

"Joe Public"

by
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INT. BOARDROOM-DAY

A group of old men in conservative business suits sit around a boardroom table. HENRY and RUPPERT SODA stand next to a monitor.

HENRY

Gentlemen thank you for coming. My brother Rupert and I have put together a presentation of some of the exceptional politicians we have backed financially in recent elections. With the benefit of hindsight, we thought it prudent to glance backwards before we look forward. (With a nod to his brother) Rupert.

Rupert hits play on the remote. The presentation plays on the monitor.

INT. BALLROOM-NIGHT

POLITICIAN 1 is standing at the podium delivering a speech. A large enthusiastic crowd is listening sportively.

POLITICIAN 1

...thank you for your support. God bless you all and God bless America.

Balloons are released from the rafters, the crowd cheers and members of the grandstand congratulate Politician 1. While shaking hands with his supporters, Politician 1 hugs the wife of a supporter and reaches around and grabs her ass. A flash bulb goes off leaving a freeze frame of the offending hand on the offended ass.

INT. PRESS ROOM

Politician 1 addresses the press.

POLITICIAN 1

As I said earlier, my elbow was bumped. That was an unfortunate reflex. Unavoidable and not at all what it appeared. I am a happily married man.

Politician 1's WIFE dutifully stands beside him.

EXT. PARK-DAY

Politician 1 has just finished another speech. This time he chooses to goose a young female supporter but in full view of his wife. His wife sees him and slugs him, all caught on camera.

INT. PRESSROOM TWO-DAY

POLITICIAN 2 is clearly having a tough press conference. He is sweating and tugging at his tie.

POLITICIAN 2
I can assure you that I was unaware
of any financial improprieties and
have no idea about any off shore
accounts in my name...

INT. PRESSROOM THREE-NIGHT

POLITICIAN 3 also seems to be having a tough press conference.

POLITICIAN 3
...as my lawyer had mentioned, I
have a wide stance...

The gathered press seem skeptical of his wide stance. A few snicker.

INT. PRESSROOM FOUR-DAY

POLITICIAN 4, another presser.

POLITICIAN 4
I didn't ask her for her ID, OK? I
mean, look at her...

INT. PRESSROOM FIVE-NIGHT

POLITICIAN 5 looks very confident in himself.

POLITICIAN 5
I will look you straight in the eye
and tell you without reservation,
man and dinosaur walked the earth
at the same time so help me God.
(MORE)

POLITICIAN 5 (cont'd)
I'm sure of it, and its about time
the schools started teaching it.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A grandstand has been erected and a PRESENTER is finishing a speech.

PRESENTER
....without further ado, it is my
pleasure to welcome Bob O'Malley.

The crowd cheers and Bob bounds up the steps. Halfway up he catches his foot on a step and stumbles. Three men on the grandstand jump up to grab him. Momentarily it appears that they have him righted, only to have Bob take all three of them down along with the podium.

EXT. NEWSSTAND-MORNING

The front page of the Daily News has a photograph of O'Malley in a hospital bed wearing a neck brace. His arm is in a cast and he is attempting to give a thumbs up. The headline reads, "O'MALLEY WITHDRAWS FROM RACE".

INT. BOARDROOM-DAY

The men are still seated while Henry and Ruppert are standing.

HENRY
Stop, stop

Rupert hits stop and turns up the lights.

HENRY (CON'T)
It keeps going, I just cant take
any more. Believe it or not, we got
some of those guys elected. And I
dare say, their elections had a lot
more to do with us, than them.

RUPERT
We feel there has to be a better
way. And I think we found one.

HENRY
But before we get right to it, I
want to let you know how we got
there.

(MORE)

HENRY (cont'd)

One area we realized we hadn't controlled very well was real grass roots campaigning. Some of these candidates come out of the woodwork, develop a strong following and then its too late to bend them in the direction we want them to go.

RUPERT

Now sure you'll say, Gentlemen, that's what grass roots is. You can't control it.

HENRY

But we say, what if you can? Hit the play button Rupert.

EXT. VILLAGE PARK - DAY

Camera tracks behind a man who walks through the park carrying a soapbox in one hand. He is wearing a navy blue suit. The soapbox is wrapped in red, white and blue bunting. In the middle of the park he sets down his soap box and climbs up on it. Cutting wide he begins his speech.

JOE

You deserve better. Where is the America we were promised? The one our forefathers imagined? The one the greatest generation thought they were entrusting to us? Its been stolen...and I say it is time to take it back!

A crowd begins to move towards him.

INT. BOARDROOM-DAY

The men are watching the video.

HENRY

Pause it there Rupert.

On the monitor is a freeze frame of the scene we just witnessed.

HENRY

Gentlemen that man is Joe Public. He says and does exactly what my brother and I tell him.

(MORE)

HENRY (cont'd)
He is the best candidate we have
ever backed. (pause) And he
doesn't exist.

Confused looks around the room.

RUPERT
Gentlemen how many times do we
financially back these morons only
to have it come back and bite us in
the ass? Adulterers, Alcoholics,
Religious zealots...

HENRY
Egotistical bastards that can't tie
their own shoes if we don't help
them.

RUPERT
And once we get them elected, they
go off the reservation. They start
believing in their own ideas.

General agreement passes through the room.

HENRY
Well not Joe Public. He's new.

RUPERT
He has no skeletons. He's not a
womanizer, not a gambler, doesn't
drink...

HENRY
No vices whatsoever.

RUPERT
He says and does what we tell him.
He never wavers.

HENRY
He is as American as John Wayne and
as patriotic as Ronald Reagan.

BOARD MEMBER 1
He sounds too good to be true.

HENRY
He almost is. Listen carefully.
He is not a real person, but he can
swing this election.

RUPERT

He is CGI, that is short for
computer generated imagery. We
created him.

INT. EDIT BAY - DAY

A CGI Artist and Video Editor are working together with the Soda Brothers supervising. The CGI Artist is creating a wire frame of Joe Public. As he rotates the wireframe the CGI Artist begins to wrap the figure with an outer layer. Slowly Joe Public starts to form. Handsome, conservative, blue suit. A flag lapel flies in and attaches to the suit. The fully formed Joe Public stands next to a simple stick figure wire frame. After a few keystrokes the wire frame begins to walk and the Joe Public figure mimics the walk. Everything the CGI Artist has the wireframe do, the Joe Public figure mimics it. With a click and drag of his desktop pen, the CGI Artist passes Joe Public to the Video Editor's screen. The Video Editor now has the completed Joe Public figure on a blank screen. The Video Editor begins adding in a background. It is of the park we saw in the Soda Brother's presentation. Next, the Video Editor brings in a crowd. We see him make the crowd larger and smaller until he and the Brothers agree on the size. After some finishing touches, the Video Editor completes the scene. The Editor rotates Joe Public so we only see him from behind. He flies in a soap box and hooks it to Joe's hand. The Soda brothers watch as the scene plays before them. It is the same scene as they just presented in their meeting. The Soda Brothers speak over the scene.

HENRY (V.O.)

There are limitations to be sure.
The CGI Artists has advised us to
stick to longer shots to better
disguise any imperfections.

RUPERT (V.O.)

Once we have created the scene we
add camera shakes so that it
appears as if a person in the crowd
is shooting it on their phone or
camcorder.

HENRY (V.O.)

All to make it appear that real
people are shooting it. We'll post
it to Facebook, You Tube, Twitter,
Instagram, real grass roots stuff.
Joe Public is a man of the people.

RUPERT (V.O.)

Then we will start creating
newsreel pieces that stations can
roll right into their regular news
cast. They will air it, but we
will control the story.

GENTLEMAN 1

Why would they air it?

HENRY

Because that will be the only way
they can cover Joe Public. We'll
generate public interest, but Joe
Public will not agree to be
interviewed. We create and control
the message.

EXT. APPLIANCE STORE-NIGHT

Televisions inside the store windows are tuned to the news.
People begin to gather as the news story comes on.

ANCHOR WOMAN

It seems that a new player has been
added to the political landscape.
New comer candidate Joe Public
continues to draw larger and larger
crowds...

Another television in the same store is tuned to a different
newscast.

MALE ANCHOR

...he's yet to commit to an
interview but he seems to have
resonated with the people of
Iowa...

The news report cuts to a train station with Joe Public
giving a speech from the back of a train.

JOE PUBLIC

...I may not have grown up on the
wrong side of the tracks, but lets
just say, I was close enough to
hear the train.

Joe waves to the crowd who laugh and cheer.

EXT. NEW YORK TIMES BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY-NIGHT

Zoom into the building.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES OFFICE-NIGHT

MARV, the editor of the political page, and AMY FAYE, a reporter, are watching the newscast we just saw.

MARV

Where did he even find that train?
That's old school.

AMY

And the quip about growing up near
the tracks? Wasn't that Reagan?

MARV

It was. Looks like he's made it
his now.

AMY

Its really pathetic. I am so sick
of these politicians.

MARV

You're going to Iowa to interview
him.

AMY

Marv no, please...

MARV

First flight out.

AMY

I can't, I just...I can't.

MARV

You can and it'll be a coup for
you. He hasn't agreed to be
interviewed by anyone yet. He
turned down 60 Minutes! He turned
down Oprah. Nobody turns down
Oprah.

AMY

Wow. Why did he agree to us then?

MARV

Actually, he hasn't. We can't even reach his organizing committee. We can't even tell if he has an organizing committee. This guy came out of no where. He is practically an apparition. We can't find anything about him. That's why I have to send you.

AMY

Send me where?

MARV

To Iowa.

AMY

Just Iowa? You can't be more specific than that? How am I supposed to even find him?

MARV

You're a reporter. How hard can it be? We know he is in Iowa. Sniff him out.

Amy shakes her head, resigned to do it and leaves.

INT. AMYS APARTMENT-NIGHT

Amy enters.

AMY

I'm home!

Her cat moves toward her disinterestedly.

AMY (CONT'D)

Hi Cronkite.

She bends down to pet Cronkite but the cat pulls away. Amy makes another attempt and the cat moves just beyond her reach. On her third attempt the cat takes off. Amy puts her stuff down and pulls her laptop out of her bag. She googles Joe Public. She clicks on a link that sends her to a YouTube page. The video was shot vertically from the back of a crowd at a rally. Its hard to make him out from this vantage point and the camera keeps bouncing around as well.

JOE PUBLIC

...I was taught to pull up my own bootstraps.

(MORE)

JOE PUBLIC (cont'd)
That's the mentality that made
America great. These Washington
fat cats have completely lost
touch.

Cheers from the crowd. Amy pauses the You Tube video right where she can get a pretty good look at Joe Public's face. It's a little far away along with some motion blur, but this frame gives her the best shot of him. She takes a screen grab for reference.

INT. JOE SMEDNICKS ROOM-IOWA

JOE is looking at himself in the mirror. He looks strikingly similar to the shot of Joe Public we just saw in the You Tube video. He brings a pair of tweezers into frame and cleans up a couple of wayward hairs. He picks up a name tag off of the counter of the sink. It reads, "Joe Smednick, Asst. Manager, Staples". He clips it on.

INT. KITCHEN-MORNING

Joe enters the modest kitchen and readies himself to leave for work. Joe's mother GLADYS enters.

GLADYS
Joe you need to visit Uncle Ned at
the home on your way in.

JOE
What? Mom I won't have time.

GLADYS
Just a quick visit, I'll come with
you.

Gladys grabs her purse. Joe frustratingly goes along with her wishes.

INT. CAR

Joe drives a very sensible older model four door sedan. He is driving while his mother is in the passenger seat.

GLADYS
I don't know why you are making
such a big deal about this? You
can be a little late to work,
you're the boss.

JOE
I'm the Assistant Manager Mom, not
the boss.

GLADYS
I'm so proud of you. Ned will be
so happy to see you. No one ever
visits him.

They pull into the nursing home parking lot and Joe parks.
He turns off the ignition, removes the keys and opens the
door to get out. Gladys doesn't budge.

JOE
Ma?

GLADYS
I'm going to wait here, you go
ahead.

JOE
What?

GLADYS
He was such a bastard the last time
I came. That's why I told him I'd
send you next time.

JOE
Mom, c'mon.

GLADYS
Nope, you go. Now if he apologizes
for how he behaved last time, maybe
I'll come in next time. Let's just
see if he apologizes first.

Joe listens to this, shakes his head, looks at his watch and
resignedly closes the door.

EXT. NURSING HOME PARKING LOT-MORNING

A subdued Joe makes his way towards the Nursing Home.

INT. NURSING HOME-MORING

Joe enters the Nursing Home and heads to the reception desk.
NURSE JUDY is waiting.

NURSE JUDY
May I help your?

JOE

Yes, I'm here to visit Ned Johnson.

NURSE JUDY

OK, if you just have a seat someone will be with you momentarily.

Joe shuffles over to the waiting area, picks out a magazine and sits. There are a few other people also waiting. NURSE 2 enters leading NED JOHNSON out of his room and towards the bathroom.

