fine.  
(re: her knitting)

Oh, that's pretty, Babs.

He puts his hand on Eleanor's shoulder and leans in to buss her cheek but Eleanor quickly stands.

**ELEANOR**

I must check on dinner.

There is a cursory formality to her words and little warmth.

16.

**FRANKLIN**

Very well.

She goes into the house. Louis then hands Franklin letters.

**LOUIS**

Tired?

**FRANKLIN**

Of you? Never.

Wearily, he sorts through the envelopes.

**LOUIS**

Why don't you nap before dinner?

**FRANKLIN**

Yes, dear.

Franklin heads into the house leaning heavily against the screen door struggling for control.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. SUN ROOM - DAY**

23

Franklin lays on a chaise being examined by a DOCTOR, who leans over him holding out his hand.

23

**DOCTOR**

Can you take my hand?

Franklin tries, but can't. Almost his entire body is paralyzed. He can only breathe and blink.

The Doctor glances at Eleanor, Louis and Sara indicating they should follow him out.

**EXT. SCREENED PORCH - DAY**

24

24

As the door from the sun room opens onto the porch, Elliot is there waiting. Seeing them coming, he dashes off into the yard so as not to be seen as Eleanor, Louis, Sara and the Doctor enter.

**DOCTOR**

He has Infantile Paralysis. Polio.

Sara sinks into a chair.

**SARA**

I knew it. I knew it.

**D**

(

**D**

17.

**ELEANOR**

**I** thought it only struck children.

**OCTOR**

Not necessarily.

**LOUIS**

How did he get it?

**DOCTOR**

Some experts believe it is linked to contaminated water. But that theory is speculative at best.

**LOUIS**

It was the visit to that god damned Boy Scout Camp!

**DOCTOR**

In all honesty you need to be looking forward, not back.

**ELEANOR**

What is the prognosis?

**DR. LOVETT**

The damage to his leg muscles is extensive. I suspect he will be paralyzed from the waist down.

**ELEANOR**

Dear God.  
beat)  
And the children?

**DR. LOVETT**

If they don't have any symptoms by now then they have been spared.

Sara stands -- her bearing once again erect and proud.

**SARA**

Then we must count our blessings.

**R. LOVETT**

You will need to prepare yourselves. There is a deep depression that follows an illness of this magnitude. I'm afraid life as he knew it is over.

Their discussion is suddenly interrupted by the sound of a child crying. Eleanor rushes off the porch to the bushes.

**L**

18.

**EXT. BUSHES - CONTINUING** 25 25  
Eleanor finds Elliot, having heard everything, curled up in a ball, weeping. She leans down and wraps her arms around him.

**INT. BEDROOM - WEEKS LATER**  
26 26  
**CLOSE-UP - WALLPAPER**

A pink background covered in small white flowers with red centers and green leaves. There is a seam in the paper. A tiny white spot where glue has soaked through.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Franklin in bed.

This is all he stares at -- hour after hour after hour.

His lips are dry.

A glass of water sits tantalizingly on the night stand. He reaches for it but it's a few inches out of his reach.

Slowly, he begins to rock his torso back and forth.

**INT. HYDE PARK - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS**

27

27

Sara, Eleanor and Louis are in heated conversation.

**SARA**

Now that politics are out of the question he can stay here at home with me.

**ELEANOR**

But what kind of life is that?

**LOUIS**

I've rented him an office downtown. He can still practice law.

**S**

**ARA**

Why would you want to do that?

**LOUIS**

Because he needs it.

**ELEANOR**

He can pursue a career, Mama.

**SARA**

A man as proud and vital as Franklin... you're inviting him to be hurt.

**(MORE)**

19.

And you, Mr. RA(cont'd)

SA Howe, engaged in the fantasy of a political future for my son... is there nothing you won't do to keep your job?

Sara leaves as Eleanor goes after her.

**ELEANOR**

Mama! That's not fair!

**28 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 28**

Franklin, still rocking his torso, has now gained some momentum, managing to have moved just a few inches.

**29 INT. SUN ROOM - CONTINUOUS 29**

Sara busies herself arranging flowers.

**SARA**

What kind of life is it to be pitied and stared at?

**ELEANOR**

What kind of life is it to be hidden away? I know you believe that what you are suggesting for Franklin is best. But I think you are making it harder for him.

**SARA**

I think I know what's best for Franklin. I am his mother!

**ELEANOR**

And I am his wife.

Sara stares at Eleanor in disbelief. Eleanor stares back -- unflinching.

**30 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 30**

Franklin reaches his arm towards the glass only to fall from the bed to the floor with a thud. Frustrated beyond words, Franklin lunges at his wheelchair and shoves it across the floor letting out an anguished cry.

In agony, from both the pain and the humiliation, he stares up and fixes his gaze on the ornate ceiling overhead.

Then, closing his eyes, a POUNDING in his head starts to get louder and louder --

**CUT TO:**

**20.**

**31 INT. BOAT - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT 31**

Franklin, on his back, his face and body drenched with sweat,

is asleep in his bunk in the boat. He awakens to the sound of the POUNDING. Voices are calling him accompanied by FISTS smashing at the door. He opens his eyes and is disoriented. He tries to sit up -- momentarily forgetting that he can't.

**H**

e lifts the sheet and visibly WINCES in disgust at the sight of his crippled legs. BONES covered by FLESH with barely an ounce of muscle.

Finally the door BURSTS open. Two young crewman, EUGENE and STANLEY enter.

**EUGENE**

Mr. Roosevelt, we got a storm  
comin'!

He lifts Franklin over his shoulder. Stanley grabs clothes and pulls a set of long iron leg braces from a hook off the wall.

Eugene grabs a bucket and holds Franklin up to urinate.

**FRANKLIN**

(while peeing)  
Leave me here. Let the ocean  
swallow me up. Burial at sea.  
Perfect for a navy man.

Stripped to his underwear Franklin is laid across the bunk. Eugene kneels and puts on Franklin's socks and shoes. Then he and Stanley slide on his braces and pants.

Their hands zipper, clasp, buckle and tie. Each hand works in synchronicity with the other.

Clumsily they lift Franklin up, struggling under his weight.

**EXT. BOAT - DAY**

32

Eugene and Stanley carry Franklin off in the driving rain.

32

**INT. DINER OFF THE FLORIDA COAST - DAY**

33

Kerosene lamps light the diner which is filled with people, mostly fishermen, seeking refuge from the coming storm. Franklin, soaked-to-the-skin and wrapped in a blanket, is being pushed through the door by Eugene in a wheelchair.

33

The restaurant collectively pauses to take them.

21.

Franklin is slowly wheeled across the restaurant. He shrinks

from the stares of the patrons.

A LITTLE GIRL eating with her parents gets excited when she sees Franklin's braces and points. Franklin gives her a hard look and she is hurt.

What he can't see is that under the table she wears a set of braces like his.

Franklin is wheeled up to his table and EUGENE and STANLEY sit down with him.

Louis enters resembling a drowned rat. He rips off his hat and raincoat and puts down his suitcase.

**FRANKLIN**

(genuinely surprised)

Louis?

**LOUIS**

I never miss Florida in the rainy season.

**FRANKLIN**

No letter? No wire?

**LOUIS**

Why? Would you have answered it?

**FRANKLIN**

What the hell are you doing here?

**LOUIS**

Good to see you too. Nice whiskers. You look like Chester Arthur.

**FRANKLIN**

Stanley, this is Mr. Howe. He gets sea-sick at the mere sight of a boat so he's probably happy that it's being destroyed right now.

**LOUIS**

Boys, I need to talk to Mr. Roosevelt alone. Find your own breakfast. Here's a five spot. Make it a feast.

They look at the money and take their leave.

**FRANKLIN**

You're always so generous with my money.

**LOUIS**

You mean your mother's, don't you?

The Waitress puts down two cups of coffee. Franklin pulls out a flask and pours some into his cup. He then lights a cigarette and begins smoking, but doesn't offer one to Louis. Without asking, Louis helps himself.

**FRANKLIN**

So Mama financed this fool's errand, has she? Well, it's a waste of a trip.

**LOUIS**

It was Eleanor's idea.

Franklin's face is immobile.

**WAITRESS**

What can I get you?

**LOUIS**

I'd like some ham and eggs, sunny side up, please?  
(to Franklin)  
What's your fancy, boss?

**FRANKLIN**

Nothing. I fancy nothing.

**LOUIS**

He'll have the same.

The Waitress grabs their menus and scurries away. Louis opens his briefcase and hands Franklin a stack of mail. Franklin glances it, but doesn't open any.

**LOUIS**

There are a few from your children.

**FRANKLIN**

I can still read.

Franklin flips through the mail and finds a letter that interests him, opening it.

**LOUIS**

Your wife wants you to come home.  
(choosing his words)

She's concerned. I'm concerned.  
This life on a boat... where is it  
getting you?

(

**F**

23.

**FRANKLIN**

Getting me? For one thing, no one  
gets to see me and I don't get to  
see them.

**LOUIS**

Don't say that. Everyone's waiting  
for you to come home. The kids...  
they're aching to see you.

**RANKLIN**

(reading)

Really?

Louis looks sadly at his friend.

**LOUIS**

What's that?

**FRANKLIN**

(skimming the letter)

From George Foster Peabody. He owns  
a resort in rural Georgia for  
investment purposes. Hot springs or  
something. He claims that only  
recently a crippled boy swam in the  
waters and can walk again.

**LOUIS**

Oh, for Chrissake...

**FRANKLIN**

(reading)

"

The high magnesium content of  
these natural springs will hold

anyone up. Although it is not a resort for infirm types I am extending you my personal invitation to come visit in the off-season."

(putting the letter aside)  
I'm only welcome in the "off-season."

Eugene and Stanley approach the table.

**EUGENE**

Mr. Roosevelt, we got bad news.

**FRANKLIN**

What?

**F**

**F**

24.

**STANLEY**

It's the boat... it got banged up real bad tied to the dock.

**RANKLIN**

How bad?

**STANLEY**

I don't think you can stay there anymore.

ranklin absorbs this.

**EUGENE**

Maybe it's a blessing in disguise, Mr. Roosevelt. I don't know about you, but I'm homesick.

**FRANKLIN**

And I'm sick of home.

(to Louis)

Where's the letter from Peabody?

**LOUIS**

You can't be serious?

He hands Franklin the letter who rereads it.

**FRANKLIN**

Why not miracle waters? I've drunk the oil of monkey glands, been zapped with electricity and hung upside down in harnesses. After all that, this sounds downright peaceful.

**LOUIS**

I can't quite picture you in the back woods of Georgia.

**FRANKLIN**

Where do you picture me, Louis?

**LOUIS**

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

**FRANKLIN**

President, Louis? I can't visit the bathroom without a team of associates to help pull my pants down.

**E**

**F**

25.

**LOUIS**

Give it a little time.

**RANKLIN**

There's a reason they say a man runs for office.

(a beat)

I'm going to Georgia.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. A TRAIN CAR - DAY**

34

34

Franklin and Eleanor sit next to one another. Franklin is now shaved and cleaned up considerably.

However, the tension between them is palpable. Eleanor knits furiously while talking. Franklin looks out the window at African-American FIELD HANDS hard at work in the red clay hills of Georgia.

**ELEANOR**

James has been doing so much better now that Elliot has joined him at Groton. They've put their differences behind them and have become a real team.

Franklin observes two YOUNG BOYS, African-American, running alongside the slow-moving train.

**ELEANOR**

Two peas in a pod. Last week they were both in the infirmary with the same cold.

Franklin eyes a wagon pulled by a mule. The driver, a FARMER, takes off his hat and wipes his brow in the hot sun.

**ELEANOR**

Meanwhile, any suggestion I make to Anna for her future -- she dismisses me. I am going to have to enlist your support in this, Franklin. She listens to you.

She looks over at Franklin and sees that he is staring out the window, deep in thought -- not having heard a word she's said.

26.

**EXT. BULLOCHVILLE TRAIN STATION - GEORGIA - DAY**

35

35

TOM LOYLESS, 39, stands waiting by a car dressed in a white suit. Laconic, with a dry sense of humor, Tom is a man of few words whose poker face hides a true desperation. He holds a telegram from Franklin in his hand.

As the train pulls in Tom looks for Franklin among the passengers making their exit.

There are two different exits on the platform clearly marked WHITE and COLORED. Whites exit from the front of the train

and Blacks from the rear.

LIONEL PURDY, tiny, and dressed in a mailman's uniform, approaches Tom. Of indeterminate age and dubious intellect, his mail bag is almost as big as he is.

**LIONEL**

Someone important?

**TOM**

You might say so, Lionel.

**LIONEL**

Who?

**TOM**

A Mr. Roosevelt.

**LIONEL**

Teddy?

**TOM**

(patiently)  
No, he's dead.

**LIONEL**

Oh.

The STATIONMASTER approaches.

**STATIONMASTER**

Tom, your guest needs some assistance. We're gonna need some able-bodied men to move him.

**TOM**

(to Lionel)  
Go over to the livery stable...

**LIONEL**

... and get the Collier boys.

27.

**EXT. A TRAIN CAR - DAY**

36

36

Franklin exits the train slung in a fireman's carry over the shoulder of ROY COLLIER, African-American, 29. His brother PETE, 27, is close behind, carrying luggage -- both hover at around 6' 4".

Tom approaches. Franklin attempts to hide his embarrassment

with good cheer.

**FRANKLIN**

Hello! Hello! Mr. Loyless?

**TOM**

Tom, Mr. Roosevelt.

