

RUSTIN

Screenplay by

Julian Breece and Dustin Lance Black

Story by

Julian Breece

A1 EXT. SIDE STREET - MOS

A1

A PETITE NEGRO GIRL, 15, is walking to school. During the above--

GEORGE WALLACE (V.O./ARCHIVAL)

In the name of the greatest people
that have ever trod this earth, I
draw the line in the dust and toss
the gauntlet before the feet of
tyranny--

We see reflected in her DARKENED SUNGLASSES, a MOB OF ENRAGED WHITE TEENAGE GIRLS yelling and cursing and threatening her.

GEORGE WALLACE (V.O.)

I say segregation now, segregation
tomorrow, segregation forever.

B1 EXT. FRANTZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MOS

B1

A LITTLE BLACK GIRL, 6, is seen skipping down the street carrying a book bag and wearing a neatly pressed pinafore dress. During the above--

STROM THURMOND (V.O./ARCHIVAL)

I wanna tell you ladies and
gentlemen, that there's not enough
troops in the army to force the
southern people to break down
segregation and admit the nigra
race...

As the LITTLE GIRL continues to skip, the CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal FIVE U.S. MARSHALS escorting her, followed by

NATIONAL GUARDS.

STROM THURMOND

...into Our theatres, into our
swimming pools, into our homes and
into our churches.

C1 INT. LUNCH COUNTER

C1

THREE TEENAGERS, two White, one Black, sit motionless, while a GANG OF WHITE HOOLIGANS gleefully assault them with containers filled with condiments.

LESTER MADDOX (V.O./ARCHIVAL)
 That's part of American greatness,
 is discrimination. Yes sir,
 inequality I think breeds freedom
 and gives a man opportunity.

CUT TO:

1 INT. NYC OFFICE - DAY (1960) 1

XCU ON: BAYARD RUSTIN, 48, handsome, regal, silver in his
 hair, brow creased, listening.

ELLA (O.S.)
 No more caution. No more delays.

RANDOLPH(O.S.)
 Six years ago, Brown vs. Board of
 Education became the law of the
 land, yet there is nothing in the
 Democratic platform addressing its
 enforcement.

MARTIN (O.S.)
 And the Republicans' platform is
 better?

RANDOLPH(O.S.)
 We plan on challenging them as
 well.

ELLA (O.S.)
 No free passes. Those days are
 done.

MARTIN (O.S.)
 So, you want me to lead 5,000
 Negroes into Los Angeles, utilize
 passive resistance to disrupt the
 Democratic Convention, and a few
 weeks later in Chicago, do the
 same? I'm sorry, but I am not your
 man.

Bayard rises and steps into the fray--with a swagger and
 panache he owns. REVEAL: A. PHILIP RANDOLPH, a wisened 71,
 and ELLA BAKER, early 60s, sharp and strong, sit across from
 MARTIN LUTHER KING, 30, and not yet the King the world will
 come to know.

BAYARD

Who told you you're not 'our man'?
Were you not 'our man' when you
took command of the Montgomery Bus
Boycott? Or spoke with such 1B.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

eloquence the night your home was
bombed, or--

MARTIN

You are conveniently forgetting I
am now co-pastor of Ebenezer.

BAYARD

Meaning?

MARTIN

I cannot forswear responsibilities
to my community, my congregation--

BAYARD

(pointedly)

What about your responsibility to
your talent, your gifts?

Girding himself for the Rustin onslaught--

MARTIN

'Heavenly Father I am forever safe
in your hands.'

BAYARD

When C.L. first heard you speak, he
rang me and said: "Bayard, there's
magic going on down here." Do you
know what he saw? A star; the
heavenly kind. And when that star
starts to shine brighter than any
other, and bows to no man,
including the most powerful Negro
leaders who have come before, they
will do everything they can to
extinguish your light, and put you
in your place.

MARTIN

Chief, Mrs. Baker, I've received a
number of calls from prominent men
within The Movement who see no
wisdom in these protests; men with
whom I have a strong kinship.

ELLA

Not once you leave the room.

Martin looks to Randolph, who concurs with silence.

BAYARD

Friend, one of my greatest joys is watching you rise. The Lord speaks through you. That direct line can lead us into Los Angeles, where we will most vigorously let Kennedy, Johnson, and the entire Democratic Party know, that unless they show up for our people, our people will not show up for them.

ELLA BAKER

Yes! YES! Yes.

BAYARD

Do this, Martin, for the young, who don't know which way to go. Martin, own your power.

Martin starts out shaking his head in disbelief, and ends up laughing and nodding in agreement.

A2

INT. HARLEM - GREASY SPOON

A2

Jam-packed. Bodies on top of bodies. Bayard and Martin crowded together at a table.

BAYARD

Best grits ever.

MARTIN

Lest I remind you, I was born and raised in Georgia. My mother was--

Once Martin takes a bite of the grits, he and Bayard both crack up laughing. Bayard, right again.

As they eat--

BAYARD

I'm proud of you.

MARTIN

I'm proud you're proud.

BAYARD

-and how's my beloved Coretta?

MARTIN
She's fine.

BAYARD
The kids?

MARTIN
The second I set foot in the front
door: "How's Uncle Bayard?"
"Where's Uncle Bayard?"

BAYARD
And the self appointed noble
Negroes of the NAACP? Roy?
Congressman Powell?
(laughs)
Can't wait to see what they have to
3A.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
say about us making the move on
L.A.

OFF OF MARTIN'S LOOK:

2 INT. PROTESTOR HEADQUARTERS - DAYS LATER 2

The same office, but there is now a vibrancy in the air. 'WAR
MAPS' of L.A.'S CONVENTION HALL fill the walls. Bayard is
standing before a group of DIVERSE YOUNG ACTIVISTS, who are
thrilled to see Martin Luther King by his side.

BAYARD
I am pleased and most proud to
announce that the Reverend Dr.
Martin Luther King, will be joining
us in Los Angeles--

The ACTIVISTS APPLAUD. As Bayard continues, his hand casually
rests on MARTIN'S SHOULDER and BACK.

MARTIN
...Where we will march on the
National Democratic Convention.

CUT TO:

3

CLOSE ON ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

3

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL (INTO PHONE)
My convention! My party!

ON-SCREEN TITLE: Harlem Congressman ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL (CONT'D)
 I've spent the past fifteen years
 fighting Dixiecrats in Congress;
 going after and winning every G.D.
 thing from poll taxes to the right
 to piss in the Congressional john.

INT. POWELL'S D.C. OFFICE / WILKINS' NAACP OFFICE

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL, 52, movie-star handsome, eloquent and slick, is INTERCUT with ROY WILKINS, 59, authoritative, with a hint of the grandiose.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL
 How dare he take aim without first
 reaching out to me.

ROY WILKINS
 Had he reached out, would you have
 said yes?

ON SCREEN TITLE: NAACP Executive Secretary ROY WILKINS

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL
 Hell no!

They share a LAUGH.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL (CONT'D)
 That short S.O.B. needs to stay
 down South where he belongs.

With the SOUND of APPLAUSE--

4

PROTEST HEADQUARTERS

4

KING
 In between your dedication, and my
 brilliant friend here, how can we
 lose?

Bayard launches into Oh, Freedom, his voice, melodious and strong. Others join in. When Martin starts to sing--

BAYARD
 (in Martin's ear)
 What say we leave the singing to
 Coretta?

As the Two Men LAUGH--

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL (O.C.)
 I blame Rustin.

5 ADAM'S OFFICE / ROY'S OFFICE

5

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL (INTO PHONE)
 Ever since Montgomery, he's got
 King thinking he's the second
 coming.

ROY WILKINS
 (INTO PHONE)
 To hell with Bayard Rustin! 5.

ROY WILKINS (CONT'D)
 (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
 His attention-grabbing antics are
 the exact opposite of how policy is
 altered and laws changed. And let's
 not mention the unmentionable.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL
 I say say'it, and say'it loud!

6 PROTEST HEADQUARTERS - CONT'D

6

At the DOORWAY. As Bayard/Martin HUG GOODBYE--

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL (O.S.)
 I'm phoning the good Reverend/
 Doctor's office today. If they
 don't call this shit off--

7 CLOSE ON ADAM--

7

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL
 ...The world is gonna know the
 truth about Martin Luther King and
 his Queen.
 (amused by his own wit)
 And I don't mean Coretta.

8 INT. A. PHILIP RANDOLPH'S APARTMENT

8

RANDOLPH (INTO PHONE)
 Wyatt, Wyatt-- Congressman Powell
 has done so much for Harlem; almost
 as much as he's done for himself,
 but this is a bold-faced lie and he
 knows it! I'm fully aware Martin is
 your boss as well as your friend,
 but allow me to first speak with
 Bayard, as it's certain to disorder
 his soul most of all.

9 INT. PROTEST HEADQUARTERS / BAYARD'S CUBBYHOLE

9

BAYARD (INTO PHONE)
 (en eruption of laughter)
 Me? And Martin? No-no-no-no.
 Brothers, yes. Friends for life.
 Besides, he's not my type.

CLOSING THE DOOR to his small office--

BAYARD (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
 Chief, you call it trouble. I call
 it an opportunity. In response to
 Powell's reckless accusations, I'll
 write a letter, tending my
 resignation. When Martin rejects
 it, we will have triggered his
 maturation, forcing him to see who
 wishes him well, and who does not.
 ...Because I know Martin. Sir, sir--
 All will be fine.

10 INT. NAACP OFFICES

10

HOLDING A LETTER addressed to DR. KING, Bayard stands before
 a conference table filled with NEGRO MEN IN SUITS, including
 Roy. They frame Martin, which causes him to appear smaller,
 younger, less in command.

BAYARD
 I assumed it would just be the two
 of us.

One of the Men EXTENDS HIS HAND. After a beat, Bayard GIVES
 HIM THE LETTER, and watches as it is passed from HAND TO
 HAND, until it reaches Martin. Once he's finished reading,
 Martin forces himself to look Bayard in the eye.

MARTIN

We thank you for your many years of service.

11 INT. NAACP OFFICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 11

As Bayard makes his way down the Hallway, it begins to dawn on him he's been ousted from the movement he loves, and by his friend whom he also loves. Bayard starts to walk FASTER and FASTER until--

CUT TO BLACK:

ON-SCREEN TITLE: RUSTIN

With the SOUND of a HISSING RADIATOR--

DISSOLVE TO:

12 INT. WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE - MORNING (JANUARY, 1963) 12

THREE YEARS LATER. A DULL ROOM filled with DULL WHITE FACES. Bayard, thinner, haunted, is seated behind a desk, doodling. The PHONE RINGS.

BAYARD

War Resisters League.
(instantly engaged)
How many? Yes sir, right away!

13 EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN / NYC - MORNING 13

It is a CRISP WINTER DAY. Bayard, wearing a regal coat and Russian fur hat, is hustling his way past the EARLY MORNING CROWD, when--

VOICE

Bayard!

Bayard looks up and sees MR. MUSTE, 75, pale and patrician, smiling/waving his arms. Behind him, THREE ELDERLY WOMEN (white) block one of multiple entrances to an OFFICE BUILDING. A WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE BANNER calling for an end to Nuclear Weapons, hangs overhead.

BAYARD

(joining Muste)
When you said 3, I understood 300.
And no press to speak of, save your nephew.

Mr. Muste's NEPHEW-PHOTOGRAPHER waves.

MUSTE

You're here. They're here.
 (calling out)
 Ladies...

Pulling Muste in, confidentially--

BAYARD

I strongly suggest we cancel until
 early next week, which will allow
 time to stage a proper protest,
 worthy of our--

MUSTE

I must kindly ask you again to not
 undermine my authority. White

BAYARD

Sir, I assure you that was not my
 intention.

MUSTE

(walking away)
 Ladies, Mr. Rustin will take over
 from here.

Annoyed/turning on the charm--

BAYARD

Who's up for the adventure of a
 lifetime; your picture in the Daily
 News--

Wrapping his scarf around one of the women--

BAYARD (CONT'D)

...Hot coffee at the station?

MUSTE

And lest we forget, preserving the
 planet and the lives of millions.

BAYARD

(helping the women sit)
 All we have to do is take a seat,
 and New York's finest will do the
 rest.

As FOUR POLICEMEN APPROACH, the LADY IN BAYARD'S SCARF hands
 it back to him and flees.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 And then there were 3.

As the POLICE MOVE IN, so does the Nephew-Photographer,

SNAPPING PICTURES.

POLICEMAN ONE "helps" Bayard to his feet and leads him to a waiting PADDY WAGON. POLICEMAN TWO does the same to Lady One. When LADY TWO GOES LIMP, POLICEMEN THREE/FOUR carry her away.

BAYARD
 (shouting to Muste)
 A.J., coming along?

Bayard looks back and sees Muste taking the film from his Nephew's camera and pocketing it. As the Paddy Wagon DOORS ARE SLAMMED SHUT--

14 EXT. TWENTY-THIRD STREET - AFTERNOON (JANUARY, 1963) 14

The sun barely cuts through a hazy sky. Desperate for a shower, shave, and still wearing the same clothes from his arrest (three days ago), Bayard makes his way down 23rd.

Towering over him: PENN SOUTH, three middle-income apartment buildings. On a nearby corner, a DRY CLEANERS. Bayard puts out his cigarette and goes inside.

15 OMITTED 15

16 INT. PENN SOUTH / BAYARD'S APT. - MINUTES LATER 16

A two-bedroom filled with GOTHIC and AFRICAN ART. Once Bayard steps inside, he LEANS AGAINST THE DOOR and CLOSES HIS EYES. He's exhausted and deeply sad.

With the SOUND of RUFUS THOMAS' Walkin' The Dog, blaring on a cheap Hi-fi--

17 INT. PENN SOUTH / RACHELLE'S ONE-BEDROOM APT. 17

A party is going full force. Bayard, wearing a smart suit, African beads, looks as if he was headed to a more stylish affair, but made a wrong turn and wound up here.

(Please Note: There is an energy in the room which suggests at any given moment something rawer/more intense could erupt)

As Bayard works his way through the MAZE OF BLACK BODIES/
FACES laughing/dancing/sweating/shouting--

GIRL ONE

I got a mama. I don't need no damn
NAACP tellin' me to be patient--

MAN ONE

I go south again, it's gonna be
with a gun in my hand and Brother
Malcolm in my heart!

ACROSS THE ROOM, Bayard sees TOM, 24, working-class handsome,
and one of the only two white kids in the room, downing cheap
beer and laughing with NORM, the 1963 version of a Negro
Nerd.

TWO DANCERS inadvertently shove Bayard in one direction. When
BLYDEN, 24, handsome, aggressive and more than halfway drunk,
GREETES/HUGS HIS BOYS, he shoves Bayard in another.

That's it. Bayard has had enough. Just as he is about to
leave, he spies RACHELLE, 22, smart/funny/tough (and the
other white person at the party), walking toward him with a
drink.

BAYARD

"For I ne'er saw true beauty till
this night."

RACHELLE

You talkin' to the vodka or me?

BAYARD

I take it there was some sort of
protest?

RACHELLE

It kinda got derailed, so I invited
everybody back here. You?

Across the room, Tom and Friends launch into a drunken
rendition of Howard University's Alma Mater.

BAYARD

(distracted by Tom)

We commandeered the entrance to a
building downtown, and made our
demands known.

RACHELLE

Tom's here.

BAYARD
I hadn't noticed.

Turning his attention to CHARLENE, 19, edgy and petite.
Indicating her SNCC button--

BAYARD (CONT'D)
Obscure fact about Miss Ella Baker,
an early champion of SNCC.
(confidentially)
She's Al Capone when it comes to
cards: Tonk, Bid Whist, Crazy
Eights.
(laughing)
You're marvelous and have
absolutely no idea who I am.

CHARLENE
(attitude)
Like you know what I know.

The second Bayard turns to go--

CHARLENE (CONT'D)
Who's that?

18 THE KITCHEN - LATER

18

A BUNCH OF KIDS, including Tom and Norm, listening as TYRONE,
21, talks, his speech slightly slurred. Blyden stands beside
him. As Bayard eases into the kitchen for some ice--

TYRONE
Door's barricaded, tires slashed,
nnn-no escape. A fire bomb's thrown
inn-side, folks start screaming. We
finally get out. Onnn the ground,
can't breathe, when this white
man... "Buddy, you okay?" I nod. He
takes this pipe and hits me, over
ann-nd over.