NURSE 2

OK Mr. Johnson, lets see if you can do a little better than last time.

Joe listens and seems a little unsettled by her comment. Joe watches them go into the bathroom. A buzzer starts ringing at the nurses station. NURSE 3's voice comes over the intercom.

NURSE 3 (V.O.)

Nurse Judy, we are having a situation in room three. Can you come quickly?

NURSE JUDY

On my way.

Nurse Judy hurries off. There is a low sounding alarm beeping. Then we hear Nurse 2's voice coming from the bathroom.

NURSE 2 (O.S.)

Oh no Mr. Johnson, not again...this is even worse than last time.

Joe's eyes get wide. The buzzing gets louder and Nurse 3's voice comes over the PA system.

NURSE 3 (V.O.)

We have an emergency. All nurses to room three.

Chaos starts to erupt. Nurses are rushing around. Nurse 2 open the bathroom door and sees Nurse Judy running by.

NURSE 2

What should I do? Mr. Johnson really needs help.

NURSE JUDY

This is an emergency. Mr. Johnson
has a visitor in waiting. Ask them
to help Mr. Johnson.

Nurse Judy rushes off. Joe is frozen with his magazine. We
hear Ned Johnson moan from the bathroom. Nurse 2 makes her
way to the waiting area.

NURSE 2

Excuse me, is anyone here visiting
Ned Johnson.

Joe freezes, wide eyed and breathless. He continues to read
his magazine.

NURSE 2

Anyone?

Nurse Judy yells from down the hall.

NURSE JUDY (O.S.)

Nurse we need you right away.

Nurse 2 gives one last look around the waiting room and
rushes off. Joe sits for a bit. Casually turns the page of
the magazine and then quietly puts the magazine down. He
rises and heads calmly to the door. We can hear an ambulance
outside screaming up the driveway. As Joe gets to the door
to make his escape the EMTs come bursting through. Joe is
forced to hold the door and wait for them to pass. Then he
exits.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Joe race walks to his car.

INT. CAR-DAY

Joe enters and starts the car without speaking. As they
drive away Gladys speaks.

GLADYS

So?

JOE

Hmmm?

GLADYS

How did it go?

JOE
Oh...fine. It went fine.

GLADYS
Did he apologize to me?

JOE
You know, he didn't.

GLADYS
Well that's it then. I'm not
stopping by next week either.
You'll have to go alone.

Joe stares straight ahead, unblinking. The Ambulance blast past him.

INT. AIRPLANE DAY

Amy is struggling down the aisle with a carry on bag and a cat carrier. Cronkite is making menacing noises throughout.

AMY
Sorry, I'm just a few more rows.

Other passengers stare.

INT. EDITING ROOM

The Soda Brothers are working with the Video Editor and the CGI Artist. We see them building a new video in layers. First a background of a park in Iowa. Then they incorporate Joe Public and finally bring in the crowds. The finishing touches are the little camera shakes and heads blocking the frame to make it appear as if someone is recording the scene with their phone. It also makes it harder to get a really clear look at Joe Public.

INT. PLANE

Amy and the passengers are in flight. Cronkite has been stowed below the seat in front of her. He is making awful noises that Amy is pretending to ignore. The other passengers are not ignoring them though. Cronkite manages to work his paw through the zipper and gives Amy a hard scratch.

AMY
Ow!

The passenger next to Amy can't help but notice. Amy looks to the passenger.

AMY (CONT'D)
He's just playing. He actually
loves traveling.

INT. STAPLES STORE

Joe is staring at RAMONA, the cashier. Even in her Staples uniform she looks like a punk rocker. Nose ring, tattoos, spiked and dyed hair. She is pretty much the opposite of Joe and uninterested in his attention. She unenthusiastically reads a gossip magazine.

RAMONA
Stop staring at me Joe.

Joe is oblivious.

ROMONA (CONT'D)
I mean it Joe, stop staring. Joe?

Joe comes to.

JOE
Oh, hey, no...I wasn't staring...

ROMONA
I could like, totally get you
written up or something.

JOE
Romona I...

ROMONA
Relax. It's probably like a whole
lot of paperwork I'd have to fill
out.

JOE
So what are you reading?

ROMONA
I have no idea. What does it
matter Joe?

She flips a page.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-DAY

Amy has a map of Iowa tacked to the wall. She is in the process of putting up thumb tacks throughout the state. Her laptop is open and we can see various images of Joe Public and links to videos. Her iPhone rings. She answers it, puts it on speaker and puts it down on the desk while she keeps working. Marv's voice comes over the phone.

MARV (V.O.)

Hey.

AMY

Hey.

Cronkite leaps to the desk, snarls, swipes the phone off the desk and darts away.

AMY (CONT'D)

Cronkite!

She picks the phone up and puts it back on the desk.

MARV (V.O.)

What was that?

AMY

Sorry, that was my cat.

MARV (V.O.)

You travel with your cat?

AMY

Well, I've been on the road so much I was feeling guilty. He's very attached to me.

Cronkite looks at her menacingly.

MARV

Wait, you travel with your cat, and your cat's name is Cronkite?

AMY

Yes. What?

MARV

Nothing. I just didn't know you were a cat person.

AMY

Ugh. I am not a cat person Marv.
I have one cat. Cat people have,
you know...a lot of cats.

MARV

OK, it's just...does your cat
actually like to travel?

AMY

Stop it Marv. What have you got
for me?

MARV

I was going to ask you the same
thing.

AMY

Me? I've been traveling all day.
Did you think Joe Public was going
to grab my bags at the airport?

MARV

We're not finding much. He has no
official web page, no organizers
that we can find.

AMY

The guy gets around, I can tell you
that. He was on two opposite sides
of the state in the same day.

Amy continues putting push pins into the map.

MARV

Maybe he's got a plane? You could
check local airport flight logs.
You'll find him. Use your
reporter's instincts.

AMY

Thanks.

MARV

I mean it, we don't have much else.
Did you see the latest clip making
the rounds? i just emailed you a
link.

Amy clicks on the link in her email. The clip that pops up
is the same one we just saw the Soda Brothers working on. We
watch the clip from Amy's laptop.

It seems that we have caught Joe Public mid-speech with lots of heads and arms breaking into the frame.

JOE PUBLIC

...righting the course won't be easy, with all the Washington bureaucrats in our way. But we will right this ship. Not because it is easy, we will do it because its hard!

The crowd cheers wildly and the clip ends.

AMY

Now he's borrowing from Kennedy...

MARV

He's an equal opportunity plagiarizer.

AMY

And comparing cleaning up Washington to space exploration?

MARV

Cleaning up Washington would actually be way harder.

AMY

He's not big on the details. Does anyone hold his feet to the fire over these rehashed quotes?

MARV

I got my best reporter on it. Find him, interview him.

Marv disconnects.

Amy clicks on another link. Again a clip of Joe Public.

JOE PUBLIC

If anyone tells you that America's best days are behind her, they're looking the wrong way.

The crowd cheers.

AMY

That was Bush, word for word.

Incredulously Amy shakes her head and then has a realization.

AMY (CONT'D)
Its the same park.

Amy pulls up the last two clips she watched. They are from different angles, different days and Joe is wearing different outfits, but there is enough information to recognize its the same park. She finds the park name on a sign. She grabs a push pin and heads to her map of Iowa. She finds the name of the park in the legend and finds it on the map. It is by far the hottest spot on the map with many push pins placed there.

AMY (CONT'D)
Seems like he has a favorite park,
lets start there.

INT. CAR DAY

Joe is driving and Gladys is in the passenger seat. They are passing the park that we just saw in the Joe Public You Tube videos.

GLADYS
You should go.

JOE
Your opinion has been duly noted
Mom, but I have no interest.

GLADYS
But its your high school re-union.

JOE
I know Ma.

GLADYS
Maybe you'll meet a woman there.

JOE
Mom. These are the same women who
weren't interested in me in High
School.

GLADYS
Well that was a long time ago.
Wait til they see what you've grown
into. You're just a late bloomer.
Now you're the manager of Staples.
That's a big company.

JOE
I'm the *assistant* manager of a
Staples *store* Ma.

GLADYS

Joe, sometimes you've just go to
step up to the plate, and run the
race!

Joe shakes his head.

JOE

Are you sure you're going to be all
right? I've got to get back to
work.

GLADYS

Of course I'm going to be all
right. Janice said she can drive me
home after lunch. Joe, just
remember to stay open to people and
opportunities. You never know what
might happen next.

We can see the Staples store next to the park.

EXT. SIDEWALK-DAY

Joe is walking along the side of the park heading towards
Staples at the far end.

EXT. STARBUCKS-DAY

Amy is exciting a Starbucks and speaking on her iPhone. She
is a bit frazzled juggling her coffee, phone, shoulder bag
and frustrated with whomever she is speaking with.

AMY

I have no idea if its going to
work, but my "reporters instinct"
tells me he likes this park.

We can't hear but Marv is obviously giving his opinion which
Amy isn't bothering with. She decides to talk over him.

AMY (CONT'D)

I'm hanging up now

She hangs up her phone and is awkwardly trying to put it away
without spilling her coffee. She is fully on the sidewalk
now oblivious to what is around her. Once she is settled she
abruptly turns to her left and bang, straight into Joe
Smednick. Her coffee spills.

AMY
Oh come on!

JOE
I'm so sorry, let me get you
another coffee.

Although clearly her fault Amy looks up frustratingly. Then,
she can not believe who is standing in front of her.

AMY
Oh my God, its you.

Joe looks at her, trying to recognize her.

AMY (CON'T)
Joe?

Joe is confused.

JOE
Yes?

AMY
I cant believe it. I came all the
way out to Iowa hoping to bump into
you!

Joe is trying to figure out who she is. Someone from high
school?

JOE
How about that. Well, we bumped.
Are you here for the re-un...

AMY
Don't even say it. I am sick of
covering this stuff already.

JOE
Same with me.

He laughs awkwardly as does she.

AMY
Amy Faye.

She reaches out her hand to shake. Joe pretends that he
recognizes her.

JOE
Amy, of course.

Now Amy is confused.

AMY
Do you have time? Can I ask you a
few questions?

JOE
Well, I'd love to, but I've got to
get back to work.

Amy looks confused. Joe points to his badge.

JOE (CONT'D)
Staples.

Amy is shocked.

AMY
You work at Staples? Wow!

Joe is surprised that this seems to impress her. Maybe his
Mom is right.

JOE
Thanks, its a pretty great company.
How about after work? I get out at
seven.

AMY
Great. Why don't we meet right
there in the park. Seems to be your
favorite spot.

Now Joe is confused.

JOE
Sure.

INT. STAPLES-DAY

Ramona is working the cash register and sees Joe coming. She
starts twirling her hair and looking away. Joe enters as if
on a mission.

RAMONA
Hi Joe. Joe?

Joe walks right by. Romona is confused and then a little
miffed. Joe moves to the back of the store, picks up a phone
and dials with a smile.

JOE

Ma. I might be a little late
tonight...well let's just say that
I might be going to that reunion
after all.

INT. HOTEL-DAY

Amy is on the phone excitedly talking on speaker phone.

AMY

...and that's not even the best
part. Marv, he works at Staples.

MARV (VO)

What!!?

Cronkite jumps on the desk and swipes the phone off.

AMY

Cronkite!

EXT. PARK-7PM

Amy is waiting for Joe in what she assumes is his favorite
spot. She spots Joe and waves. Joe sees her and smiles. He
is carrying himself with a little bit of bravado. Joe
crosses to her still in his Staples uniform.

AMY

You actually came.

JOE

Of course.

AMY

I so appreciate you agreeing to
meet me here.

JOE

Well I appreciate your asking to
meet. I've been looking forward to
it.

AMY

You really are a man of mystery. I
hope you don't mind.

Amy pops out her reporters recorder. Joe thinks its a bit
odd but goes with it.

JOE
Not at all.

Passersby start to take notice of the interview and slowly move closer.

AMY
So Joe, you work at Staples?

JOE
Yes I do. Assistant Manager there for six years.

AMY
Was this all part of a bigger plan, you know, to learn what makes regular people tick?

JOE
I don't know about that, but I can tell you that you can learn a lot about people working at Staples. Just how they pick copy paper for example.

AMY
What can you learn from that?

JOE
Well, the cheapest is the non-recycled paper. Then we have fifty percent recycled and finally the one hundred percent. Most go for the fifty percent.

The crowd has now surrounded them.

AMY
And that tells you something?

JOE
Well, most people want to help the environment, but nobody wants to go broke doing it. You know what I mean?

AMY
Interesting point.

One of the onlookers speaks up.

ONLOOKER

Hey look. That's the...that's the
guy.

ONLOOKER TWO

Yeah, you're right. That is the
guy!

Other onlookers concur.

AMY

Joe you've tapped into something,
you've struck a responsive chord
with a lot of people.

ONLOOKERS

Yeah!