**FRANKLIN**

Then you'd better call me Franklin.

Still in the fireman's carry, Franklin extends his hand for Tom to shake.

**TOM**

Franklin.

**FRANKLIN**

And this is the Misses.

**ELEANOR**

Call me Eleanor.

**TOM**

Pleased to make your acquaintance.

Roy then carries him over to Tom's car and gingerly places him inside. Pete follows.

**ROY**

(to Tom)

There's a trunk and a chair with the wheels, too.

**TOM**

I'll send a wagon right over.

**PETE**

We got a wagon, sir.

**EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

37

Tom drives Franklin in front, Eleanor sits in the back.

37

28.

Pine trees tower over the sides of the dirt road. In occasional clearings, Franklin spies barefoot children playing out in front of broken-down shacks. They stop their play to look at the car.

**FRANKLIN**

(covering his discomfort)  
Beautiful country.

**ELEANOR**

How long have you been manager of  
the Inn?

**TOM**

Not long.

They BANG over a large pothole. They all fly up and land hard.

**FRANKLIN**

Got any paved roads?

**TOM**

No we don't.

**EXT. THE MERIWETHER INN - DAY**

38

38

Tom's car turns into a driveway. Franklin has a brochure for "The Meriwether Inn" opened in his lap. He tries to spy the building through the trees but cannot.

He looks back at the brochure. The picture is of a lavish Victorian Hotel and the words, "Our renowned mineral hot springs can cure whatever ails you!"

Franklin looks up and sees a three-story hideous green and yellow monstrosity leaning slightly to one side. Paint is peeling everywhere. What once were flower beds are overgrown with weeds.

The car pulls to a stop.

**TOM**

You'll have a great deal of  
privacy. There are only a few  
guests right now as it's the off-  
season... I'm hoping to make some  
improvements by next Spring --

Franklin puts out his arm preventing Tom from getting out of  
the car.

**F**

29.

**FRANKLIN**

(panicked)  
I... I can't stay here. This place  
is a wreck.

**E**

**LEANOR**

Franklin!

**TOM**

Look on the bright side. Most of  
your time will be spent in the  
water.

(a beat)

It's true, we've fallen on some  
hard times...

**RANKLIN**

Hard times? This is a disaster! It  
should be condemned!

Tom's southern manners are being put to the test, but he  
stays remarkably calm.

**TOM**

Yes, we've seen better days.

(a beat)

But then I imagine so have you.

Franklin blinks incomprehensibly at Tom and what he has just  
said.

**TOM**

I'm happy to drive you back to the  
train station right now, if that's  
what you want.

They lock eyes. Franklin wonders if Tom's bluffing, but he  
can't tell.

**FRANKLIN**

(in a low voice)

Fire. I'm frightened of fire. I  
can't get out if I'm upstairs.

**TOM**

We've got options.

**EXT. MERIWETHER INN GROUNDS - DAY**

39

Tom's car is now parked in front of a group of small  
cottages. Roy and Pete's horse drawn wagon is behind it.

39

**EXT. COTTAGE - DAY**

40

40

Tom and Pete open a set of shutters over the windows of a tiny cottage.

Franklin and Eleanor sit in the car, watching.

**INT. COTTAGE - DAY**

41

41

Sheets cover the furniture, cobwebs span the beams and dust particles fill the air.

As Tom maneuvers the wheelchair through the front door, Franklin notices a broken window.

**FRANKLIN**

(caustic)

Well ventilated, at least.

Roy enters with a suitcase.

**ROY**

Where do you want this, Mr. Roosevelt?

**FRANKLIN**

The bedroom, Roy, thank you.

He looks after Roy as he exits.

**FRANKLIN**

Tom, this young man appears quite competent. Would you ask him if he'd like to stay on as my valet?

**TOM**

(politely)

Why don't you ask him yourself?

He tips his hat and goes outside.

**EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY**

42

42

Pete, alone, drives the wagon past the Inn and out onto the road.

**INT. COTTAGE - DAY**

43

43

Eleanor stands in the middle of the tiny living room stunned by the squalor. She speaks to Franklin who is changing in the

other room.

**T**

31.

**ELEANOR**

This is madness.

**FRANKLIN (O.S.)**

No doubt.

**ELEANOR**

Tell me again, Franklin, why are we here?

Franklin is wheeled out by Roy, now changed into a bathing suit.

**FRANKLIN**

For the waters. Are you coming?

**EXT. A DIRT PATH - DAY**

44

44

Roy wheels Franklin while Tom walks in front of them leading the way.

**OM**

Mrs. Roosevelt want to swim?

**FRANKLIN**

Mrs. Roosevelt doesn't know how.

Franklin takes in the surroundings. Deserted horse stables in total ruin and tennis courts covered with underbrush mar the landscape.

45

45

**EXT. POOL - DAY**

An immense, T-shaped pool rimmed in concrete. The bluish water is clear and sparkling and a delicate steam rises out of the warmth.

**A**

MOTHER, eyeing Franklin approaching in his wheelchair, comes to the edge of the pool and coaxes her CHILDREN out of the water.

AUNT SALLY, an ancient, gaunt, African American woman, stands

guard by the edge of the water.

**TOM**

Mr. Roosevelt, I'd like you to meet Aunt Sally.

**FRANKLIN**

Aunt Sally.

**AUNT SALLY**

Good day, sir. I have towels for you.

32.

Roy wheels Franklin as close to the rim of the pool as possible. Tom lends his assistance and both he and Roy HOIST Franklin out of the chair and place him at the edge, letting his feet dangle in the warm water.

Twisting on his massive arms, Franklin lowers himself cautiously.

**TOM**

Now give it a minute. You'll see that the mineralization makes the water more buoyant. The crippled boy who swam here was actually able to walk in the water.

Franklin's legs flop as his useless feet touch the shallow bottom. Crushed, all hope drains from his face.

**FRANKLIN**

I can't even stand.

**AUNT SALLY**

Well, not yet.

**EXT. CABIN - NIGHT**

46

Roy sleeps on a couch on the front porch. Crickets hum.

46

**INT. CABIN - CONTINUING**

47

Eleanor tosses and turns on a roll away bed.

47

48

**INT. CABIN BEDROOM - CONTINUING**

48

Franklin lies in bed staring up at the ceiling.

**INT. MERIWETHER INN - DINING ROOM - DAY**

49

49

A handful of guests are spread out in a huge dining room. Franklin and Eleanor sit together. He is eating heartily, but Eleanor merely moves her food around.

**ELEANOR**

This is simply revolting.

**FRANKLIN**

It's not very good, but it is mysterious.

(holding out his plate)

What in the world do you think they've poured over this chicken? Or is it possum?

Eleanor sizes Franklin up. She knows this is a preamble.

**H**

33.

**ELEANOR**

You want to stay.

**FRANKLIN**

Yes.

**ELEANOR**

New York has the best doctors and hospitals in the country.

**F**

**RANKLIN**

I need something new.

**ELEANOR**

This isn't about getting better is it? You don't want to come home. You don't want to live with us.

**FRANKLIN**

I refuse to be a burden to anyone.

**ELEANOR**

You're not a burden, you're my husband.

e reaches out and takes her hand in his.

**FRANKLIN**

I want to offer you the freedom you  
once so generously offered me.

(she pulls it away)

All you've ever known is duty. To  
me and to a political career that  
unless I can walk no longer exists.  
You've been exemplary. Now I'm  
telling you you're free to go.

**ELEANOR**

(her voice rising)

No.

(a beat)

I don't want freedom. I want a  
marriage. I want a life with you.

Franklin won't let himself believe it.

**FRANKLIN**

I can't imagine what you think that  
life is going to be.

This takes the wind out of Eleanor.

34.

**ELEANOR**

Oh Franklin... it's not up to me to  
imagine, it's up to you.

Eleanor folds her napkin and gets up from the table.

**EXT. COTTAGE DRIVEWAY - DAY**

50

50

Pete helps Eleanor into his livery wagon.

Franklin watches from the porch as Eleanor rides away. Her  
suitcase slides across the open wagon bed, as the wagon makes  
the tight turn from the driveway onto the main road.

**ON ELEANOR**

Looking out -- straight ahead.

**ON FRANKLIN**

Alone and scared as he watches the wagon fade from sight.

51

51

**INT. HYDE PARK - DAY**

Eleanor is pouring tea for Louis, who is seated.

**ELEANOR**

Thank you for stopping by, Mr. Howe.

**LOUIS**

I thought you might want to see a friendly face.

(off the silence)

So how's our boy doing?

**ELEANOR**

Well, he's enjoying the waters very much. He...

(suddenly overwhelmed)

I think we've lost him.

Her pent-up tears burst in a free-flow. Louis leads her to a nearby settee and hands her his handkerchief.

**E**

**LEANOR**

Please excuse me, Mr. Howe.

**LOUIS**

Don't you think it's time you called me Louis?

**ELEANOR**

Louis.

**E**

35.

**LOUIS**

Maybe we've been going about this all wrong. He's down there to be alone so let's give him what he wants. We change our focus.

**LEANOR**

To what?

Louis smiles, knowingly.

**LOUIS**

To you.

**EXT. COTTAGES - SUNSET**

The row of abandoned cottages look strangely pretty, aglow in the setting sun.

53

53

**EXT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Franklin is seated on the ramshackle porch in his chair. His cigarette hangs from his lip as he mixes martinis in a glass milk bottle. He pours one for Tom, then himself.

**FRANKLIN**

To your mineral pool, or whatever you call it.

**TOM**

Warm Springs.

They clink their glasses. Tom takes a polite sip, then chokes back the bad taste.

**FRANKLIN**

Too strong?

**TOM**

Haven't been in a drinking mood lately.

**FRANKLIN**

I have.

**TOM**

Actually, its the most god-awful martini I've ever tasted.

**FRANKLIN**

Are you always this direct, Tom?

36.

**TOM**

Well, I never tasted a martini this bad before.

Franklin takes another sip, checking. It tastes fine to him.

**FRANKLIN**

(hurt)  
Everyone likes my martinis...

**TOM**

So they say.

**INT. COTTAGE - MORNING**

54

Franklin's bed is already empty.

54

**EXT. POOL - MORNING**

55

Aunt Sally is seated, talking with Roy while Franklin lies on his back in the water, swimming. All his movement comes from his shoulders and arms. The morning sun streams down on him.

55

Tom sits off to one side reading the newspaper.

**FRANKLIN**

Tell me more about what that boy did, Aunt Sally.

**AUNT SALLY**

Well, first he'd always swim over to the side of the pool and hold himself there -- make sure he righted himself. Then... before he knew it... he'd be standing.

**FRANKLIN**

If it was only that easy.

**AUNT SALLY**

Well, you make it hard. Get over to the side of that pool and grab it.

**FRANKLIN**

(  
humoring her)  
Yes, ma'am.

**AUNT SALLY**

Now you got to remember how you did it.

Franklin holds the edge of the pool, closing his eyes.

**F**

37.

For a long moment there is silence. Almost without realizing it, Franklin lets go of the edge of the pool.

When he opens his eyes -- he is standing -- all by himself in the water.

**FRANKLIN**

(a nervous laugh)  
I'm standing.

His laughter gets stronger. Tom, Aunt Sally and Roy look on.

**FRANKLIN**

I'm standing.

The release is powerful as Franklin dissolves into tears.

**EXT. COTTAGE PORCH - EVENING**

56

56

Tom, who's been mixing cocktails, hands Franklin a drink and lifts his glass.

**TOM**

To standing on your own two feet!

They clink and drink.

**FRANKLIN**

This water could be the cure -- the  
cure! In six months I could be up  
and walking!

Lionel, the mailman, comes down the path carrying a  
flashlight, reading an open letter.

**LIONEL**

Evening folks.

**FRANKLIN**

Cocktail, Lionel?

**LIONEL**

I can't. I'm working for the  
federal government.

**FRANKLIN**

All the more reason.  
(shoving a drink at him)  
Sort of late for the mail, isn't it?

**F**

**L**

**LIONEL**

Not for me it isn't. Got a whole packet of clippings for you, Mr. Roosevelt. From a Mr. Howe. New York Times, Journal-American... don't know what else.

He hands an already opened letter to Franklin.

**LIONEL**

Your mother wants to know when you're coming home. She says they got swimming pools in Hyde Park. She's mad as all hell.

**FRANKLIN**

Reading other people's mail is not only impolite, it's illegal.

**LIONEL**

Sheriff don't mind. He likes I read his mail. Saves him the time. Plus a lot of folks around here can't read, so it's more a public service, really.

**FRANKLIN**

Astonishing. Thank you, Lionel.

He hands Lionel a letter.

**LIONEL**

(reading)

"Miss Missy LeHand." Who's she?

**F**

**RANKLIN**

If you must know, she's my social secretary.

(to Tom)

I'm having her come down.

Lionel reaches into his bag.

**LIONEL**

Almost forgot... your wife wrote the nicest letter. She's gonna make a speech at the League of Women

Voters.

**FRANKLIN**

Give me that.

(

39.

He hands the letter to Franklin who immediately begins reading.

**LIONEL**

(to Tom)

Says she's gonna keep the Roosevelt name alive. Least till he starts walkin' and all.

Lionel takes the letter Franklin just handed him, opens it, flicks his flashlight back on and continues on his way.

**FRANKLIN**

(studying the letter)

This is so unlike Eleanor. She's terrified of crowds.

**CUT TO:**

57

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

57

Louis and Eleanor approach a set of double doors.

**ELEANOR**

We are facing imminent disaster.

**LOUIS**

I take full responsibility if you hyperventilate or faint.

