

WARM SPRINGS

written by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. A BODY OF WATER - LATE AFTERNOON 1

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

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

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

He breaks the surface and gasps for air.

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

2 EXT. HOUSEBOAT - CONTINUOUS 2

A floating tenement.

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

3 EXT. BOAT DECK - CONTINUOUS 3

The crane swings around with the MAN in the net.

He is EMPTIED out onto the deck like a fish.

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

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

4 INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT 4

The same MAN is illuminated by the light of a single candle. He is dancing, holding on tightly to a WOMAN.

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

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

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

He kisses her passionately on the mouth.

MAN

Oh, my dear...

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

WOMAN

(whispering softly)

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

5 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

5

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

A VOICE (O.S.)

Oscar! Where the devil are you?

Deftly, Oscar opens the door to a spacious bedroom.

OSCAR

My apologies, Mr. Roosevelt.

6 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

6

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

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

Right now... he wants his pants.

FRANKLIN

I've been standing here for five minutes.

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

OSCAR

Did you sleep well, sir?

FRANKLIN

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

OSCAR

Yes, sir.

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

7 INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

7

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

He overhears a voice from the nearby sitting room.

WOMAN (O.S.)

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

8 INT. SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

8

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, 34, is dictating a letter. Her enormous eyes, liquid and blue, reveal a woman of extraordinary intelligence and depth.

ELEANOR

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

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

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

LUCY

And what do you really want me to say?

ELEANOR

Thank you and if you ask again I shall scream?

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

LOUIS

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

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

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

LOUIS

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

ELEANOR

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

LOUIS

In the street, Mrs. Roosevelt?

ELEANOR

If you like.

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

FRANKLIN

I see it's not even eight a.m. and already the gloves are off.
(kissing Eleanor on the cheek)
Good morning, Babs. Hello, Miss Mercer.

LUCY

Good morning, sir.

Quickly, she lowers her eyes to her work.

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

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

He leans in and kisses Eleanor on the cheek.

FRANKLIN

Have a lovely day, Babs.

ELEANOR

Should I expect you for dinner?

FRANKLIN

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

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

ELEANOR

Do you wish me to come?

FRANKLIN

Well... whatever you'd like.

ELEANOR

(a beat)

Thank you, no.

FRANKLIN

Very well then.

(tipping his hat)

Good day, Miss Mercer.

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

9

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. SIDEWALK - DAY

9

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

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

What did I think of it?

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

LOUIS

You had some problems with it.

FRANKLIN

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

LOUIS

Lunch with Secretary Daniels.

FRANKLIN

Must I?

LOUIS

He's your boss.

FRANKLIN

Anything else?

LOUIS

(a beat)

What if she'd said yes?

FRANKLIN

Who?

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

LOUIS

People know. It's time to stop.

FRANKLIN

I can handle my own affairs, Louis.

LOUIS

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

(off-put by Franklin's
arrogance)

How can you be so cavalier?

FRANKLIN

You say that like it's a bad thing.

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

- 10 INT. FRONT HALL - NIGHT 10
- A large grandfather clock reads 3:00.
- The sound of a key in the front door turns and Franklin quietly enters. His hair is a mess and his clothing is slightly askew.
- As he comes through the hall two eyes shine in the darkness. They belong to Eleanor sitting rigidly on a settee, listening to the sound of Franklin's footsteps going up the stairs.
- 11 INT. UPPER LANDING - CONTINUING 11
- Franklin goes into his bedroom. Eleanor quietly comes up the stairs and stops for a brief moment by Franklin's door, then goes off to her bedroom closing the door behind her.
- 12 INT. FRANKLIN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING 12
- Franklin lays sleeping in his bed as Eleanor enters quietly so as not to wake him.
- Carefully she picks up a set of keys on the dresser then turns and notices a packet of letters sitting on top of an open duffle bag.
- Tentatively she reaches for them. She brings the packet, tied with a piece of ribbon, up to her nose. She is shocked by their familiar scent.
- With trembling hands she unties the ribbon. Tears flood down her cheeks as she reads.
- Franklin opens his eyes.
- CUT TO:
- 13 EXT. HYDE PARK - DAY 13
- Springwood is the three-story Roosevelt mansion. It is surrounded by a thousand acres of forests, fields, bridal paths and a glorious view of the Hudson River.
- THE FIVE ROOSEVELT CHILDREN are screaming on the front lawn playing a boisterous game of croquet.
- 14 INT. SPRINGWOOD - DINING ROOM - DAY 14
- SARA ROOSEVELT, 65, sits at the head of the table. She is one for whom the expression "Grande Dame" was coined.