As the interview continues, more and more people crowd
around. Shouts of support are yelled and Joe seems to be
enjoying this unexpected celebrity although not sure what it
is about. As the camera pulls back, Joe continues to answer
questions with the occasional wave to an enthusiastic
supporter.

As the interview ends Amy puts away her recorder and stands.
Joe stands too. Amy then sticks her hand out and shakes
Joe's hand. Joe is not sure what is happening but goes
along. Amy turns and leaves and Joe gives her a wave.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Gladys enters the front door carrying the newspaper. She
unrolls it and on the front page the headline reads:

"LOCAL MAN THROWS IN HIS HAT. JOE PUBLIC = JOE SMEDNIK!"

Gladys gasps, then smiles.

GLADYS

I knew he was up to something. Joe
get out here.

Joe emerges dressed for work.

JOE

What now Mom?

GLADYS

So why didn't you tell me you're
running for president?

JOE
I'm not running for president Ma.

GLADYS
You are so, it says so right here
in the paper.

Gladys hands Joe the paper, who examines it. He is shocked.

JOE
Holy shit.

GLADYS
Come on, we've got to go tell Uncle
Ned.

JOE
Mom, this is crazy. I'm not sure
what this is about but I have to
get to work.

GLADYS
It'll just take a minute. You
think you're going to run for
president and I'm not going to
gloat about it to that no good son
of a bitch brother of mine?

EXT. NURSING HOME-DAY

An ambulance with lights blaring comes screaming into the parking lot to be followed by Joe and Gladys in Joe's car. The ambulance comes to a screeching stop and the EMTs jump out and run in. Joe parks and he and Gladys walk towards the home. Gladys seems much more enthusiastic about this visit with Joe lagging behind trying to convince his mother that he is not running for president.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Gladys and Joe enter and head to the front desk. There is a lot of commotion going on but Nurse Judy is there to help them.

GLADYS
We're here to see Ned Johnson.

NURSE JUDY
Oh I'm afraid I have some bad news.
The ambulance is here for him. He
was going into cardiac arrest.
(MORE)

NURSE JUDY (cont'd)
The EMTs will be rushing him to the hospital.

Gladys is unconcerned.

GLADYS
They'll be bringing him by right here?

Nurse Judy is confused by the question.

NURSE JUDY
Yes ma'am.

At this, the EMTs have Ned on a stretcher, wearing an oxygen mask, and are rushing him down the hall. As they get close, Gladys leans in to Ned.

GLADYS
Ned did you hear? My Joey is running for President.

JOE
Mom!

Ned stares at them wide eyed while breathing through his mask. The EMTs rush him past her.

GLADYS
Ha! What did your Mr. Hot Shot son ever do except move away and never come back!

The EMTs have rushed Ned out of the building and Gladys is feeling good about herself. The nurses are staring at Joe.

JOE
I'm not running for President.

GLADYS
He is so, its in the paper.

The nurses look down at the newspaper at the nurses station and sure enough, there is Joe on the front page.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Henry and Rupert are staring at the same picture of Joe in the New York Times. They look in disbelief.

RUPERT
How the hell did this happen?

HENRY
I have no idea.

RUPERT
What do yo think we do?

HENRY
Well, we can't just announce to the world that we have been deceiving them. For now I think we just wait, see how this plays out.

RUPPERT
Maybe we make a trip to Iowa?

INT. JOES CAR

Joe is driving and as he approaches his Staples store, he stares out in disbelief.

JOE
What the..?

EXT. STAPLES STORE- DAY

A crowd of people are standing outside including reporters. Red, white and blue balloons are displayed along with a few supportive signs for Joe. Joe's car arrives and the crowd cheers. Joe parks, exits his car and heads to the store. The supportive crowd cheers for him. Joe nods and smiles.

REPORTER 1
Joe, can I get an interview?

JOE
Well, perhaps later. I've got to get to work.

Other reporters try to get in a question. Joe moves past them as supporters pat him on the back. A TV REPORTER starts filming a piece with Joe's crowd in the background.

TV REPORTER
There he goes, Joe every man on his way to work. Perhaps this is his appeal to voters. He doesn't come from a long established political family. He hasn't been a career politician. He is not a wealthy tycoon. He is an assistant manager at Staples.

(MORE)

TV REPORTER (cont'd)
A regular job for a regular guy
that appeals to the regular voter.
A man that just might be, an
irregular president.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -DAY

Amy and Cronkite watch the above news report.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

The Soda Brothers watch the above news report.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Gladys and the other librarians watch the above news report.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The news report is on in Ned's room. We hear the sound of Ned breathing hard and then, flat lining. Doctors and nurses are in the room.

DOCTOR 1

Clear!

Doctor 1 applies the defibrillator paddles to Ned and administers the shock. Ned's body quakes. His heart rate returns to normal and the doctors and nurses leave. The news story covering Joe is still playing on his TV.

INT. STAPLES STORE-DAY

Joe's fellow employees greet him heartily. Romona eyes him from her spot at the cash register.

ROMONA

Looking good Joe.

Joe nods and walks by with a little bit of a nervous swagger.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-DAY

Amy is sitting at her desk watching clips on her computer of Joe Public. She seems to be analyzing the clip from this morning with earlier clips of Joe. Her cellphone buzzes. She puts it on speaker phone while she still looks at the clips.

MARV (V.O.)
There she is. Scoop of the
election season so far.

AMY
(distracted)
Yeah.

MARV (V.O.)
Stop sounding so excited. This is
blowing up. People are falling in
love with this guy.

AMY
I don't know

MARV (V.O.)
Oh Amy stop. Enjoy it. Revel
even. How is that cat doing?

At this Cronkite swipes the phone to the floor.

AMY
Good boy Cronkite.

INT. STAPLES BATHROOM - DAY

Joe is trying to compose himself. He checks his watch, it is
five o'clock.

JOE
OK, you can do this. Just walk to
the car. No problem. Its not like
you're running for president or
anything.

EXT. STAPLES STORE

A crowd awaits Joe's exit. Joe exits the store and the crowd
cheers. He waves dutifully. REPORTER 2 tries to get his
attention.

REPORTER 2
Joe can I get a quick question?

JOE
Sorry, I need to pick up my mom.
She volunteers at the library.

The crowd cheers for this. A POLITICAL AIDE for an opponent
is on his cell phone witnessing the scene.

Unlike the rest of the crowd which is dressed mid western casual, he is in a suit and wearing the pin of another candidate.

POLITICAL AIDE

...yeah, he just said his mom volunteers at the library. This guy is no joke. He has obviously put a lot of work into this regular guy routine. He is going to be tough to beat.

Joe has made it to his car and drives off.

EXT. LIBRARY

Gladys is at the top of the stairs with a crowd of her own. Reporters are asking her questions and she is not shying away from them.

INT. JOES CAR

Joe is pulling up to the scene.

JOE

(to himself)

Oh no.

EXT. LIBRARY

Joe pulls up in front of the library. Gladys is on the stairs answering reporters questions.

GLADYS

No, he wasn't an early walker or talker or anything. He took forever to potty train, oh I have some stories about that...

Joe looks mortified.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

I'd say Joe is a late bloomer, but I always knew he was made of the right stuff.

Gladys sees Joe pull up.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

There he is now the good boy. So dependable, just like I told you.

The crowd turns and cheers. Joe gets out, moves up the steps and takes his mother's arm. He waves to the crowd as he leads her down the steps while she blows kisses. Joe gets Gladys to the car and helps her in.

INT. CAR

Joe is driving with Gladys still waving to the crowd. Gladys attempts to put the passenger window down so she can still wave. Joe sees this and puts it up with the control on the driver's side.

JOE

Ma, I told you I'm not running for president.

GLADYS

What are you talking about? Look at all the people. You're in the newspaper, you're on the TV. Of course you're running for President. I'm very proud of you.

Joe shakes his head.

EXT. JOES HOME-NIGHT

A limousine sits parked outside of Joe's home. Joe's car pulls into the driveway. Joe and Gladys exit their car and head to the house. Gladys is excited by the limo, Joe looks nervous. Joe and Gladys enter their home and close the door. After they enter, the driver of the limo gets out and opens one of the back doors. Out steps Henry Soda. The driver moves to the other door and opens it. Out comes Ruppert. The two brothers walk slowly to the front door.

INT. JOES HOME - NIGHT

Gladys is looking out of a window. Joe is nervously peeking out a window by the door.

GALDYS

Joe, the limousine men are coming.

JOE

I can see that Ma.

GLADYS

Do you know them?

JOE

Not yet.

We hear a knock at the door.

GLADYS

Oh, this is exciting.

Joe cautiously opens the door. Henry and Rupert are standing there.

HENRY

Mr. Smednick?

JOE

Yes.

HENRY

I'm Henry Soda and this is my brother Rupert. May we come in?

JOE

We're not looking to buy a new vacuum.

Henry laughs, Rupert not so much.

HENRY

A sense of humor, I like it. That can come in handy during a campaign. I can assure you we are not vacuum salesmen Mr. Smednick. Please, may we come in?

Reluctantly Joe starts to open the door. Henry nods to Rupert. Joe fully opens the door and they come in.

INT. JOES DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Henry, Rupert and Joe are sitting at the table. Gladys is just a few steps away listening.

JOE

I'm not running for president.

RUPERT

We know that Mr. Smednick. It wouldn't be possible. You're not even on the ballot.

HENRY

Joe, did you ever want to see the Democrats and Republicans finally get together on something?

JOE

Of course.

HENRY

Try to run as a viable independent candidate. Those two parties will come together like dogs in heat to keep you off the ballot. It's almost inspiring to see them be able to accomplish something together. You're not running for president Mr. Smednick, but you've somehow gotten yourself into something of ours and you're in over your head.

RUPPERT

What we are about to share with you is very sensitive. It could be damaging to us if it got out, and damaging to you as well.

HENRY

Mr. Smednick, Rupert and I created Joe Public. He was a way for us to get our message out. He is not a real person.

RUPERT

That is until you came along.

JOE

I'm not sure I follow you, but I didn't mean to become this Joe Public guy.

Henry nods.

HENRY

Do you like capitalism Joe? Good ol' fashion American capitalism?

JOE

Sure, as much as the next guy I guess.

RUPERT

Good. Cause I'm the next guy and I love it!

HENRY

We'd like to make this little mix up worth your while. With our guidance, we'd like you to keep up this charade of being Joe Public...

JOE

Oh, I don't know...

RUPPERT

I'm sure we can pay one hundred times the salary of...(he checks Joe's name tag) an assistant manager at Staples.

HENRY

We'll tell you what to say, what to do. We'll do all the thinking, the planning. We'll make it easy on you. It could be a lot of fun...

RUPPERT

...and when the time comes, you'll throw your support to a candidate of our choosing. You'll be out, but with an amazing experience and a lot more cash in your pocket.

JOE

While I...

HENRY

Show him the briefcase Ruppert.

Rupert brings a briefcase up to the table and pops it open. It is loaded with cash.

RUPERT

Think of this as a down payment.

Joe is dumbfounded. Henry reaches across and Joe shakes his hand. Gladys steps into the room.

GLADYS

I told you you were running for president!

EXT. JOE'S HOME - EARLY MORNING

A convoy of Lincoln Town Cars and cargo vans arrive in unison. They park at the curb in front of Joe's house with military precision. Henry, Ruppert and TONY climb out of the first car. Tony is in his forties, tailored suit, hair slicked back, fit and confident. As activity flourishes around the cargo vans, Henry, Rupert, Tony and a few others head towards the home.

INT. JOE'S HOME

Gladys is in her housecoat watching the scene excitedly. She heads to the door and opens it. She waves to the people.

GLADYS
Good morning everybody.

HENRY
Good morning Gladys. Is Joe home?

GLADYS
Joe is still sleeping.

Ruppert checks his Rolex and does an eye roll.

HENRY
Would you mind pointing us to his room?

GLADYS
Sure, his is the room on the right.

HENRY
Thank you Gladys. (turns to the crew). Room on the right.

In sync they march through the small house and head to Joe's room. With Tony leading the charge, they enter without knocking.

INT. JOES ROOM

Joe is sound asleep. Tony, followed by everyone else, heads straight to him and pulls off his sheets.

TONY
Rise and shine Mr. President.

Joe, in his boxers, is startled and showing a bit of a morning erection. He scrambles for his sheets and is confused.

JOE
What the hell?

TONY
What do we have here? A little morning wood?

Joe is mortified, no one else seems to care.

TONY (CONT'D)
I'm Tony Clifton.

Tony extends his hand. IDA, with her measuring tape in hand, pushes through and begins taking measurements of Joe, morning wood or not. Joe is trying to cover himself and is still in disbelief.

JOE
What is going on?

TONY
The campaign Joe.

HENRY
Candidates need to be early risers.

JOE
You said I wasn't really running.

HENRY
True, but you are campaigning, it's a subtle difference. You need to sign this.

Henry thrust some papers at Joe who signs in his bewilderment. They have hoisted him out of bed while Ida continues taking measurements. Joe is goosed when she measures his inner thigh to his crotch. She is aggressive about her job. Joe, being nearly naked, is embarrassed. They usher him out of the room.