They enter the room.

**INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

58

At a lectern, behind which a banner reads "LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS," the CHAIRWOMAN sees them and waves them forward.

58

**CHAIRWOMAN**

Ah, here she is now. Ladies, Mrs.

Franklin Roosevelt.

A small crowd of about two dozen women offer up polite, but scant applause for Eleanor.

**ELEANOR**

Good afternoon. I am so pleased to  
be invited here today.  
looking down at her  
cards)  
Too often....

A PHOTOGRAPHER snaps a picture which throws Eleanor off.

40.

**ELEANOR**

Too often...

She stops. The pause is deadly. Louis looks ready to jump out a window. Eleanor continues, her voice still pitched too high.

**ELEANOR**

Too often the great decisions are  
originated and given form in bodies  
made up wholly of men...

Slowly, she begins to find her voice.

**ELEANOR**

So that whatever political value  
women have to offer is shunted  
aside... without expression.

**T**

his is a mistake.

She looks up from her cards and stares at the audience...  
and for the first time speaks spontaneously.

**ELEANOR**

I think this might be the reason I  
am having such a difficult time  
giving voice to my own thoughts  
here today.

The immediacy of her self-effacing comment charms the room.

**ELEANOR**

I'm reminded of what someone once  
said about looking at an elephant.

That it is impossible to ever see  
an entire elephant from one place --  
you must walk around it. If our  
elected leaders are to be truly  
effective then they must be willing  
to go out of their way to look  
beyond what is right in front of  
them. To see the entire elephant.  
And for that... they need our help.

The ladies applaud her, much to her relief. Louis beams.

**LATER**

At a reception following the speech, Eleanor and the  
Chairwoman are drinking tea.

**F**

41.

**CHAIRWOMAN**

That was so moving, Mrs. Roosevelt.  
The Child Welfare Amendment could  
use someone with your passion. You  
must consider being our  
spokesperson.

Eleanor looks to Louis who nods.

**ELEANOR**

Oh. It would be an honor.

**CHAIRWOMAN**

Wonderful.

59

59

**EXT. POOL - DAY**

Franklin is attempting to walk in the water, working  
diligently. Tom watches him from a few paces back.

**TOM**

Morning.

**FRANKLIN**

I walked five steps today!

**TOM**

Congratulations. Listen, Franklin,  
I got word a local reporter wants  
to do a story on you.

**RANKLIN**

I'm hardly newsworthy these days.  
(a beat)  
How did he find out I'm here?

**TOM**

Small town -- word gets out. It  
probably won't amount to more than  
a provincial puff piece but it  
might give us some free publicity  
for the Inn.

Franklin looks at Tom knowing full well he's arranged this.

**TOM**

All right, I know the gentleman.  
I'm doing him a favor. You know, I  
used to be a journalist.

**FRANKLIN**

Do you mean all this time I've been  
talking to a newspaper man?

42.

**TOM**

Not anymore. I got in a bit of  
trouble in Atlanta. Seems some of  
the editorial pieces I wrote  
offended the sensibilities of a  
local civic group. So I needed to  
lay low for a while.

**FRANKLIN**

(a beat)  
You mean the Klan? Good God, Tom...

**T**

**OM**

Thankfully, Mr. George Foster  
Peabody gave me this job...

**FRANKLIN**

Well, that explains a few things.  
For the life of me, I couldn't  
figure out why someone like you was  
running this --

**TOM**

Rat-trap?

**FRANKLIN**

(laughing, swimming off)  
I was going to say dump, but rat-trap fits nicely.

**EXT. FRANKLIN'S COTTAGE - FRONT PORCH - DAY**

60

60

Franklin is seated -- but not in his wheelchair. He wears long pants even though it's blisteringly hot.

CLEBURNE GREGORY, 28, sits across from Franklin -- a second string reporter in a three-piece suit.

**GREGORY**

Now in 1920 when you were running for Vice-President...

**FRANKLIN**

I can't imagine your readers are interested in ancient history. Cox and I lost the election by a wide margin.

**GREGORY**

It was only a few years ago, Mr. Roosevelt...

**H**

43.

**FRANKLIN**

Now it's the waters extra minerals plus its warmth that makes all the difference. At 90 degrees I can work my muscles for hours and not get cold.

**GREGORY**

As Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the Great War did you condone the use of...

**FRANKLIN**

I forgot one more thing you will need to write down. Poor circulation is a chronic problem

for people in my condition.

Gregory looks at Franklin. It's clear he's not going to get the interview he came for.

**GREGORY**

So... you think it could be a cure?

**FRANKLIN**

I don't know.

**GREGORY**

But you're hopeful?

**FRANKLIN**

Yes. I am.

**INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT**

61

61

Franklin is laid out on the bed as Roy slides the braces off his legs. Roy unlaces his shoes and slips them off his feet.

He is about to put them under the bed when Franklin motions for Roy to hand them to him.

Still flat on his back, Franklin luxuriates in the rich leather cobbled by hand. He examines their smooth, immaculate soles... worn but never walked in.

**INT. COTTAGE - MORNING**

62

62

A newspaper clipping of Eleanor in her speech to the League is taped to the wall.

We hear the sound of an Underwood typewriter clacking away and Franklin's voice, dictating.

44.

**FRANKLIN**

Therefore, a formal questionnaire should be composed in order so we may hear from all recent delegates as to how we can do better in '28 to present a more united front. Signed, Franklin Roosevelt, etc., etc.

MISSY LE HAND, 30, is sitting at a card table, typing. Brunette with some early gray, she is sturdy in build with a plain but friendly face.

**MISSY**

Very good. Do you want this out  
today? F

**FRANKLIN**

Tomorrow will be fine.

**MISSY**

Alright.

**FRANKLIN**

Thank you, Missy, and c.c. that to  
Louis.

Missy rises with a stack of envelopes and heads out.

Roy enters with a plate of pancakes in front of Franklin.

**ROY**

Hungry, Mr. Roosevelt?

**FRANKLIN**

Not really.

**ROY**

Who do you write to every morning?

**FRANKLIN**

Different people I knew in  
politics. Just in case they ever  
want me back.

**ROY**

So you'll be ready when you get  
your legs workin' again?

**FRANKLIN**

Exactly.

**45.**

There is a knock at the screen door. An earnest young man,  
BENJAMIN PRENDERGAST, 18, is peering in. He has a newspaper.

**PRENDERGAST**

Excuse me, are you Mr. Roosevelt?

**FRANKLIN**

Yes. Who are you?

Roy opens the door to Prendergast, who enters.

**PRENDERGAST**

My name is Benjamin Prendergast.

I've come to see if you could speak  
at this year's graduation ceremony  
at the schoolhouse. You being so  
famous and all.

Prendergast unfolds the newspaper. There is a picture of  
Franklin under the heading "FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT SWIMS HIS WAY  
**TO HEALTH!**"

**FRANKLIN**

I'll be damned.

**PRENDERGAST**

Would you be available?

**FRANKLIN**

(looking up)

When? Next spring?

**PRENDERGAST**

Next week. We only have a four  
month school year.

**FRANKLIN**

How is that possible?

**PRENDERGAST**

Tax dollars only cover that much.

**FRANKLIN**

Are you graduating?

**PRENDERGAST**

No, sir. I'm the principal.

**FRANKLIN**

I see.

But Franklin doesn't see.

46.

**EXT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY**

63

A small breeze or a decent rain would knock it to the ground.

63

**INT. SCHOOLROOM - CONTINUOUS**

64

A bookshelf with four books.

64

A few FARMERS and their WIVES sit with large groups of filthy  
children. They look at Franklin askance.

Prendergast stands proudly beside three GRADUATES-TO-BE.

Tom stands in the back observing.

Franklin, in his wheelchair, sits uncomfortably before the gathering. He notices a FATHER staring at his legs.

**PRENDERGAST**

Now that we're all here let me introduce to you to our guest speaker today, Mr. Franklin Roosevelt.

**FRANKLIN**

Good afternoon.

A fly begins buzzing around his head. He laughs derisively, almost to himself.

**FRANKLIN**

At Groton, where I graduated from high school, our beloved Headmaster encouraged his students to enter public life...

He looks up and catches the glazed eyes of an undernourished child which unsettles him.

**FRANKLIN**

I chose to attend Harvard for my undergraduate work and then Columbia for my law degree.

**H**

e takes in their uncomprehending expressions.

**FRANKLIN**

I followed my Headmaster's advice and sought a career in public life. But circumstances beyond my control have made that... very difficult...

**R**

He stares at his tiny audience, all of whom know something about circumstances beyond their control.

**FRANKLIN**

I've given many speeches in my life... I don't know why I'm having such a hard time making this one...

Horrified and unable to speak, Franklin seems temporarily lost, but the tiny audience doesn't seem to notice. They just see Franklin.

5

65

**INT. TOM'S AUTOMOBILE - DAY**

**FRANKLIN**

My God did you see how they were looking at me?

**TOM**

They welcomed your company, Franklin.

**FRANKLIN**

Don't patronize me.

Tom is losing his patience.

**TOM**

Don't patronize them. These people go to bed night after night with half-empty stomachs -- your legs are the least of their worries.

They continue to drive in silence.

66

66

**EXT. POOL - DAY**

It's a cold day and Franklin is swimming in the pool.

Roy is wearing a sweater. Aunt Sally is there, too, wearing a patched up coat with a scarf around her neck. Tom is nearby raking leaves.

**AUNT SALLY**

Mr. Roosevelt, aren't you cold?

**OY**

Mr. Roosevelt, you're gonna catch the chill if you don't get out of

the water.

Franklin ignores them and dips under the water as Tom comes over.

48.

**AUNT SALLY**

You got to tell him, Mr. Loyless.  
He won't listen to us.

Franklin comes up from under.

**TOM**

Franklin, we need to talk...  
Normally we close up this time of  
year and the staff goes home for  
the holidays.

Franklin looks at Tom, then at Roy and Aunt Sally,  
acknowledging.

The sound of a TRAIN WHISTLE is heard.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

67

67

**INT. HYDE PARK, NEW YORK- LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The WHISTLE is coming from a MODEL TRAIN as it zooms around a track set up on a table in the Roosevelt living room. Elliot, now 15, is mesmerized.

Sara sits at a piano between FRANKLIN, JR., 9, and JOHN, 7. They are finishing a rousing rendition of "Angels We Have Heard on High" as an enormous Christmas tree gets decorated.

JAMES, 18, is at the top of a ladder while his sister, ANNA, 19, decorates from the lowest rung.

Eleanor holds up a tiny porcelain ornament to Anna.

**ELEANOR**

Grandmother Delano brought this  
from China.

Franklin, working from his wheelchair is filling out the lower branches of the tree, his lap filled with ornaments.

**E**

**LLIOT**

Have you ever been to China,  
Father?

**FRANKLIN**

No, Elliot. Just your grandmama.

**SARA**

I adored China. It smelled of ginger cookies.

**L**

49.

**FRANKLIN, JR.**

Let's go in the backyard and dig our way there!

**SARA**

That sounds like an adventure.

Anna looks over at her father, sadly and Franklin catches her eye. She quickly looks away.

From behind his back, John, pulls out the Christmas star and places it on his father's knee.

**JOHN**

Put it on top.

Silence descends over the room. No one dares to breathe.

**ELEANOR**

Give it to James. He's the tallest.

**JOHN**

No.

**ANNA**

John, give it to him!

**JOHN**

Papa always does it.

**FRANKLIN**

I can do it.

Franklin tosses the star in an attempt to reach the top. It almost catches, but it falls to the floor.

Quickly, aiming to avoid his father's embarrassment, James

climbs back up and puts the star on top. Sara sensing the awkwardness of the moment begins to play and sing an overly cheery rendition of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."

**INT. STUDY - LATER**

68

68

Roy is spotting Franklin as he pulls himself along a set of parallel bars. Eleanor observes as Franklin uses his arms to drag his legs behind him.

**ELEANOR**

It was an extraordinary turnout this afternoon. Louis says there were over two hundred people in the audience.

50.

**FRANKLIN**

That's marvelous, Babs.

Eleanor is flushed with pride. Franklin, catching her look, slips slightly on the bars as Roy grabs hold of him.

**ROY**

I've got you, sir.

Franklin then takes note that Eleanor's expression has turned to one of pure heartbreak.

**FRANKLIN**

You wonder why I want to go back to Georgia... it's to avoid people who look at me the way you just did.

**ELEANOR**

You truly believe the waters...  
(with difficulty)  
... that they are helping?

**FRANKLIN**

Don't talk to me as if I were a child. Choosing your words so carefully...

**ELEANOR**

How am I supposed to talk to you?

**FRANKLIN**

Like I was! Talk to me like I was!

Roy turns Franklin around on the bars and they begin walking away from Eleanor.

**ELEANOR**

I don't know how anymore.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. COTTAGE - DAY**

69

69

Franklin is being lifted out of Pete's wagon by Roy and placed into his wheelchair. He sees Tom approaching.

**T  
OM**

You're a sight for sore eyes...

**FRANKLIN**

We missed you at the station...

51.

The smile on Franklin's face slips to a look of shock as he takes in Tom's changed appearance. His face is sallow and his trademark white suit is hanging on him.

**FRANKLIN**

(concerned)

Tom, are you all right?

**TOM**

It's just an ulcer. I can't eat anything I like anymore.

Roy carries the luggage into the cottage.

**FRANKLIN**

(covering)

My father had ulcers. Damn irritating.

**TOM**

Yes, they are.

A silence hangs in the air.

**TOM**

Ready to swim?