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

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

ELEANOR
I have offered Franklin his freedom.

FRANKLIN
And I have accepted.

SARA
(to Eleanor)
His freedom is not yours to offer!

FRANKLIN
I am in love with Miss Mercer, Mama.

LOUIS
Lord save us from fools in love.

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

Eleanor rises from the table.

SARA
Where do you think you're going?

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

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

FRANKLIN
Babs!

SARA
Come back here! Both of you!

15

INT. ENTRY HALL - CONTINUOUS

15

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

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

FRANKLIN

For what?

ELEANOR

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

FRANKLIN

I didn't mean to hurt you, Babs.

ELEANOR

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

(finding her anger)

It must be a luxury.

She goes up the stairs without looking back.

16

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

16

Franklin slowly walks back into the room.

SARA

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

FRANKLIN

My trust fund.

SARA

Divorce Eleanor and there is no
trust fund.

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

LOUIS

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

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

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

CROWD NOISE (O.S.)
 Rose-velt! Rose-velt! Rose-velt!

17 INT. DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION HALL - SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT 17

CONVENTIONEERS shout out Franklin's name holding up PLACARDS emblazoned with:

"COX/ROOSEVELT IN '20!"

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

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

18 CLOSE UP - FRANKLIN 18

Smiling for no one. For everyone.

FRANKLIN
 (breathless)
 I humbly accept your nomination for
 Vice-President!

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

FRANKLIN
 They say the best way to get rid of
 a man is to have him run for Vice-
 President.
 (he holds for the laugh)
 You might well have asked my cousin
 Teddy if that's how they got rid
 of him!

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

DISSOLVE TO:

19 INT. TEA ROOM - WASHINGTON, D.C. - AFTERNOON 19

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

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

ALICE

Of course you lost. A Roosevelt on the democratic ticket? Our ancestors are turning in their graves.

FRANKLIN

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

ALICE

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

FRANKLIN

And what's wrong with that?

They both share a laugh.

ALICE

Do you know what they're saying about you?

Franklin's smile fades.

FRANKLIN

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

ALICE

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

FRANKLIN

Is that what you think?

ALICE

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

FRANKLIN

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

ALICE

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

She leans in conspiratorially.

ALICE

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

FRANKLIN

Alice, stop.

ALICE

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

FRANKLIN

What are you talking about?

ALICE

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

FRANKLIN

(stunned)
She's married?

ALICE

Last week. A small event, of course.

FRANKLIN

When I last heard she was governess to his children.

ALICE

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

20

EXT. STATEN ISLAND BOY SCOUT CAMP - DAY

20

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

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN
 (kidding)
 Really? Of which state?

Louis shoots him a look.

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

FRANKLIN
 What about Al Smith?

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

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

FRANKLIN
 Boy Scouts, Louis? Hardly my
 political base.

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

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

FRANKLIN
 Franklin Roosevelt, happy to
 meet you.

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

LOUIS
 Over here!

Franklin poses with two Scouts. The picture is taken.

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

FRANKLIN
 Of course!

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

FRANKLIN

What's your name, son?

GUISEPPE

Guiseppe.

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

FRANKLIN

Guiseppe! Come sta, ragazzo?

GUISEPPE

(puzzled)

Okay, I guess.

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

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

ESTABLISHING SHOT - CAMPOBELLO ISLAND

21 EXT. ROOSEVELT SUMMER HOME - DAY 21

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

22 EXT. PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON 22

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

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

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

LOUIS

He's a natural.

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

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

ELLIOT

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

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

FRANKLIN

Festina lente! ("Not so fast!")

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

ELEANOR

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

FRANKLIN

Up! Up, chicks! You heard your
mother!

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

ELEANOR

Go wash up.

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

LOUIS

Hey, boss! Are you all right?

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

FRANKLIN

I'm fine.
(re: her knitting)
Oh, that's pretty, Babs.

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

ELEANOR

I must check on dinner.

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

FRANKLIN

Very well.

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

LOUIS

Tired?

FRANKLIN

Of you? Never.