EXT. HALLWAY-MORNING

Tony and company march Joe down the hall and stop in front of the bathroom door. They push him in.

TONY

Shower up Joe, we'll get everything ready.

INT. LIVINGROOM - MORNING

The crew have taken over the entire house. Joe and Gladys' personal belongings have been pushed to the side. Their dining room table has been commandeered by young people with laptops. Card tables have been brought in with more papers. Ida and her helpers wheel in two clothing racks. The first lined with navy blue suits, white shirts and a selection of power ties. The second is the casual candidate attire. Ironed jeans, polo golf shirts, etc. Ida opens a box of flag pins and places one on the label of each suit jacket. She then selects a suit, shirt, tie and examines each one to make sure that there isn't a loose thread or blemish of any kind. Her face is millimeters from the material.

INT. HALLWAY-MORNING

Joe has finished his shower and exits the bathroom with a towel around his waist. He sheepishly looks back towards the dinning room to make sure that no one sees him. He slips down the hall to his room. He enters and closes the door behind him relieved to be alone.

INT. JOES ROOM

He looks at himself in the mirror. Exhales and drops his towel to the floor. Ida burst threw the door and is all business. Joe scrambles for his towel.

JOE

Oh, ah...excuse...

IDA

Relax, I've seen a penis before.
This is your outfit for today.

She lays out the clothes on his bed and exits.

INT. DINING ROOM-MORNING

Tony and the Soda Brothers are looking over potential campaign slogans. Joe enters. His tie isn't quite right and he is carrying his name tag from Staples. Joe attempts to put his name tag on the jacket and Ida notices.

IDA

Ah!!!

Ida leaps at Joe and quickly pulls the name tag off of the jacket and throws it across the room. She begins to fix his tie, strangling Joe in the process. Joe reacts to his name tag being thrown.

JOE

Hey...everyone, I don't know how to tell you all this, but I have to work today.

TONY

You do Joe, but not at Staples.

JOE

What a second...

HENRY

Joe, we've taken the liberty of calling the CEO of Staples. He is a good friend of ours. He loves this whole idea by the way. Great advertising for them. Anyway, they're going to hold on to your job for you, but you're on leave for now.

JOE

But...

RUPPERT

You'll probably wind up with a job at corporate after this.

GLADYS

After being President?

JOE

No, ma.

Henry has picked up the name tag.

HENRY

I must say, I like the idea of the name tag though.

RUPERT

Interesting.

TONY

It certainly drives home the every man concept.

IDA

No! No! No name tag.

HENRY

Ida, its not a fashion show. We are trying to have him relate to the public. Give him something to stand out. Trust me, no other candidate owns a name tag.

Henry hands the name tag to Joe who attempts to put it on. Ida smacks his hand and takes it from him.

IDA

If we must, I will place it.

Then she very carefully places it just where she wants it.

TONY

Joe, safe to assume you're not married? That presents a bit of a challenge.

GLADYS

I've been telling him that forever.

JOE

Ma.

TONY

Are you gay?

JOE

What? No.

Gladys turns to the person next to her.

GLADYS

Did he say no?

TONY

You're going to have to get used to me asking you straight forward questions Joe. We can make most things go away if we see them coming.

Henry walks over with some campaign ideas.

HENRY

Joe I'd love your input on these ideas. We need to go with one word, one idea, that captures the attention and the imagination of the voter.

Henry places three ideas on the table. One reads, "Joe Public/Patriot", another reads, Joe "Public/Real Values", while the third says, "Joe Public/American".

JOE

Hmmm. I think I like Joe Public, Real Values. Its a...

TONY

Patriot. Its got to be Patriot. It communicates the idea of loving the real America. The old America.

HENRY

I get a very visceral reaction.

RUPPERT

Agreed.

Tony pulls that one from the table and turns to an intern.

TONY

Print these.

The intern grabs it and heads off.

JOE

Wait, it says Joe Public, not Joe Smednick.

The intern stops. Tony turns to the intern.

TONY

Go.

The intern scurries off. Then Tony addresses Joe.

TONY

Joe (Tony makes the quotes sign with his fingers), Joe Smednick isn't electable. Joe Public already has traction. He is trending on Google search, Twitter, You Tube...

JOE
But that's not my name.

TONY
You're not actually running. We
just want to grab everyone's
attention.

An AUDIO MAN places an earpiece in Joe's ear while Joe is speaking with Tony.

AUDIO MAN
That should be good to go.

TONY
Perfect, thank you. (Tony touches
his belt and turns away from Joe.)
Joe, can you hear me?

Joe is surprised to have Tony's voice in his ear and looks around the room.

JOE
Yes.

TONY
Excellent. This whole campaign I'm
going to be right there in your
ear. Telling you what to say, what
to do...

HENRY
Are we ready?

TONY
Yes sir.

EXT. PARK ACROSS FROM STAPLES - DAY

A small grandstand has been erected. Interns are draping it in bunting. A few passenger vans arrive and park. Out climb a random assortment of people. As they walk towards the grandstand they are met by Tony and an ASSISTANT. Tony begins addressing where each should stand. Hand made campaign signs are being distributed to the organized spectators who are not actually supporters but clearly paid actors. It is a well orchestrated show. Tony moves to the top of the grandstand and while looking out at the spectators, he gestures to have some changes places. Some are sent to the back, front, side, etc. News cameras start to show up and newspaper reporters begin to arrive.

A second set of passenger vans emerge and out pour some of the interns we saw earlier at Joe's home. Tony comes off of the grandstand and directs them as well. Once he is happy with everything he touches the button on his belt.

TONY
Send in Elvis.

Out from the van emerges a nervous and cautious Joe. As he makes his way to the grandstand the crowd cheers. Joe likes the attention and walks a little straighter. Tony reaches for his button again. While we see Joe, we hear Tony's voice come through the earpiece.

TONY (V.O.)
Joe, can you hear me?

Joe looks to his left and spots Tony through the crowd. Joe gives him a wink and a thumbs up. News cameras capture the thumbs up. Joe looks very confident, he has been transformed into a real candidate.

TONY (CONT'D)
You're going to kill today!

EXT. PARK-DAY

Joe is addressing the fake crowd. Reporters are throwing questions at him. Tony is whispering into his mic to give Joe the answers.

REPORTER 1
Joe, what's your take on the
current state of the economy?

JOE
We're going to rejuvenate it! I'm
going to breath life right back
into it!

REPORTER 1
How Joe?

JOE
With American ingenuity. American
Pride and good ol' American Hard
work! I believe in America!

The crowd cheers, the reporters roll their eyes. Tony is pleased. Reporters continue to question Joe and Tony continues to give him all the answers. The hired crowd continues to cheer. Joe gives a final wave and exits the podium.

EXT. CAMPAIGN BUS-DAY

The "Joe Public Patriot Bus" is rolling down the highway. We see shots of the bus on country roads, small towns and rolling past farms.

INT. TOWN HALL-DUSK

Joe is seated on a small stage with a MODERATOR NEXT TO HIM. Joe looks more comfortable and more confident.

JOE
America is going...back to the
future!

MODERATOR
Can you explain that Joe?

Tony is giving Joe the answers off stage.

JOE
That right there is the problem.
The media doesn't get it, the
politicians don't get it. But the
Americans, the true red blooded
Americans completely understand.

The crowd cheers.

JOE (CONT'D)
God bless you all and God bless
America.

The crowd erupts, the moderator looks a bit baffled and Joe stands up, waves to the crowd, and shakes the moderator's hand. Joe gives another wave and walks off. Tony excitedly greets him off stage and whisks him out a side door.

INT. STUDIO MONITOR

We see a map of Iowa with red lines showing Joe crisscrossing the state.

EXT. ANOTHER CAMPAIGN STOP

Instead of arriving in the customary passenger van, this time Joe pulls up in an old school American convertible. Very Kennedy-esque.

INT. SODA BROTHERS CONFERENCE ROOM

The Brothers are watching footage of Joe arriving in the convertible.

RUPPERT

I love the old convertible, that's a nice touch. Very Americana. This Smednick guy is working out perfectly.

HENRY

Do you think we are taking our chances with the convertible though? What if some lunatic takes a shot at him?

RUPPERT

Like we could get so lucky.

Henry and Ruppert laugh.

INT. NEWSROOM

We catch a news program mid-broadcast. A panel is discussing the candidates.

PANELIST ONE

Relative unknown Joe Public is quickly rising up the polls.

We see a graphic of seven candidates, At the start of the graph Joe does not even register. Now he has moved into fifth and continues to climb.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES OFFICES - NIGHT

Amy and her editor watch the coverage of Joe's rise.

MARV

Your guy is coming on strong Amy.

AMY

My guy?

MARV

Well, no one knew who the hell he was until you found him.

AMY

He doesn't even seem like the same guy any more. And what's with Joe Public? We outed him. His name is Joe Smednick. Are politicians going with stage names now? Could that actually be a thing? Its weird. Why doesn't anyone care that that's not even his name?

MARV

You know he's still not on the ballot?

AMY

What?

MARV

I just checked. He's not on the ballot in any state. Yet, there he is. Giving speeches, drawing crowds. There is a rumor that the Soda Brothers are backing him.

AMY

The Soda Brothers? Since when did they start backing long shots?

MARV

Since never.

AMY

Intriguing.

MARV

Glad to hear you say that.

AMY

What? No. I'm done covering politicians. They're a bunch of lying scumbags.

MARV

You've got to go back Amy. Other than these press clips, he won't interview with anyone. Maybe he'll interview with you again.

AMY

I swear to God anyone who wants to lose faith in our system should cover an election.

INT. AMYS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amy has her suitcase out and is almost all packed. Her carry-on cat carrier is next to it. Cronkite eyes her from the corner.

AMY

Don't worry Cronkite, I wouldn't
leave without you.

Cronkite makes a disagreeable noise and darts away.

AMY (CONT'D)

Cronkite!

Amy continues to hunt Cronkite around the apartment. She finally corners him, picks him up and brings him to the cat carrier. He is squirming hard, hissing, flailing his paws, trying to get away.

AMY (CONT'D)

There, there...don't worry. You'll
be with me the whole time.

Cronkite struggles to avoid the cat carrier but ultimately Amy gets him in. She closes the cat carrier door and stands. She has a few noticeable scratches on her arms and face.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-EARLY MORNING

The room is pitch black. The door bursts open and Tony enters. He flicks on the lights and opens the curtains. Joe wakes with a jolt.

TONY

Rise and shine champ!

Ida enters carrying gym shorts, shirts, sneakers and socks.

JOE

What time is it?

TONY

Four thirty A.M.

JOE

My God, I didn't even know that was
a time. Don't you people ever
sleep?

TONY

No. Good news. First, you've risen to number four in the polls and second, our latest survey indicates that the public views you as an early morning jogger. Oddly, they also pegged you as a sushi eater. More importantly, these are things they like that about you.

JOE

What? Jogger? Sushi eater? How would that even come up in a survey? I'm not either of those.

TONY

You are now. Up and at 'em.

Joe reluctantly gets up.

JOE

I get the jogging thing, but sushi? I thought I was all about apple pie and hotdogs.

TONY

You are. The Sushi thing is kind of a wild card, I was surprised by it to. Market research can be baffling to try to figure out, sometimes you just have to go with it. So get up you running sushi eater.

EXT. STREET-MORNING

With the campaign car driving in front of him, Joe is struggling jogging behind. Every time a car passes in the other direction, Joe straightens up, gives them a thumbs up and appears to be running joyfully only to deflate back to his struggling self when they are out of sight. As he jogs by a hotel, we see a curtain open.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-EARLY MORNING

Amy looks out the window and notices Joe jogging by. From her vantage point she gets a full look at Joe putting on his brave face only to nearly collapse when each car passes. She watches in part amusement, part disgust.

AMY
Classic...

EXT. PUBLIC PARK-DAY

Joe is making a speech to his eager followers. Amy is also there watching. Reporters lob him questions.

REPORTER 1
Joe, are you planning on taking part in the debate? Most of the other candidates have already committed.

Joe holds his hand to his ear as if he is having a hard time hearing the question.

REPORTER 2
The debate Joe? What do yo say?

Joe lowers his hand and Amy can make out the ear piece. She instinctively looks around for who might be feeding him answers. After some searching she spots Tony in the background, speaking and covering his mouth.

JOE
Debates are for professional politicians. They are the ones that got us here in the first place. Besides, we know they just tell us what we want to hear. My time is better spent with you, real Americans.

The crowd cheers him on, Amy continues her surveillance.

REPORTER 1
It might help clear up your stances on the issues...

Amy sees Tony speaking and Joe listening attentively.

JOE
The real issue is that the politicians are politicians. They don't represent you. They represent themselves, special interest groups and whoever is picking up their check on K Street. While the real Americans are right here, with me.

(MORE)

JOE (cont'd)
Living in the country of their
parents and grandparents. Making
apple pies, eating corn dogs and
driving the largest American made
pick ups they can find!