TOM
I'm so sorry.

BLYDEN
Like we give a shit you're sorry.
Was probably one of your uncles or
cousins with that pipe.

TOM
 Raised in Brooklyn, go to
 school in D.C. Why would I
 have cousins in Aniston,
 Alabama?

BLYDEN (CONT'D)
 Y'all listening to this?
 Ain't-shit white boy talkin'
 shit.

NORM
 Tom isn't like that.

NORM (CONT'D) TOM
 In choosing to attend a noted Negro institution, Tom
 abdicated being part of the majority-- Norm... Norm--

BLYDEN
 Betcha these two are card carrying
 members of Martin-de-Lawd's non-
 violence jamboree. So let's play.
 I'll be the redneck.

Poking/punching Tom, with mounting intensity--

BLYDEN (CONT'D)
 Beat you so bad your body starts to
 scream. Beat you like they beat
 Tyrone. Beat you till you calling
 for your mama.

Tom snaps, slaps BLYDEN'S HAND AWAY. He and Blyden charge at
 each other. Norm PULLS TOM AWAY, then BAYARD PULLS NORM,
 until He and Blyden are FACE TO FACE.

BAYARD
 I'm the one that's been preaching
 passive resistance since before you
 were born, so hit me.

TOM
 Bayard, I can take care of myself!

On hearing Bayard's name, a light bulb in Blyden goes off.

BAYARD
 The pacifist is opposed to using
 violence, but must be prepared to
 receive it, only aim left. A
 policeman in '42 took care of the
 right.

Bayard smiles, revealing a MISSING RIGHT TOOTH.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 Symmetry.

Bayard looks into Blyden's eyes and sees a wounded soul. When Blyden looks into Bayard's, he sees a man without fear.

BLYDEN

I hear when King said git, you
tucked your tail between your legs
and swished away.

(backing away)

You're-- irrelevant.

Is that it? Bayard is privately amused.

BAYARD

It's Friday night. I've been called
worse.

As the tension begins to dissipate, Bayard looks around. Tom is nowhere to be found

19

INT. BAYARD'S APT. - LATER

19

Bayard, wearing only a bathrobe, is pouring himself a drink when he hears AGGRESSIVE KNOCKING. The second Bayard unlocks the door, TOM BARGES IN: amped-up, horny, desperate to get rid of his edge.

TOM

So what are you gonna do? White

BAYARD

Offering up my face as a punching
bag to a would-be Sugar Ray wasn't
enough?

TOM

Forget Blyden. We're enemies until
he remembers we used to be friends.
I'm talking about the party.

Making Tom a drink--

BAYARD

A party is hors d'oeuvres,
laughter, Mambo for Latin Lovers on
the Hi-fi.

Tom, making himself at home, starts rummaging through assorted drawers, nonchalantly creating chaos as he goes.

TOM

Earlier today, a protest got cancelled because nobody could agree on the same chant. A fight almost broke out!

BAYARD

Can I help you find--

TOM

It didn't used to be like that. Now it's like that all the time. SNCC, CORE, CORE East, the NAACP kids, all fighting over agendas, slogans, songs. And do you know who's winning?

BAYARD

Something tells me I'm about to find out.

TOM

Bull Connor in Birmingham, Strom Thurmond on the Senate Floor. Faubus, Talmadge, Maddox, Wallace, while we all snap and snarl and eat each other alive.

Once Tom finds what he's been looking for: rolling papers, he kicks off his shoes and begins rolling a joint.

TOM (CONT'D)

(ribbing/flirting)

Mambo for Latin Lovers? You are old.

BAYARD

(flirting)

Vintage. Intoxicating. Robust.

TOM

So what are you gonna do?

(laughing)

Stop distracting me. The Movement needs you.

BAYARD

I already have a job. Mr. Muste--

TOM

Hates you because you possess everything he does not: charm, passion, a goddamn pulse.

BAYARD

Thomas--

TOM

Don't call me Thomas.

BAYARD

...You've yet to learn it is unwise to speak of that which you do not know.

TOM

He treats you like shit to keep you from getting 'uppity' and wanting to quit.

BAYARD

I don't care if you were elected to Howard's Student Council--

BAYARD (CONT'D)

...There are words you are not allowed to use.

TOM

Bullshit. You know I would never--

TOM (CONT'D)

Why don't you admit you're still hurt over what happened between you and Dr. King, so you'll use any excuse--

TOM (CONT'D)

...Including working a job you hate, to avoid recommitting to a cause you love.

BAYARD

SPECULATIVE!

IRRATIONAL AND UNPROVEN!

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Just because you're smart about some thing, doesn't mean you're smart about everything.

TOM

I've got the right to an opinion!

BAYARD

And when it comes to my life, my past, especially as it relates to Martin, I've got the right to say ENOUGH!

The Two Men wind up seated next to each other on the bed. The display of anger has also given way to desire. Tom lights the joint.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

The last time I checked, that was illegal.

TOM

The last time I checked, so were we.

(Takes off his shirt)

I should go.

BAYARD

Your language suggests one impulse, your actions another.

TOM

Your eyes don't seem to mind the contradiction.

BAYARD

The best advice I ever got from Ma Rustin: Never sleep on misery.

TOM

Then I guess we shouldn't sleep.

They KISS, begin to make love.

CUT TO:

20 INT. BAYARD'S APT. - SERIES OF IMAGES 20

A desk light SWITCHING ON; a SWIRL of CIGARETTE SMOKE as Bayard draws a RECTANGLE on a white pad; BAYARD'S HANDS taping a large piece of BUTCHER PAPER to the wall, and drawing TWO RECTANGLES: one SMALL, the other LARGE. Much larger.

21 INT. BAYARD'S LIVING ROOM 21

Bayard at his desk, smoking, scribbling notes, when Tom, naked, sweetly places his head on Bayard's shoulder.

BAYARD

I've had an idea. Want to be my assistant again?

TOM

Of course.

Bayard eases away from Tom's touch, not out of cruelty, but because his focus is elsewhere.

BAYARD
Get me the Randolph/Truman '48
folder; that trunk over there.

Tom recognizes this Bayard. Now that the warrior has been roused, whatever intimacy from the night before is gone.

22

INT. BAYARD'S APT. - LATER

22

Tom (fully dressed) is seated on the couch, next to Norm, Rachelle, Charlene (the party girl from SNCC) and ELEANOR, 22, articulate and poised. Bayard stands before them.

BAYARD
Thirty years ago, Gandhi walked to
the sea, picked up a handful of
salt and inspired a movement that
brought down an empire. The time
has come for us to do the same.

Using a marker, Bayard scribbles on the butcher paper, next to the smaller rectangle: LINCOLN MEMORIAL.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
We are going to put together the
largest peaceful gathering in the
history of this nation, the world.

ELEANOR
How big?

BAYARD
100,000 people.

CHARLENE
Is he for real?

BAYARD
A massive two-day demonstration
with the power to shut down the
White House, and Capitol Hill, made
up of angelic troublemakers such as
yourselves, with actions so bold
and inspiring, the execution will
demand all groups draw tightly
together and become one. So let's
hear 'em--

There are now FIFTEEN KIDS, hereafter known as THE TEAM, sitting on the couch/floor/windowsill. There are cartons of takeout scattered about, and cups of deli coffee are being passed around. BAYARD MOVES ABOUT THE ROOM, like a coach amping up his team before the big game.

BAYARD

All your ideas. Talk! Shout! Take command!

ELEANOR

What if we flood the offices of every member of the House and Senate, with delegates from church, labor, civil rights--

Bayard gestures, 'keep going.'

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

...And in such numbers, the Legislative branch will cease to function.

BAYARD

(offering a marker)

"Flood Legislative Offices." Write it on the wall.

As Eleanor does--

TOM

Impossible to train that many lobbyists in--

BAYARD

No-no-no. Do not kill an impulse before it's born.

The Other's mock/harangue Tom.

NORM

Picking up on Tom's concern and Eleanor's idea, what if instead of lobbyists, they're constituents from their respective states--

Bayard starts gesturing--

NORM (CONT'D)

...Who refuse to leave until they've been heard!

BAYARD

Now that's collaboration!

Offering the marker to Norm--

NORM

Technically it was an amalgam of--

The Team playfully harangues Norm. He draws on the butcher paper a Capitol Building, and scribbles: "Constituents are heard."

RACHELLE

(teasing)

Why can't you be collaborative like Norm?

TOM

Shut up.

RACHELLE

(singsongy)

Somebody didn't go home last night.

BAYARD

Rachelle. How many bodies does it take to surround the White House?

RACHELLE

How many? Sorry, I thought that was the setup for a joke. So you want me to literally--

BAYARD

Day Two, we shall surround the White House and serenade the President.

(singing)

Ain't gonna let the President turn me around/Marching up to freedom land.

The Teams applauds.

CHARLES

What about sleeping arrangements? D.C. has only so many Negro hotels.

CHARLENE

How about tents? You know--

BAYARD

A sea of tents; big and bold enough to unify an entire movement.

CHARLENE
Gimme that thing!

As Charlene draws TENT AFTER TENT...

BAYARD
And near the Lincoln Memorial, a
stage where the Head of every Civil
Rights organization can be heard.

ELEANOR
Why just the Heads?

The Room agrees.

BAYARD
More! More!

We're not done yet!

24 A SEAMLESS SMASH TO LATER--

24

BAYARD
We started with two rectangles, and
look--

The CAMERA TAKES IN The Team, TAKING IN THE MAP, now littered
with DRAWINGS/PHRASES: Day 2 March, Stage for Speeches,
Surround White House Sing!, etc.

As Bayard continues, The Team hangs on to his every word.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
In order to make all of this real,
each night, I want you to imagine
these two days from beginning to
end; every problem that needs to be
solved, and every detail that must
be fixed. I'll be doing the same.
The work starts now!

The Team, most of whom only met today, spontaneously breaks
into small groups, arguing/debating, completing each other's
sentences. Bayard smiles as the ENERGY IN THE ROOM CONTINUES
TO GROW.

25 INT. A. PHILIP RANDOLPH'S APT. / HARLEM - MORNING

25

Bayard waits with a bouquet of roses. The DOOR IS OPENED by
A. Philip Randolph, now 73.

26 INT. RANDOLPH'S APT. - SERIES OF IMAGES

26

ELLINGTON'S Satin Doll plays on the phonograph. Randolph watches as Bayard and LUCILLE, 80, delicate, beautiful and quite ill, dance together. Bayard whispers in Lucille's ear. Her eyes and smile shine.

As the MUSIC FADES, Bayard pretends Lucille isn't saying goodbye as HER FRAIL HAND gently pats his face.

Bayard watches as Randolph escorts Lucille to a chaise and delicately kisses her on the lips. It's a level of intimacy and love Bayard has never known, and fears he never will.

27 INT. RANDOLPH'S APT. - LATER

27

Bayard and Randolph having tea.

BAYARD

In '41, you called for a large-scale march to protest discrimination in the defense industry, but then cancelled.

RANDOLPH

Roosevelt acquiesced to our demands, as did Truman in '48.
(a source of pride)
Executive Order 9981: The End of Segregation in the Armed Forces.

BAYARD

The time has come for another March.

RANDOLPH

I can't. Not now. If Lucille makes it past the summer...

BAYARD

We honor her by doing the work we have always done; the work the two of you did together.

Randolph subtly nods, i.e., he's listening.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

I can handle all the grunt work: building a grass roots operation, rally the young. But when it comes to the old guard: Whitney, Jim--

RANDOLPH

Roy.

BAYARD

Especially Roy, I'm considered a pariah. I need you, otherwise this march will never take flight.

28 INT. NAACP OFFICES - HALLWAY

28

An energized Randolph and Bayard are walking down the hallway. Tom follows after, carrying copies of The Plan.

RANDOLPH

No matter what Roy says or does, I need you to behave.

Annoyed by the word 'behave'--

BAYARD

I do not have issues with Roy. It's Roy has issues with me.

Off Randolph's look--

BAYARD (CONT'D)

But in deference to both you and the cause, I shall sit in a corner and smile.

29 INT. NAACP OFFICE / CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

29

Roy is seated at the head of a conference table, framed by FOUR LIEUTENANTS, middle-aged Black Men who wear their 'Racial Respectability' with pride. Also at the table, MEDGAR EVERS, 37, intelligent, compassionate, and ELIAS TAYLOR, 29, handsome, self-effacing.

Randolph sits opposite Roy, and true to his word, Bayard is seated in a corner, away from the table with the 'Lesser Staff': Secretaries, assistants etc. Roy has just finished scanning "The Plan."

ROY WILKINS

And so, after a day spent flooding the Capitol and encircling the White House, so that the President of the United States cannot get in or out of his own home, our intrepid protesters would retire to tents, which now cover the National Mall. Day One.

Randolph confidently smiles. No one else does.

ROY WILKINS (CONT'D)
Chief, do you plan on pulling
'this' together yourself?

RANDOLPH
As we all know, there is only one
person capable of organizing an
event of this scale.

From his corner, Bayard smiles/waves.

ROY WILKINS
Bayard, I was under the impression
you were busy serving-- I mean
saving white people from the bomb.

BAYARD
I go where needed.

ROY WILKINS
As opposed to when asked.
(to Randolph)
If memory serves me, this is your
third attempt at--

BAYARD
He did not-- Did he just say
'attempt'?

ROY WILKINS
Do you have something to say?

BAYARD
No, except 'attempt' is hardly a
word I'd used to describe the
actions of a man who single-
handedly is responsible for
integrating both the armed forces
and defense industry, but--

ROY WILKINS
Mr. Randolph, I was about to ask if
this was once again a ruse to get a
sitting president to yield.

RANDOLPH
No, we intend to march.

MEDGAR
Roy?

ROY WILKINS

Yes, Medgar?

MEDGAR

Most of our folks in Mississippi have never been outside of their hometowns, so the opportunity to march with people from all over--

BAYARD

There you go!

MEDGAR

...Will afford them the chance to discover, not only are they not alone--

BAYARD

He gets it!

MEDGAR

...But are engaged in a struggle far greater than they ever dreamed.

BAYARD

(shaking his hand)

Thank you, Brother Evers.

ROY WILKINS

Let just one Negro breathe wrong, and the entire D.C. Police Department will explode. White

BAYARD

And the world will bear witness.

ROY WILKINS

Chief, what size crowd are you projecting?

RANDOLPH

100,000 people.

The Room explodes in disbelief.

ELIAS

Mr. Wilkins, forgive me but that's impractical.

Bayard looks over and sees one of the handsomest men, ever.

ROY WILKINS

Elias is from Alabama. A field organizer. Perhaps you have facts to substantiate your claim.

Elias pulls out a paper. Bayard/Randolph share a look.

ELIAS

(reading)

Previous D.C. Demonstrations: In 1913, 8,000 Suffragettes. In '26, 25,000 Klu Klux Klan. The Prayer Pilgrimage in '57, 30,000. And in 1932, 42,000 Veterans marched and were attacked with tear gas and tanks.

ROY WILKINS

Who led the attack?

ELIAS

The military.

ROY WILKINS

And the Veterans' race?

ELIAS

White.

ROY WILKINS

White boys.

Case Closed. But not for Bayard. He rises, straightens his posture and a FAUX ENGLISH ACCENT finds its way into his mouth.

BAYARD

Young man, your facts are correct, but your sense of history is not. Those 42,000 men marched on Washington D.C. because it was the Depression, and after dutifully serving their country, found themselves without jobs, and homes, and food to feed their families. And when they took to the street and were attacked, the world did in fact bear witness. Gandhi brought an empire to its knees--

ROY WILKINS

Will someone please tell this man this in not INDIA!

(MORE)

ROY WILKINS (CONT'D)

For decades The NAACP has been getting Negroes out of jail. All of a sudden, they want to stay in and sing songs. And now you are proposing a 100,000 Black folks invade Washington D.C. Have you talked to Martin about this?

BAYARD

(nonchalant)

I lost his number, he lost mine...