Wearily, he sorts through the envelopes.

LOUIS

Why don't you nap before dinner?

FRANKLIN

Yes, dear.

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

DISSOLVE TO:

23 INT. SUN ROOM - DAY

23

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

DOCTOR

Can you take my hand?

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

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

24 EXT. SCREENED PORCH - DAY

24

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

DOCTOR

He has Infantile Paralysis. Polio.

Sara sinks into a chair.

SARA

I knew it. I knew it.

ELEANOR
I thought it only struck children.

DOCTOR
Not necessarily.

LOUIS
How did he get it?

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

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

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

ELEANOR
What is the prognosis?

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

ELEANOR
Dear God.
(beat)
And the children?

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

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

SARA
Then we must count our blessings.

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

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

25 EXT. BUSHES - CONTINUING 25

Eleanor finds Elliot, having heard everything, curled up in a ball, weeping. She leans down and wraps her arms around him.

26 INT. BEDROOM - WEEKS LATER 26

CLOSE-UP - WALLPAPER

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

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Franklin in bed.

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

His lips are dry.

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

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

27 INT. HYDE PARK - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS 27

Sara, Eleanor and Louis are in heated conversation.

SARA

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

ELEANOR

But what kind of life is that?

LOUIS

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

SARA

Why would you want to do that?

LOUIS

Because he needs it.

ELEANOR

He can pursue a career, Mama.

SARA

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

(MORE)

And you, Ms. Sara (cont'd) engaged in the
fantasy of a political future for
my son... is there nothing you
won't do to keep your job?

Sara leaves as Eleanor goes after her.

ELEANOR

Mama! That's not fair!

28 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 28

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

29 INT. SUN ROOM - CONTINUOUS 29

Sara busies herself arranging flowers.

SARA

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

ELEANOR

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

SARA

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

ELEANOR

And I am his wife.

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

30 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 30

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

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

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

CUT TO:

31 INT. BOAT - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

31

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

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

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

EUGENE

Mr. Roosevelt, we got a storm
comin'!

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

Eugene grabs a bucket and holds Franklin up to urinate.

FRANKLIN

(while peeing)

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

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

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

Clumsily they lift Franklin up, struggling under his weight.

32 EXT. BOAT - DAY

32

Eugene and Stanley carry Franklin off in the driving rain.

33 INT. DINER OFF THE FLORIDA COAST - DAY

33

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

The restaurant collectively pauses to take them.

Franklin is slowly wheeled across the restaurant. He shrinks from the stares of the patrons.

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

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

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

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

FRANKLIN
(genuinely surprised)
Louis?

LOUIS
I never miss Florida in the rainy season.

FRANKLIN
No letter? No wire?

LOUIS
Why? Would you have answered it?

FRANKLIN
What the hell are you doing here?

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

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

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

They look at the money and take their leave.

FRANKLIN
You're always so generous with my money.

LOUIS

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

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

FRANKLIN

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

LOUIS

It was Eleanor's idea.

Franklin's face is immobile.

WAITRESS

What can I get you?

LOUIS

I'd like some ham and eggs, sunny side up, please?

(to Franklin)

What's your fancy, boss?

FRANKLIN

Nothing. I fancy nothing.

LOUIS

He'll have the same.

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

LOUIS

There are a few from your children.

FRANKLIN

I can still read.

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

LOUIS

Your wife wants you to come home.

(choosing his words)

She's concerned. I'm concerned.

This life on a boat... where is it getting you?

FRANKLIN

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

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

(reading)

Really?

Louis looks sadly at his friend.

LOUIS

What's that?

FRANKLIN

(skimming the letter)

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

LOUIS

Oh, for Chrissake...

FRANKLIN

(reading)

"The high magnesium content of these natural springs will hold anyone up. Although it is not a resort for infirm types I am extending you my personal invitation to come visit in the off-season."

(putting the letter aside)

I'm only welcome in the "off-season."

Eugene and Stanley approach the table.

EUGENE

Mr. Roosevelt, we got bad news.

FRANKLIN

What?

STANLEY

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

FRANKLIN

How bad?

STANLEY

I don't think you can stay there
anymore.

Franklin absorbs this.

EUGENE

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

FRANKLIN

And I'm sick of home.

(to Louis)

Where's the letter from Peabody?

LOUIS

You can't be serious?

He hands Franklin the letter who rereads it.