The crowd continues to love it.

AMY
This is even worse than usual.

As the rally continues Amy decides to make her way towards Tony. Tony, being on top of everything, observes her and casually grabs the walkie talkie on his hip and speaks into it. Moments later as Amy begins to get close, two SECURITY OFFICERS intercept her and divert her away.

AMY
Excuse me I'm trying...

SECURITY OFFICER 1
Sorry Ma'am, only candidates and
their personnel beyond here.

As they usher her away, Tony gives the wrap it up signal. Like clock work, the convertible and the van for the rest of the crew appear. Joe gives a last wave and climbs into the convertible while the rest get into the van. In no time they are whisked away and the crowd cheers after them. Joe turns and gives one last wave to the crowd. Amy watches them in disgust and frustration.

INT. LOBBY OF HOTEL

Amy, in a bad disguise, is waiting. Eventually the convertible and the van pull up to the front. Out climbs Joe and his entourage. As they enter the lobby, Amy sees her chance to approach.

AMY
Joe, would you mind answering a
couple of questions?

JOE
Oh, hi! How are you?

Tony intervenes.

TONY
No more questions. I'm sure you
understand, Joe Public has been
answering questions all day...

AMY

But I'm...

TONY

Amy Faye from the New York Times.
I know exactly who you are. No
questions.

As Joe gets ushered into the elevator he looks back to Amy
and gives her an apologetic look.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-NIGHT

Amy is on the speaker phone with Marv. She is pacing and
holding Cronkite while distractedly petting him. Amy is
blind to the fact that Cronkite wants none of it.

AMY

Marv it's nauseating. Not only is
he not answering anything, he isn't
even the one doing the non-
answering. He is actually out
politicianing the politicians.

MARV (O.S.)

You're going to need to be a little
clearer than that.

AMY

He is wearing an ear piece Marv.
He has a handler feeding him every
line.

MARV

Tony Clifton by any chance?

AMY

Who?

MARV

Tony Clifton. He's one of the Soda
Brothers go to guys. He is really
good, in a complete scum bag sorta
way.

AMY

I don't know his name, he knew who
I was though. He won't let me near
Joe.

MARV

You'll find a way.

AMY

Marv seriously, after this it's time for me to do a few fluff pieces.

MARV

Amy, even if I let you, you'd hate that.

AMY

Probably.

EXT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Amy has spotted Joe inside at the sushi counter. He is getting his picture taken and trying to look like he is enjoying himself. He is surrounded by supporters. The Chef brings him another plate of sushi that Joe feigns excitement over. He takes a bite, nods his head to the chef in an affirmation of how good it is. As the chef walks away, Joe looks for a place to get rid of the sushi. He finally spits it into his napkin when almost no one is looking. Amy of course, catches this. While she is watching she doesn't notice Tony walking up beside her.

TONY

You're persistent.

Amy is caught off guard.

AMY

What? Oh, I was just wondering if there are any good sushi places near by. Do you know if this place is supposed to be any good?

Tony laughs.

TONY

Sorry. It's a private party thrown by some of Joe's supporters.

AMY

How do you know I wasn't invited?

TONY

Because I handled all the invites.

Joe looks out the window. He seems somewhat of a captured animal. He spots Amy and smiles and gives a wave.

AMY

See that, we're friends.

TONY

No you're not. But I should thank you. Without you and your article, I wouldn't have picked up this gig. I almost thought I'd be sitting this election out.

Tony catches Joe's eye, gives him a "don't worry, I've got it under control" look. Joe sheepishly turns away.

AMY

Then you wouldn't mind a few questions.

TONY

I would mind.

Tony moves past her towards the two Security Officers stationed at the door. Tony gives them instructions regarding Amy. He then enters the restaurant and crosses to the window in front of Amy. While staring at Amy, he closes the blinds. Amy grimaces. She takes two steps towards the Officers who look at her and shake their heads no. She nods to them and walks to the parking lot as if she is going to her car.

Once the Officers have lost interest in her, she circles back towards the restaurant. She walks around the side of the restaurant peeking in windows along the way. She gets to a back door. Carefully she turns the handle and it is unlocked. She peeks in and can see that it leads to the kitchen. The kitchen is busy and there are too many cooks and dishwashers for her to go unnoticed. She continues down the wall to a window with bars on it. The window is slightly cracked. She peers in and spots a urinal. The bathroom appears to be empty. She decides to wait.

AMY

(to herself)

My mom actually wanted me to go into journalism. Not sure that this is what she had in mind.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Joe is still at the counter. A bit of a commotion erupts as the Head Chef approaches Joe. He is followed by other excited restaurant workers. On a small plate he presents what must be a very rare piece of sushi.

This one is still moving! It resembles a small octopus arm and it's squiggling and reaching. They very excitedly present it to Joe. Joe is trying to look excited while the restaurant staff stands by in anticipation. Joe looks to Tony who is smiling with clenched teeth.

TONY

Eat it Joe.

Tony Is all business. Joe looks back to the plate, manages to pick it up with his chopsticks which delights the staff and politely tosses it in his mouth. The staff erupts with cheers. As Joe is trying to eat it he gives everyone a "thumbs up" to show how delicious it is. The staff wait and watch and Joe realizes he is going to have to get this down. At one point a tentacle emerges from his mouth still squirming, which Joe has to get back in. Eventually he swallows and gets one last cheer from the staff. As they start to head back to work Joe goes pale and gathers up his napkin which has quite a bit of sushi in it.

JOE

Excuse me.

Joe heads to the restroom, discreetly carrying his napkin.

INT. RESTROOM-NIGHT

Joe burst into the restroom and heads to the toilet. He retches but doesn't throw up.

JOE

Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God.
Go to your happy place...

EXT. RESTROOM WINDOW-NIGHT

Amy hears the noise and peers in.

INT. RESTROOM-NIGHT

Joe is heading to the sink. He empties his napkin into the trash. He is sweating. He looks in the mirror.

JOE

Oh what have I done?

AMY

(through the window)
Joe? Joe, is that you?

Joe is startled. He looks around.

AMY (CONT'D)

Joe?

Joe goes to the window and looks out. We can just make Amy out through the partly opened window.

JOE

Oh hey, it's you!

AMY

Hi.

JOE

What are you doing here?

AMY

Oh, you know. I just love hanging outside of mens bathroom windows. You didn't sound to well there.

JOE

I can still feel the tentacles of the last one going down.

AMY

Can I ask you a couple of questions on the record?

JOE

Sure.

AMY

Not much is known about you. Where did you go to college?

JOE

I've got two years of Suffolk Community College under my belt.

AMY

Did you get a degree in anything?

JOE

Nope.

AMY

Why did you choose Suffolk Community College?

JOE

No one chooses Suffolk community College. It just sort of happens to you.

AMY

How did it happen to you?

JOE

I was all set to go to the University of Iowa. I'd been accepted, even had some scholarship money. Then my Dad had a sudden heart attack. He was only fifty two.

AMY

Oh my. How did that turn out?

JOE

Not good. He didn't survive. It was a real shook to everyone, especially my Mom. So, then I had a decision to make. Head off to college as planned or stay home to look after her.

AMY

You stayed home.

JOE

My Mom was having a really tough time. It didn't seem right to leave her then. Time passed, now I'm an assistant manager at a chain store.

AMY

And a presidential candidate.

JOE

Well...

Tony burst into the bathroom.

TONY

What the hell...

Tony gets on his walkie.

TONY

She's around the back of the building morons, lets go.

JOE

Tony...

TONY

Shut up Joe. You don't talk to her, you don't talk to anybody without me.

JOE

I just thought...

TONY

There's your problem, don't think. I do the thinking. You do the waving.

From outside we can hear a scuffle.

AMY (O.S.)

Get off me...

Joe goes to the window, Tony stops him.

TONY

Don't worry about her, she's fine. She'll probably kick both their asses. She's a reporter. Joe, reporters are our enemy.

JOE

She doesn't seem...

TONY

She does seem. Leave her to me. Now get back out there.

JOE

No more sushi.

TONY

Yes more sushi. If they offer it, you're eating eat. It would be insulting not to.

Tony pushes Joe back into the restaurant.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM-MORNING

Joe is finishing his shower, oblivious to Ida who is picking up his clothes. Joe steps out of the shower naked, still exhausted with his eyes closed and reaches for a towel.

IDA
Good morning Joe!

Joe is shocked, his eyes pop open and he quickly tries to cover himself with the towel.

JOE
Ida! God, I'll never get used to this.

IDA
You get ready and I'll get your outfit together.

JOE
I'd like to pick it out.

IDA
No!

Ida exits. Joe closes the door behind her. He leans against the door to catch his breath.

JOE
I'm done with this...

He listens at the door.

INT. HOTEL SUITE-MORING

Ida is busy picking out the clothes. Tony enters.

TONY
How is our candidate today?

IDA
Naked.

TONY
Well, I'm hoping that's just a temporary problem.

IDA
I'm working on it.

INT. BATHROOM-MORNING

Joe moves away from the door and looks out the window. They are on the second floor. It's only a short drop. He looks around the bathroom for a robe, some clothing, anything. All he has is his towel.

He decides to creep towards the door to see if maybe there are some clothes nearby. Just as he gets to the door he hears loud footsteps and a knock, knock, knock on the door.

IDA (O.S.)

Joe, are you ready? I'm coming in.

Joe recoils from the door.

JOE

Uh, no. I need few more minutes.
I'm...ah...going to the bathroom.

IDA (O.S.)

That's OK. I'll come in and...

Ida attempts to open the door and Joe lunges to stop her. He pushes the door closed and locks it.

JOE

No! Just give me a few minutes.

Joe glances around the bathroom for anyway out. He moves to the window and carefully opens it. Joe looks out. Not seeing a better option he climbs out to the ledge one leg at a time, constantly rearranging his towel to cover himself. After getting up his courage he releases and drops. We hear a thud.

JOE (O.S.)

Ow!

INT. HOTEL SUITE-MORNING

Tony and Ida hear it. They rush to the door. Tony attempts to open it and it is locked.

TONY

Joe? Joe, are you all right?

EXT. BACK OF HOTEL-MORNING

Joe, still only in his towel, is limping away.

INT. HOTEL SUITE-MORNING

Tony lowers his shoulder and after a few bangs the door gives.

INT. BATHROOM-MORNING

Tony and Ida rush in. After a quick scan he notices the window. He runs to the window and can just spot Joe escaping.

TONY
Unbelievable.

Tony grabs the walkie talkie from his waist.

TONY (CONT'D)
Gentlemen I don't believe this, we
have a runner.

We hear the Security Officer over the walkie talkie.

SECURITY OFFICER 1 (O.S.)
Excuse me sir?

TONY
You heard me. Joe Public is
heading around the north side of
the hotel wearing only a towel.
Get him.

SECURITY OFFICER 1
On it.

INT. CAR-MORNING

Amy is driving along the road. Her luggage is in the back and Cronkite is bopping freely and dangerously around the car. She nears the hotel where Joe is staying.

AMY
All right Cronkite, so they think
they can keep me away from him.
Well let's just see if there are
any vacancies at this hotel.

She sees a man running in a towel around the side of the hotel heading her way.

AMY (CONT'D)
Talk about the walk of shame.

She then sees Security Officers chasing the man. Her reporters instincts take over and she slows down. He is heading her way. Joe looks behind him, sees the Officers and continues running. He spots Amy, squints and recognizes her.

He has now altered course and is clearly heading straight to her car.

JOE

Amy. Amy! It's me. You gotta help me.

AMY

(in disbelief)

Joe?

Joe continues to run towards her and struggles to keep his towel covering his manliness. The Officers are getting closer. Amy is both looking and trying not to look at his occasional nakedness and is unsure of what to do. Cronkite is bounding freely around the car. Joe runs around the front of her car and opens the passenger side door. His towel gets caught on the door and is ripped off. Amy looks, then looks away and screams. Joe screams and Cronkite attacks the hairy thing in front of him. Cronkite leaps straight onto Joe's crotch claws out. Joe, in agony, rips the cat off of him and tosses him back in the car. He manages to reclaim his towel and hops in.

INT. AMY'S CAR

JOE

(in a high pitched voice)

Go! Go! Go!

Amy is perplexed. The Security Officers are getting closer, one begins to reach for the car.

AMY

Ahhh! Okay!

Amy floors it, leaving the Security Officers behind.

EXT. HOTEL-MORNING

Tony has made it to the front of the hotel and can see it is Amy who has Joe.

TONY

Wait!!!!

INT. AMY'S CAR-MORNING

Amy sees Tony and triumphantly flips him the bird. Tony can't believe it. Joe and Amy both laugh exhilaratingly. Cronkite pulls curly hairs from his paws with his mouth.

AMY

Woo, that was fun.

Joe is laughing.

JOE

That was awesome. Thank you.

AMY

So you really are a politician.

JOE

I am really not a politician.