ROY WILKINS

Dr. King, who hasn't lost my number, has come to understand that mass lobbying is sheer madness.

BAYARD

Brown v. Board is the crowning glory of this organization, yet all across the South, when Negro children sleep, they see 'Whites Only' signs instead of their dreams. Counting on the courts to eradicate racial inequity, that's madness.

ROY WILKINS

Mr. Randolph sir, you are a giant among men, but when it comes to this--

(i.e., The Plan)

The NAACP says no.

Roy/His Lieutenants go. Medgar follows, but not before giving Bayard's shoulder a reassuring squeeze.

30

INT. NYC OFFICE BUILDING / MEN'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER

30

Bayard is at a urinal. Elias enters. Though there are a dozen urinals, he unzips at the one next to Bayard. Silence, then:

ELIAS

"When an individual is protesting society's refusal to acknowledge his dignity, his act of protest confers dignity on him."

BAYARD

Why are you quoting me, to me?

ELIAS

You're an inspiration.

BAYARD
 Inspiration untethered from action
 loses all value.

ELIAS
 Who said that?

BAYARD
 I did. Just now.

Bayard zips up and moves to the sinks. So does Elias.

ELIAS
 I agree with Mr. Evers. At its
 core, your idea has potential. I
 would have spoken up, but it wasn't
 my place.

BAYARD
 It wasn't your place to voice
 support, but it was to help tear it
 down?

Bayard's had enough. As he turns to go--

ELIAS
 Your march is possible without The
 NAACP, but not without Dr. King,
 and Mr. Wilkins knows it.

Not so self-effacing after all. Bayard finds himself
 intrigued, not only by the observation, but the man as well.

ELIAS (CONT'D)
 Elias Taylor. You looked like you
 were about to ask.

BAYARD
 I was about to ask something, but
 it wasn't that.

ELIAS
 (laughing/embarrassed)
 I was warned-- Whatever you want to
 say, you just say it.

BAYARD
 Doesn't everyone.

ELIAS
 No. Most people are modest,
 cautious, afraid.

BAYARD

So do it. Say what you are thinking
right this second. No caution, no
fear.

Bayard waits. He's not backing down. Elias wants to, even
tries to, but can't. Sensing Bayard's had enough--

ELIAS

(blurting out)

My wife is in town through Saturday
night.

When a White Man enters, Elias deliberately brushes against
Bayard's body and leaves.

31 INT. NYC OFFICE BUILDING / LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

31

When Bayard emerges from the bathroom, CLAUDIA TAYLOR, 26,
calls out, her smile lighting the way. Tom watches from a
distance.

CLAUDIA

Mr. Rustin! Claudia Taylor.

BAYARD

Have we--

CLAUDIA

Years ago. I volunteered for the
Women's Political Council during
the bus boycott. You spoke, and my
spirit soared. Elias!

Elias is talking to one of Roy's Lieutenants when Claudia
waves him over. Tom takes in Elias' sheepish approach.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

Have you two met?

BAYARD

Just now--

ELIAS

Earlier.

CLAUDIA

Mr. Wilkins chose Elias to
coordinate efforts between national
and regional branches. Until he
takes over my Daddy's church.

(reassuring Elias)

It's only a matter of time.

BAYARD

I have no doubt, Mr. Taylor, you'll continue to impress your lovely wife's father. And such a vocation holds great rewards, celestial and worldly.

CLAUDIA

A heavenly calling indeed, but once Daddy says yes, I expect a Lincoln, just like my Mama's.

They all LAUGH. Only Claudia is fully sincere.

BAYARD

I hope to see you both again very soon. Perhaps on the Sabbath?

CLAUDIA

Sadly, no. I leave Saturday. Wouldn't that have been a dream.

Bayard and Tom exit the building.

A32 EXT. NYC OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

A32

TOM

Careful.

Tom throws a look at Elias, who throws a quick look in Bayard's direction.

BAYARD

I asked you to be my assistant, not "Mrs. Rustin." That is if you still want the job?

TOM

Yes, of course. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Before leaving the building, Bayard throws Tom a kiss, a la Dinah Shore: "Mawah!" Tom laughs.

B32 EXT. RANDOLPH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

B32

The sun has just set in Harlem.

32 INT. RANDOLPH'S APT. - EARLY EVENING

32

Lucille's Wake. FAMILIAR FACES milling about: Roy, Medgar, etc.

Bayard and Randolph stand before the MANTLE as ALTER:
photographs, mementos, etc, celebrating Lucille/Her life with
Randolph.

RANDOLPH

Years ago, we started a Shakespeare
Society. Fighting racial tyranny by
day, reciting 'What a piece of work
is man' by night. Why is it no
matter how hard you try, it's never
enough?

BAYARD

The day I came by and we danced, I
told her about the march. The light
in her eyes.

LATER: Bayard OPENS THE DOOR to go--

ELLA

Mr. Rustin, I see that you have
arisen.

BAYARD

You're merely witnessing the
walking dead.

ELLA

Don't make me embarrass my mama at
such a solemn affair. Call me back.

34

INT. 8TH AVENUE BAR - SUNDAY AFTERNOON

34

Bayard and Elias are seated at the bar; a few MEN AND WOMEN
scattered about. On the jukebox: DORIS DAY.

BAYARD

The first time Martin invited me
into his home, there were guns
everywhere, underneath the sofa,
inside the chiffarobe, guards on

the front porch. Understandably so,
given all the threats being leveled
at his family and him. I started
talking to him about passive
resistance, and how our bodies are
the strongest weapon we have. Over
time, all the weapons went away.

ELIAS

So Dr. King's stance on non-violence, he got from you?

BAYARD

By way of Jesus Christ, Ghandi, Thoreau.

ELIAS

He trusted you?

BAYARD

I always told him what I knew to be true.

(to Bartender)

Vodka, water and--

(to Elias)

How about a Manhattan? After two, you'll be a changed man.

ELIAS

In that case, gimme three. No-no, just one please, thank you. Thank you.

35

INT. 8TH AVENUE BAR - JUMP TO LATER / EVENING

35

Tipsy now, shirts loosened, Bayard and Elias haven't moved. The bar is fuller: WOMEN AND MEN.

ELIAS

The man's asthmatic, can barely walk or breath, but the second he hits the pulpit--

(combustive energy)

"The end of the world is at hand!"

Bayard laughs.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

I'm gonna burn in hell.

BAYARD

For sharing how you feel?

ELIAS

For not revering a man who welcomed me into his home, and hates my guts, and I feel the exact same way about him!

(taking a large gulp)

You're bad. You're good. I'll have another. Do you want--

Bayard signals for another round.

BAYARD

The church...your dream or hers?

ELIAS

I have always wanted to serve the Lord. You were raised--

BAYARD

Quaker.

ELIAS

No!

BAYARD

My parents, who were really my grandparents, raised me after their daughter, my mother, fled the coup.

ELIAS

So... the rumors about you and Dr. King?

BAYARD

An ugly lie perpetrated by Adam Clayton Powell to stop a planned protest. He threatened to share his lie with the press. I called Martin's bluff and resigned. He accepted, effectively ended my connection with The Movement.

ELIAS

Why would Reverend Powell do something like that?

BAYARD

Months later, Reverend Powell was made Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor. Not saying the two are related but--

ELIAS

So, where is your resentment?

BAYARD

Martin is a gift from God. I believed it then. I believe it now.

Sensing Bayard's sadness, Elias is about to place a hand on Bayard's shoulder, but instead discretely touches his knee.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

You're okay in here. At this hour.

With his hand still resting on Bayard's knee, Elias looks around. The bar is now filled ENTIRELY WITH MEN; the windows covered, a Doorman stands guard.

36 INT. 8TH AVENUE BAR - A JUMP TO LATER / NIGHT

36

Bayard/Elias at the bar, facing each other. Drunk, mostly. On the jukebox: Instead of Doris, LITTLE JIMMY SCOTT.

ELIAS

It's drilled into you, the day you're born: "They think you're less than, so you've got to be better than."

BAYARD

Yes. Yes.

ELIAS

"Everything you do reflects on the race." "Be charming, be perfect, be polite."

BAYARD

The suffocating chains of Negro respectability. When I told Ma Rustin I preferred dancing with boys instead of girls, she said "What would you have me do with that?" And then she said "I suppose that's what you need to do."

The sense of intimacy between them is absolute.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

When Martin speaks, he holds nothing back. That's what people feel when they hear him: truth. So, tell me, Elias Taylor, how can you preach salvation, and you don't want to save yourself? How can you speak about love, when your flesh is disconnected from your heart?

37 EXT. 8TH AVENUE - NIGHT - LATER

37

Walking, weaving in and out of shadow and light--

BAYARD

(laughing)

And when Roy said, "So Elias, can you substantiate your claim," and you pulled out that piece of paper. I hope the two of you didn't think--

ELIAS

Teach me how not to be afraid.

Elias kisses Bayard, gently. When Bayard moves in for more--

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Good night.

Elias smiles, walks away.

38

INT. WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE / BAYARD'S OFFICE - DAY

38

Bayard is at his desk, drawing the TWO RECTANGLES, when he hears--

FEMALE STAFFER (O.S.)

Lord, no. No!

Bayard looks up and sees the Staff, gathered around a TV: COPS with DOGS and FIRE HOSES attack BLACK CHILDREN/TEENS.

MALE STAFF (JIM)

Shame on Reverend King. He had to have known what would happen, sending those poor children to march the streets of Birmingham.

BAYARD

A man in uniform unleashes attack dogs, turns a fire hose on the innocent, and the first words out of your goddamn mouth are "Shame on Reverend King."

JIM

Bayard, I see no reason for you to--

Trapped inside an anger he can't control--

BAYARD

You see this and think 'those po' Negroes down south,' incapable of understanding they are beyond powerful, because today they discovered a bravery they never knew they had, and a bravery you'll never know.

Muste enters, undetected.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

You sit behind that desk, as you have sat for over thirty years, convincing yourself you are committed to saving the world, when the only thing you're committed to is your own safety and superiority.

MUSTE

Bayard, enough! Raging against Jim because of the color of his skin.

BAYARD

I'm not raging against Jim because of the color of his skin. I'm raging at him for being arrogant and ill-informed. The fact that he happens to be white while doing so, well that's between him and the Lord.

MUSTE

Every day we agree to surrender that which makes us different, so that together we might forge a more humane world.

BAYARD

I can't surrender my differences. The world won't let me. And even if I could, I wouldn't want to. Not today.

When Muste sees Bayard grab his coat--

MUSTE

Where are you going? What are you doing?

BAYARD

Sarah, Sarah, Agnes, Jim.

When Bayard turns to go--

MUSTE

You must stay here where I can protect you, from the world, and from yourself. You are a man of exceptional skills and keen intellect--

(confidentially)

...But until you admit to your anger at being abandoned by your parents, which is why you became a homosexual, to hurt them and hurt yourself, you will never be fully whole, not as a man, and not as a person committed to saving the world.

BAYARD

Mr. Muste, sir, have you ever been to a Negro church?

MUSTE

Innumerable times.

BAYARD

As a Quaker, I'd never seen anything like it; the hand-clapping, singing, shouting. It felt like exalted rage. And so instead of staying here and saying something I might regret, I'm going to leave. And this coming Sunday--

Bayard stomps/claps in a fit of anger and praise.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

...I'm going to church!

A39 EXT. PENN SOUTH - NIGHT

A39

Push-in on Bayard's apartment.

ELLA (O.S.)

So, this young preacher working for Roy--

39 INT. BAYARD'S APT. - LATER THAT EVENING

39

Bayard is pouring Ella another large glass of wine, as they share a home-cooked meal.

ELLA

...I hear he's so fine, the Lord
cried when he made him.

BAYARD

I have no idea to what or to whom
you are referring.

ELLA

And what happened to whatshisname,
the pale one-- Tom? Is that more
your flavor?

BAYARD

I am drawn to beauty, black-white-
indeterminate. So long as they're
passionate and smart. Why is
everyone so obsessed with what I am
doing and with whom?

ELLA

I'm just curious as to why it took
you so long to return my calls?

BAYARD

Because, my dear Miss Baker, you
casually ask questions which cut to
the core of one's soul.

ELLA

So, why you aren't you on a bus to
Atlanta tonight?

BAYARD

I'm not wanted in Atlanta.

ELLA

A reason that has nothing to do
with pride.

BAYARD

Because I do not care! Besides, Dr.
King is doing just fine.

ELLA

Albany, Georgia? You call that
doing just fine?

BAYARD

(instantly irate)
Who, who tries to integrate an
entire town?

(MORE)

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Your focus must be singular: a lunch counter, a bus boycott. Thinking he had another Bull Connor on his hands. Sheriff Pritchett undermined every media-savvy move Martin made. As a result, the Southern Civil Rights struggle got swept off the front pages of The New York Times.

ELLA

(with a knowing smile)
Thought you didn't care?

The PHONE RINGS.

BAYARD

I don't! I of course care about the cause-- And somewhere deep inside, Martin-- More so Coretta and the kids-- Which is not to say--

ELLA

You're embarrassing yourself.
Answer the phone.

BAYARD

Yes?
(to Ella)
Turn on the TV.

Ella flips his TV on. Seated in the Oval office, Kennedy is delivering an address (archival):

PRESIDENT KENNEDY (ON TV)

--The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South. Where legal remedies are not at hand, redress is sought in demonstrations and protests which create tensions and threaten violence and lives. We face, therefore, a moral crisis as a country and a people. It is a time to act--

BAYARD

Words. Nothing but--

ELLA

Shh.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY (ON TV)
Next week I shall ask the Congress
of the United States to act to make
a commitment it has not fully made
in this century to the proposition
that race has no place in--

Bayard turns the TV off.

ELLA
On your own, you and Martin are
fine. Together, you are fire. He
needs you to help him figure out
what's next. And you need him to
nationalize this march. And if you
dare bring up that damn job as an
excuse--

BAYARD
This afternoon, I quit, or took a
leave of absence, or--

ELLA
Good! A shark trapped in a shot
glass! I never bought for one
second Powell's lie, but I do
believe he saw the power you and
Martin have together, and it
threatened him; threatens them all.

Leveling her focus, so that Bayard dares not look away.

ELLA (CONT'D)
This country has failed us, over
and over. Even so, each day, we
forgive by fighting to make things
right, yet you can't forgive Martin
for failing you one time.

Bayard finds himself emotionally overwhelmed.

ELLA (CONT'D)
I tell you, this new generation is
restless, and angry. Are you going
to let that anger turn to blood,
our children's blood, or will you
harness it, with Martin, for our
freedom?

So go, go win back your friend.

40 EXT. SWEETWATER, TN BUS TERMINAL - DAY 40

A LINE OF PEOPLE waiting to board a GREYHOUND BUS. Just as BAYARD is about to climb on board--

FLASHBACK:

41 INT. BUS TERMINAL / SWEETWATER, TN - DAY (1942) 41

WHITE FACES keep turning around in their seats, to gawk and scorn. The object of their contempt: BAYARD RUSTIN, early-30s, seated, his gaze locked forward. A few rows back, a sign: COLORED, indicating a SECTION OF SEATS behind him.

When a WHITE GIRL, 3, reaches for Bayard--

MOTHER
(pulling her hand back)
Don't touch that nigger.

Two POLICE OFFICERS step onto the Bus.

OFFICER
Git on back now.

BAYARD
I cannot move.

BUS DRIVER
You walked past me and sat there.

BAYARD
If I move, this child will never
know an injustice is taking place.

The Two Police Officers begin to hit and shove Bayard.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
I am not resisting. Why are you-

A CRUSHING BLOW SENDS BAYARD TO THE GROUND, and the two Officers DRAG HIM OFF THE BUS.

42 EXT. SWEETWATER, TN BUS TERMINAL - MOMENTS LATER (1942) 42

The Cops KICK/BEAT BAYARD SEVERELY. The Mother watching from her window is aghast. Bayard lifts his head. As a BILLY CLUB comes down hard--

SMASH BACK TO:

43 INT. BUS / SWEETWATER, TN BUS TERMINAL - DAY (1963) 43

Bayard moves down the aisle, past the White Section. He spies a FOLDED NEWSPAPER, and grabs it. The HEADLINE staggers him: MEDGAR EVERS SHOT DEAD.