**EXT. POOL - DAY**

70

70

Franklin now dressed in his bathing suit is being wheeled by Roy. Tom follows.

**TOM**

We've got some new guests. Some paying, some non-paying...

As they get closer, Franklin is stunned by what he sees --

A DOZEN PEOPLE -- all in different groupings -- some on crutches, others in wheelchairs, are gathered around the pool.

**FRANKLIN**

What in blazes?...

**TOM**

The interview you gave was syndicated in Sunday papers all over the country.

Franklin looks up at Tom, dumbfounded.

**TOM**

They're here to see you.

**H**

52.

This news hits Franklin with the force of a sledgehammer.

PAT DOYLE, 50, is stuffed into his wheelchair with a huge cigar between his fat lips.

His eyebrows have a life of their own. He wheels himself to Franklin.

**PAT**

Mr. Roosevelt, Pat Doyle. I've come all the way from Minneapolis to shake your hand, sir.

He reaches out his hand to Franklin.

**PAT**

Stuck in this chair I do nothing but read. Newspapers, mostly. Usually I'm just looking for something -- anything -- that'll tell me there's even the slightest

chance I'll walk again.

Franklin is uncomfortable, especially as Pat won't let go of his hand.

**FRANKLIN**

I really don't know what to say.

**PAT**

Well, you're here. And we're here.  
Together... we'll think of  
something.

Franklin looks to Tom and gestures for him to come closer.

**FRANKLIN**

(whispering)  
Get me out of here.

**EXT. MERIWETHER INN - GROUNDS - DAY**

71

Franklin is pushing the chair himself along the dirt path,  
his anger propelling F  
him away from Tom.

71

**RANKLIN**

I want no part of this. I come here  
for privacy!

**TOM**

This isn't your personal spa!  
I have a business to run.

53.

**FRANKLIN**

Exactly. You have a business to  
run, not I!

**TOM**

No one's asking anything of you!

**FRANKLIN**

Of course they are!

**TOM**

Do you know what it took for most  
of them to get here?

**FRANKLIN**

It's not my concern. I want to be  
left alone!

**TOM**

My God, you're afraid of these people.

**FRANKLIN**

Afraid? What you're talking about?

**TOM**

You look at them with the same  
repulsion and pity as everyone else.

**FRANKLIN**

Don't be ridiculous. I resent your  
trying to --

**TOM**

You don't want to be around them  
because then that would make you  
one of them, wouldn't it?

Franklin furiously wheels himself back towards the cottage,  
getting stuck on the dirt path along the way.

**FRANKLIN**

God damn it!

Tom comes to his aid but he is brushed off by Franklin.

**FRANKLIN**

Out of my way! Get out of my  
goddamn way!

Franklin wheels himself off.

54.

**EXT. BULLOCHVILLE TRAIN STATION - DAY**

72

72

Franklin, in his wheelchair, smokes a cigarette. His bags are  
next to him, as is Roy. A train's whistle BLOWS and pulls in.

**ROY**

Right on time.

Franklin sees someone else on the platform. He squints in the  
distance. It's Tom.

He walks closer towards Franklin and Roy.

**TOM**

Good evening.

Franklin nods in Tom's general direction. Tom has a telegram in his hand which peaks Franklin's curiosity.

**FRANKLIN**

Expecting someone?

**TOM**

Yes.

The train comes to a complete stop. A CONDUCTOR steps out onto the platform. A single ELDERLY WOMAN gets off the train.

**TOM**

(to the Conductor)

I'm looking for a young gentleman by the name of Botts. Fred Botts?

**CONDUCTOR**

Don't know anything about that.

**TOM**

I expect he would be in a wheelchair.

**CONDUCTOR**

You mean the cripple? He's in the baggage car.

**EXT. BAGGAGE CAR - DAY**

73

73

Tom, Franklin and Roy are in front of the large door as the Conductor pushes it back slowly.

55.

**INT. BAGGAGE CAR - DAY**

74

74

Amongst crates and luggage is FRED BOTTS, a young man of fifteen lying on the floor, unconscious. A wheelchair is next to him, turned over on its side.

**FRANKLIN**

Mother of God.

Tom leaps up and into the car as does Roy leaving Franklin below. Tom takes his wrist.

**TOM**

His pulse is slow.

75

75

**EXT. STATION PLATFORM - DAY**

Roy lays Fred on a bench. Franklin wheels himself over.

**FRANKLIN**

Son, can you hear me?

Tom brings a cup of water. Franklin puts it to Fred's lips.

**FRANKLIN**

Fred?

Fred opens his eyes. They are large and brown with a sweetness to them. His face comes alive when he recognizes Franklin.

**FRED**

Mr. Roosevelt?...

**FRANKLIN**

It's going to be all right, son.

**H**

e hands Franklin a worn newspaper clipping from his pocket. The headline reads: "FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT SWIMS HIS WAY TO HEALTH!"

**FRED**

The conductor wouldn't let me ride in the passenger car with my chair.

Franklin looks at the clipping, then at Fred.

**FRANKLIN**

When did you last eat?

**FRED**

Knoxville.

56.

**TOM**

Knoxville had to be three days ago.

**FRANKLIN**

Roy, take him to the car.

As Roy lifts Fred in his arms, Franklin wheels himself to the engine car. Tom follows as they approach the CONDUCTOR.

**FRANKLIN**

Who in their right mind let's a child ride in the baggage car! You could have killed that boy.

**CONDUCTOR**

He had polio. Probably still contagious.

The Conductor walks away, dismissively. Franklin pushes his chair up and stops the Conductor in his tracks.

**FRANKLIN**

Don't dismiss me because I sit in this chair!

**CONDUCTOR**

Get away from me.

Franklin pushes the wheels of his chair with such force he knocks the Conductor over.

**FRANKLIN**

You ignorant son of a bitch. If I could, I'd get up right now and lock you in that box car! See how you like it!

**TOM**

Franklin...

The Conductor struggles to get up.

**CONDUCTOR**

Get this lunatic off me!

Franklin wheels himself towards Tom's car where Fred is now lying across the back seat. The sight of Fred drains all anger from Franklin's face.

**FRANKLIN**

Where's the nearest hospital?

57.

**TOM**

Atlanta.

**FRANKLIN**

What about a doctor?

**TOM**

Closer, but not by much.

The train whistle BLOWS.

**ROY**

Train's ready.

Franklin looks at Fred, then at Roy and Tom.

**FRANKLIN**

(quietly)

Let's go home.

**INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT**

76

76

Fred lays in Franklin's bed while Franklin sits by the bedside. Roy lays a cold compress on Fred's forehead.

**F**

Franklin is using his watch to take Fred's pulse.

Roy pulls back the sheet to give Fred air revealing his withered legs. Alabaster skin stretched over bones.

Franklin looks away.

**INT. COTTAGE - DAY**

77

77

Franklin sits at a card table with his check book in front of him. Tom stands before him, shifting uncomfortably.

**FRANKLIN**

How many can pay?

**TOM**

Fewer than half.

Franklin opens the check book and begins writing.

**FRANKLIN**

I want these people in the cottages, not in the inn. It's safer.

**TOM**

Well, it's the way it has to be.

58.

**FRANKLIN**

What do you mean?

**TOM**

I've already had some complaints.

(awkwardly)

This is the start of the season, Franklin. I've got regulars who have come for years. Healthy folks

over all... They're threatening to check out, afraid they might catch polio.

**FRANKLIN**

Such ignorance! Don't they know that after the fever breaks we are no longer contagious?

**TOM**

I'm going to have to ask that you not use the pool during regular hours. I'll put time aside for you late in the day... and it won't be possible for you to eat in the dining room either. But I promise I'll find someplace suitable.

**FRANKLIN**

They don't want us to eat in their presence?

**TOM**

Of course for you I can make other accommodations.

**FRANKLIN**

(a beat)

That won't be necessary.

Franklin goes back to writing out the check. Tom stands waiting, the sound of the pen scratching seemingly interminable. Their mutual discomfort is obvious.

Franklin rips the check from the ledger and holds it for Tom.

**TOM**

Thank you.

**FRANKLIN**

We still need a doctor here.

**TOM**

For Fred?

59.

**FRANKLIN**

(pointedly)

For everyone.

**EXT. COTTAGE - NIGHT**

78

Franklin is in his wheelchair, writing.

78

**FRANKLIN (V.O.)**

"Dear Babs, Things are very different upon my return."

7

9

**INT. HYDE PARK - DAY**

79

Eleanor sits in a chair reading Franklin's letter.

**FRANKLIN (V.O.)**

I am taking on responsibilities which none of my schooling in the spheres of higher learning or politics could have prepared me for... I have seen the casualties of war. But I have never seen this, a suffering so insidious, so silent, that it rattles my soul."

**INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT**

80

Franklin is tucking Fred in for the night.

80

**FRED**

When can I swim?

**FRANKLIN**

Soon. When you're a little stronger.

**FRED**

When I'm asleep, in my dreams, I can still walk.

**FRANKLIN**

Me too.

(a beat)

How long has it been... since you walked?

**FRED**

Nine years. I'd just learned to ride a bike. After I got sick my mom was sure that the bike had caused it.

60.

**FRANKLIN**

Did she sell it?

**FRED**

No. She took it out back and shot it.

Franklin howls with laughter, joined by Fred.

**EXT. POOL - DUSK**

81

81

Franklin is in the pool with the new guests. They are all nervously waiting to test the water.

From the looks on their faces it's clear they only want to take their cues from Franklin.

A MOTHER carries her adorable 4 year old GIRL into the water.

**FRANKLIN**

And who is this delightful child?

**DAISY**

(giggling)

Daisy.

**FRANKLIN**

All right Daisy, try and kick your legs.

Daisy wiggles back and forth in her MOTHER's arms giving it her very best effort.

**FRANKLIN**

Excellent, Daisy!

JAKE PERRINI, 32, Bronx-born with an upper body of steel wheels over to Roy who is fixing a wheelchair.

**JAKE**

Jake Perrini, Bronx, New York.

**ROY**

Roy, sir.

**JAKE**

How you doin'?

Jake reaches out his hand to shake. Roy is unsure what to do.

**JAKE**

C'mon -- I won't bite.

T

**ROY**

(shaking his hand)  
Mighty fine, sir. Mighty fine.

**JAKE**

Hey, would you mind pulling me  
outta this trap, Roy? I wanna get  
airborne.

Roy gently lifts Jake up and out of his chair, into his arms  
like a child.

**JAKE**

Do me one more favor? Throw me in?

Roy tosses Jake to the heavens and he SAILS through the air  
emitting a jungle cry of pure emotional release before  
SPLASHING down hard in the water.

**H**

e bobs up to the surface. There is applause.

**FRANKLIN**

Now folks, these exercises are of  
my own devising so bear with me.

Some laugh, some are confused. This is new territory for  
everyone.

**FRANKLIN**

My hope is that in repeating these  
movements over and over in the  
water I'm in some way causing the  
muscles to regenerate themselves  
and repair the damage.

He swims to the edge of the pool.

**FRANKLIN**

So everybody grab the edge of the  
pool and move what you can!

hey disperse, eagerly ready to do what Franklin tells them.

**FRANKLIN**

Go ahead now, do your best!

Their legs barely rise up to splash the surface. Undeterred,



Amen.

**EXT. FACTORY - DAY**

With Louis in tow, Eleanor is touring the exterior of an ironworks factory. She is the only woman in a large gathering of men.

**ELEANOR (V.O.)**

"My dear Franklin, I too am embarking on an altogether remarkable experience."

8

63.

**EXT. BUILDING - DAY**

85

85

Eleanor stands against a banner that reads "CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE." She is passing out pamphlets to a small crowd that has gathered.

**ELEANOR (V.O.)**

"It seems everywhere I go there are more people in dire need of help. It would be overwhelming if not for my deep belief that help is possible..."

**INT. NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY - DAY**

6

86

Eleanor is being introduced by Louis to members of the New York State Assembly -- all men -- eager to shake her hand.

**ELEANOR (V.O.)**

"Louis's latest flash of brilliance is to take me 'mainstream.' He said that you would know what he means by this."

**EXT. POOL - DAY**

87

87

Franklin is in the water. Roy lifts Fred out of his wheelchair and gently puts him in the shallow end. Franklin receives him. Fred's face is ecstatic as he floats on his back in the water.

**ELEANOR (V.O.)**

"I hope you are finding your work to be gratifying in both mind and heart. Your beloved, Eleanor."

**EXT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY**

88

88

A very old car comes coughing in, steam hissing from its engine.

HELENA MAHONEY, 43, gets out of the driver's seat. Her iron will is matched only by her deep reserves of empathy. She gets a good look at the Inn. This is what she has come for?

**EXT. COTTAGE PORCH - DAY**

89

89

Franklin and Roy, having finished lunch, are playing checkers. Fred is sitting nearby eating a piece of pie.

Helena approaches. Roy pulls off a triple jump.

64.

**FRANKLIN**

Damn!

**ROY**

King me.

Franklin reluctantly tops Roy's checker.

**FRED**

You're losing, Doc.

**HELENA**

Doc? I'm sorry, you're Franklin Roosevelt, aren't you?

**FRANKLIN**

Depends.  
(suspiciously)  
Are you a lawyer?

**HELENA**

No.

**FRANKLIN**

Then Roosevelt it is. Wait!

He jumps one of Roy's checkers.

**HELENA**

I'm Helena Mahoney. I'm a physical

therapist.  
(off their blank looks)  
You have no idea who I am, do you?

**FRANKLIN**

Should I?