AMY

I don't know Joe. Hoping out of hotel windows wearing only a towel. Pretty sketchy behavior. Seems like a politician to me. Were you sleeping with the wrong person?

JOE

What?

AMY

It's a symptom I've found to be quite common with politicians.

JOE

No. I jumped out of my own hotel room. I wasn't with anyone. I was trying to get away from them.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY

Amy's car is cruising below. A news helicopter is now following them.

INT. AMY'S CAR

Amy and Joe notice the helicopter.

AMY

What the...

INT. UNCLE NED'S HOSPITAL ROOM-MORNING

Ned is in his hospital bed watching the news. The coverage is from the helicopter's POV that is following Joe and Amy. Gladys is visiting Ned.

NEWSCASTER

According to witnesses, a nearly
naked Joe Public is racing away in
the car on your screens...

GLADYS

Ha! See that Ned. Helicopters are
following my son! What do you
think about that?

INT. BOARDROOM-MORNING

The Soda Brother's watch the events horrified.

INT. AMY'S CAR

Amy and Joe are still racing along. Her cellphone rings.
Amy looks at the screen and sees that Marv is calling. She
groans. She answers the phone, now driving with one hand on
the wheel with the other holding the phone. This display of
dangerous driving clearly makes Joe nervous.

AMY

Hi Marv.

She swerves around a corner.

AMY (CONT'D)

...Yeah, he is right here...that's
correct, just a towel...what no, i
didn't look. Well not on purpose
anyway.

She again partially loses control of the car. By now Joe is
reaching over to help drive. Amy is slapping his hand away
while occasionally having no hands on the wheel.

JOE

You really shouldn't be...

AMY

I'm fine, stop it. (back to the
phone). No, I was talking to Joe.

A truck comes around the bend and is partially in their lane.
Joe goes for the wheel but stops himself. Amy swerves,
partially off the road, to avoid the truck.

JOE

Oh my...

Amy is unfazed. Cronkite is howling.

AMY
(to phone)
I'm not sure. We are going to need
some help. Clothes for one, place
to stay...there is a great story
here, we've just got to keep him
away from them to get it...

EXT. HOTEL-MORNING

Tony is already organizing a search committee. He has
interns in vans heading out while other people are awaiting
his instructions. His phone rings.

TONY
Rupert, Henry, what a pleasure to
hear from you...Oh, I'm aware...I
can assure you, I'm on it.

INT. AMY'S CAR

Amy is driving through a very small Iowan town. She keeps
looking up.

AMY
I don't see it anymore, do you?

JOE
What?

AMY
The helicopter Joe.

JOE
Oh, yeah, I don't see it.

AMY
We just passed a thrift shop. I'm
going to circle back.

JOE
For what?

AMY
So we can get you some clothes Joe.

JOE
At the thrift shop? Who am I,
Maclemore?

AMY
Just something for now.

JOE
Why don't we just go to my home?

AMY
Your home Joe? Are you serious?
It will be a zoo there. Home is
the last place you want to go.

JOE
Why?

AMY
You really aren't a politician are
you? Let's see, candidate leaps
from hotel window wearing only a
towel and escapes in the car of a
New York Times reporter. People
are gonna want to know about that
Joe. There is no going back to
normal now.

EXT. JOE'S HOME

The press are there. Tony and some of his people are there
and Gladys is standing on the steps to her front door,
holding an informal news conference.

GLADYS
...it's very exciting. One minute
my Joey is running for president,
the next he is being chased by
helicopters. He couldn't even ride
a two wheel bike until he was
eleven. Now look at him. Maybe
he'll wind up being the next James
Bond...

The reporters are taking notes but are not sure what to make
of Gladys.

INT. THRIFT STORE

A disinterested old lady is at the front counter, otherwise
the store is empty. Amy wanders the aisles. There isn't
much there and everything is very old. She finds a suit,
shirt and shoes she thinks will fit Joe. She walks to the
back of the store. A back door is propped open with a fan.

She peeks out of the door and her car with Joe in it is there.

AMY
(to Joe)
Psst. Psst. Joe. Joe. (finally
yelling) Joe!

EXT. BACK OF THRIFT SHOP

Joe snaps out of his haze in the car. He sees Amy trying to get his attention. She is nodding for him to come in the back door. He shakes his head, motioning to the fact that he is only wearing a towel. She shakes off his objections and more emphatically motions for him to come in the back door. Reluctantly Joe exits the car, making sure that Cronkite does not escape. He looks furtively in each direction, and hustles to the back door in his towel.

INT. THRIFT STORE

Joe peers in the door to see that the store is empty. He enters.

AMY
Here try these on. There's a
dressing room right there.

Joe's not sure he likes the clothes.

JOE
But...

AMY
Just put them on Joe. You need
something to wear.

Joe enters the dressing room. After a beat he comes out. He is wearing a zoot suit from the 20's. A little short in the sleeves and the legs. He has no socks. He looks part hipster and part pimp.

JOE
I don't know...

AMY
It's fine.

She proceeds to pull all of the tags off of him and heads up to the old lady at the front.

AMY (CONT'D)
(to Thrift shop lady)
If it's okay, he's just going to
wear it out.

Amy goes to her purse. The Thrift Shop Lady could care less.

EXT. THRIFT STORE

Amy and Joe exit. They are in slow motion, cool music kicks in as Joe struts around the front of the store in his new duds. As they round the corner a flash bulb goes off. It's a PHOTOGRAPHER and A REPORTER.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Got 'em!

The Photographer rips off a few more shots.

REPORTER
Joe, can I get a few questions?

AMY
Shit!

Amy grabs Joe's arm and hustles him to the car. The photographer and the reporter follow, taking more shots. Amy and Joe get in. Amy starts the car, Cronkite is howling madly while they peel out.

INT. NED'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Ned and Gladys are watching the news.

NEWSCASTER
He may have fled the political scene, but now he's *making the scene*. All over the trendiest clubs in Manhattan, club goers are sporting the new Joe Public look...

The newscast first shows the photographer's shots of Joe leaving the thrift shop followed by people in night clubs wearing the ill fitted zoot suit. Both men and women have adopted the style. Short in the sleeves and the legs, no socks with wing tips. Some even sport Staples name tags.

NEWSCASTER
Thrift shops have been selling out as both men and women have been flocking to the shops.
(MORE)

NEWSCASTER (cont'd)

As a side note, Joe has risen to number three in the latest polls, political polls that is.

INT. BOARDROOM-NIGHT

The Soda Brothers watch in horror.

HENRY

This has gotten out of hand. Maybe it's time to walk away.

RUPERT

What? Create the Frankenstein monster and then just walk away. We've opened Pandora's box. I'd be afraid this could come back to haunt us.

HENRY

I'd like to get my hands around his scrawny little neck.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-NIGHT

Amy hangs up the phone. Joe is sitting there.

JOE

So what did they think of your story?

AMY

Well...they're excited. Marv keeps calling me Woodward. They're just a little afraid to run it.

JOE

Why?

AMY

Why? Joe. Is this all true? This is the New York Times. The paper of record. They aren't going to take any chances. This whole Joe Public persona is completely made up by the Soda Brothers?

JOE

Entirely. Until you came along and turned *me* into Joe Public.

AMY
It's an amazing story. Probably
the best on my career.

The phone rings. Amy answers it.

AMY (CONT'D)
(to phone)
Really?...yeah...okay...I'll see.
Are we going to run the
story?...OK...Yes, I'll let him
know.

She hangs up.

AMY (CONT'D)
Unbelievable. I don't have enough
time to buy a fresh bra, but
Giorgio Armani wants to dress you.

JOE
What?

AMY
I just haven't been able to get to
my laundry so...

JOE
I mean about the Armani part.

AMY
Oh. They want to strike a deal to
be in charge of your wardrobe any
time you're going to be making a
public appearance.

JOE
Sweet.

AMY
Are you sure you want to do this?

JOE
For free suits? Yeah!

INT. HOTEL ROOM-LATE NIGHT

Joe is sleeping soundly. Cronkite is curled up next to him.
Amy is sitting at the desk typing furiously on her computer.

EXT. CITY STREET-MORNING

A stack of New York Times newspapers is dropped on the street. On the cover is a shot from the helicopter of Amy and Joe's escape. The headline reads "We've Been Had!". The papers quickly get picked up one by one.

INT. RANDOM LIVING ROOM-MORNING

A morning news program plays while a family gets ready for work and school

NEWSCASTER 1

According to the New York Times,
we've been had...

An image of the New York Times cover appears next to the Newscaster.

INT. COFFEE SHOP-MORNING

A hanging television in the shop plays a different morning program while a barista takes an order.

NEWSCASTER 2

...quite the ruse. He's not on the
ballot and his name isn't even Joe
Public...

INT. COMMUTER TRAIN STATION-MORNING

Commuters watch the news on a monitor while they wait for their train.

NEWSCASTER 3

...backed by the influential Soda
Brothers, Joe Public had climbed up
to number three in the polls. Now
his supporters will have to find
another candidate to vote for.

NEWSCASTER 4

I don't know, I really liked the
guy. Just something very real and
honest about him.

INT. HOTELROOM-MORING

Amy and Joe are watching the newscast. There is a knock on their door. Amy crosses to answer. When she opens the door Marv and a new stylist, RAPHAEL, are there. Raphael can best be described as fabulous and has a rolling rack of suits with him.

MARV
Congratulations, front page!

Marv and Raphael enter.

AMY
I thought they were afraid to run it.

MARV
They were more afraid someone else would beat them to the story. They knew the morning broadcast would air it.

RAPHAEL
There he is, my little mannequin!

Raphael crosses straight to Joe and begins taking measurements. Joe is used to this routine by now.

MARV
Mr. Smednick, it's a pleasure to meet you. That's quite a story you've got there.

Joe shakes his hand.

MARV (CONT'D)
We've alerted the rest of the media that you will hold a press conference right back in your old park.

JOE
Really, the park?

MARV
It'll be great symmetry. End the story right where it started.

AMY
And we are sharing the story?

MARV

We've already broken the story.
Less risk for us if everyone else
picks it up.

EXT. PARK ACROSS FROM STAPLES-DAY

A podium has been set up for Joe. Across the park another candidate is making a speech to a large crowd. A caravan of cars pulls up near the podium with the last car being Amy's. Marv hops out of the first car. Joe and Amy emerge from her car. Joe, as usual, has to keep Cronkite from getting out. Amy crosses to Joe and notices that his new suit is covered in Cronkite's fur. She pulls a roll of tape from her purse and begins pressing it to Joe's suit in an attempt to remove the cat fur. As Joe walks to the podium the press scramble to assemble in front of him, including some press who leave the other candidate. The other candidate looks across to Joe somewhat annoyed. Then the crowd surrounding the other candidate notice Joe.

FOLLOWER 1

Hey look, it's Joe!

FOLLOWER 2

It's Joe Public.

The crowd moves from listening to the other candidate and heads over to Joe's podium. By now, Joe has reached the podium. He tests the microphone.

JOE

Hello? Hello? You know me as Joe
Public but my real name is Joe
Smednick and I'm her to answer any
questions you may have.

REPORTER 1

Joe, is the New York Times article
true?

REPORTER 2

Has this whole campaign been a
fraud?

REPORTER 3

What was in it for you Joe? Was
someone paying you? Was it
blackmail?

JOE
Hold on. One at a time. Yes, the
story is completely true...

The reporters are peppering him with questions and Joe looks uncomfortable. The crowd though is still supportive. One yells from the back...

FOLLOWER 1
Vote for Joe! Vote for Joe!
Vote! For! Joe! Vote! For! Joe!

Follower 1 starts the chant. Quickly the whole crowd joins in. They are drowning out the reporters. Joe is baffled.

REPORTER 1
Can they actually vote for you Joe?
Are you on the ballot?

The crowd chants louder. Joe attempts to answer the question.

JOE
No, they can't vote for me. Nor do
I want them to.

Undeterred the crowd keeps going. TV cameramen are getting the coverage. Marv and Amy look at each other, unable to make sense of what's happening. Joe raises his hands to quiet the crowd.

JOE (CONT'D)
Thank you. Thank you everyone for
your support. The fact of the
matter is, I can't run...

FOLLOWER 1
Vote for Joe!

The chant quickly re-erupts. They are drowning out Joe. He looks to Amy and laughs, who returns the laugh.

INT. OFFICE-DAY

The Soda Brothers have the news on. The coverage is of the deafening crowd and their "Vote for Joe" chant.

HENRY
Unbelievable. This guy can't be
stopped.

RUPPERT
It would take a high powered
riffle.

The two laugh. Once they stop laughing, they give each other
a knowing look. After a pause, Henry picks up the phone.

INT. HOTELROOM-DAY

Amy is packing her bags. Cronkite is sitting comfortably on
Joe's lap.

JOE
I think Cronkite has gotten to like
me. Is he always this
affectionate?

AMY
Usually just with me.

Marv enters. He sees Amy packing.

MARV
What are you doing?

AMY
What does it look like I'm doing?
Packing.