44 EXT. MLK'S ATLANTA HOME - HOURS LATER 44

Riddled with apprehension, Bayard finishes his cigarette and RINGS THE BELL. The door opens to reveal: CORETTA KING, 36, beautiful and warm. They hug.

BAYARD

Coretta.

CORETTA

Bayard, as I live and breathe.
(ushering him inside)
When did you get into town?

45 INT. MLK'S HOME - CONTINUOUS 45

BAYARD

Within the hour.

CORETTA

You must stay for dinner.

BAYARD

You best ask the master of the house.

CORETTA

There can't be a master without slaves, and in this house there are neither.

BAYARD

Show me the little ones at once!

46 INT. MLK'S ATLANTA HOME / KITCHEN - LATER 46

With baby BERNICE in his arm, Bayard "helps" in the kitchen while playing with YOLANDA, 8, MARTIN III, 6, and DEXTER, 2.

BAYARD

So, Madame Coloratura, Carnegie Hall? I know some folks who know some folks.

CORETTA

You haven't been here ten minutes--

BAYARD

Yolanda, Dexter, did you know your
mama is a great singer?

Bayard gestures for Coretta to start singing. When she scoffs
at the notion--

BAYARD (CONT'D)

I'll go first.

CORETTA

Of course you will.

BAYARD (SINGING)

This little light of mine, I'm
gonna let it shine.

CORETTA/BAYARD

This little light of mine, I'm
gonna let it shine.

CORETTA

This little light of mine, I'm
gonna let it shine. Let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine!

BAYARD

Everybody now!

BAYARD/CORETTA/KIDS

Jesus is the Light, I'm gonna let
Him shine!

ON: Martin as he walks through the FRONT DOOR.

IN THE KITCHEN:

The "concert" is in full swing. Bayard

casually acknowledges Martin when he sees him standing in the
doorway, but keeps right on singing.

BAYARD/CORETTA/KIDS (CONT'D)

Jesus is the Light, I'm gonna let
Him shine! Let him shine, let him
shine--

BAYARD

Fortissimo! That means loud!

BAYARD/CORETTA/KIDS
Let him shinnne!

47 INT. MLK ATLANTA HOME / LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

47

Bayard follows Martin into the room and closes the door. It is the first time they have been alone together in three years; the energy between them, stilted/awkward. Martin gestures. They sit.

BAYARD
So...Brother Medgar.

MARTIN
Unspeakable.

BAYARD
When's the funeral?

MARTIN
Next Wednesday. Corrie and Myrlie have been in touch. What did you make of Kennedy's speech?

BAYARD
Calculated, cautious. Hours later, Medgar gets shot.

MARTIN
So, your march. Ambitious.

BAYARD
Unless we demonstrate unity and strength, Kennedy will do what they've all done before: champion legislature destined to be doomed.

MARTIN
A March for jobs doesn't address our concerns down here.

BAYARD
Then call it a March for Jobs and Freedom. This was not an easy journey for me, but the promise of what this march could become--
(with mounting passion)
...The monumental impact it could have, the lives it could radically alter, the dreams, visions and unfulfilled aspirations of our ancestors at long last realized, the, the--

MARTIN

(laughing)

The first time we met, I remember calling Corrie and saying, "This Rustin fellow's a little crazy in the head." Only later did I fully comprehend 'a little' didn't come even close. I've missed you, friend.

BAYARD

And I, you.

The awkwardness gives way to two minds working as one.

MARTIN

Come fall, the Dixiecrats will get to work gutting Kennedy's bill, which leaves us roughly--

BAYARD

...Two months to pull off the largest peaceful protest ever, and absolutely no time for anything else.

MARTIN

Such as?

BAYARD

Succumbing to blackmail, innuendo and lies, which are sure to follow, if and when the march is announced.

MARTIN

(gingerly)

And what of the things about you that are true?

BAYARD

What you see I cannot conceal. But I swear to you, there will be no new incidents.

The Two Men share a look. Bayard lights a cigarette.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

So...

MARTIN

So...an epic demonstration in the nation's capitol, organized in 8 to 10 weeks, and without the support of the NAACP?

BAYARD
Sounds like a helluva good time.

Martin laughs. They both do, joyful and free.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
You once said "The time is always
right to do right."

They look at each other. After a long, thoughtful beat--

48 INT. ROY'S OFFICE/BAYARD'S APARTMENT 48

Roy in HIS OFFICE, is INTERCUT with Bayard in HIS APARTMENT, watching MARTIN ON TV. Bayard is beaming. Roy is not.

MARTIN (ON TV)
We are calling for a nonviolent,
peaceful March on Washington. We
intend to go there, not by the
hundred, or the thousands, but by
the hundreds of thousands. The time
is now. We shall be free.

49 INT. NAACP CONFERENCE ROOM - THAT SAME DAY 49

ELIAS (INTO PHONE)
(covertly)
Now that Dr. King has publicly
endorsed the march--

50 EXT. NAACP HEADQUARTERS - DAY 50

Randolph, Bayard, Norm and Tom watch as Roy, moving at a brusque pace and followed by a parade of ASSISTANTS, enters the building.

ELIAS (O.S.)
...Mr. Wilkins can't attack it, so
he's coming after you.

Elias follows Roy. He and Bayard share a quick look, which Tom catches. Martin approaches.

MARTIN
This should prove interesting.
Chief, after you.

As Randolph/Martin enter the building, CLEVE ROBINSON, mid-50s, a bear of a man, with a large personality and a Jamaican accent, appears.

CLEVE
 Brother Rustin!

BAYARD
 Cleve, what are you doing here?

CLEVE
 When I heard about Roy and his
 little coup-d'tete-a-tete, I
 decided to show up and provide
 support, moral and--
 (his fists)
 ...Otherwise.

BAYARD
 Norm, Tom, meet the indomitable
 Cleve Robinson, Union Leader of
 District 65.

CLEVE
 And newly appointed Chairman of the
 March's Administrative Committee--

Off of Norm and Tom's look--

BAYARD RUSTIN
 And its first donor.

A WHITE COUPLE casually glances in their direction.

CLEVE
 Guess they've never seen proud
 Black men before.
 (calling out to them)
 "Glorious shall be the battle when
 the time comes to fight for our
 people and our race."

NORM
 (sotto voce)
 The man's a human hand grenade.

CLEVE
 Black gents and Tom, shall we?

51 INT. NAACP CONFERENCE ROOM

51

The Big 6 are seated around the table: Urban League's WHITNEY YOUNG, 47; CORE's JIM FARMER, 43; SNCC's JOHN LEWIS, the youngest, 23; plus Randolp, Martin and Roy.

There are a number of ASSISTANTS, as well as Elias, Cleve, Norman and Tom. Bayard presides.

BAYARD

I realize a total budget of 65,000 dollars might seem like a lot--

WHITNEY YOUNG

Chief, there's a rumor going around you intend to hold the march this summer.

JIM FARMER

Way too soon!

Others agree. The energy feels mutinous.

BAYARD

(above the fray)

While the horror of Birmingham is still fresh in the nation's mind, we must seize the moment and--

MARTIN

Bayard, if I might.

Addressing the room--

MARTIN (CONT'D)

We all heard the President announce on national television he's sending a bill to Congress. It is my personal estimation, and Chief, please feel free to contradict, that in order to get this bill past the southern segregationist, it will take a president with intelligence, political savvy and passion.

The Entire Room is hanging onto Martin's every word.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Kennedy has the first two in abundance, but not the third; not when it comes to civil rights. And so to make sure he does not relent, we must not relent in our commitment to this country, and to the race. And that is the reason for the timely nature of this most improbable, yet most essential endeavor.

RANDOLPH

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Seeing the impact Martin just had--

ROY WILKINS

Who are all these people? I did not cut short my Regional Conference to meet with everybody's seconds the thirds.

(indicating the Big 6)

You, you, you, you, and you, stay. Everybody, out!

CLEVE

I am Chairman of the Administrative Committee, and to date, the march's only donor.

ROY WILKINS

Much appreciated. OUT!

CLEVE

Go ahead! Vote yourselves outta history!

BAYARD

(ushering him out)

Come along, Cleve.

CLEVE

I'd be happier doin' it without you, you showboatin' blood-suckin' sons-of-whores.

Once they are gone: DOOR SLAM.

52

INT. 6TH AVENUE BAR - MINUTES LATER

52

Bayard is seated at the bar, Cleve and Norm on either side of him, while Tom paces. Bayard is calm. The others are not.

CLEVE

(annoyed with Bayard)

Just sitting there, like some toad?

NORM HILL

I am so disappointed in Mr. Wilkins.

TOM

You do realize what's happening, right this second?

BAYARD

My guess is, Roy is starting to build his case against me.

INTERCUT: BAYARD AT THE BAR & THE MEETING ROOM:

Bayard narrates what we see in the meeting room:

ROY WILKINS

We must ask ourselves, is this the man we wish to see labeled 'Mr. March on Washington.'

BAYARD (AT THE BAR)

John Lewis and the Chief will defend me.

ROY WILKINS

He was a member of the Young Communist League--

RANDOLPH

Which he renounced years ago.

ROY WILKINS

...Imprisoned for refusing the draft.

JOHN LEWIS

A moral decision, not a cowardly one.

BAYARD (AT THE BAR)

Even so, Roy will press on.

ROY WILKINS

His mannerisms and reputation make him an easy target. And when the White press and powers that be take aim, and they will, every single person seated around this table will also be in the line of fire, because of him.

A DEADLY SILENCE.

MARTIN

Whatever we decide, we must do so with humility and respect.

JIM FARMER

Chief?

OFF Randolph, carefully considering his next move.

53

INT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL / BAR - MINUTES LATER

53

Bayard sees Randolph walking toward them.

RANDOLPH

What date is strategically wise for a march?

BAYARD

We'll need at least eight weeks.

RANDOLPH

Monday, August 26th?

BAYARD

Mondays will be challenging for protestant Ministers, and Fridays complicated for our Jewish friends.

TOM

I'm sorry sir, but what happened in there?

MR. RANDOLPH

They voted to remove Bayard as Director.

CLEVE

Son-of-a-bitch!

RANDOLPH

And my first order of business was to reappoint him as my Deputy Director, putting him fully in charge.

BAYARD

You can call me Trash Collector for all I care. I only wish I could have seen Roy's face.

Indicating Tom's stunned expression--

MR. RANDOLPH

Looked a little like Tom's does right now.

CLEVE

(hugging Bayard)

You're one clever black bastard!

(MORE)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Can't put a thing over on you. Are you sure you're not Jamaican?

As the sense of celebration/relief continues, Randolph places both hands on Bayard's shoulders--

RANDOLPH

Get to work.

54 EXT. 130TH STREET/HARLEM - DAY (1963) 54

A residential block. VIBRANT. KIDS PLAY, TEENAGE GIRLS dance to TRANSISTOR RADIOS. OLDER MEN PLAY DOMINOES while WOMEN GOSSIP and LAUGH. A YOUNG BOY looks up. HIS POV:

A CARAVAN of PEOPLE as it turns onto 130th Street, with Bayard as the Pied Piper, followed by The Team which has grown to roughly 19. They are joyful and energized, and carry portable typewriters, lamps, fans, office supplies, etc. Cleve is part of the procession, as is DR. ANNA ARNOLD HEDGEMAN, 64, sophisticated and fierce, and COURTNEY, a handsome young recruit.

The whole street watches as they make their way down the block before entering 170 West 130th, a neglected brownstone, soon to be known as--

55 INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS/2ND FLOOR - MINUTES LATER 55

A LARGE OPEN SPACE, a BANK of WINDOWS at the FRONT and BACK.

BAYARD

Our new offices. The third floor is uninhabitable, so we'll all be on top of each other down here.

YVETTE

Dirty.

BAYARD

Keen observation.
(he hands her a broom)
Over here--

He flings open a BACK WINDOW and indicates a COURTYARD below, overgrown and littered with junk.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Our boardroom.

CLEVE
(to Norm)
Nice.

BAYARD
Rachelle, you'll be in charge of
transportation.

RACHELLE
For a hundred thousand people? I
can't even drive.

BAYARD
My faith in you and your compulsive
nature knows no bounds. Norm,
you'll travel from city to city,
raising funds and spreading the
word.

NORM
What's my budget?

Sticking a \$20 bill in his pocket.

BAYARD
This'll get you to your first city,
where you'll raise enough to get
you to the next.
(Calling out)
My office!

DR. ANNA
Near the front door. Is that wise?

BAYARD
I'd like to welcome a woman who
needs no introduction--

Dr. Anna gives Bayard a look. She wants an introduction.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
Educator, activist, and the first
Negro woman to serve in a New York
City cabinet position, Dr. Hedgeman
has volunteered to lead outreach to
all religious organizations.

DR. ANNA
There shall be two lists: one for
those who support us, and one for
those who do not. Over time, those
who are opposed shall be shamed
into surrender.

Charlene throws a "I'm-scared-of-her" look.

BAYARD

Tom, Eleanor, you'll oversee all written documents. First up, an invite to a July 2nd meeting with the Big 6.

The room erupts with objections.

DR. ANNA

All those oversized hats to fit their oversized heads.

BAYARD

We need their numbers and resources. And they are each loaning us two employees.

CLEVE

Spies!

BAYARD

If this uneasy alliance is ever going to work, we've got to figure out how to live under one roof.

Going down a line, hurling orders, then moving on before anyone can object--

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Courtney?

COURTNEY

Yes sir.

The others mock his formality,

BAYARD

You're coming with me to D.C.
(standing next to Cleve)
If we expect to engage a hundred thousand people, we'll need a phone on every desk, and someone to get them on the cheap.

CLEVE

Look no further. I'm your man.

BAYARD

Rachelle, two sisters from SNCC will be moving in with you sometime tomorrow. Tom--
(confidentially)
(MORE)

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Instead of finding a place in the city, you'll stay in my spare room; keep me focused and out of trouble.

TOM

Bayard, we tried this and--

BAYARD

Norm-Tom-Charles, around the corner, Johnson's Mortuary. See if they'll lend us chairs. Now.

(they go)

By the time I get back tomorrow night from D.C., this "dump" needs to be operational.

56

EXT. THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL / WASHINGTON D.C.

56

A STUNNINGLY CLEAR SKY. Bayard and Courtney are climbing the

LINCOLN

MEMORIAL STEPS when Bayard turns to take in: the REFLECTING POOL and the WASHINGTON MONUMENT beyond it.

REVEAL: CHIEF WELLS and FIVE MEN, all white, standing atop the steps. A tiny reception for such a grand idea.

BAYARD

(warmly smiling)

One can't help but be in awe.

COURTNEY

Makes you want to believe.

Chief Wells steps forward, wearing a smile void of warmth.

BAYARD

Bayard Rustin, Deputy Director of The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

CHIEF WELLS

(as they shake)

Chief Wells.

Rattling off names, without any indication who is whom--

CHIEF WELLS (CONT'D)

Messrs. Caldwell and Murray, Deputies Walden, Cowell and Barnes.

BAYARD
Who's with National Park Service?

CHIEF WELLS
No one.

BAYARD
If I'm not mistaken, The Mall falls
under NPS jurisdiction?

CHIEF WELLS
Correct.

BAYARD
Chief Wells, in little under seven
weeks' time, a monumental, two-day
event is--

CHIEF WELLS
One day. It's no longer a two-day
event.

BAYARD
According to whom?

CHIEF WELLS
Mr. Wilkins of the NAACP also
believes it should be one day.

BAYARD
(the faux-accent is back)
It'd be safe in assuming you do not
work for Mr. Wilkins?

CHIEF WELLS
(amused)
No, I do not.

BAYARD
Neither do I, so I'm confused as to
why you mentioned his name. I am
however very interested in knowing
who you do work for, and if they're
the person who also believes the
march should be one day?

CHIEF WELLS
(with a smile)
Mr. Rustin, we've found what works
best is for you to answer our
questions, not the reverse.

BAYARD

And I've found a free flowing exchange of information and ideas works even better.

CHIEF WELLS

When you put on an event in your mall we'll give that a go, but seeing as it's your gathering in our mall--

BAYARD

Your Mall? Not The National Mall, or America's Front Yard, or The People's Mall.