FRANKLIN

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

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

Where do you picture me, Louis?

LOUIS

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

FRANKLIN

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

LOUIS
Give it a little time.

FRANKLIN
There's a reason they say a man
runs for office.
(a beat)
I'm going to Georgia.

CUT TO:

34 INT. A TRAIN CAR - DAY

34

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIONEL
Someone important?

TOM
You might say so, Lionel.

LIONEL
Who?

TOM
A Mr. Roosevelt.

LIONEL
Teddy?

TOM
(patiently)
No, he's dead.

LIONEL
Oh.

The STATIONMASTER approaches.

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

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

LIONEL
... and get the Collier boys.

36

EXT. A TRAIN CAR - DAY

36

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

Tom approaches. Franklin attempts to hide his embarrassment with good cheer.

FRANKLIN

Hello! Hello! Mr. Loyless?

TOM

Tom, Mr. Roosevelt.

FRANKLIN

Then you'd better call me Franklin.

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

TOM

Franklin.

FRANKLIN

And this is the Misses.

ELEANOR

Call me Eleanor.

TOM

Pleased to make your acquaintance.

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

ROY

(to Tom)

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

TOM

I'll send a wagon right over.

PETE

We got a wagon, sir.

37

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

37

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

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

FRANKLIN
(covering his discomfort)
Beautiful country.

ELEANOR
How long have you been manager of
the Inn?

TOM
Not long.

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

FRANKLIN
Got any paved roads?

TOM
No we don't.

38 EXT. THE MERIWETHER INN - DAY

38

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

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

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

The car pulls to a stop.

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

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

FRANKLIN

(panicked)

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

ELEANOR

Franklin!

TOM

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

(a beat)

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

FRANKLIN

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

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

TOM

Yes, we've seen better days.

(a beat)

But then I imagine so have you.

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

TOM

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

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

FRANKLIN

(in a low voice)

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

TOM

We've got options.

39

EXT. MERIWETHER INN GROUNDS - DAY

39

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

40 EXT. COTTAGE - DAY 40

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

Franklin and Eleanor sit in the car, watching.

41 INT. COTTAGE - DAY 41

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

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

FRANKLIN

(caustic)

Well ventilated, at least.

Roy enters with a suitcase.

ROY

Where do you want this, Mr. Roosevelt?

FRANKLIN

The bedroom, Roy, thank you.

He looks after Roy as he exits.

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

(politely)

Why don't you ask him yourself?

He tips his hat and goes outside.

42 EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY 42

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

43 INT. COTTAGE - DAY 43

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

ELEANOR
This is madness.

FRANKLIN (O.S.)
No doubt.

ELEANOR
Tell me again, Franklin, why are we
here?

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

FRANKLIN
For the waters. Are you coming?

44 EXT. A DIRT PATH - DAY 44

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

TOM
Mrs. Roosevelt want to swim?

FRANKLIN
Mrs. Roosevelt doesn't know how.

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

45 EXT. POOL - DAY 45

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

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

AUNT SALLY, an ancient, gaunt, African American woman, stands
guard by the edge of the water.

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

FRANKLIN
Aunt Sally.

AUNT SALLY
Good day, sir. I have towels for you.

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

Twisting on his massive arms, Franklin lowers himself cautiously.

TOM

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

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

FRANKLIN

I can't even stand.

AUNT SALLY

Well, not yet.

46 EXT. CABIN - NIGHT 46

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

47 INT. CABIN - CONTINUING 47

Eleanor tosses and turns on a roll away bed.

48 INT. CABIN BEDROOM - CONTINUING 48

Franklin lies in bed staring up at the ceiling.

49 INT. MERIWETHER INN - DINING ROOM - DAY 49

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

ELEANOR

This is simply revolting.

FRANKLIN

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

(holding out his plate)

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

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

ELEANOR
You want to stay.

FRANKLIN
Yes.

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

FRANKLIN
I need something new.

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

FRANKLIN
I refuse to be a burden to anyone.

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

He reaches out and takes her hand in his.

FRANKLIN
I want to offer you the freedom you
once so generously offered me.
(she pulls it away)
All you've ever known is duty. To
me and to a political career that
unless I can walk no longer exists.
You've been exemplary. Now I'm
telling you you're free to go.