MARV
You can't leave. This story's not
over.

AMY
What are you talking about? We got
the front page, Joe has come clean.

JOE
I'm going to hopefully get my job
back at Staples.

Marv picks up the clicker and turns on the TV. Immediately
we hear the "Vote for Joe! Vote for Joe!" chant come over the
television.

MARV
You've just moved into second place
in the polls. Your numbers are
climbing.

JOE
But I'm not running.

MARV

You never where. It's never mattered. You've tapped into something.

JOE

What?

MARV

I don't know. Voter's disgust. A fresh face. The public's lack of interest in the details. Some of that, all of that or maybe something else. That's the follow up on your story. I've got to go get a room.

Marv crosses to the door and opens it. Outside we can hear his followers chanting.

FOLLOWERS

"Vote for Joe! Vote for Joe!

MARV

They found you.

Marv exits. Joe peeks out of the window at his followers. He closes the curtain and comes back to Amy.

JOE

What do I do? This has to stop. I told them I'm not running. Your article came out.

AMY

I don't know. Another press conference?

JOE

Yeah, you can see how well that worked.

AMY

Go in with a planned speech. Say what you want, no questions, and then just walk off.

JOE

When?

Amy looks out to the crowd still gathered.

AMY
I'd say first thing tomorrow
morning.

The crowd outside continue to chant.

EXT. PARK-MORNING

Amy's car pulls up to the park. A much smaller podium has been placed in the park. Joe and Amy exit the car and begin to walk towards the podium. Joe's new found confidence is still present, he is committed to ending this once and for all.

INT. CARGO VAN-DAY

A cargo van is careening at dangerous speeds through the Iowan town. Five FEMI-NAZI'S are applying the last touches of black marker to parts of their bodies. They are writing slogan's like "My Body, my choice" and "Keep your bible out of my vagina" on their exposed skin. They wear black masquerade masks, black leather short shorts and high black boots. Leather straps are worn on their torso's with their breasts exposed. DONNA is wearing a flesh colored top so as not to expose her breast. BRENDA notices.

BRENDA
Donna, what the fuck?

DONNA
Oh, I'm just not comfortable with,
you know, the nakedness.

BRENDA
Well get comfortable with it. We
are trying to make a statement.

DONNA
Brenda, I used my words. It's my
body.

BRENDA
God you're unbelievable.

EXT. PARK-DAY

Joe has reached the podium. He looks good in his Armani suit. A crowd forms.

JOE

Hello everyone, good to see you all today.

CROWD

Vote for Joe, vote for Joe!

JOE

Funny that you bring that up...

INT. VAN-DAY

With their finishing touches complete, they pull black tank tops over their bodies.

EXT. PARK-DAY

The cargo van screeches to a halt right near Joe's podium. The sliding door opens and they charge out heading straight for Joe. Joe uses his hands to quiet the crowd.

JOE

I'm hear today...

Joe stops, looks at the Femi-Nazis confused. They march straight to him. They surround him and in unison rip off their tank tops. Brenda forcefully marches straight to the microphone.

BRENDA

We are the Femi-Nazis and we have a message.

FEMINAZIS

(all in unison)

Our bodies, our choice! Our bodies
our choice!

Joe is bewildered. He happens to be standing next to Donna and notices her flesh colored shirt. He gives a quizzical look. She acknowledges his look.

DONNA

(to Joe)

I know. I not entirely comfortable
with exposing myself.

JOE

Oh. Me either.

Donna smiles. Brenda has finished her chant and looks to Joe.

BRENDA

Well, what do you think about that Mr. Politician?

JOE

I'm not really a politician but that seems reasonable. I do have a question though.

BRENDA

What!?

JOE

You call yourselves Femi-Nazis?

BRENDA

Damn straight!

JOE

So is it safe to assume there is some level of anti-Semitism in your message?

BRENDA

Of course not, why would you think that?

JOE

Because the word Nazi is in the name.

DONNA

I agree, I was always uncomfortable with that.

BRENDA

Donna shut up. And take off your stupid shirt.

Donna considers it and even begins to lift her shirt. A few in the crowd cheer her on.

JOE

Donna do not do it. You just told me you were uncomfortable with exposing yourself.

BRENDA

We have a message we are trying to deliver.

JOE
Correct. Her body, her choice.

CROWD
Her body, her choice! Her body,
her choice!

JOE
See?

DRUNK GUY
Show us your tits!

JOE
Hey, that's enough.

CROWD MEMBER 1
We love you Joe!

CROWD
Vote for Joe! Vote for Joe! Vote
for Joe!

JOE
No, no. That's what I came here to
talk to you about.

CROWD
Vote for Joe.

With the crowd chanting, Donna moves to Joe.

DONNA
So Joe, are you going to the
reunion?

Joe is distracted.

JOE
What? The reunion?

DONNA
Yeah. You know, High School?

JOE
You know I'm not Joe Public, I'm
Joe...

DONNA
Smednick. Yeah I know. Don't you
remember me from high school? I
was kinda quiet.

Joe clearly does not remember her.

JOE
Oh, Donna, of course.

BRENDA
Donna lets go. You ruined it
again!

Amy was watching the exchange between Donna and Joe with a hint of jealousy. Donna, begins to move towards Brenda. But looks back to Joe. The crowd still chants.

DONNA
I gotta go. I hope to see you
there.

EXT. IN THE CROWD-DAY

TED, a local polling volunteer, is walking around getting signatures to get Joe on the ballot.

TED
Please sign here to get Joe on the
ballot! Please help get Joe on the
ballot.

People in the crowd are going to Ted to sign. His clipboard is now being passed around. He moves to the podium. The Femi-Nazis, fighting amongst themselves, are heading back to their van. Ted reaches the podium.

TED
Everybody. Joe is not currently on
the ballot. I have a petition
being passed through the crowd to
get him on. You've all got to sign
it.

The crowd responds and lines up to sign the petition.

JOE
There is no need to sign the
petition, I'm not running...

The crowd drowns him out.

CROWD
Vote for Joe! Vote for Joe!

JOE
Please do not sign...

Joe looks to Amy dumbfounded. She returns the look.

INT. SPORTS CAR

The ASSASSIN is driving on the highway. Dark glasses, tooth pick in his mouth. On the passenger seat is a picture of Joe with a scope symbol drawn over him.

INT. HOTELROOM-DAY

Joe returns to the hotel to be greeted by the Armani crew. Joe and Amy enter. The Armani crew clap.

RAPHAEL

Joe you were fabulous, fabulous!

Raphael removes Joe's coat for him. Joe just shakes his head.

RAPHAEL (CONT'D)

I've left some casual clothes for you in the closet. I'll be back tomorrow with a fresh suit.

Raphael and company leave the room. Joe sits, exasperated.

JOE

That was a disaster.

AMY

I don't know. It was kind of exciting. The whole bit with the Femi-Nazis went great.

JOE

They turned it into a sideshow. I wasn't able to get my message out.

AMY

And that Donna. She seemed nice. You went to high school with her?

JOE

What? Oh, her. Yeah I guess so.

AMY

So you don't remember her?

JOE

I guess I kind of do. I wasn't the most memorable person in high school either. I'm surprised she remembered me.

AMY

Oh, she remembered you all right.

JOE

How can I end this?

AMY

I guess don't go to the reunion.

JOE

What? I mean the campaign. I just want my life back.

AMY

Of course.

JOE

This whole thing is crazy. I'm tired, I'm hungry. Do you want to grab some dinner?

Amy is surprised.

AMY

You mean go out somewhere?

JOE

Yeah. I'm sick of being cooped up in hotel rooms every night.

AMY

Yes. That would be nice. I'll even clean my bra!

She regrets it as soon as she says it. It's awkward for both of them.

JOE

Uh, great.

INT. AMY'S HOTEL ROOM.

Amy is getting ready. She looks nicer than usual. She experiments with wearing a jacket or not wearing a jacket while she checks herself in the mirror. There is a knock on the door.

Now, a bit flustered, she decides to go with the jacket and checks her hair one last time. She crosses to the door and opens it. Marv is there. Amy seems a bit disappointed.

AMY

Oh, hi. Didn't you get my report?

MARV

I did. It's just...not enough.
There is a bigger story here.

Without being invited Marv enters.

AMY

Marv, I've got...

MARV

What is that smell? Are you
wearing perfume?

AMY

Too much?

MARV

No, it's fine. Wait, is that
lipstick?

AMY

Yes Marv. I'm wearing lipstick.
Women wear perfume and lipstick,
there is nothing uncommon about
that.

MARV

You don't.

AMY

Well...

MARV

And your clothes match.

AMY

My clothes match? Marv, my clothes
always...match.

MARV

Not always.

The phone in the room rings. Marv, without giving it a thought, answers it.

AMY

Hey...

MARV

Hello?...Hi Joe, yeah, she's right here.

Marv hands Amy the phone who now is uncomfortable. She turns her back to Marv.

AMY

Hi Joe...OK, yeah. No, just us...why don't I just meet you in the lobby?

Amy hangs up. Marv looks confused.

MARV

Do you have a date?

AMY

What? No, it's not a date.

MARV

Looks a little bit like a date.

AMY

No...

MARV

Amy, you know you can't date Joe, right? You'd lose all credibility.

AMY

I know that. We are just having dinner together.

MARV

Maybe I should come.

AMY

What? No, you can't come.

MARV

Why? If it's not a date...

AMY

I don't know what it is Marv. He me asked to go to dinner. I don't know.

MARV

Do you have feelings for him?

AMY

Marv!

MARV

All right, all right. But, if something starts to develop here, I need to know. Just for journalistic integrity.

AMY

OK.

MARV

OK. So, go on. Have fun on your date.

AMY

Marv!

Amy and Marv exit her room.

EXT. HOTEL-NIGHT

Amy and Joe exit the hotel. Joe is wearing his new Armani casual outfit and looks really good. Confident. They enter Amy's car. She starts the car and they pull out of the hotel. Headlights turn on in the parking lot. It's the Assassin's sports car. We can just make him out in silhouette. He pulls out of the parking lot and follows them.

INT. AMY'S CAR-NIGHT

Joe keeps jerking his head towards the backseat. Through the rear window we see the Assassin's car.

AMY

What's wrong?

JOE

I keep waiting for Cronkite to lunge out at me.

AMY

Cronkite's not in the car.

JOE

Really? I don't think I've ever been in your car without Cronkite.

AMY

I left him in the room. I'm sure he is missing me.

INT. HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Cronkite is completely sprawled out on the bed, sleeping comfortably. For the first time in the film, he is not agitated.

EXT. RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Amy and Joe pull up in front of the restaurant. The Assassin parks across the street and watches. Amy and Joe exit the car and cross to the restaurant. When they enter we hear a small cheer. Joe, the experienced politician, gives a polite wave and they are shown to their table in the window. It's candlelight. As they sit, we can see Amy and Joe smiling and talking. They look very relaxed. The Assassin just sits in his car watching.

INT. RESTAURANT NIGHT

Joe and Amy are sitting together. It's awkward. Neither knows what to say. A PATRON walks past Joe and pats him on the shoulder.

PATRON

I'll be voting for you Joe.

The Patron moves on.

JOE

Please don't.

Joe shakes his head and looks to Amy.

JOE

In all your years covering politics, have you ever seen this kind of thing before?

AMY

I haven't. And I hate covering politics by the way.

JOE

I can see why. How did you get into it? Aren't we supposed to do something we love?

AMY

I love being a journalist, the political stuff I just stumbled into. Marv thinks my skepticism of all politicians is a benefit.

JOE

Hmmm. So you and Marv are...really close?

AMY

What? Marv? No. I mean, we work well together, but it's just business.

JOE

Oh.

AMY

He actually...well no...

JOE

What?

AMY

Nothing.

JOE

C'mon. You can't leave it at that.

AMY

He actually thought this was a date.

She nervously laughs and then, silence.

AMY (CONT'D)

I mean...

JOE

Sure, no, I get it...

AMY

No, I mean it could be...

JOE

It could be...?

AMY

Well...

JOE
I couldn't tell if it was a date or
not either.

AMY
Me either.

JOE
So we are both pretty smooth
operators.

AMY
(laughs)
Yeah. It would be kina nice
maybe...

JOE
Yeah..

AMY
But then again...I'm a reporter,
you're a politician...

JOE
I'm not really a...

AMY
You're right. But you are the
story I'm covering...

JOE
It's fine, if you don't...

AMY
But I'm not saying that. How about
if it is kind of a date?

JOE
That seems perfect for us. I'm
kind of a candidate so you are
technically only kind of a
political reporter...

They clink glasses.

INT. ASSASSIN'S CAR-NIGHT

The Assassin watches the two of them. Joe and Amy relax and
begin to look as if they are enjoying their date.

INT. HALLWAY OF HOTEL-NIGHT

Joe is walking Amy back to her room.

JOE
Thanks, that was fun. It felt like
I wasn't running for president for
awhile.

AMY
Except for the times people pledged
their vote to you.