CHIEF WELLS

Mr. Rustin, since you insist on raising your voice--

CHIEF WELLS (CONT'D)

...And appear more invested in constructing roadblocks instead of finding solutions, then I fail to see how we can support in a substantive way, your gathering. Gentlemen--

BAYARD

I haven't raised my voice. Courtney, have you heard-- Roadblocks! The person I need to communicate with the most didn't BOTHER TO SHOW UP!

As Wells/The Men descend the Memorial steps--

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Where are you going?
(to Courtney)
Where are they--

Charging down the steps after them--

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Sir, we have yet to discuss bus arrivals, drinking fountains...

The Men continue on their way.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

(calling after them)
And it is not a gathering! It is an act of civil disobedience, organized and sanctioned by some of the most meaningful minds in the country. And it is going to take place...

The Men are now too far away to hear--

BAYARD RUSTIN
 ...Over two days.

Bayard is left standing in the middle of the steps, trying to make sense of what just happened.

BAYARD (O.S.)
 I tell you Martin--

57 INT. TELEPHONE BOOTH - UNION STATION/MARTIN'S STUDY 57

Bayard seated in a phone booth, his hand positioned outside of the booth doors, smoking, is INTERCUT with Martin at home.

BAYARD
 Not since Tennessee, when those two policemen set out to reconfigure my face, have I experienced such an overt display of disregard. They had one goal: to make sure the meeting was a resounding failure.

MARTIN (INTO PHONE)
 You say he mentioned Roy?

BAYARD
 Yes, but it was clear this was coming from some place higher up.

MARTIN
 The President and Attorney General/
 brother Bobby higher up, or Hoover
 and the FBI higher up?

Looking around before answering--

BAYARD
 All of the above.

Silence, as both Men realize the weight of Bayard's response.

MARTIN
 Corrie's calling me to dinner.
 We'll talk tomorrow.

BAYARD
 Give her a hug.

Bayard hangs up and just sits there.

58

INT. RACHELLE'S APT. - THAT NIGHT

58

Sonic and visual chaos abounds. While Chubby Checker, sans sound, dances the twist on TV, and MARTHA AND THE VANDELLAS' Heatwave blasts on the Hi-fi, Southern sisters JOYCE, 18, DORIE, 19, spirited and tough, are in the kitchen serving soul food piled high on paper plates, to Tom, Eleanor and Rachelle. Bayard, still reeling from his day in D.C., sits in a corner, nursing a glass of wine.

RACHELLE

Dorie, Joyce, I swear I have never tasted anything this good in my entire life. Have you, Tom?

Tom nods to the beat and keeps chewing. They all LAUGH.

ELEANOR

Wait a minute. You're the one who started the riot.

DORIE

Girl, you know how white people are. Three Negroes on a corner and it's a riot. No offense.

Rachelle gestures, 'none taken.'

Tom is too busy eating to respond. When Bayard hears LAUGHTER, his sullen mood begins to lift.

JOYCE

After Mr. Evers' funeral, we were all standing around, numb, unable to move.

DORIE

So I started walking, and folks started singing, and the walking turned to marching, and singing to shouting. And when the police showed up and got all white, we got real colored real quick!

ELEANOR

For an instant riot, just add Dorie.

The OTHERS laugh/cheer her on.

JOYCE

(bringing him a plate)
Mr. Bayard, you knew our mentor,
Mr. Evers.

BAYARD

Call me Bayard. He was a good man,
and an early supporter of the
march.

TOM

You're not gonna be with us in
Harlem?

DORIE

I'll be downtown, at SNCC. But
Joyce will.

BAYARD

(To the room)
I have a question.

Rachelle turns down the music.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

What got you each started?

JOYCE

Well--

BAYARD

Don't be nervous.

JOYCE

...When I was 10, Dorie 11, we were
at the corner store, when this
white clerk came up from behind and
grabbed Dorie's breast.

DORIE

So I grabbed a box of donuts, and
beat him upside his head.

JOYCE

We ran home and told our mama and
she said, "You shoulda killed him."
We've been marching ever since.

ELEANOR

For me, it started with our fathers
fighting Aryan racism in Germany
and then coming home to Jim Crow
laws. They started NAACP chapters,
and we are their children; the
first generation to grow up knowing
how to organize and fight back.

JOYCE

Tom?

TOM

He already knows my story.

DORIE

We don't.

TOM

Shortly after I was born, my mother left me at a Foundling Hospital.

JOYCE

Jesus wept.

TOM

I sometimes think my sense of social justice was born of being an outsider in an adoptive family. I'm also here because my father worked with the unions, so I'm very passionate about building coalitions. That's about it.

RACHELLE

The first adults to make me feel good about myself were my 5th grade teacher and 7th grade librarian; Negro women who demanded I read something other than comic books, and let me check out books from the grown-up section. And then Emmett Till happened.

ELEANOR

(a punch to her stomach)
Umph!

RACHELLE

And seeing kids my age being spat on integrating Central High--

DORIE

Don't get me going.

RACHELLE

...I joined the Students for Democratic Action, and once we got to college-- Tom and I went to the same high school, we volunteered at this office run by Bayard, who taught us about The Movement, and what books to read. He'd sing and he was just so-- Remember, Tom?

Tom nods, moved. Taking in each of their faces--

BAYARD
 After the day I had in D.C., thank
 you.

59 INT. BAYARD'S APT. - LATER

59

Bayard is alone. His PHONE RINGS.

BAYARD
 Hello?

FAINT BREATHING. He hangs up. It RINGS AGAIN.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 Hello?

BREATHING. He hangs up, puts a MAHALIA JACKSON RECORD on the
 Hi-fi. The phone RINGS AGAIN! He turns Mahalia up so loud, he
 can't hear the phone.

The SOUND of a POUNDING KNOCK startles Bayard. He looks over
 and sees the CHAINED DOOR, PARTLY OPENED. It's Tom.

Letting him in/turning down the volume--

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 Sorry.

TOM
 Sorry. Are you alone?

BAYARD
 Never when Mahalia is around.
 Drink?

TOM
 I should probably...

BAYARD
 So, those sisters.

TOM
 Such heart.

BAYARD
 (indicating a drink)
 I made you one anyway.

TOM
 Bayard--

BAYARD
 (moving in)
 No one has to know.

TOM
 When I was five, my mother told me
 she was taking me back to where she
 62.

TOM (CONT'D)
 found me. Along the way, she
 sobered up and we went back home. I
 begged her to tell me what she'd
 meant. She never did. Eight years
 later, I found my adoption papers.
 I hate secrets, and I won't be
 yours.

Tom goes into his room and closes the door. Just when the
 loneliness is about to devour Bayard--

EXT. A SIDE STREET (26TH) -

60 MINUTES LATER

60

Bayard, exhausted/restless, is walking down a DARKENED STREET
 when he sees, on the OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE STREET, A MAN-IN-
 SHADOWS. The cruising begins:

The Man walks toward Bayard, slows down. Bayard does the
 same. The MAN STOPS. So does Bayard. It's all in BAYARD'S
 FACE: desperation, trepidation, desire. Just when the Man is
 about to cross the street, Bayard's caution/paranoia sets in,
 and he quickly walks away.

61 INT. ELIAS'S ROOM / SRO - LATER

61

Bayard sits in a chair, his sleeves rolled up, trying not to
 laugh at Elias, who is mid-sermon and using inflections/
 rhythms which are the antithesis of who he is.

ELIAS
 And GAWD will shine his light down
 on you. He will LIFT YOU UP in your
 time of sorrow, for as the good
 book says: SUFFER NOT little
 children, unto me.

BAYARD
 (laughing)
 I'm sorry, but what the hell was
 that?

You sound like some 87-years-old, jack-leg preacher from
 Backwoods, Mississippi.

ELIAS
 (hurt)
 I apologize for wasting your time.

BAYARD
 (cornering Elias)
 I wanna see you not your asthmatic
 father-in-law, or whoever the hell
 you think you've got to be to
 appeal to his congregation. 63.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 (getting even closer)
 I wanna see your hurt, your heart.
 Martin holds a PhD from Boston
 University. He's impassioned and
 political and a mama's boy, and
 over time he has learned to not
 apologize for any of that!

With HIS HANDS on ELIAS'S CHEST--

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 Try it again, and this time, I
 wanna see you.

The energy between them emotional/vulnerable/sexually
 charged. And in that moment, Bayard understands: the first
 move, if there is going to be one, must come from Elias.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 That's all for tonight.

Bayard grabs his coat and goes.

62

INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS - DAY

62

The office is ALIVE: PHONES RINGING, TYPEWRITERS CLACKING,
 MIMEOGRAPHS SOUNDING. Dr. Hedgeman watches as the GIRLS

HANDLE THE PHONES--	ELEANOR
March on Washington, Michelle	RACHELLE Yes, yes, this is
Harwood, How may I help you?	Michelle Harwood.

CHARLENE
47 people in Chattanooga? Yes
ma'am. Michelle Harwood.

JOYCE
Michelle Harwood speaking.
There's a bus leaving First
Baptist Church on-- Yes
ma'am.

DR. ANNA
Who is Michelle Harwood?

JOYCE
Anyone involved in travel is
Michelle Harwood. Keeps it simple
when they call back. Bayard's idea.

Dr. Anna looks over and sees BAYARD'S CLOSED DOOR.

63 INT. BAYARD'S OFFICE

63

Bayard is listening intently to John Lewis, the youngest
member of the Big 6, Southern and full of heart.

JOHN LEWIS
The President kept talking, mostly
about himself; how if anything goes
wrong at the march, it's gonna kill
his bill, and why protest at the
White House, especially after his
speech and his bill.

BAYARD
What was Roy's response?

JOHN LEWIS
Nodding mostly.

BAYARD
Whitney and Jim?

JOHN LEWIS
Watching Martin, who was listening.
And then the President's brother--

BAYARD
The Attorney General was there?

JOHN LEWIS
...Kept saying we should cancel,
call the whole thing off. And
that's when Mr. Randolph stood up
and said "Mr. President, we are
going to march on Washington.

((MORE))

JOHN LEWIS (CONT'D)

The people are restless. The Black masses are restless. We are going to march."

BAYARD

And this took place in the Oval Office?

JOHN LEWIS

Three days ago.

64

EXT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / BACK YARD - MINUTES LATER

64

The overgrown vegetation has been cut back to reveal concrete slabs onto which a circle of chairs has been placed. The Big 6 are all present. Bayard is aggressively doodling. His talk with John has left him on edge. Martin and Randolph can sense it.

RANDOLPH

Son, how are you?

BAYARD

(taut)

Good.

JIM FARMER

Before we begin, I received a very distressing letter from Senator Douglas:

RANDOLPH

Regarding--

JIM FARMER

Latrines.

WHITNEY YOUNG

I did as well, from Senator Humphrey.

What initially appeared to be doodling is Bayard scribbling notes: Contact GUARDIANS/Wire Mahalia/Sound system.

ROY WILKINS

So did I. Senator Hart. Isn't Park Services helping out?

BAYARD

(continuing to scribble)

No, they are not.

WHITNEY YOUNG

Bayard, aren't you the least bit concerned?

BAYARD

What concerns me, Whitney, is the three of you got the exact same letter, but instead of looking at the President's brother, who likely had them sent, you're looking at me. The issue of latrines is easily solved, if we had money.

(blunt/direct)

Each of you committed on behalf of your organizations to contribute two thousand dollars, but I've yet to see one check.

JIM FARMER

Bayard, we're each dealing with our own economic constraints--

BAYARD

Which is why I am proposing-- The March should form a coalition with the Unions; with the AFL-CIO and the UAW--

ROY WILKINS

Both of whom are against a two-day event, and measures directed at the White House.

BAYARD

(ignoring Roy)

Chief, you're on the AFL Council.

RANDOLPH

I'm not sure about Meany, but Mr. Reuther at the UAW does in fact prefer a one-day march and no White House event.

BAYARD

(to Randolph)

Put me in a room with Reuther and Meany, and I'll convince

ROY WILKINS

(to the Room)

What did I just say?

What did I--

them to-- (to Bayard) (to Roy) We must limit this to one

No. No. day, and take the White House

We cannot retreat! off the table!

BAYARD (CONT'D)

First you tried to get me fired,
and now you want to see the whole
march destroyed.

WHITNEY YOUNG

Bayard, let's not point fingers.

ROY WILKINS

Did I wake up one morning and say
to myself, "Let's stage the largest
march ever, and get former-
communist-ex-convict-quaker Bayard
Rustin to pull it altogether? No, I
did not! But once we signed on,
we're in it, no matter what.

(before Bayard interrupts)

If you would stop being so goddamn
willful and accept the inevitable
now, instead of later, when
economics force you to, it will
give the appearance of unity and
strength. It's called being
strategic.

65

INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / BACK YARD - MINUTES LATER

65

The meeting is over. Randolph, Martin, Dr. Anna and Bayard
are huddled together.

RANDOLPH

I realize this may feel like an
attenuation of everything we fought
for.

BAYARD

Because that's exactly what it is.
A two-day event will make it clear
to Kennedy, Hoover, whomever, we
will not back down or back away.

RANDOLPH

If you allow Roy this one win--

Bayard aggressively shakes his head 'no.'

MARTIN

Bayard, Bayard-- You have Chief,
you have me, Dr. Hedgeman, John.

((MORE))

MARTIN (CONT'D)

And when he isn't behaving like a modern day Cassandra foreseeing doom, you have Jim. An uneasy alliance, but an alliance nonetheless.

Bayard looks to Dr. Anna.

ANNA HEDGEMAN

If I'm not asking attendees to get arrested at the White House, or, Heaven forbid, sleep in tents, I could get more congregations to sign on.

66

INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / 2ND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

66

Bayard is climbing the stairs, when he sees The Team at the top, angry and upset.

TOM

So, no lobbying congress?

CLEVE

Bullshit!

RACHELLE

Or marching on the White House?

CHARLENE

Or tents on the Mall?

CLEVE

Bullshit! Bullshit!

COURTNEY

Goodbye, CORE.

JOYCE

Goodbye, SNCC.

CLEVE

It's turning into a got'damn picnic.

NORM

That first day, sharing ideas, writing them on the wall...

ELEANOR

Bayard you've got to understand our disappointment.

BAYARD

Do I want this?! No! But if we want to make sure 100,000 people show up, we need help. And in order to get the Unions and their money, changes have to be made.

TOM

We could've raised the money.

BAYARD

BUT YOU HAVEN'T! If sisters Dorie and Joyce went out to Westchester and talked about growing up in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, I know you would come back with enough money for not just one bus, but three. The same with you, Eleanor, Tom, Charlene. Your stories hold the power to inspire supporters and raise funds. We are committed to the cause of changing history, of altering the trajectory of this country toward freedom. That is what's on the line. Nothing less.

The SOUND of PERCUSSION is heard, signaling the beginning of--

SPREADIN'-THE-WORD MONTAGE:

67

INT. CPW APARTMENT/SCARSDALE MANSION

67

Joyce, talking to a gathering of WEALTHY WHITE WOMEN in Westchester, is INTERCUT with DORIE, talking to an EQUALLY AFFLUENT CROWD on the Upper East Side.

JOYCE

I'd like to share with you what it was like growing up in Hattiesburg--

DORIE

...As a young girl in Mississippi,

JOYCE

...Where regardless of how smart you were, or loved to read--

DORIE

Or never missed Sunday School--

JOYCE

You were told-- your dreams were never going to happen--

DORIE
 ...Weren't possible, because of
 what you looked like--

JOYCE
 ...Because of the color of your
 skin.

68 INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS 68

SERIES OF HANDS:

Opening ASSORTED ENVELOPES and finding CHECKS and CASH MONEY.
 As the MUSIC TAKES ON A JAUNTY BEAT--

69 EXT. KANSAS CITY NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 69

Norm is at the wheel of a CAR plastered with POSTERS/PLACARDS
 ADVERTISING THE MARCH. He drives past a BBQ JOINT with LOCALS
 hanging out in front.

NORM (OVER LOUDSPEAKER)
 If you're like Sam Cooke: It's
 Saturday Night and you ain't got
 nobody, the place to be/is
 Washington D.C./August 28th, 19
 hundred 63/because I guarantee/you
 will not be alone.