**HELENA**

I wrote you a letter right after I  
saw the article in the paper.  
Didn't you read it?

**FRANKLIN**

It got read, I assure you. But  
probably not by me.

Helena glances down at the checkerboard and points to it.

**HELENA**

(to Roy)  
He's open right there.

65.

**ROY**

He sure is.

Roy trounces Franklin with three swift moves.

**ROY**

Thank you, ma'am.

Helena sits at the table with them.

**HELENA**

I've been studying the effects of  
moist heat on polio patients and I  
think with repeated exercise in  
warm water...

**FRANKLIN**

It can help them regain lost  
strength.

**HELENA**

Yes.

**FRANKLIN**

Incredibly I've come to the same  
conclusion myself.

**HELENA**

(a half-smile)  
Well, you're the doctor.

90

90

**EXT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY**

Helena is wheeling Franklin around the grounds.

**HELENA**

No ramps, no running water, no doctors... from the article in the newspaper I assumed this was a rehabilitation center.

**F**

**RANKLIN**

Don't believe everything you read.

**HELENA**

I feel like I was brought here under false pretenses.

**FRANKLIN**

Join the club.

(

66.

**INT. A BARN - DAY**

91

91

Franklin lies across a makeshift examining table. Helena's examination is in progress.

She is completely absorbed -- all business -- pouring over his muscles inch by inch. She kneads, bends and stretches them with a laser-like focus, finally picking up Franklin's leg and rotating it out and around.

**HELENA**

Push against my hand.

Franklin, with difficulty, tries to do so.

**FRANKLIN**

Give me the good news first.

**HELENA**

Your gluteus maximus is better than I hoped. It will serve you well.

**FRANKLIN**

Must be all that sitting.

**HELENA**

I'm serious. Your right leg has some movement along the thigh. That's good because we can use it to help extend your hip, flex your knee and rotate your tibia.

**FRANKLIN**

I'm supposed to walk on one side?

**HELENA**

The water may help build some strength I'm not able to see yet. But to do that you would need to swim in the water much of the day. Not the limited hours you have now.  
a beat)  
Why should this place cater to a few able-bodied folk when it could be opened year round with polios?

**EXT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY**

92

92

Tom is pushing Franklin in his wheelchair.

**FRANKLIN**

There's a need for a place like this, Tom.

**(MORE)**

67.

Are you aware NKLIN(cont'd)  
FRA that in the last epidemic over 16,000 people got polio in the New York area alone?

**TOM**

Sounds like you've been reading up.

**FRANKLIN**

I wish there was more to read. Damn few things being written about any of this. To think of someone like Fred... locked away... his mind and heart so vibrant...

**TOM**

It's a waste. An awful waste.

Franklin takes a beat -- the weight of this sinking in.

**FRANKLIN**

What's the acreage here?

**TOM**

Roughly twelve hundred or so. Why?

**FRANKLIN**

I want to buy it. I think it would make one hell of an investment.

**TOM**

Investment?

**FRANKLIN**

Twelve hundred acres? Enough for two resorts, don't you think?

**TOM**

It would take money. There's a lot of land, rebuilding the inn, adding ramps and so many people can't pay...

**FRANKLIN**

(undeterred)

Do you think old Peabody will sell?

**TOM**

He'll sell.

**FRANKLIN**

How can you be so sure?

**TOM**

Have you taken a look at this place?

68.

**INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY**

93

Franklin sits in his chair at a desk.

93

**FRANKLIN**

(full of charm)

Peabody you old reprobate! How are you?

Tom is pacing back and forth

**FRANKLIN**

You'll never guess why I'm calling.

**EXT. MERIWETHER INN - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY**

94

94

Helena is training a group of YOUNG MEN how to lift and carry using a raven haired young woman, ELOISE HUTCHISON, 18, as the test model. She sits shyly in her wheelchair before them.

**HELENA**

Woodhall, this is Eloise. Lift her gently.

WOODHALL BUSEY, 17, has bright red hair and a face full of freckles. Over six feet tall he has spent his life working in the fields.

W

**WOODHALL**

Yes, ma'am.

He picks Eloise up effortlessly, then sets her back down.

**HELENA**

Very good! Watch her braces.

Woodhall kneels before Eloise like Prince Charming, carefully straightening out her legs.

**WOODHALL**

You're light as a ...

He notices the long jagged scars along Eloise's wrists. Eloise, sensing his eyes, self-consciously pulls down her sleeves. He stares at her questioningly.

**ELOISE**

(looking away)

I was a dancer...

Tom and Franklin come out. Franklin gives a questioning look to Helena, pondering how these boys have suddenly appeared.

**T**

69.

**HELENA**

Good news... I raided the pool hall. I call them my Push Boys.

**FRANKLIN**

Welcome Push Boys! Good day, Eloise.

**ELOISE**

Hello, Mr. Roosevelt.

**TOM**

Want to tell them your good news?

Franklin is smiling like the cat that ate the canary.

**FRANKLIN**

It's hardly a done deal, but for better or worse, you may be looking at the new owner of this God-forsaken place.

**INT. COTTAGE - EVENING**

95

95

A free wheeling game of poker. Heavy with cigarette and cigar smoke, Franklin, Tom, Fred, Jake and Pat are playing.

**PAT**

Polio's always going to be a losing financial proposition, but it doesn't mean you shouldn't buy the place.

**FRANKLIN**

I am buying it. Make no mistake about that.

**PAT**

Good for you, Doc.

**FRED**

If you don't mind my asking, how will people pay for the services you are going to offer here? Most people with polio have a hard enough time making ends meet as it is.

**OM**

(gently)

The boy makes a good point, Franklin.

**FRANKLIN**

Not everything in this world has to be about profits.

**P**

**TOM**

I'll see your twenty-five and raise you twenty-five.

**J**

**AKE**

C'mon will ya! The night's still young.

**TOM**

It's twenty-five cents not twenty-five dollars.

**PAT**

Don't mind him, Tom. He's a cheap bastard.

Fred and Pat fold immediately as does Franklin.

**FRANKLIN**

Too rich for my blood.

**JAKE**

(to Tom)

Fine! Here's your twenty-five! You better have something.

They eyeball each other. Gunfight at the O.K. Corral.

**TOM**

Take it. I was bluffing.

Gleefully, Jake slaps his hands together and rakes in the pot.

**AT**

(handing Franklin a fresh deck)

Your deal, Doc.

**FRANKLIN**

Very well. Gentlemen, the game is Five Card Stud, sevens are wild.

Everyone groans.

**FRANKLIN**

Sevens are wild and you can all go to Hell!

The sun is about to rise. Tom's car is parked in front of the Inn, pulled up very close to the main entrance. The trunk is open.

71.

Tom, struggling with a suitcase, comes down the ramp. He deposits it in the trunk and then walks precariously back up the ramp, having difficulty navigating the incline.

He goes back into the house for one last bag. When he comes out, he's surprised by what he sees --

**FRANKLIN (O.S.)**

Where do you think you're going?

Franklin is being pushed by Roy in his wheelchair. They are both dressed in pajamas and bathrobes, though Franklin has a blanket around his shoulders to shield him from the morning chill.

Tom is caught. This is everything he wanted to avoid.

**TOM**

Going to Asheville to see my  
parents.

From the sight of Tom's car stuffed with luggage, it is clear he is not coming back.

**FRANKLIN**

I can't do this without you...  
we're only just beginning.

**TOM**

You. (You're beginning, not me.  
a beat)  
I've got cancer, Franklin. It's  
spread everywhere.

Franklin is stunned -- utterly thrown.

**FRANKLIN**

I... I'll take you to the best doctors.  
We'll go to Atlanta right now --

**TOM**

I've seen the best doctors. When  
you were in New York they opened me  
up for the second time. Now I just

want to die in the bed I was born.

Franklin is struggling with this.

**TOM**

You're going to do great things.  
This place has an identity now --  
a purpose. It has you.

72.

Any guard Franklin had is gone. He reaches out and takes Tom by the sleeve slipping his hand into Tom's gripping it tightly.

**TOM**

Take care of yourself, Roy.

**ROY**

God be with you, Mr. Loyless.

Tom takes one last look at Franklin.

**FRANKLIN**

You never pitied me. Thank you for that.

**TOM**

On the contrary, I envy you.

**FRANKLIN**

I will miss you all the days of my  
life.

Tom gets into his car and looks at Franklin with a smile.

**TOM**

Good luck, Franklin.

With a wave he slowly lurches down the long driveway and turns onto the main road. Franklin watches the car until it is out of sight.

**INT. HYDE PARK, NEW YORK - LIBRARY - DAY**

97

Sara paces wildly, waving a letter at Eleanor and Louis.

97

**SARA**

He wants to use his entire trust  
fund to buy that... leper colony!

**ELEANOR**

Franklin has invited Louis and me  
to see the work he's been doing.

**SARA**

(derisively)  
Work! Playing in a pool all day  
long? Squandering his birthright on  
a group of fawning strangers? I  
consider this your fault, Eleanor!

**ELEANOR**

I beg your pardon, Mama?

73.

**SARA**

You have indulged him and this is  
the result.

**ELEANOR**

(challenging her)  
Indulged him? I have indulged him?

Sara looks away.

**ELEANOR**

He's a grown man who makes his own  
decisions.

**SARA**

But he does not need to buy it.

**ELEANOR**

If it's of any comfort to you, I  
agree.

**LOUIS**

I'm against it as well. It will  
consume too much of his time and  
energy.

**SARA**

Then it is settled. We tell him no.

**ELEANOR**

No, it is not settled. We must hear  
him out. Louis and I must see for  
ourselves the work that he has been  
doing then we will all discuss this  
further.

(a beat)

**A**

nd tell him no.

They all look at each other for a moment. For once they agree.

**SARA**

Perhaps I have underestimated you.

**ELEANOR**

Perhaps you have. But that has been my fault, not yours.

**EXT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY**

98

98

Fred, on crutches, swings himself up using one side and then the next under Helena's supervision.

74.

**HELENA**

Excellent, Fred! Keep going...

They are surrounded by many others, Franklin, Eloise, Woodhall, Pat and Jake.

The BEEPING of a car horn gets their immediate attention.

Roy leaps off the porch, skipping the stairs as his brother Pete drives up in Tom's car. He parks it and steps out.

**PETE**

Morning, Mr. Roosevelt.

**FRANKLIN**

Peter, what are you doing with Tom's car?

**PETE**

I was as sorry as anyone to hear about Mr. Loyless's passing. Wished he coulda' lived to see this!

**FRANKLIN**

What are you talking about?

**PETE**

Mr. Loyless had me come up and fetch this right after he brung it to Asheville. "Pete, he said, "Take this home and fix it up for Mr. Roosevelt."

**FRANKLIN**

Pete... I can't drive a car.

**PETE**

You can now.

Roy opens the passenger door and lifts Franklin into the driver's seat.

**PETE**

Get on in and I'll teach ya'!

He begins showing off a system of pulleys and levers that have been attached to both pedals. They thread through holes in a second dashboard, attached to polished wood knobs. It's a hand-controlled automobile.

**PETE**

That one there is your brake.

75.

**FRANKLIN**

Got it.

**PETE**

And this here's the gas.

**FRED**

Hot damn! You got hand controls.

**PAT**

That is a thing of beauty!

Franklin begins running his hands over the polished wood knobs.

**PETE**

Now you got to push it real smooth  
or it goes all herky-jerky.

Franklin excitedly turns the key and starts it up.

**PETE**

Wait, Mr. Roosevelt, you're not  
ready to drive yet!

**FRANKLIN**

Oh, yes I am!

Franklin hits the gas as the car begins HALTING and JERKING the whole way down the driveway. Pete is yelling out instructions but Franklin ignores him.

They all watch as he pulls away.

As the car hits the end of the driveway Franklin reaches across Pete and opens his passenger door pushing him out. Franklin tears off alone -- out on his first solo spin.

**OVER MUSIC:**

**99**                    **EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**                    **99**  
**F**  
Franklin is driving by himself with the top down, thrilled to be moving on his own. No one is pushing him. He's free. The car covers miles of farmland, passing pine forests, peach orchards and cotton fields.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**100**                    **EXT. BULLOCHVILLE TRAIN STATION - MORNING**                    **100**  
A spent and anxious Eleanor, with Louis in tow, stands on the station platform, suitcase in hand.

**76.**

**LOUIS**

It's a far cry from Grand Central Station.

They are both silent for a moment.

**ELEANOR**

The wire said someone would be here to pick us up.

The sounds of tires screeching and a car horn cause them to turn around.

It is Franklin, sitting in the driver's seat of his car.

**FRANKLIN**

Your chariot awaits, Madame!

Louis promptly drops the luggage. Then he and Eleanor walk over to the car, taking in the hand-controls.

**LOUIS**

When did you learn to drive this thing?

**FRANKLIN**

Tuesday!

**101**                    **EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**                    **101**

Franklin drives wild and fast. Louis hat flies right off his head. Eleanor just holds on.

**EXT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY**

102

102

Franklin, Eleanor and Louis pull up to the Inn. Though the brush has been cleared and the trees are newly trimmed, it's still a wreck. Franklin is too proud to concede Louis and Eleanor's disappointment.

**FRANKLIN**

Can't wait to give you the tour!

**EXT. GROUNDS - DAY**

103

103

Franklin wheels himself along the circular driveway, pointing things out, almost manic in his energy.

**FRANKLIN**

A small schoolhouse will go there. We need it badly as many of the children are barred from the local schools due to their infirmities.

77.

He points to a dilapidated gardener's shed.