JOE
Yeah, except for those times.

They reach Amy's room and stand there awkwardly.

AMY
I'm not sure the traditional way to
end a kind of a date.

JOE
Yeah, me either. Kissing seems...

AMY
Yeah, no...

JOE
But shaking hands...

AMY
Kind of like a business deal.

JOE
Right. How about a hug?

AMY
A hug seems appropriate.

JOE
All right then.

They attempt to hug, but even that comes off as awkward.
They release their embrace and reluctantly head their
separate ways.

INT. JOE'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Joe climbs in his bed and turns on the television. Coverage
of the election comes on and Joe quickly changes the channel.

He comes across the movie "Groundhog Day". He stops. He watches and begins to laugh. In "Groundhog Day", Bill Murray's character finishes another in a series of never ending days. Bill is in bed, turns out the light and after a beat his alarm clock goes off. He sits up in bed. "I got you Babe" by Sonny and Cher is playing over the clock radio. Bill Murray is living the day again. Joe smiles, then relates. He looks to the phone next to the bed. He hesitates but ultimately decides to call Amy.

INT. AMY'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Amy is in bed with the news on. The coverage is of the election. Her laptop is open as well. The phone rings. She is surprised but reaches over to pick it up.

AMY
Hello?...Oh, It's you!

INT. JOE'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Joe is still watching "Groundhog Day".

JOE
What are you doing right
now?...watching the news? What?
Switch to channel 47.

INT. AMY'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Amy switches the channel.

AMY
Oh, Groundhog Day. I love this
movie...It's you?

INT. JOE'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Joe is on the phone with Amy.

JOE
Don't you see it? He just wants to
go on with his life, but he can't.
He's trapped...See, I knew you
would understand...

INT. AMY'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Amy is on the phone watching.

AMY
Oh, I love this part.

It is the scene when Ned approaches the Bill Murray Character trying to sell him insurance and Bill Murray just hauls off and punches him.

INT. JOE'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Joe is watching while on the phone.

JOE
(teasing)
I see you've got a violent streak in you...well, you said you quote love this part, and a guy gets punched straight in the face.

INT. AMY'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Amy on the phone.

AMY
Oh, c'mon...

INT. JOE'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

JOE
...I'm just saying maybe you should talk to somebody about that...well, yes I do feel like that...if I was going punch somebody, it was going to be that Tony Clifton guy...but I choose to walk away.

INT. AMY'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Amy laughs.

AMY
...more like ran away. You were practically naked!

Amy says this laughing and then realizes that it is awkward and abruptly stops.

INT. JOE'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Joe is on the phone.

JOE

...that's my own little way of
trying to get the whole naked thing
out of the way...what do you mean
little?

INT. AMY'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Amy seems relieved.

AMY

You're the one who said
little...yes you did, you said my
own little way...

INT. JOE'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Joe on the phone.

JOE

...ouch. Well, we've really
covered a lot of ground here.

INT. AMY'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Amy on the phone.

AMY

Yes we have. You've got a big day
tomorrow...if you don't get this
right, you just might wind up as
President...I know I'm right...OK,
good night.

INT. JOE'S HOTELROOM-NIGHT

Joe hangs up the phone. He seems pleased. He turns out the
light and goes to bed.

EXT. HOTEL-MORNING

Marv is waiting outside the hotel with a car standing by. We see the Assassin's car drive by him. Joe exits the hotel and crosses towards Marv. A minute later, Amy also exits.

MARV
Good morning Joe. How did you
sleep?

JOE
Great.

Joe gets in the backseat of the car. Amy crosses to Marv. Marv nods to her.

MARV
Amy.

AMY
Marv.

Marv continues to stare at her curiously.

AMY (CONT'D)
What?

MARV
Nothing.

Marv and Amy climb in the car.

EXT. PARK-DAY

Marv, Amy and Joe's car pulls up to the park. The grandstand is there. Reporters are there as well as news cameras. They exit the car.

MARV
Are you ready?

JOE
Yes, let's do this.

Joe determinedly walks towards the grandstand.

EXT. ROOFTOP ACROSS THE PARK-DAY

The Assassin, rifle in hand, is readying himself for his shot.

EXT. GRANDSTAND-DAY

Joe has made his way to the grandstand. People cheer, Joe gives the politician wave. He steadies himself and walks to the podium.

JOE

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming today. I have an important announcement and I'd really appreciate it if you listened to it completely. No chanting...

Bang! The shot is fired and hits Joe who collapses. Panic ensues. A crowd member spots the Assassin.

CROWD MEMBER

He's up there.

Police officers hurry towards the building. Sirens are arriving and people rush to Joe. Joe gets back up in front of the podium, waving all offered help away. The cameras are rolling.

JOE

I'm all right, I'm all right.
Thank you. I just have a few quick words to say.

An ambulance has pulled up next to the grandstand. The EMT's are out but they wait for Joe.

JOE

I am not running for president. I repeat, I am not running for president. You, as citizens of this great country, need to value your vote. Don't vote for a candidate just because they are the most visible. That just means they have the most money. Wealth is behind them and they will surely put the needs of the wealthy ahead of your own. Don't vote for the candidate that gives the best sound bites. The media will always love that candidate but there is often nothing behind those sound bits.

Blood is now appearing to seep through Joe's shoulder.

JOE

Make these candidates tell you what they really think, not what a poll tells them to think. Make them earn you vote. Thanks for listening and don't vote for Joe Public!

Joe steps away from the podium and over to the EMT's who quickly get him to the ambulance. As they load him into the ambulance, a crowd member, moved by Joe's speech, starts the chant.

CROWD MEMBER 2

Vote for Joe! Vote for Joe!

It starts slowly, but soon enough the rest of the crowd picks up the chant. Joe, by now in the back of the ambulance, sits up on the stretcher in disbelief and looks out the back window towards the crowd. The EMT's force him to lay back down. The ambulance heads out.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

Gladys is pacing in the hospital waiting room. There is a television broadcasting the attempted assassination.

NEWSCASTER

...in spite of the quick police response, the Shooter remains at large. Anyone with any information should call 911 immediately.

NEWSCASTER 2

On a positive note, in the most recent polling numbers, Joe Public has leapfrogged into the number one position.

NEWSCASTER

Well done Joe and get well soon!

NEWSCASTER 2

And finally, Mrs. Kessler's cat has decided to come down from that tree. It has been 42 days since that feline's feet last touched terra firma.

NEWSCASTER

Well that is good news. We could all use it...

A DOCTOR enters the waiting room and crosses to Gladys.

DOCTOR
Excuse me, Mrs. Public?

GLADYS
Yes.

Gladys makes no reference to being called the wrong name.

DOCTOR
Joe is going to be fine.

GLADYS
Oh thank the lord! He's number one
in the polls!

DOCTOR
Well that's good news. The bullet
didn't hit any major organs and
excited cleanly. We are going to
put him under and clean up the
wound.

GLADYS
Can I speak to him?

DOCTOR
Well OK, but it will have to be
quick.

Gladys and the Doctor exit.

INT. OPERATING ROOM

Joe is on the operating table. There are two attending
NURSES and an ANESTHESIOLOGIST. Joe looks sleepy. Gladys
enters excitedly.

GLADYS
Joe...Joe...

JOE
Ma?

She crosses to him.

GLADYS
I have great news.

JOE
I know, I'm going to be all
right...

GLADYS
No, you're number one in the latest
polls!

Joe musters one blink and goes under.

EXT. HOSPITAL

A supportive crowd has gathered outside. The police have
formed a line to keep them out. The crowd chants.

CROWD
Vote for Joe! Vote for Joe!

INT. AMY'S CAR

Amy is driving with Marv in the passenger seat. Cronkite is
all over Marv, clawing and being aggressive.

MARV
Amy, what the hell...

AMY
Aw Marv, he likes you.

Cronkite hisses. As they pull up to the hospital they see
the crowd. Amy parks and Marv has to work extremely hard to
get out of the car without letting Cronkite escape.

EXT. HOSPITAL

The crowd continues to chant. Amy and Marv walk towards the
entrance. They are stopped by a POLICE OFFICER.

POLICE OFFICER
Strict orders. No one gets in.

Amy pulls out her press credentials.

AMY
We're press.

POLICE OFFICER
Doesn't matter. Absolutely no one
gets in.

Amy and Marv are discouraged. Raphael's van pulls in and parks behind Amy's car. He quickly hops out of the van, grabs some designer hospital garb out of the back and heads towards the entrance. The crowd continues their chant.

CROWD

Vote for Joe! Vote for Joe!

Amy and Marv look at the crowd.

AMY

(to Marv)

This is unbelievable. The more he tries to get out, the more they want him. Absolutely nothing can beat him.

Raphael hustles towards the entrance. As he passes Amy she tries to tell him that he won't be able to get in.

AMY

Raphael, they won't let any...

Raphael hurries by, right up to where the Police officer is standing. He attempts to go by.

POLICE OFFICER

No one gets in.

Amy nods as if, "I tried to tell him".

RAPHAEL

But I am his...*stylist*!

Raphael trust his hospital garments towards the officer as if they are some kind of warrant. The officer hadn't really prepared for this response and seems unsure of what he should do.

RAPHAEL (CONT'D)

Joe Public is not going to be seen in off of the rack hospital gowns! Not On my watch.

POLICE OFFICER

Oh...well, OK I guess.

The Officer lets him in. Amy can not believe it. The chant continues. Raphael gets half way up the stairs when he turns to the crowd.

RAPHAEL

Stop it. Stop it all of you. You haven't been listening to Joe. You don't care. You just want Joe to be someone you want him to be.

The crowd quiets. Amy can not believe the power Raphael seems to have over the crowd.

RAPHAEL (CONT'D)

While I want Joe to be...whoever Joe wants to be.

CROWD MEMBER

Who the hell are you?

RAPHAEL

I am Raphael. His stylist. And I love him!

At this the crowd goes silent. Shocked. Crickets.

POLICE OFFICER

Come again?

RAPHAEL

I love him!

With a huff, Raphael turns and runs up the steps. As the shocked crowd comes to, they eventually start to wander off. All the chanting is over. The crowd quietly, meekly, disperse. The police even remove their barricades and as suddenly as an accident, Joe's campaign has ended.

AMY

I stand corrected. He can be beaten.

Marv begins to walk away.

AMY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

MARV

That's it. The story is over. I'm heading back to New York.

AMY

Do you want a ride to the airport?

Marv looks towards Amy's car.

MARV

Nope, I'm good. I'll just catch a cab. What about you?

AMY

Well...I'm going to stay here a bit. I want to see Joe when I can.

Marv heads off. Amy turns and heads up the stairs of the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

Amy enters and crosses to the television playing the news.

NEWSCASTER 1

...and as quickly as it started, it appears to be over. Joe Public's approval ratings are plummeting.

NEWSCASTER 2

Do you know that's not even his real name? It's Joe...S something.

NEWSCASTER 1

He almost pulled one over on us...

NEWSCASTER 2

I never liked the guy...

Amy smiles and shakes her head.

INT. BOARDROOM

As the Soda Brothers watch the news they pour themselves a drink and click glasses.

HENRY

We gotta send that Raphael guy a thank you gift.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Joe is lying in his bed. His shoulder is bandaged but he looks to be in good shape. Gladys is sitting in a chair beside him and Raphael is hanging up Joe's designer hospital garments. Amy peers around the corner. Joe sees her.

JOE

Hey you.

Joe smiles, Gladys looks to see who it is. She is happy to see a woman and can sense something between Amy and Joe.

AMY

Hi. How are you doing?

JOE

Oh I'm fine, completely fine.

Joe notices Gladys who is now standing and staring at Amy hopefully.

JOE (CONT'D)

Amy, this is my Mom, Gladys.

AMY

Nice to meet you.

GLADYS

Nice to meet you!

JOE

Is it still crazy out there?

AMY

Surprisingly no. Raphael you seem to have done it. He got them to finally stop wanting to vote for you.

JOE

Really Raphael? Oh my God I love you!

GLADYS

I knew it!

Raphael seems encouraged, hopeful.

JOE

What? No Ma', it's an expression. How did he do it?

Pregnant pause.

AMY

Ah, well, he kinda told them...

RAPHAEL

Stop! We shall not speak of it again.

Raphael exits in a huff, the rest are confused.

AMY
He told them that he loved you.

JOE
Oh. That's kinda awkward.

GLADYS
Now I'm confused.

Joe just shakes his head at his mother.

JOE
So Amy, any chance you're free for dinner tonight?

AMY
(surprised)
Are you sure they're going to let you leave? You were shot today.

JOE
I'm positive. I have really mediocre insurance.

AMY
Great then, I'd love to.

GLADYS
Is Raphael going to be there too?

JOE
What? No ma.

Gladys is relieved but still confused.

GLADYS
Just the two of you?

JOE
Yes.

GLADYS
Are you two getting serious? Do I hear wedding bells?

JOE
Ma!

GLADYS
What? I'm your mother. I'm just asking a question.

FADE OUT.