70 INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / HARLEM 70

More envelopes, more money.

RACHELLE
 (calling out)
 We got another bus!

JOYCE
 (calling out)
 2 trains down, 38 to go.

71 INT. BASEMENT UNION HALL 71

The CAMERA TRAVELS PAST Tom talking to OLDER UNION MEMBER--

TOM
 ...My whole life, actually. My
 father was president of the
 Transportation Workers, Local 101.

OLD UNION WHITE GUY

BROOKLYN!

...ONTO ELEANOR, talking to a GROUP OF MEN--

ELEANOR

It's about interconnected, and
don't let anybody tell you
otherwise. As long as the Negro
workers are ill-housed and under-
paid--

...Before settling on HANDS PLACING MONEY in a Donation Box.
With the SOUND of HORNS and PERCUSSION becoming one--

A72 INT. BAYARD'S OFFICE A72

Bayard is on the phone when his OFFICE DOOR SLAMS OPEN,
revealing Charlene/The Team.

CHARLENE

We just had the best idea, ever!

As the MUSIC EXPLODES--

72 OMITTED 72

73 EXT. THE APOLLO THEATER - NIGHT 73

On the FAMED MARQUEE: BENEFIT FOR THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON.
Underneath the marquee, Bayard, all done up, is warmly
greeting the AUDIENCE as they pour inside.

LITTLE STEVIE WONDER

(O.S.)

Everybody say yeah!

74 INT. APOLLO THEATRE 74

IN A SPOTLIGHT--

12-year-old wunderkind, little STEVIE WONDER, in dark
sunglasses, leading a call and response with the Audience
(unseen).

STEVIE/AUDIENCE (O.S.)

Yeah! (Yeah)
Yeah!(Yeah)
Yeah-yeah-yeah-yeah!

As Stevie lifts his harmonica and begins to play--

A75 INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS A75

Opening more ENVELOPES, revealing MORE CASH MONEY and BIGGER CHECKS, INTERCUT with the following SERIES OF IMAGES:

75 EXT. HARLEM STREET - BOOKSTORE 75

CLEVE/A TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS, hawking M.O.W. buttons in front of The House of Common Sense/Proper Propaganda Bookstore.

CLEVE

Be proud, be loud, show up!

CLOSE-UPS of DORIE/JOYCE/ELEANOR/TOM, telling their stories, their language overlapping, so that crucial words from their disparate speeches, "UNITY, POWER, BELIEF, NOW, FREE", emerge.

76 EXT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS 76

A BEAUTIFUL SUMMER DAY. People from the Neighborhood watch as The Team hangs a banner: National Headquarters MARCH ON WASHINGTON for JOBS & FREEDOM. Once the banner is in place,

EVERYBODY CHEERS.

77 OMITTED 77

78 OMITTED 78

79 EXT. RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD - GEORGIA 79

As the Truck makes it's way down the street, a GROUP OF KIDS run behind it laughing, their faces full of joy.

NORM (LOUDSPEAKER)

Mahalia's gonna sing and freedom's gonna shout!

The MUSIC BEGINS TO FADE/GIVE WAY to a LONE PIANO pounding out a GOSPEL TUNE.

80 EXT. STOREFRONT CHURCH / HARLEM - NIGHT 80

The CAMERA PUSHES IN on a modest Storefront Church.

81 INT. HARLEM STOREFRONT CHURCH - NIGHT 81

An impassioned Elias stands before a small, BLACK WORKING CLASS CONGREGATION, his rhythms and a GOSPEL PIANIST'S RIFFS and CORDS become one. Bayard is seated in the back row.

ELIAS

The Lord wants you to know that you are loved. He wraps you in his arms and your fears begin to fade.

INSERT IMAGE: Elias pulling Bayard into an Alley. They kiss.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

His touch is his way of saying, you are not alone.

INSERT IMAGE: Elias/Bayard in ELIAS'S ROOM, tearing off each other's clothes.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

And where you once felt hopeless, you now feel strong. And where there once was doubt, you now feel brave and alive, because you know, you know with all your heart that you are a child of God.

INSERT IMAGE: Bayard/Elias' bodies entwined.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

And you have the right to love and be loved. Let the congregation say--

ELIAS/CONGREGATION/BAYARD

Amen.

INSERT IMAGE: Elias/Bayard in bed together. Bayard is asleep. Elias, wide awake.

82 EXT. PENN SOUTH - DAYS LATER - EARLY EVENING 82

A BEIGE CAR with TWO SUITED WHITE MEN, parked in front.

83 INT. BAYARD'S APT. - CONTINUOUS

83

Bayard is looking out of his BEDROOM WINDOW, at the Car below. Tom enters the apartment.

BAYARD
(calling out)
Tom?

TOM
Yeah.

BAYARD (O.S.)
On my desk is an Invitation to the March, Dr. Anna asked I write for Mother AME Zion's Church Bulletin. My spelling is atrocious, so check-double-check.

A buoyant Bayard enters, wearing one of his smartest suits.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
Also have Officer Johnson of the New York Guardians come see me next week.
(crossing to the Door)
Oh, and in addition to an FBI detail now parked out front, careful what you say on the phone, as I have a feeling the entire Kennedy clan is listening in.

He is gone.

84 EXT. 8TH AVENUE BAR - LATER

84

Bayard is transfixed, unable to move. Across the street--

GAY BAR PATRONS COWER, REPORTERS' CAMERAS FLASH-FLASH-FLASH!

The POLICE CAR'S RED FLASHING LIGHTS. The MEN being loaded in a PADDY WAGON.

The IMAGES trigger something inside of Bayard.

The back of a BLACK MAN'S HEAD, hit by FLASHING LIGHTS; WHITE HANDS jerking a BLACK ARM out of a car, BLACK HANDS handcuffed from behind.

A MAN'S VOICE
Mr. Rustin?

Bayard jumps/turns around. It's Elias. As the PADDY WAGON pulls away--

ELIAS

I waited for you outside. Once the shutters closed, the cops stormed in, rounded them up like dogs. Why the cameras?

BAYARD

The police sometimes alert the press when there's going to be a raid.

Doubling over, dizzy, overwhelmed--

ELIAS

I have a wife, parents, six brothers and sisters, a congregation in wait. What if I'd gone inside? I almost did. WHERE

WERE YOU?

BAYARD

Running late, thank God.

ELIAS

Or God's warning.

BAYARD

Ma Rustin once told me I should only associate with those who have as much to lose as I do. We'll be more careful. Make wiser choices.

ELIAS

(turning to go)
I have to go. I--

BAYARD

(calling after him)
Elias--

Elias doesn't stop.

85

INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / 2ND FOOR - THAT NEXT DAY

85

Bayard and BILL JOHNSON, president of the GUARDIANS, making their way through a beehive of office activity.

BAYARD

Roughly speaking, how many
Guardians are there?

OFFICER BILL JOHNSON

1,100 Negro New York City
policemen.

BAYARD

You're the only cops I can trust,
so I'm going to need every single
one of you in D.C., but your guns
must stay home.

OFFICER BILL JOHNSON

Even if I thought it was a good
idea, which I do not, New York law
requires we are in possession of
our fire arms twenty four hours a
day.

As Johnson goes--

BAYARD

Then I guess we'll have to change
the law.

Thanks for stopping by. (calling out)

Eleanor, get Mayor Wagner on the phone.

Bayard turns. Everyone is motionless, except for Bayard as he
walks toward a RADIO.

STROM THURMOND (ON RADIO)

--Mr. King's infamous alliances
with communists and agitators has
been a carefully guarded secret.
Until now! Mr. Bayard Rustin is not
only Mr. King's closest advisor, he
is also a draft dodger and a
communist! That is correct. This
March is being built by the
Communist Party itself!

Bayard turns off the radio and SWITCHES INTO HIGH GEAR.

BAYARD

Tom, we need three press releases,
ranging from purely pissed to
questioning the mental well-being
of the not-so-beloved Senator from
South Carolina.

The PHONES START RINGING.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Eleanor, what's the name of the woman reporter from The Washington Post? McNair, McNeal--

ELEANOR

Susanna McBee?

JOYCE

(holding a phone)
Bayard, Dr. King.

BAYARD

(crossing to his office)
I will not speak to any other press, except her. And get Mayor Wagner to call me back.

He goes inside and CLOSES THE DOOR.

86

INT. BAYARD'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

86

Bayard listens.

MARTIN (ON PHONE)

Fortunately, Roy's animus towards you is eclipsed by his unadulterated hatred for Strom Thurmond, so we're safe for now.

BAYARD

Thank you friend.

Bayard hangs up. Now that he's alone, his mask of authority gives way to vulnerability and concern. A KNOCK ON THE DOOR saves him from sinking any further.

TOM

(entering)
Here's purely pissed. Was easy to write.

BAYARD

When I went to see Martin in Atlanta, I assured him there would be no incidents.

TOM

It's not your fault. Someone needs to go dredging up Strom Thurmond's past. No telling what we'd find.

Bayard gestures for Tom to sit.

BAYARD

Years ago, I traveled the country giving speeches for The Fellowship of Reconciliation. This one time...

A QUICK KNOCK, followed by Elias poking his head into the room.

ELIAS

(beaming)

Is this the office of the famous Bayard Rustin?

TOM

I'll finish the other two.

Tom leaves. Elias closes the door.

ELIAS

That racist piece of white trash calls any famous Negro a communist. It's a badge of honor.

BAYARD

That and fame, I'd just as soon do without.

ELIAS

Too late for that.
(moving in)
I've been thinking a lot--

BAYARD

About?

ELIAS

What Ma Rustin said: Only associate with someone with as much to lose.

BAYARD

And just who might that someone be?

ELIAS

Who do you think?

87

INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS - DAYS LATER - NIGHT

87

A late-night Meeting is underway. Desks have been pushed together to form a large table. The Team listens as ELEANOR reads from The WASHINGTON POST.

ELEANOR

"Devoted to non-violence, Mr. Rustin claims: 'friendliness, not a gun, is the proper weapon.'" She goes on to mention your dedication to justice and peace, and calls you heroic.

The Team CHEERS/BANGS ON DESKS/WHISTLES.

BAYARD

Enough, enough. Get rid of all of that. So last night, thinking about the march--

CHARLENE

Run for cover.

Everybody laughs.

BAYARD

We need to provide toll booths with leaflets so that those arriving by cars know where to go once in D.C. Courtney, take charge, and Charlene would be glad to assist.

Everybody chides Charlene.

CHARLENE

I was gonna volunteer anyway.

BAYARD

It's just after 1. Early. Good night everyone.

As everyone packs up to go, BLYDEN, last seen threatening to kick Tom's ass, appears at the top of the stair. Before Tom can respond, Blyden wraps him in a hug.

BLYDEN

My brother, long time no see. White

TOM

Blyden, what are you doing here?

BAYARD

Blyden!

BLYDEN

(joining him)
Mr. Rustin, suh!

BAYARD

Bayard will suffice. I've been hounding the Mayor about a project. Today, he called back and said yes. So, starting next week--

88 INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / 2ND FLOOR 88

Outside, it's raining. 25 Guardians look to Officer Johnson, who reluctantly nods. A COAT RACK is soon loaded down with

HOLSTERS/GUNS.

89 EXT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS 89

It's RAINING HARD, the Courtyard is flooded.

90 MARCH HEADQUARTERS - 3RD FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER 90

LADDERS/TARP/BROKEN FURNITURE/etc. have been pushed to the side. Pots capture DRIPPING WATER as the RAIN CONTINUES TO POUR. Elias eases into the room and watches as the GUARDIANS STAND MOTIONLESS, while Blyden tears into them, one after another.

BLYDEN

I do not take orders from no muthafuckin' Uncle Toms. Thinkin' you shit, 'cause of that badge.

Blyden is "performing rage." For the Guardians, it's real. And because they aren't allowed to defend themselves/attack, their emotions are coming to the surface.

BAYARD

(even-toned)

Form a circle. Your backs to the aggressor.

As they move in--

BLYDEN

How many niggas dead because of that badge!

When an ANGRY GUARDIAN abruptly turns, ready to attack, the

SCENE INSTANTLY TURNS - MOS

A SERIES OF
IMAGES:

BLYDEN SPEWING INVECTIVES; JOHNSON glares at BLYDEN, then BAYARD. BAYARD coaching the ANGRY GUARDIAN who is about to emotionally detonate.

As BLYDEN CONTINUES TO RAGE, the GUARDIANS BACK HIM INTO A CORNER. They are starting to feel the power of working and moving as one. Elias is mesmerized. Officer Johnson, though still wary, seems convinced enough. END MOS.

Bayard speaks to the Men in a calm, reassuring voice.

BAYARD

You will leave your weapons at home. You will wear white identifying arm bands, a white hat and carry a whistle. It is your responsibility to create an atmosphere of peace for all to witness and follow. God bless you.

Officer Johnson congratulates the Guardians. Blyden shakes the MEN'S HANDS. One of the GUARDIANS playfully puts Blyden in a head lock.

ELIAS

That was nothing short of heroic. You weaving your spell, watching Officer Johnson's respect for you grow.

BAYARD

Come on.

Bayard introduces Elias to Johnson/The Guardians. Tom, who's been watching from the doorway the entire time, feels disregarded and hurt. An outsider.

91

INT. BAYARD'S APT. - LATER THAT NIGHT

91

Elias moves about the place, checking out BAYARD'S ARTIFACTS/OBJECTS, before turning his attention to Bayard's record collection. Bayard is in the Kitchen. (OS)

ELIAS

Half of this music I've never even--

Pulling out an ALBUM, YOUNG BAYARD'S FACE on the cover.

ELIAS (CONT'D)
"Elizabethan Songs and Negro
 Spirituals." So you sing?

BAYARD
 (entering with drinks)
 And on two songs, play the lute.

They wind up seated next to each other.

ELIAS
 They sure as hell don't grow 'em
 like you down in Alabama.

BAYARD
 Or much to my dismay, anywhere
 else.

Elias sees a LUTE, offers it to Bayard.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 God, no. I haven't played that
 thing since-last week.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 (singing)
 I n'er didst dream, e'vr the day
 Such heavenly joy wouldst...

They kiss, gentle and romantic. Just as it's starting to grow
 in intensity and desire, the FRONT DOOR OPENS revealing--

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 Tom!

Elias leaps up like a little boy that's been caught.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 Tom is staying here through the
 march. I thought you and Eleanor--

TOM
 Cancelled.

BAYARD
 I'm sure you must be--

TOM
 I'm good.
 (sitting/marking
 territory)
 So Elias, I hear you're married?

BAYARD

Tom...

ELIAS

And you attend Howard University.
I've heard of Colored passing for
white. Good luck with the reverse.

TOM

When I was sixteen, I brought a
Negro friend home for dinner. My
father told me he was not gonna
allow 'that boy' to sit at his
table. And that was the end of
that.

ELIAS

Your friend.

TOM

My family. I moved out and have
been on my own ever since.

ELIAS

Where I come from, we hold onto our
family, and they hold onto us, no
matter what.

Elias looks at Bayard, then goes. Bayard is silent, furious.

BAYARD

I cared about him.

TOM

Who don't you 'care about'? I'm
sure there's some PhD student at
Columbia, or junior activist fresh
out of Fisk. Why don't you take 'em
to that bar down on 8th Avenue and
regale them with tales about Gandhi
and King. And then when it's
convenient, or when their feelings
become inconvenient to your need to
save the race, it's on to the next
one.

Tom's bravura starts to give way to hurt.

TOM (CONT'D)

Except this time, you actually
started giving your heart to
someone, who is clearly incapable
of giving his back.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)
 (becoming emotional)
 All the while, I've-- I'm...

As Tom charges into his room--

92 INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / 3RD FLOOR 92

Bayard aggressively shoves two tables together.

BAYARD
 Courtney, Eugene, more chairs. I
 want the entire Team up here.

CHARLENE BAYARD (CONT'D)
 But what about the phones Now!

93 INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / 2ND FLOOR 93

King, Whitney have just arrived.

WHITNEY YOUNG
 We're meeting on--

JOYCE
 Yes sir, the 3rd floor.