**FRANKLIN**

We also require a blacksmith's shop so we can craft braces here on the premises. I've found a wonderful local man who can make crutches and canes. His work is outstanding. Of course what is most desperately needed is a hospital. That's going to put my fund raising abilities to the test.

Franklin wheels himself up a ramp to the Inn as Eleanor and Louis follow.

**INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

104

104

Surrounded by peeling wallpaper and threadbare furniture

**E**

Eleanor and Louis exchange glances.

**LEANOR**

What exactly are you proposing, Franklin?

**FRANKLIN**

That this will be the first polio rehabilitation and treatment center in the world. My personal trust almost covers the price of the Inn and the surrounding land. There will be a modest tuition charged to the patients which should hold us over while I seek out investors.

**LOUIS**

Franklin, you're risking everything you have...

**ELEANOR**

And there are other costs to consider.

**FRANKLIN**

Mama will see that the children are provided for.

**ELEANOR**

I'm not speaking of money.

78.

**FRANKLIN**

I have found something here which makes waking up in the morning remotely bearable and the two of you stand there...

**ELEANOR**

Franklin, I need for you to be practical and realistic.

**FRANKLIN**

(furious)

Practical? I am trapped inside a body that no longer moves of my own volition. I am trying to be practical. Now either you're with me or against me. In or out!

**ELEANOR**

I don't care for ultimatums disguised as debate.

Eleanor starts to leave.

**FRANKLIN**

Where are you going? Eleanor! Get back here.

**ELEANOR**

I will see you gentlemen tonight.

She leaves.

**LOUIS**

You can't talk to her like that.

**FRANKLIN**

Oh really? Are you an expert on this now? How should I speak to my wife, Louis?

**LOUIS**

With the respect she deserves.

(a beat)

Look, I don't deny the work you're doing here could be important --

**FRANKLIN**

Could be?

79.

**LOUIS**

The issue is whether you want to run a rehabilitation center or whether you want to run for office again.

**FRANKLIN**

When I can walk, I'll run.

**EXT. POOL - DAY**

105

105

Eleanor approaches the pool. It is as quiet as a church. She is stunned to observe over a dozen tables set up in the water.

On each table is a child or an adult polio wearing their bathing suit. Next to them is a Physical Therapist also in bathing attire conducting therapy. In hushed tones the Physical Therapists encourage and work the distressed limbs of the patients as Helena swims to each table overseeing the work being done.

Eleanor sits down in a chair and watches fascinated.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

106

106

The camera pans various tables revealing legs in braces, legs in wheelchairs, shapely legs, flaccid legs, children's legs... some reveal illicit romances, betrayed by secret hand holding and hands on thighs.

Jake and a new physical therapist, MARY BETH, are particularly cozy.

**FRANKLIN (O.S.)**

This is a very special night we're celebrating. At last we are together eating in this dining room!

The hands come up and out from under the table, applauding.

**ON FRANKLIN**

He is in his wheelchair dressed in a jacket and tie.

**FRANKLIN**

Now please join me in welcoming Miss Jackie Mills, a new arrival along with her father, Samuel, all the way from Oakland, California.

80.

**CLOSE-UP ON JACKIE**

Eight years old with black hair. Her legs are in braces and she grips her father's hand tightly.

**ON FRANKLIN**

**FRANKLIN**

Let us also take this opportunity to welcome our two able-bodied guests, Mr. Louis Howe and my better half, Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt.

**ON ELEANOR AND LOUIS**

Waving politely from their seats.

**FRANKLIN**

Now for the musical portion of our program...

**JAKE**

Wait a minute! I can't let this

opportunity pass without saying out  
loud what a lot of us feel in our  
hearts right now.

(a beat)

You're a man among men, Franklin.

**A WOMAN'S VOICE**

And women!

**DAISY**

And children!

**JAKE**

(laughing)

It's a real democracy at Warm  
Springs -- everybody gets heard!

(to Franklin)

You listening?

Eleanor, seated next to Franklin, watches as Franklin, in a rare moment of emotional nakedness, is at a loss for words.

**JAKE**

All right then, if I may do the  
honors of presenting to you the  
lovely Miss Eloise Hutchison of  
Cottage C.

Eloise wheels herself out. In a sweet, but untrained voice, she begins the introduction to her song:

81.

**ELOISE**

(singing)

"Think of what you're losing by  
constantly refusing to dance with me.

**Y**

Aou'd be the idol of France with me.

nd yet you stand there

And shake your foolish head dramatically,

**W**

hile I sit here so ecstatically.

You just look and say emphatically:

Not this season!

There's a reason!"

Some members of the audience begin to smile, knowing what's coming. Various STAFF step out from the kitchen to watch.

Eloise is joined by three others -- all of them in wheelchairs.

**ELOISE & CHORUS**

(singing)

"I won't dance! Don't ask me!  
I won't dance! Don't ask me;  
I won't dance, monsieur, with you."

Simple, but clever choreography utilizing the wheelchairs,  
has the audience cheering.

**ELOISE & CHORUS**

"My heart won't let my feet do

**C**

things they should do."

**HORUS**

"You know what? You're lovely."

**ELOISE**

"And so what? I'm lovely."

**CHORUS**

"But oh! What you do to me!  
I'm like an ocean wave that's  
bumped on the shore;  
I feel so absolutely stumped on the  
floor!"

This is too much for the crowd, including Franklin, Eleanor  
and Louis. They laugh and cry in equal measure at the sight  
of Eloise and her Chorus.

The song finished, Franklin quiets down the crowd.

82.

**FRANKLIN**

Before we say good night,  
I understand our Royal-Taskmaster-  
in-Residence, Miss Mahoney, insists  
on having the last word.

Helena rises from her seat.

**HELENA**

I don't think words describe  
adequately what Daisy and I would  
like to show all of you.  
(calling out)  
Are you ready, Daisy?

Daisy's mother, Cecile, carries Daisy to the center of the  
room where Helena meets them. Helena bends down and removes

Daisy's braces.

The room is hushed.

Daisy then begins to WALK tentatively towards her mother.

**ON FRANKLIN**

Overwhelmed by what is taking place. He looks around and takes in the sight of so many different faces...

Some are beaming, some are fighting back tears, some look away... the sight of it almost too painful... a reminder of their own private battles.

**ON DAISY**

Only a step or two away from her mother she FALLS the short distance and lands in her mother's outstretched arms.

WILD CHEERS go up in the room while Daisy's face glows with pride. She connects with Franklin, who matches her smile with his own -- genuine and beatific.

**INT. COTTAGE - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

107

107

Roy lifts Franklin out of the wheelchair and on to the bed.

Eleanor enters holding a lit candle.

Roy is about to begin Franklin's bedtime routine, but Eleanor gently reaches out and touches him on the arm.

**ELEANOR**

Let me.

83.

Roy looks to Franklin, who nods it's all right, and exits. Eleanor closes the door and puts the candle on the bureau.

**A**

After a beat, Franklin begins to unbuckle his pants. He then lies back on the bed.

**ELEANOR**

What is your most pressing concern?

Eleanor kneels before him and tugs the pants down, slowly, so as not to catch on the braces.

Eleanor folds the pants and carefully places them over the back of a chair.

**FRANKLIN**

Getting a doctor to live on the premises full-time. Someone who, at the very least, could monitor our progress. Make us legitimate.

She begins to take off Franklin's braces -- a series of intricate buckles.

Eleanor slides the braces off his legs. His legs, though now deeply tanned are withered and spindly. He is still wearing his shoes.

**ELEANOR**

And that costs more money.

**FRANKLIN**

Yes.

Eleanor puts the heavy braces against the wall and kneels once again to untie his shoelaces.

**FRANKLIN**

But the real problem is no one is interested. The annual Orthopedics Convention is being held in Atlanta this weekend and I offered to speak.

(his anger surfacing)

They turned me down flat.

Eleanor takes Franklin's pajama bottoms off the bed and with tender care pulls them up his legs.

84.

**ELEANOR**

A few weeks ago, the conditions at a garment factory on West 27th Street were brought to my attention. The owners claimed everything was satisfactory, but would never let anyone in to conduct a proper inspection.

She reaches for Franklin's hands and pulls him up to a seated position. They are now face to face.

**ELEANOR**

It took awhile, but we finally got in.

**FRANKLIN**

We?

He searches her face for clues as to the woman she's become. He starts to unbutton his shirt and put on his pajama top.

Eleanor sits in a chair across from him.

**ELEANOR**

I showed up with someone from the Labor Board and we refused to leave until they let us in.

**FRANKLIN**

What are you suggesting?

**ELEANOR**

At the risk of my good standing with the Junior Assistance League, I suggest we crash the party.

She stands and walks over to Franklin and runs her hand through his hair. E

**LEANOR**

Good night, Franklin.

She goes to the door and opens it letting in a shaft of light against the candle-lit room.

**FRANKLIN**

Good night, Babs.

She blows the candle out and closes the door.

**E**

85.

**EXT. ATLANTA STREET - DAY**

108

108

Franklin's car pulls up to a massive stone building built in Greek revival style. Franklin looks intimidated -- there are two dozen stairs leading up to the main entrance.

**EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS**

109

109

Roy climbs the stairs like a stevedore with Franklin slung over his shoulder. Using enormous force, Eleanor is pulling the chair up and over each step while walking backwards up

the stairs.

**INT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY**

110

110

The stage is lit with a skeleton hanging on a stand and large projections on a screen of spinal discs while a DOCTOR, in a dull litany, intones a prepared speech.

**DOCTOR**

A clinical situation where the radicular or nerve root is compressed by the prolapsed disc is referred to as a radiculopathy.

Double doors fly open with a BANG as all heads turn to see Franklin and Eleanor.

**ELEANOR**

So sorry we're late!

**FRANKLIN**

Good afternoon!

Eleanor talks quickly while wheeling Franklin down the aisle.

**ELEANOR**

(introducing herself)  
Eleanor Roosevelt, niece of the late President Theodore Roosevelt and this is my husband, Franklin, former Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

**FRANKLIN**

(sotto to Eleanor)  
Are you sure this worked on 27th Street?

**LEANOR**

(under her breath)  
It seemed to at the time.

86.

They reach the befuddled Doctor on stage whose name tag reads, "Dr. Bissell."

**ELEANOR**

Thank you, Dr. Bissell for agreeing to let us share the stage with you today. It was so generous of you.

Dr. Bissell smiles limply, saving face. The audience vaguely

applauds. Franklin and Eleanor are now center stage.

**ELEANOR**

My husband, as many of you may have read, is a victim of polio. However, victim is only a definition, not a state of mind. Franklin?

He looks at her completely amazed. Eleanor gives him an

**F**

encouraging nod to take over.

**RANKLIN**

We all know that poor circulation is a chronic problem for limbs damaged by polio... I've never been able to swim more than a few minutes without becoming too cold. But there's a place, gentlemen... a miraculous place not three hours from here where the water is filled with natural minerals at a temperature of almost 90 degrees. That place, gentlemen, is called Warm Springs.

**CLOSE-UP**

One DOCTOR in particular, 60's, leans forward in his chair, listening with great interest.

**FRANKLIN**

Patients can stay in these waters for up to an hour. This is essential in allowing them the time to work on strengthening their muscles.

**ELEANOR**

We have come to the shared conclusion that research for the cause and the cure for infantile paralysis is paramount.

**(MORE)**

87.

However, until NOR(cont'd)  
ELEA that day arrives  
more emphasis has be placed on  
rehabilitation. We personally  
invite you to Warm Springs to come

and take a look. Thank you.

**ON THE AUDIENCE**

These "men of science" are mesmerized by Eleanor's style, both warm and immediate. She has disarmed them with her lack of pretension.

ON FRANKLIN and ELEANOR

Their two separate journeys intersecting -- lightning in a bottle.

**INT. LOBBY - DAY**

111

111

There is a receiving line in place to get a last word or an autograph with Franklin and Eleanor. DR. WILLIS, bespectacled, speaks with them.

**DR. WILLIS**

I saw you speak at the Legion Hall in Cleveland last Spring.

**ELEANOR**

For the League of Women Voters?

**DR. WILLIS**

You created quite a stir. Not sure you'll be asked back.

Franklin is ready to intervene but Eleanor puts her hand on

**E**

his shoulder stopping him.

**ELEANOR**

(all smiles)

Well, I believe you must say what you feel in your heart -- what you feel is right, for you'll be criticized anyway. Damned if you do -- damned if you don't.

DR. HEBERT, military in bearing -- the doctor who listened so intensely -- steps up in line and shakes hands with Eleanor and then Franklin.

**DR. HEBERT**

Dr. Peter Hebert. I've been doing my own studies in this area.

**(MORE)**

DR. HEBERT(cont'd)  
If it is possible I'd like to come  
and make an evaluation for the  
Journal of Orthopedic Medicine.

Franklin looks to Eleanor, elated.

**FRANKLIN**

The sooner the better.

**EXT. FRANKLIN'S CAR - TWILIGHT**

112

112

Roy is fast asleep tucked around the wheelchair in the back seat.

Franklin smiles in Eleanor's direction. She looks back at him shyly and smiles in return. But her expression changes when she sees something in his eyes -- something she hasn't seen for a long time.

**ELEANOR**

What is it?

**FRANKLIN**

(a beat)

Who are you?

Franklin reaches out and takes her hand, pulling her close. He stretches his whole arm around her and places her hand on one of the driving knobs, his hand on top of hers.

**ELEANOR**

I don't know how to drive.

**FRANKLIN**

I'll teach you.

They operate the car together -- their connection complete.

**EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY**

113

113

Franklin and Eleanor are sitting in the front seat of the car. Louis is already up on the train platform.

**ELEANOR**

I'll break the news to Mama.

Franklin smiles as they look at each other like two naughty children.

**ELEANOR**

I think it's going to be fun.

Eleanor bursts out laughing, Franklin joins in.

**F**

89.

**FRANKLIN**

Babs... words fail me.

**ELEANOR**

You? Franklin Roosevelt?

She leans in and kisses Franklin on the mouth.

**ELEANOR**

I do so love you.

She slides out of the car and goes up to the platform and  
**A**  
boards the train while Franklin watches her.

Farmer and his Wife from the school house graduation  
approach Franklin.

**ARMER**

Mr. Roosevelt you lookin' mighty fit.

**FARMER'S WIFE**

Fine day, isn't it.

**FRANKLIN**

It is. How's the Boll Weevil  
situation?

**FARMER'S WIFE**

I expect the Boll Weevil is always  
gonna be a situation, Mr.  
Roosevelt, but thanks for askin'.

Franklin's energy and vitality are infectious. The politician  
within him is being reborn.

**INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY**

114

114

A beaming Eleanor sits down next to Louis. He too is looking  
very pleased. Eleanor takes notice.

**ELEANOR**

Why do I get the feeling we're not smiling about the same thing?

The train begins pulling out.

They both look out at Franklin. Locals are coming up to his car surrounding him -- he is a magnet.

**LOUIS**

He's ready.

90.

**INT. STATE ASSEMBLY, N.Y. - VIEWING SECTION - DAY**

115

115

Louis is seated in the front row of the balcony of the State Assembly, his feet up on the railing, eating pistachio nuts.

Also seated are two politicians, **JAMES HASTINGS** and **STEPHEN TELLER**.

**HASTINGS**

You can't kiss babies from a wheelchair. It'll scare their mothers half to death.

**TELLER**

Al Smith's got a lock on the presidential nomination.

**LOUIS**

Correct me if I'm wrong, but don't you think even after all these years that old Al's still a little rough around the edges?

They laugh knowing this is a huge understatement.

**LOUIS**

Franklin can help soften his image.

**HASTINGS**

How?

**LOUIS**

Let him put Smith's name in nomination.

Teller and Hastings are none to sure.

**TELLER**

Well, he is a helluva speech maker.

**HASTINGS**

Yeah, but is your man up to it?

**LOUIS**

It's in the bag, guys. Count on it.

Bluffing is one of Louis's strong suits and it looks like they're buying it.

Just then, Louis notices a familiar face down on the floor.

**I**

**S**

91.

**LOUIS**

Hey, Stansbury, give my best to the Misses!

(to Hastings and Teller)

He's lost weight. Must've been the prison food.

1

**INT. MERIWETHER INN - HALLWAY - MORNING**

16

116

A line stretches outside with patients waiting to be seen. Among them is Franklin, chatting with everyone else, expecting and receiving no priority attention.

**INT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY ROOM - MORNING**

117

117

Dr. Hebert is examining Daisy. Helena is by his side, filling him in on her case history.

**INT. MERIWETHER INN - NIGHT**

118

118

Helena, dressed in a robe, walks the halls of the Inn. Something is amiss.

**EXT. GROUNDS - NIGHT**

119

119

An empty wheelchair, illuminated by a sliver of moonlight.

On a blanket nearby are Jake and Mary Beth.

he unbuttons his shirt and runs her hands over his impressively developed upper body. They begin to kiss hungrily, passionately -- completely in their own world.

Several yards away, across the lawn, Eloise is in Woodhall's arms -- they are dancing. He is singing softly into her ear as they sway, her feet never touching the ground.

**INT. MERIWETHER INN - NIGHT**

Helena, in a nightgown, is looking out a window into the distance. Fiercely protective and slightly envious of her charges, she pulls a pack of cigarettes from her bathrobe pocket and steals a solitary smoke.

**EXT. COTTAGE - NIGHT**

120

120

Franklin seated alone on the porch in the darkness. He drags on his cigarette and the red glow illuminates the contours of his face in repose.

**FADE OUT:**

92.

**INT. MERIWETHER INN - FRONT DESK - DAY**

121

121

Franklin is on the phone. Roy stands by his side.

**FRANKLIN**

Hello, Souders. How are you?...  
Couldn't be better. I was wondering if you'd found a buyer for my naval prints?

(clearly not)

I see. Well, they're in marvelous condition... All right, Souders. Oh one more thing... I have some beautiful pieces of my Grandfather's -- T'ang Dynasty... Really?... An auction in the Fall? That sounds promising. I'll be in touch.

Franklin hangs up and sits deep in thought. He rubs his perspiring forehead with the back of his hand. He looks down at his hand and sees that it is shaking.

**EXT. GROUNDS - DAY**

122

122

Franklin is walking on crutches aided by Roy. Nearby, a group

of children practice on parallel bars with Helena.

**FRANKLIN**

What am I going to tell these people  
if I have to close things down?

**ROY**

That you did the best you could.

Franklin gives Roy a look of gratitude, then notices Lionel  
approaching with his mail bag.

Lionel hands Franklin a fistful of open envelopes.

**FRANKLIN**

Any good news?

**LIONEL**

Creditors are gettin' cranky.

**FRANKLIN**

The operative word was good.

**LIONEL**

Oh, yah, almost forgot. The doctor  
that came and studied ya'll sent  
his report.

93.

Lionel offers up the envelope, but then pulls it back before  
handing it over.

**LIONEL**

Save me the stamps?

Franklin nods then grabs it from Lionel. He rips it open and  
begins devouring the report.

**FRANKLIN**

(reading)

"... therefore, in conclusion, my  
research has shown that the  
overwhelming majority of patients  
here have shown some improvement.  
Enough for me to recommend warm  
water therapy as the standard post  
polio treatment to the Orthopedics  
Society of America!"

(

he grips Roy's arm)

Roy!

Something catches Franklin's eye and his smile begins to fade.

**ROY**

What is it, sir?

**INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT**

123

123

Helena entering the cottage.

**HELENA**

It's not as bad as you think.

Franklin slams the door behind her and wheels over to the table. He throws back a drink -- clearly not his first.

**FRANKLIN**

Read it. Out loud. Page twenty-nine.

**HELENA**

I already...

**FRANKLIN**

(angrily)

Read it!

**HELENA**

"Of the twenty three patients examined only one, a forty-four year old male, showed little visible signs of improvement..." This is one doctor's opinion, Franklin.

H

94.

**FRANKLIN**

Keep reading.

**HELENA**

"There is marked falling away of the muscle masses on either side of the spine in the lower lumbar region. His lower extremities present a most depressing picture."

She brings the pages down, but Franklin gestures her to continue.

**HELENA**

"I feel after studying him that the psychological factor in his management is paramount. He has such courage and ambition. Yet at the same time he is such an extraordinarily sensitive emotional mechanism...

It is difficult for her to continue.

**FRANKLIN**

Please.

**HELENA**

... that it will take all the skill which we can muster to lead him successfully to a recognition of his severe physical limitations without crushing him."

**FRANKLIN**

Patronizing son-of-a-bitch! I wanted to walk again.

**HELENA**

And you still might. This report legitimizes we've worked so hard for. We can raise funds now. It could change everything!

**FRANKLIN**

It won't change anything for me.

**HELENA**

Franklin, I won't play this game. I won't feel sorry for you.

e reaches for the bottle, but Helena grabs on to it, stopping him.

95.

**HELENA**

I met a boy today, ten years old. He's paralyzed from the waist down. Why don't you go regale him with vivid tales about your trips to Europe and playing football at school. Tell him how you courted your wife and fathered children.

Tell him of a life he can only  
dream of.

(

a beat)

I can't help you out of a hole if I  
climb in with you. Then we're both  
stuck.

**INT. MERIWETHER INN - FRONT DESK - DAY**

Fred, wearing a bow tie and an oversized jacket, is proudly  
polishing off a desktop sign that reads: "FRED BOTTS:  
**DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS.**"

Helena is behind him reading a file.

**LIONEL**

(entering)

Here's another one he's refusin'.

He throws a telegram onto an already large stack.

**HELENA**

Why don't you read it?

**LIONEL**

Don't like telegrams. All them  
STOPS and stuff.

**HELENA**

Make you dizzy, Lionel.

**LIONEL**

A little bit.

Fred eyes the telegram, then impulsively grabs it, ripping it  
open.

**FRED**

"Would be honored if you place my  
name in nomination for President.  
STOP. The party needs you. STOP.  
Yours sincerely, Al Smith."

**LIONEL**

Who's he?

(

**HELENA**

The Governor of New York.  
     handing it to Lionel)  
 Why don't you slide it under  
 his door?

**LIONEL**

All right. Probably slide it  
 right back.

Lionel leaves. Fred and Helena are silent for a moment.

**FRED**

He won't go. He doesn't want to be  
 seen walking on crutches or being  
 wheeled to the podium.

**HELENA**

The millions listening on radio  
 won't be able to see that.

**FRED**

But all the people at the  
 convention will.

Helena nods, "That's right."

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COTTAGE - AFTERNOON**

125

125

Responding to a knock at the door, Roy gets up from sitting  
 on the couch with Franklin, sullen and inattentive.

**H**

e opens the door to Louis who walks right in.

**ROY**

Good afternoon, Mr. Howe.

**LOUIS**

Hello, Roy.

Roy takes his hat and coat and exits to the bedroom.

**LOUIS**

I can't believe you've made me come  
 all the way back to this hell hole!

**FRANKLIN**

I've done no such thing.

**LOUIS**

I'm here to take you to Houston.  
You started your speech yet?

**FRANKLIN**

I'm not going.

He stares at Franklin, drinking. Shaking his head, he goes over to the sidebar and pours one for himself.

**LOUIS**

You know what this is, don't you?  
It's a golden opportunity. A  
springboard for you to run for  
Governor.

Franklin is silent. Frustrated, Louis takes a seat in Franklin's empty wheelchair.

**LOUIS**

Ever hear of a Civil War General  
named Francis Nicholls?

**FRANKLIN**

No.

**LOUIS**

Well, I never heard of him either.  
But this was one brave son-of-a-  
bitch. Fought for the Confederacy  
and lost his left arm in one battle  
and his left foot in another. Then  
after the war he ran and won the  
Governorship of Louisiana -- twice!

**FRANKLIN**

He was a war hero.

**LOUIS**

(with emphasis)

Twice.

(a beat)

Look, I've worked like a dog to  
keep your name in play, grovelling

at the feet of the powers-that-be  
in back rooms.

**FRANKLIN**

As much for you as for me.

98.

**LOUIS**

I'll be damned if I'm going to let  
you pass up a chance like this.  
It's time -- and you're ready.

**EXT. COTTAGE - AFTERNOON**

126

126

Waiting on the porch are Eleanor and Helena, who are seated,  
talking. Louis exits the cottage, defeated.

**LOUIS**

Your turn.

Eleanor rises and goes into the cottage as Louis takes her  
seat next to Helena.

**INT. COTTAGE - CONTINUING**

127

127

**ELEANOR**

Roy, so good to see you.

**ROY**

Very good to see you, Mrs.  
Roosevelt.

She approaches a surprised Franklin. Leaning in, she runs a  
hand across his stubbly beard. He looks up at her.

**ELEANOR**

You're a mess.

**FRANKLIN**

The report. I'll never...

She sits by his side and Franklin begins to cry. His sobs  
grow louder connecting to the despair deep inside him. It  
unleashes an avalanche of grief.

**ELEANOR**

Oh my darling...

**FRANKLIN**

I'm useless, Eleanor. I feel so  
useless.

**ELEANOR**

That's not true. No one can make  
you feel inferior without your  
consent.

Finally, his sobs subside.

**F**

**E**

99.

**ELEANOR**

You have done a brilliant thing  
here -- a magnificent thing.

Eleanor picks up the E  
doctor's report and puts it in the fire.

**LEANOR**

Let's get you in the water.

**EXT. THE POOL - DAY**

128

128

Franklin is wheeled down to the pool by Roy and Eleanor. When  
they get closer, Franklin makes out someone already swimming.

**ELLIOT**

Hi, Pop!

**FRANKLIN**

(squinting)  
Who's that?

ELLIOT ROOSEVELT is now 17 years old. He has his mother's  
enormous blue eyes and his father's natural charisma.

**FRANKLIN**

Elliot!

**ELLIOT**

Come on! You getting in?

Louis and Helena approach the pool.

**FRANKLIN**

I sense a conspiracy.

**LOUIS**

You ain't seen nothin' yet.

Franklin smiles, warily.

**EXT. A CLEARING - DAY**

129

129

Elliot is climbing a rope dangling high from a tree as Franklin and Eleanor look up at him. Franklin is standing on crutches.

Elliot descends with a flourish as Helena approaches Franklin with a single cane.

**HELENA**

Franklin, let go of your crutches.  
You're not going to need them.

100.

**FRANKLIN**

What?

**HELENA**

We're going to make your arms  
function as your legs.

**FRANKLIN**

How is that possible?

**HELENA**

Elliot, go to your father and stand  
on his left side.

**ELLIOT**

Think this may work, Pop.

**HELENA**

Eleanor, take the crutch.

Eleanor takes one crutch as Helena takes the other, replacing it in Franklin's hand with a cane.

Then, with Elliot on Franklin's left side she bends Elliot's arm at a right angle, like a parallel bar, and hooks Franklin's left arm around his.

Going over to Franklin's right side she puts a cane in his hand.