94 MARCH HEADQUARTERS - 3RD FLOOR 94

MARTIN
 (to Bayard)
 Roy's guest just arrived.

JIM
 But it's so nice outside.

BAYARD
 I hadn't noticed.

Martin/Bayard look out a FRONT WINDOW: POWELL, stylishly
 attired, is standing by a SLEEK SPORTS CAR, warmly greeting
 his adoring HARLEM CONSTITUENTS. As he and Roy shake hands--

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 Wonder what they're up to?

MARTIN
 We're about to find out.

The Team is starting to arrive on the 3rd floor.

BAYARD

Dr. Anna. If there any thoughts
which have been weighing heavily on
your heart--

DR. ANNA

Careful. Once the panther's been
unleashed...

95

INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / 3RD FLOOR - LATER

95

The windows are open, which only serves to make the room even
hotter. Whitney, Jim, Randolph, John, Martin, Bayard, Roy,
Powell and Dr. Anna sit in a circle.

They are surrounded by The Team, who sit on the floor, in
windowsills, lean against walls. Elias sits off to one side.

BAYARD

And with our three new religious
leaders, and Mr. Reuther from the
UAW, the Big 6 has turned into the
Big 10!

Applause/Congratulations/Etc.

WHITNEY YOUNG

It's very warm in here.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

Hot as hell.

(indicating The Team)

If there were less of 'them.'

Joyce's hand shoots up.

BAYARD

Yes, Joyce?

JOYCE

My sister and I have been marching
since we were 11 and 12. So, with
all due respect, sir, we are
nobody's 'them.'

DR. ANNA

Perhaps if those sitting in the
windows moved, there's a slight
chance a breeze might find its way
inside.

RANDOLPH

Given this will probably be one of our final meetings before the March, Bayard--

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

Mr. Randolph, I have a question for our Deputy Director.

RANDOLPH

I repeat, given this will be one of the last times--

Bayard gestures to Randolph, it's okay. Now that Adam has been given the floor, HE TAKES IT.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

Mr. Rustin, you love your work, love this March?

BAYARD

With all my heart.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

What if, strictly hypothetical, there was someone attached to this fine organization you've created, whose mere presence was detrimental to the cause you love; someone whose past affiliations, political and otherwise, combined with their quiddity and flair, could be used by those in power to inflict great harm, not just to the March, but their acts of vengeance could easily derail the fight for racial justice, a good ten, fifteen years, would you keep them in their position, or would your sense of duty as a custodian of the cause compel you to send him/her, her/him, on their way?

BAYARD

Hypothetically speaking?

Adam nods.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

I'd send them on their way. Unless the person in question was me.

When Bayard slyly smiles, everyone in the room, except Adam and Roy, smile/break into laughter.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Julia and Janifer Rustin raised me to be humble and never brag. But seeing as no one on The Team was--

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Blyden, are you a Quaker?

BLYDEN

Hell no!

BAYARD

...They'll speak instead. Norm, how many First Aid Stations have been secured?

NORM

22, run by teams of mostly Negro medical practitioners.

BAYARD

Water.

TOM

There will be six water tanks, 1,500 gallons each, insuring that the 27 portable fountains are operational all day long.

BAYARD

Transportation.

RACHELLE

All in all, we have 2,220 chartered buses. CORE North Carolina, 11 buses, SNCC Mississippi, 7.

BAYARD

And Reverend Powell's church?

RACHELLE

They've chartered 5. I could continue, state by state, but Joyce-

-

JOYCE

We have 40 Freedom trains, and thanks to the UAW, 6 chartered flights, bringing workers from Chicago, Grand Rapids, Flint, 86A.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Detroit, Rochester, Syracuse and New York.

RACHELLE

Also, per Mr. Rustin's request, the Mayor approved the implementation of the subway rush hour schedule at 5 a.m., so that passengers can make their 6 a.m. bus departures the day of.

BAYARD

Blyden, who are The Guardians?

BLYDEN

A fraternal order of NYC's Black police.

BAYARD

And how many will be in Washington D.C. to ensure a safe and peaceful march.

BLYDEN

Over a thousand.

BAYARD

Latrines?

COURTNEY

ELEANOR

And if I might add, a chartered plane of celebrities, including--

As Eleanor rattles off names, the Room "oohs and ahhs."

ELEANOR

Harry Belafonte, Marlon Brando, James Baldwin, Charlton Heston--

JIM FARMER

Moses.

ELEANOR

Diahann Carroll, Sammy Davis Jr. Lena Horne, Burt Lancaster, will also be in attendance.

BAYARD

All of which has been achieved in seven weeks. And that is why I would never send me on my way, hypothetical or otherwise.

JOHN LEWIS
Check and mate.

The entire room erupts into applause. Even Roy is silently impressed.

WHITNEY YOUNG
How did so much get accomplished in such a short amount of time.

CHARLENE
By working 12 to 15 hours a day, every day, and also because of Mr. Bayard, who--

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL
Chief, Dr. Hedgeman, have you ever gotten a word stuck in your head that you just can't shake?

MARTIN
(to Randolph)
Now what?

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL
While Bayard and the Rustinets were putting on a show, the one word I couldn't shake: Pasadena.

On hearing "Pasadena," Bayard doesn't move, his expression doesn't change. He's physically still present, but HIS SOUL HAS TAKEN FLIGHT.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL (CONT'D)
Martin, ever been?

MARTIN
What does this have to do with--

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL
How about you, Deputy Director?
Ever spent time in Pasadena?

When Bayard doesn't respond, Dr. Anna sees something in Bayard's eyes she's never seen before, and neither have we:

FEAR.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL
Can't recall? Well, I just so happen to have-- Where the hell did the G.D. thing go? I had it--

DR. ANNA

I am done. Done. I look at this program, and I do not see one woman's name. Not Ella Baker, or Diane Nash. Not Dorothy Height, Gloria Richardson, Prince Lee, Myrlie Evers, Rosa Parks or Daisy Bates. Not-not-not-not-not. Jim?

JIM FARMER

Well, umm, Roy-Martin-Bayard, correct me if I'm wrong, but a decision was made early on, that only leaders of the participating organizations would be allowed to speak.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

Hold up! Where's my name?

MARTIN

That also means no politicians.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

I am more than just a politician. Stop any man-woman-child on 7th Ave and 125th, and say the name Adam Clayton Powell--

DR. ANNA

Congressman Powell, I am not done.

RANDOLPH

Dr. Hedgeman, might I suggest we address the issue internally, and reconvene once a solution has been found.

Anna respects Randolph too much to defy him, so she agrees.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

Back to the point I was about to make.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL (CONT'D)

Son-of-a-bitch. I had the goddamn piece of paper - (to Dorie / Charlene) Darlin', would one of you mind checking the glove compartment-

MARTIN

Adam, you are a guest here.

You cannot continually-

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

ADAM!

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL
You may be Head-Nigger-Down-South--

RANDOLPH
Congressman Powell! WE. HAVE.
MOVED. ON.

The room is stunned. No one has ever seen Randolph erupt.
Even Adam is stunned. After a beat--

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
(gentlemanly)
Bayard, the floor is yours.

BAYARD
(cheerfully)
I'm good.

RANDOLPH
Meeting adjourned!

Shamed, but worse of all upstaged, Powell hurriedly slips
out. Relieved it's over, Bayard throws a quick nod to Dr.
Anna, Martin and The Team. When Bayard looks to Elias for
comfort/reassurance, Elias does not respond.

96

INT. BAYARD'S APT. / CLAUDIA'S HOME - PAST MIDNIGHT

96

Bayard in bed scribbling notes is INTERCUT with Claudia,
sitting alone in a darkened room, lit by a lone floor lamp.
The phone rings.

BAYARD
Evening, G-man! Please tell Mr.
Hoover--

CLAUDIA
Mr. Rustin?

BAYARD
Who is this?

CLAUDIA
Claudia... Elias's wife.

BAYARD
Yes. Yes. How are you?

CLAUDIA

Thank you for asking. I have good news: My father has decided to officially turn his congregation over to my husband.

BAYARD

That is--wonderful indeed.

CLAUDIA

I'm so glad to hear you feel that way. So, if you wouldn't mind telling my husband it is time for him to return home, to the path our Lord ordains.

BAYARD

Mrs. Taylor--

CLAUDIA

I'd like to thank you for the time, the inordinate amount of time you've taken with Elias. But that is over.

BAYARD

Claudia--

CLAUDIA

You believe in Elias' possibilities. I know his limitations. Goodbye.

The line goes dead.

97

EXT. PENN SOUTH - THE NEXT MORNING

97

A haggard Bayard rushes out. Charlene and Rachelle scurry behind him.

BAYARD

I didn't eat, couldn't sleep. Where's Courtney?

RACHELLE

He left an hour ago.

BAYARD

I'm going to miss my flight.

CHARLENE

Rachelle--

RACHELLE

Time to go be a white girl.

Rachelle quickly hails a cab and gets in. On her signal, Bayard runs and gets in the Taxi. Rachelle gets out.

CAB DRIVER

No. No. OUT!

The Cabbie reaches back and USES HIS ARM to block Bayard from closing the door. Spotting the DRIVER'S HAND in the rolled down window, Bayard quickly ROLLS IT UP, trapping the

DRIVER'S FINGERS.

CAB DRIVER

Roll it down! Roll it down!

Charlene and Rachelle are in shock.

BAYARD

Non-violence is a noble calling;
one we aspire to, but sometimes
fail.

(to the Driver)

Idlewild Airport, please. Handsome
tip included.

98

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. / LINCOLN MEMORIAL - DAY

98

At the top of the stairs, Bayard and Courtney look down and see Chief Wells and what appears to be a BATTALION of DEPARTMENT HEADS, all-white, walking toward them.

BAYARD

Chief Wells.

CHIEF WELLS

Mr. Rustin.

As Norm passes out maps.

BAYARD

Gentlemen, my associate is handing
out a map which details the
locations of key support systems:
water fountains, First Aid
stations, Lost & Found. I am also
pleased to report that over one
thousand New York City Marshals
will be present.

(MORE)

BAYARD (CONT'D)

The Guardians have been schooled in the tenants and practices of passive resistance, and will therefore not be armed.

CHIEF WELLS

That's not possible.

CHIEF WELLS (CONT'D)

Mr. Rustin, for the first time since Prohibition, every liquor store in the metropolitan area will be closed for the day. All elective surgeries have been cancelled, and congressmen have told their female staff to stay home.

BAYARD

And why is that? Chief Wells?

Bayard looks to Chief Wells. He is silent.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Is it because a number of people, specifically, a number of men with skin similar to my own will be in town?

Bayard looks to The Men. Some look away, others blankly stare.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

The last time I turned on the television, I saw a pack of white hooligans assaulting Negroes at a lunch counter, and a white police officer ordering children be hosed. But to blame all for the actions of a few would be unfair. As a matter of fact--

(a helpful hint)

...That is what's called being racist.

Singling out TWO ODD-LOOKING MEN--

BAYARD (CONT'D)

You two. Something tells me you might be the Engineers I requested.

ENGINEER ONE

That we are.

CHIEF WELLS

(to Bayard)

The day of your march, the entire D.C. police force has been mobilized, along with 500 reserves, 2,500 National Guards, 4,000 Army soldiers and per orders of The Pentagon, 19,000 troops.

BAYARD

I hope you'll have something for them to do, as they won't be needed here.

(to the Men)

And whoever amongst you has direct dealings with Mr. Hoover--

(To Wells)

Chief Wells, you strike me as the sort who stands outside of the door, never in the room.

(to The Men)

...Let him know that on August 28th, black, white, young, old, rich, working class, poor will descend on Washington D.C., and there is nothing he can do to stop it. Seeing as he's listening in on all my calls anyway, I'll tell him myself.

As Bayard and Company descend the Memorial steps, ONE OF THE MEN steps forward and eyes him as he goes.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

I need a sound system which allows someone speaking or singing here, to be heard all the way back there.

ENGINEER ONE

No such system exists.

BAYARD

Then you must invent one, because sound is how we turn a crowd into an audience.

99

EXT. MARCH HQ / COURTYARD - AFTERNOON

99

DR. ANNA'S FACE IS STOIC. Roy, Whitney, Randolph, John, Cleveland, Eleanor, Rachelle and Tom watch as Jim speaks. Elias, who is also present, looks uncharacteristically tired and rough.

Please Note: The Courtyard is now perfectly groomed.

JIM FARMER

And as each of our accomplished heroines rises, Chief would proclaim their remarkable deeds to the world.

DR. ANNA

So seen, but not heard?

Jim looks to Roy, who looks the other way.

JIM FARMER

They each could write their own introduction. And, and we have asked Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of--

DR. ANNA

I know Mrs. Height.

JIM FARMER

...To join the Big 6.

DR. ANNA

With all due respect, Mr. Randolph, a woman should introduce them, and do not ask for recommendations as a number of women have informed me they will not be participating in the march.

RANDOLPH

That is unfortunate to hear.

DR. ANNA

What is unfortunate, sir, are the circumstances which led to their decision.

Bayard rushes in with a travel bag, Courtney follows. Roy, eager to discuss anything other than women--

ROY WILKINS

Bayard! Perfect timing! There's a chair right next to me. Sit!

WHITNEY YOUNG

What's the word from Washington?

BAYARD

We need 16 to 20 thousand dollars for a sound system, and no, we do not have it, and yes, Jim, it's a disaster. But it will be solved.

CLEVE

Big problem. The official March on Washington button: white hand on left, black hand on right. This one, the reverse. Someone is selling counterfeit buttons and robbing us blind.

BAYARD

I'll handle it.

CLEVE

How?

BAYARD

I'll have The Guardians beat 'em to a pulp.

CLEVE

Good!

JOHN LEWIS

Bayard, how are the numbers?

BAYARD

Rachelle--

RACHELLE

Our latest estimate: 88,000.

JIM FARMER

If we have one person less than 100,000--

ROY WILKINS

Interesting enough, the last couple of days Congressman Powell has been hounding me, demanding he speak at the March. Do you want to know why?
(relishing the attention)
Aunt Bess is throwing a cookout--

RANDOLPH

Aunt Bess?

WHITNEY YOUNG

Nobody has an Auntie named Bess. Aunt Wilhelmina, Aunt Frankie--

ROY WILKINS

I have an Aunt Bess, and 20 guests
have been confirmed. How many
should she cook for?

(zeroing in on--)

Tom?

TOM

19, 20.

All the Black People laugh/mock Tom.

ROY WILKINS

By the time cousins invite cousins,
and neighbors hear from neighbors,
Aunt Bess best be cooking for at
least 50. Adam smells success!

CLEVE

He sure as hell ain't smelling
ribs, cause with a name like Aunt
Bess, you know she can't cook!

LAUGHTER.

ROY WILKINS

Mr. Deputy Director, you best be
cooking for 200,000. You heard it
here first!

Above the euphoric response--

JIM FARMER

I don't see the March demands in
the program. They should be heard.

JOHN LEWIS

Bayard, you should read them.

BAYARD

Fifteen days from now, if
everything goes as planned, you can
list me as Trash Collector. Chief,
this has been your dream for many
years. I nominate Asa Philip
Randolph!

ENTIRE ROOM

Second!

RANDOLPH

Gentlemen, ladies. Thank you. Thank
you all.

BAYARD

Now, unless there is anything else--

Holding up a SMALL ENVELOPE--

WHITNEY YOUNG

Pledge Cards? Feels a bit off-
putting, begging the day of?

JOHN LEWIS

(reading the pledge)

"I do solemnly swear to commit
myself to the civil-rights
struggle, and do pledge my heart,
mind and body unequivocally and
without regard to personal
sacrifice, to the achievement of
social peace through social
justice."

Silence. Everyone around the table, including Roy, smile/nod
their approval. Except Elias.

100

EXT. MT. MORRIS PARK - LATER

100

Bayard and Elias are seated on a bench.

ELIAS

My wife-- Her father is retiring
and is passing his church on to me.

BAYARD

She called to tell me.

ELIAS

Did she also tell you she is
pregnant?

BAYARD

Elias, you may think you are
killing off one aspect of yourself,
but you're not. You're killing all
of yourself.