**HELENA**

(to Franklin)

Now use your right shoulder and pull your left leg forward.

He does so.

**HELENA**

Good! Now with the muscles in your left shoulder, pull your right leg.

**FRANKLIN**

One small bump and I'll land right on my keister!

**HELENA**

That's what Elliot is for. He's going to hold you up. Hitch your leg! Come on!

Franklin and Elliot attempt to walk. It requires immense strength and effort on both their parts.

101.

**HELENA**

(ever the taskmaster)

Elliot, don't lean in -- stand up straight. Pull against him. He needs you!

After one or two steps the enormity of it overwhelms Franklin.

**FRANKLIN**

I can't.

**ELLIOT**

I'm strong, pop. You can't hurt me.

**HELENA**

You can do this, Franklin! Keep going!

They start the walk again. It's awkward... difficult... but it's working.

**LOUIS**

(under his breath)

I'll be damned.

Franklin stops, exhausted.

**ELEANOR**

Franklin, are you all right?

**FRANKLIN**

I'm fine. I'm just...

Roy runs in with a chair and helps Franklin into it as Helena, Eleanor, Louis, Elliot and Roy all look at him, concerned.

**HELENA**

This isn't a replacement for the real work we're doing to get you on your feet again, understand? No one is throwing in the towel or even agreeing with that doctor's report...

**FRANKLIN**

I know, I know.

**HELENA**

I know it's not practical --

**F**

**H**

102.

**FRANKLIN**

No, it's not.  
(a beat)  
It's political.

Franklin looks at Louis, then to Eleanor, and realizes that this could be it.

1

**EXT. GROUNDS - AFTERNOON**

30

Franklin and Elliot are walking. Helena is close behind, coaching.

130

**ELENA**

Use Elliot, not the cane. Switch your weight to Elliot... good! Keep

your head up.

Off to the side Pat, Jake, Eloise, Woodhall and Daisy are having an informal picnic, observing Franklin.

**ELOISE**

Why is he working so hard to hide it?

**JAKE**

He doesn't have a choice.

**ELOISE**

Oh, I disagree.

**JAKE**

How can you disagree? "There but for the grace of God goes us," that's what they're saying. As if our bodies is who we are, but it's not. It's our souls is who we are, but they don't know that.

**ELOISE**

I wish he could just wheel himself out there in front of everybody.

**PAT**

He can't do that Eloise, it's politics.

**JAKE**

It's not gonna matter if he hides his legs as long as he don't hide what he knows. And what he knows is what it's like to be one of us.

Franklin, getting closer, raises his cane in greeting.

103.

**FRANKLIN**

Good afternoon, everyone!

Off-balance Franklin goes down hard bringing Elliot down with him.

Eleanor, Louis and Roy all rush to his aid, but Helena is there first.

**HELENA**

Take a moment to catch your breath...

**FRANKLIN**

Damn. You okay son?

**ELLIOT**

I'm fine, Pop.

**DAISY**

You fell down.

**FRANKLIN**

Yes, I did, Daisy. Twelfth time today. Must be a new record!

Daisy laughs as do the others, though some can't hide their concern.

Franklin struggles hard as Roy and Elliot help him to his feet.

131

131

**INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT**

Eleanor is packing Franklin's suitcase while Franklin, sitting up in bed dressed in pajamas, works on his speech.

**FRANKLIN**

(reading aloud)

And so America must find...

(

reconsidering)

No, America needs a pathfinder...

Louis, pacing in shirtsleeves, nods approvingly.

**LOUIS**

That's good.

**FRANKLIN**

To emblaze the trail along a high road that will avoid... avoid the bottomless morass...

Discouraged, Franklin pushes aside the pages.

104.

**LOUIS**

What is it? What's wrong?

**FRANKLIN**

What if I fall... trying to get to the podium.

**LOUIS**

If you fall, you show them how to get up.

**FRANKLIN**

No, if I fall in front of thousands of people I lose everything but their pity.

(a beat)

They'll be writing my obituary before I get up off the floor.

**LOUIS**

Elliot won't let you fall, he'll be there. All the arrangements have been made, boss. It'll be fine.

**FRANKLIN**

Who are we fooling? This will never work. They'll never let me back into politics. They'll never see past my legs.

**ELEANOR**

My darling, they'll never see past your legs unless you do.

132

132

**EXT. MERIWETHER INN - MORNING**

Franklin is settling into the driver's seat of his car, aided by Roy. Eleanor is seated next to him; Louis and Elliot in back.

Franklin's attention is diverted by something he sees straight ahead.

It is the entire Warm Springs group coming down the driveway in chairs and on crutches.

All the patients, the Push Boys, the physical therapists, Helena, Jake, Fred, Aunt Sally, Eloise and Lionel.

**FRED**

Don't worry, Doc -- we're not coming with you.

**F**

**FRANKLIN**

Oh, you'll be with me. No question of that.

(a beat)

I am proud more than you will ever know to be part of this community.

(his voice growing stronger)

A community based not on birthright or privilege, but on compassion and courage. The true power of these waters is that they brought us all together. Our ability to help one another is what will make our victory over polio endure. Our ability to survive... despite the odds.

**F**

ranklin looks out at the sea of faces.

**FRANKLIN**

What we have done and will continue to do until this disease is defeated is come together -- like a family -- and do what we do best...

(his voice breaking)

Lift each other up.

Franklin starts the car as the crowd begins to disperse. Then, spying Helena, Franklin calls out to her.

**FRANKLIN**

Miss Mahoney I need to speak with you, please.

**HELENA**

Sure, Doc.

Off her smile, Franklin reaches into his pocket and withdraws a small box.

**FRANKLIN**

Thank you.

He hands it to Helena. She just stares at it, at a loss for words.

**RANKLIN**

Open it.

She does so, tentatively, revealing a ladies watch.

106.

**HELENA**

It's beautiful.

**FRANKLIN**

Don't wear it in the pool.

**HELENA**

I'll try not to. Good luck,  
Franklin.

**FRANKLIN**

I'm throwing myself to the wolves.

**HELENA**

You've faced worse. And if they  
bite, you can come back here.

**FRANKLIN**

I'll always come back here.

Helena steps away and Franklin pulls out and down the  
driveway.

**CUT TO:**

133

133

**INT. HOUSTON TRAIN STATION - NIGHT**

Dark and deserted Roy is carrying Franklin down a flight of  
stairs. Louis is hastily checking over his shoulder. If  
possible, Eleanor appears even more nervous than Louis.

**FRANKLIN**

You're being superstitious, Louis.  
There aren't any reporters here.

Suddenly out of the darkness a FLASHBULB POPS revealing a  
dozen or more REPORTERS staring incomprehensibly at the sight  
of a six foot, 200 lb. man being carried like a baby in the  
arms of a black man.

No one does or says a thing. The PHOTOGRAPHER who had the  
wherewithal to snap the one picture raises his camera to take  
another.

But DAN REED, a reporter for The New York Herald Tribune and  
a gentle giant at over six foot-four, reaches out and places

a massive hand over the lens.

Slowly, but firmly, he pulls the camera down.

**REED**

(  
quietly)

No.

107.

Louis and Eleanor stand stock still, tense, watching the scene unfold

Roy is sweating; his arms growing weak. Elliot brings the chair around and Roy gently lowers Franklin into it.

It's a measure of Reed's standing with this group that his authority is unquestioned.

But the Photographer raises his camera again. Only now Reed isn't as kind. He grabs the camera from him and opens the back, pulling out the film and exposing it.

**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Hey!

**REED**

(tipping his hat)  
Good to see you, Mr. Roosevelt.

**FRANKLIN**

Thank you.

**INT. CONVENTION HALL - HOUSTON - NIGHT**

134

134

The enormous arena is empty but for some maintenance WORKERS and JANITORS. Louis enters and makes his way to the stage.

He approaches dead center and stands behind the podium looking out. GRIPPING the podium hard he ROCKS it back and forth.

Taking no chances, he pulls a hammer out from the rear of his waistband and a bunch of nails from his coat pocket.

Looking around to see if anyone is paying any attention to him he quickly ducks down behind the podium.

The sound of HAMMERING fills the hall as Louis, on his knees, NAILS the podium to the floor.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. CONVENTION HALL - DAY**

135

135

Twenty thousand CONVENTIONEERS are roasting in the hall. It is Houston in the summer and it's broiling hot. A sea of hand-held red, white and blue fans are being waved all at once -- most bearing the words "SMITH FOR PRESIDENT."

Near the stage is a long table where the new breed of RADIO REPORTERS are seated, each in front of a primitive looking microphone.

**A**

108.

Hovering in a group off to the side are Dan Reed and the REPORTERS from the previous night.

**INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUING**

136

136

Franklin is standing ramrod straight holding onto Elliot's arm. He looks handsome in a navy pin-striped suit. As everyone else is sweating no one notices that Franklin is perspiring more than F  
most.

**FRANKLIN**

Where is she seated?

Louis, a human train wreck himself, reaches over to mop Franklin's brow with a handkerchief.

**LOUIS**

In a box stage left. Give me your hand.

Franklin takes his hand off his cane. It's soaking wet. Louis wipes it, gently.

**FRANKLIN**

Louis, what the hell am I doing?

**LOUIS**

Putting your big toe in the water.

Just then, a VOICE booms out from the loudspeakers:

**LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)**

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce to you a man who as Assistant Secretary of the Navy served our country with distinction. member of an illustrious family of long-standing political commitment to our great nation... Ladies and gentlemen: Franklin Delano Roosevelt!

Franklin turns to Elliot and they both take deep breaths.

**FRANKLIN**

(to Elliot)

Let's go.

The curtains part and they begin moving forward.

109.

**137 INT. THE STAGE OF THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION - CONTINUING 137**

A BLINDING SPOTLIGHT picks up Franklin and Elliot. The SPOTLIGHT follows them as they make their way to the podium.

Franklin is hitching each leg forward, slowly. The tip of his cane hits the floor with pinpoint accuracy for balance and support.

He leans heavily on Elliot's arm. The walk appears effortless.

He chats with Elliot the whole way, still managing to flash the CONVENTIONEERS his million dollar smile. But the walk is slow and the ovation is beginning to fade.

**138 L 138**  
**INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUING**

ouis stands in the wings clutching the curtain with one hand and covering his eyes with the other.

**139 INT. DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION BOX - CONTINUING 139**

Eleanor sits looking down at her lap, afraid to even breathe.

**140 INT. THE STAGE - CONTINUING 140**

Franklin and Elliot are still ten steps away from the podium. Sensing the crowd noise weakening, he whispers to Elliot.

**FRANKLIN**

Laugh as if I'm making a joke.

Elliot throws back his head and laughs. The crowd, wanting to be in on it, rise as one in a sustained CHEER!

But a puddle of sweat caused by the dripping perspiration from Franklin's hands is causing the tip of his cane to slip.

Elliot, ever aware, grips him tighter, averting disaster and finally they reach the podium.

Franklin grabs one side of the podium while Elliot, with a sleight of hand Houdini would admire, LOCKS his father's braces, whisks the cane away, pulls his father's speech from his breast pocket and lays it smoothly on the podium.

THE VIEW FROM BEHIND displays how Franklin's legs are spread wide for stability as he clutches the podium. He holds on tightly, as if the wood might snap from his grip.

FROM OUT FRONT the crowd sees only a powerful man standing tall amidst the flashbulbs POPPING.

110.

Franklin has made it. He is home.

**INT. MERIWETHER INN - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

141

141

All the denizens of Warm Springs are crowded around the radio.

**RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)**

Here on the stage is Franklin Roosevelt... a figure tall and proud even in suffering; a face of classic profile; a frame nervous and yet self-controlled. A man softened, cleansed and illumined with pain.

1

**42 INT. WARWICK HOTEL, HOUSTON - SMITH'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS 142**

GOVERNOR AL SMITH, 51, is seated by a radio, surrounded by CRONIES. An overblown Irishman with gold capped teeth and heavy New York accent. He chomps on a lit cigar that never leaves the side of his mouth.

**CRONY #1**

Hell of an ovation, Al. Couldn't have asked for anything more.

Smith sits silently puffing on his cigar.

**CRONY #2**

You may have to be careful though.  
Looks like you're raising up a rival.

**SMITH**

(after a beat)  
Mark my words. He'll be dead in a year.

**INT. DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION BOX - CONTINUING**

143

143

Eleanor applauds Franklin as a REPORTER leans in.

**REPORTER**

Mrs. Roosevelt, one last question.

**ELEANOR**

Yes?

**REPORTER**

Do you think polio has affected  
your husband's mind?

**ELEANOR**

(smiling)  
Yes, I do. I certainly do.

111.

**INT. CONVENTION STAGE - CONTINUOUS**

144

144

Franklin stands before the crowd. His magnetism is  
incontestable. He radiates infinite possibility.

He looks up to Eleanor's box and they smile at one another as  
the crowd continues to applaud.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. WARM SPRINGS - DAY**

145

145

The mineral springs gently ripple as Franklin appears in the  
water. As the following words appear on the screen, Franklin  
slowly and confidently swims out of frame.

**CRAWL**

Four years later, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected  
President of the United States. He was elected three more  
times -- unprecedented in U.S. History.

During his years as President, he saw the country through the

Great Depression and a world war waged on six continents.

On April 12, 1945, in the thirteenth year of his presidency, at the age of sixty-three, Franklin Roosevelt died in his cottage at Warm Springs.

The beneficiary of his \$562,000 life insurance policy was Warm Springs... which continues to flourish as a rehabilitation center to this day.