As if performing for someone else--

ELIAS

I am a married man, about to be a
father, and you, sir, are a sick
man. You need to stop following me.

A woeful laugh gurgles out of Bayard.

BAYARD

She also implied she hadn't heard from you. Have you visited this park at night?

Mount Morris baths? Who got to you?

The Vice Squad? The FBI?

Do they have pictures?

ELIAS

'For the desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desire of the spirit are against the flesh. For these are opposed to each other...

BAYARD

To keep you from doing that which you most desire.'

Bayard touches Elias. Elias closes his eyes and, just as he is starting to surrender to Bayard's touch, abruptly stands and walks away.

101

INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / HARLEM - LATER

101

Devastated, Bayard is headed up the stairs when he is hit by SILENCE.

At the top of the stairs, not a single person on the 2ND FLOOR is moving. And then he hears--

STROM THURMOND (ON RADIO)

--the organizer of this catastrophe--
in- wait, the so-called "man,"
Bayard 100.

STROM THURMOND (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

Rustin, is not only a draft-dodging communist, he is also a pervert! I have in my possession his Pasadena arrest record, dated January 23, 1953!

On hearing the word "Pasadena," members of the Team sneak looks to Bayard/each other.

STROM THURMOND (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)
 Mr. Rustin was arrested, jailed,
 and pled guilty to lewd conduct
 with two men. He is a convicted
homosexual!

Bayard bum-rushes the radio, turns it off, and tries putting
 on a show of 'business as usual.'

BAYARD
 The Council of Churches has
 committed to build 80,000 box
 lunches, the evening before.
 Correct? CORRECT?

RACHELLE
 Yes.

BAYARD
 Yes. Peanut butter and jelly,
 correct?

RACHELLE
 We were talking--

The PHONE STARTS TO RING.

BAYARD
 Don't answer that. Who's we?

RACHELLE
 The girls and myself, and decided
 cheese sandwiches would be so much
 better.

Another PHONE STARTS RINGING.

BAYARD
 No. Peanut butter and jelly.

ANOTHER PHONE RINGS, and ANOTHER, and ANOTHER. When a member
 of the team makes a move to answer--

BAYARD (CONT'D)
 DON'T. What is the one word you've
 heard me say over and over?
 Eleanor?

ELEANOR
 Details.

BAYARD
 It's going to be over 80 degrees.
Cheese spoils. Details!

IMAGES FLASH ECU: Pants being unzipped, shirts torn open.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

You should know better; should have known better! Details.

IMAGES FLASH: YOUNG BAYARD'S FACE being hit, first by the LIGHT OF A FLASHLIGHT, and then by the FLASHLIGHT itself.

When Bayard sees the FACES of THE TEAM, their hurt and confusion, it's too much for him to bear. He starts walking, then RUNS FOR THE STAIRS.

102

EXT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS / ROOF - MINUTES LATER

102

Bayard on the roof, PACING/WALKING IN CIRCLES, humiliated, angry, trapped. But no matter how aggressively he moves, the IMAGES and WORDS do not abate.

INSERT IMAGE: YOUNG BAYARD in a chair, looking down, MUSTE towering over him.

MUSTE (V.O.)

The charge:

"Lewd vagrancy."

YOUNG BAYARD

(mumbling)

Guilty.

Young Bayard looks up, his face badly bruised.

BAYARD

GUILTY.

TOM (O.S.)

Bayard...

Bayard turns. Tom is on the roof. Bayard wants to tell him to leave, but doesn't.

BAYARD

Two men. I'd seen them earlier. I was lonely, alone.

INSERT IMAGE: YOUNG BAYARD in the backseat; TWO YOUNG WHITE FACES frame his.

BAYARD (CONT'D)

Stupid. I should have known. I should have--

INSERT IMAGE: YOUNG BAYARD FACE lit by GLARING LIGHTS.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
I'd gone to prison over my beliefs.
Proud.

But this time, fighting to save my job, my dignity, my reputation--

INSERT IMAGE: YOUNG BAYARD 'posing' for his MUG SHOT.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
For the first time ever, I felt
ashamed of who I was--

As the CAMERA GOES FLASH.

BAYARD (CONT'D)
...What I was--

Flash--

BAYARD (CONT'D)
...What I desired.

Flash--

BAYARD (CONT'D)
And no matter how hard I fight and
flaunt and believe, it's still
there. And in rooms where no one
looks like me, or behaves like me,
I distract myself by being defiant.
All the while, inside is the fear
and shame I keep hidden, even from
myself. And now that everyone
knows.

TOM
Good. GOOD.

This stops Bayard cold.

103

WITH BAYARD:

103

WALKING/Running down a HARLEM STREET; riding in a SUBWAY CAR.
When the subway CAR GOES BLACK--

104 INT. NAACP CONFERENCE ROOM

104

Bayard opens the DOOR. They're all there: Martin, John, Whitney, Roy and Jim, all staring at him. But Bayard doesn't give them the satisfaction of looking back.

BAYARD

Martin. Alone.

Martin leads the way. Bayard follows.

105 INT. NAACP - SMALL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

105

Martin starts to speak. Bayard stops him with a gesture.

BAYARD

You are one of the smartest men I know, so explain to me why, with all that is left undone, do I find myself forced to yet again justify my existence. Each of us has been taught, in ways both cunning and cruel, that we are inadequate, incomplete. And the easiest way to combat the feeling of not being enough, is to find someone we consider less than. Less than because they are poorer than us, or darker than us, or desire someone who our church and our laws say they should not desire. And when we tell ourselves such lies, start to live and believe such lies, we do the work of the oppressors by oppressing ourselves. Strom Thurmond and Hoover don't give a shit about me. What they really want to destroy is all of us coming together and demanding this country change. Are they expecting my resignation?

MARTIN

Some are.

BAYARD

Then they're going to have to fire me, because I will not resign. On the day that I was born black, I was also born a homosexual. They either believe in freedom and justice for all, or they do not.

Bayard and Martin share a look, before he walks out and

CLOSES THE DOOR.

106 INT. MARCH OFFICE / 2ND FLOOR - DAY

106

Bayard emerges from the stairs, fully expecting to see the vestiges of his own wake, and instead finds the room vibrantly alive, The Team hard at work and totally in command.

CHARLENE (INTO PHONE)

Yes ma'am, we have a bus leaving at 6:30, on Walnut Street, in front of the Mammoth Life--

JOYCE (INTO PHONE)

Interstate 66, just before the Washington/Old Dominion corridor, you'll come to a toll booth--

RACHELLE (INTO PHONE)

No sir, I can't wait.

(to Bayard)

To help cover cost for the sound system, I thought, 'what would Bayard do?' So, I put in a call to Mr. Dubinsky of the ILGWU, and told him we'd just gotten a \$10,000 check from Mr. Reuther of the UAW. I'm now on with Mr. Reuther telling him the reverse.

ELEANOR

Bayard! Tom and I decided to put out a press release announcing the celebrity contingent coming to the march.

BAYARD

A bit of chum before the sharks swallow me whole.

Eleanor laughs/goes back to typing.

107 INT. MARCH OFFICE / BAYARD'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

107

Bayard is seated at his desk, quiet, not working. Tom appears.

BAYARD

Is that how you intend to dress for my execution?

TOM

My widow's veil is at the cleaners.

BAYARD

This entire time, you've been waiting for me to offer something I'm not ready to give. Maybe when I'm older, and most of the battles have been won, I'll free myself to fall in love. But until then I want you to know, you are my family. No secrets, no shame, just love.

Tom smiles and nods because he can't speak. There is a knock. Charlene opens the door, her face flush with emotion.

108 EXT. NYC PRESS CLUB - MINUTES LATER

108

Randolph is standing at a MICROPHONE-LADEN LECTERN, surrounded by the BIG 10.

RANDOLPH

....And as for Senator Thurmond's accusations, I am dismayed that there are men who, wrapping themselves in a mantle of Christian morality, would violate the most elementary conceptions of human decency, privacy and humility in order to persecute other men.

109 INT. MARCH HEADQUARTERS - SAME TIME

109

The TV is on, Bayard/The Team are watching. Dr. Anna stands nearby.

RANDOLPH (ON TV)

I also wish to express my complete confidence in Mr. Rustin's character.

Bayard/The Entire Room prepare for the worst, as ROY CROSSES TO THE LECTERN.

ROY WILKINS (ON TV)

Mr. Thurmond's vicious slurs and attacks are like water off a duck's back to us.

(MORE)

ROY WILKINS (ON TV) (CONT'D)

And so, I speak for the combined Negro leadership when I say that the entire Civil Rights Movement stands behind Mr. Bayard Rustin.

Bayard is silent/stunned.

JUMP TO: Dr. King at the microphones.

MARTIN (ON TV)

Mr. Rustin is one of the most moral, one of the most decent human beings I have ever known. He is as committed to American democracy as any current elected official, and would fight to protect the rights of all, including those who would use the power of their positions to deny him his. I am proud to call him friend, and cannot think of a finer person to lead us in Washington D.C.

Without warning, Bayard's emotions rush to the surface: tears, anger, frustration, hurt. Dr. Anna gently PLACES HER HAND AGAINST HIS BACK while he cries. And then just as abruptly, Bayard wipes his eyes and smiles. He's ready and feels finally free.

110 EXT. 125TH STREET / NYC - PRE-DAWN

110

Lit by the glow of buses parked underneath the 125th St. SUBWAY OVERPASS, The GUARDIANS put on their WHITE ARMBANDS and "GANDHI" HATS, and begin boarding, as DAWN BEGINS TO EMERGE.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. / WASHINGTON MONUMENT - DAWN / MONTAGE
111

An army of TRUCKS arrives with tons of SOUND EQUIPMENT. Under Blyden and Courtney's guidance, the FIRST BUNDLE OF CABLES roll out, headed toward the Lincoln Memorial.

112 EXT. THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL - DAWN

112

With the Lincoln Memorial in the b.g., Bayard is walking, singing/humming as he goes.

BAYARD

Jesus walked this lonesome valley.
He had to walk it by Himself;

(MORE)

BAYARD (CONT'D)

(hums the next line)

I hope and pray, folks come today.

113 EXT. WASHINGTON MONUMENT / ORGANIZER'S TENT - MORNING 113

Nearby, Dorie, Tom, Joyce, and VOLUNTEERS are stapling together MOUNDS UPON MOUNDS of SIGNS.

INSIDE THE TENT, Eleanor, Rachele, Charlene are going over a checklist, acutely aware The PRESS are hovering nearby. When they see Bayard approaching--

JOURNALISTS

(overlapping)

--Mr. Rustin, where's everybody? --

Where's your one hundred thousand? -

-It's 8 o'clock and I see 75 people, tops.

Pulling out a piece of paper--

BAYARD

"Alabama, Wisconsin, Nevada-- Union Station, Interstate 66..."

(calling out)

I'd say around 10. Wouldn't you agree?

He hands Eleanor the blank piece of paper.

ELEANOR

Agreed.

114 EXT. THE STREETS OF WASHINGTON D.C. / MONTAGE: 114

ARCHIVAL MIX: BUSES pulling into Washington D.C., Trains into UNION STATION.

Smiling HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES arriving via CHARTERED PLANES.

ARCHIVAL MIX: HORDES OF PEOPLE, marching/singing, claiming the STREETS OF WASHINGTON D.C. as their own.

115 EXT. THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON - THE MARCH - SERIES OF IMAGES 115

MARCHERS OF EVERY AGE/RACE greeting each other; being given protest signs.

OLDER BLACK WOMEN wearing white, with purple 'USHER' armbands and blue sashes saying "PLEDGE CARDS," move amongst the SWELLING CROWDS, handing out the cards.

A GROUP OF YOUNG BLACK BOYS singing, Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around, the WASHINGTON MONUMENT and AMERICAN FLAG, reflected in one of the BOY'S SHADES.

THE MARCH HAS BEGUN. The Big 10 leads, followed by an ENDLESS CASCADE of SIGNS, which seem to go on for forever.

ARCHIVAL: An Aerial View as THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS converse on THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL and MALL, and reflecting pool.

116

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL PLATFORM - LATER

116

MAHALIA JACKSON is singing, How I Got Over. Seated with the Big 10, DOROTHY HEIGHT, 51. Bayard and Mr. Randolph stand together, looking out at the OCEAN OF PARTICIPANTS.

ROY WILKINS

(standing nearby)

I called it first? Aunt Bess
brought the entire human race.

RANDOLPH

Son, I am afraid this isn't 100,000
people. I so wish Lucille was here.

BAYARD

When Mahalia sings, angels descend.

The SONG ENDS. As the MASSES ROAR, Randolph's eyes fill with tears.

117

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL PLATFORM - LATER

117

Martin is at the podium. Above the applause--

MAHALIA JACKSON

(calling out)

Tell'em about the dream.

As Martin pushes his notes aside - MOS

Bayard beams with pride as his brother/friend takes the WHOLE WORLD TO CHURCH; he smiles as he takes in the FACES of STRANGERS in the Crowd, the FACES of DR. ANNA, CLEVE, ELEANOR, CHARLENE, TOM, NORM, DORIE, RACHELLE, et al. believing, feeling, rejoicing.

MARTIN

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvacious slopes of California. But not only that, let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, Black men and White men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: "Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last."

THOUSANDS ROAR. As Martin steps back, He and Bayard share a look before Martin turns back and waves, as the CROWD CONTINUES TO ROAR. Martin now belongs to the world.

Bayard looks to Mr. Randolph. It's time for the MARCH DEMANDS, but instead, Randolph hands Ossie his speech.

OSSIE

And now I bring to you, the executive director of the March on Washington. The man who organized this whole thing, Bayard Rustin!

Bayard is shocked. He looks to Randolph who gestures for Bayard to take his rightful place. Bayard does.

BAYARD

Ladies and Gentlemen! The first demand is: that we have effective civil rights legislation. No compromise! No filibuster!

((MORE))

BAYARD (CONT'D)

And that it includes public accommodation, decent housing, integrated education, and the right to vote! WHAT DO YOU SAY?!

Bayard RAISES A FIST, and the 250,000 marchers ROAR WITH APPROVAL!

118

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL / PODIUM - LATE AFTERNOON

118

Randolph and Bayard are posing for a photographer. Dr. Hedgeman and the Big 10 linger nearby.

Once they're done--

DR. ANNA

Bayard, when I was a girl, every night my father would ask, "Have you been useful today?" I'm more than certain that has been true for you most of your life. But today, my child... Today.

They hug. And then--

DR. ANNA (CONT'D)

Whitney, congratulations. Where is Mr. Farmer? I can't believe he'd miss his moment in the sun.

WHITNEY YOUNG

He was arrested a few days ago in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, for protesting against police brutality. Prior to his arrest, he'd gotten death threats.

With ROY, RANDOLPH, BAYARD, JOHN--

ROY WILKINS

Chief, the President has invited us to meet.

BAYARD

Don't let him get away with a thing. Not after this.

RANDOLPH

Trust me, that will not occur.

JOHN LEWIS

You should be with us.

BAYARD

A few weeks ago, I said I'd happily act as trash collector if we pulled today off.

ROY WILKINS

You are far more valuable to us than a trash collector.

BAYARD

Roy, for shame! Ma Rustin taught me no man is less valuable because he picks up trash in order to care for his own.

(to John)

Next time.

Roy hustles Randolph/The Big 10 away. The Team watches as Bayard descends the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

After introducing himself to the OTHER WORKERS, the CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK until anonymity takes over, and Bayard becomes just ONE MORE VOLUNTEER helping to make things clean.

TEXT OVER THIS SHOT:

"More than 250,000 people attended the March on Washington, making it the largest nonviolent demonstration to date."

"In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, outlawing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin."

"In 1977, Bayard met Walter Naegle. They fell in love, and were inseparable until Bayard passed away in 1987."

"After decades of going unrecognized for his role in the Civil Rights Movement, Bayard was posthumously bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama in 2013."

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FINAL IMAGE: THE SEPTEMBER 6TH, 1963 COVER OF LIFE MAGAZINE, FEATURING A PHOTOGRAPH OF RANDOLPH AND BAYARD IN FRONT OF LINCOLN'S STATUE. THE CAPTION: LEADERS RANDOLPH AND RUSTIN

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FADE TO BLACK