ELEANOR
(her voice rising)
No.
(a beat)
I don't want freedom. I want a
marriage. I want a life with you.

Franklin won't let himself believe it.

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

This takes the wind out of Eleanor.

ELEANOR

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

Eleanor folds her napkin and gets up from the table.

50

EXT. COTTAGE DRIVEWAY - DAY

50

Pete helps Eleanor into his livery wagon.

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

ON ELEANOR

Looking out -- straight ahead.

ON FRANKLIN

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

51

INT. HYDE PARK - DAY

51

Eleanor is pouring tea for Louis, who is seated.

ELEANOR

Thank you for stopping by, Mr. Howe.

LOUIS

I thought you might want to see a
friendly face.

(off the silence)

So how's our boy doing?

ELEANOR

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

(suddenly overwhelmed)

I think we've lost him.

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

ELEANOR

Please excuse me, Mr. Howe.

LOUIS

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

ELEANOR

Louis.

LOUIS

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

ELEANOR

To what?

Louis smiles, knowingly.

LOUIS

To you.

52 EXT. COTTAGES - SUNSET 52

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

53 EXT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS 53

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

FRANKLIN

To your mineral pool, or whatever you call it.

TOM

Warm Springs.

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

FRANKLIN

Too strong?

TOM

Haven't been in a drinking mood lately.

FRANKLIN

I have.

TOM

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

FRANKLIN

Are you always this direct, Tom?

TOM

Well, I never tasted a martini this bad before.

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

FRANKLIN

(hurt)

Everyone likes my martinis...

TOM

So they say.

54 INT. COTTAGE - MORNING 54

Franklin's bed is already empty.

55 EXT. POOL - MORNING 55

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

Tom sits off to one side reading the newspaper.

FRANKLIN

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

AUNT SALLY

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

FRANKLIN

If it was only that easy.

AUNT SALLY

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

FRANKLIN

(humoring her)

Yes, ma'am.

AUNT SALLY

Now you got to remember how you did it.

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

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

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

FRANKLIN
(a nervous laugh)
I'm standing.

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

FRANKLIN
I'm standing.

The release is powerful as Franklin dissolves into tears.

56

EXT. COTTAGE PORCH - EVENING

56

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

TOM
To standing on your own two feet!

They clink and drink.

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

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

LIONEL
Evening folks.

FRANKLIN
Cocktail, Lionel?

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

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

LIONEL

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

He hands an already opened letter to Franklin.

LIONEL

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

FRANKLIN

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

LIONEL

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

FRANKLIN

Astonishing. Thank you, Lionel.

He hands Lionel a letter.

LIONEL

(reading)

"Miss Missy LeHand." Who's she?

FRANKLIN

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

(to Tom)

I'm having her come down.

Lionel reaches into his bag.

LIONEL

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

FRANKLIN

Give me that.

He hands the letter to Franklin who immediately begins reading.

LIONEL

(to Tom)

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

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

FRANKLIN

(studying the letter)

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

CUT TO:

57 INT. HALLWAY - DAY 57

Louis and Eleanor approach a set of double doors.

ELEANOR

We are facing imminent disaster.

LOUIS

I take full responsibility if you hyperventilate or faint.

They enter the room.

58 INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 58

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

CHAIRWOMAN

Ah, here she is now. Ladies, Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt.

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

ELEANOR

Good afternoon. I am so pleased to be invited here today.

(looking down at her cards)

Too often....

A PHOTOGRAPHER snaps a picture which throws Eleanor off.

ELEANOR

Too often...

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

ELEANOR

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

Slowly, she begins to find her voice.

ELEANOR

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

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

ELEANOR

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

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

ELEANOR

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

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

LATER

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

CHAIRWOMAN

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

Eleanor looks to Louis who nods.

ELEANOR

Oh. It would be an honor.

CHAIRWOMAN

Wonderful.

59

EXT. POOL - DAY

59

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

TOM

Morning.

FRANKLIN

I walked five steps today!

TOM

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

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

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

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

TOM

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

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

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

FRANKLIN

(a beat)

You mean the Klan? Good God, Tom...

TOM

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

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

Rat-trap?

FRANKLIN

(laughing, swimming off)

I was going to say dump, but rat-trap fits nicely.

60

EXT. FRANKLIN'S COTTAGE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

60

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

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

GREGORY

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

FRANKLIN

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

GREGORY

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

FRANKLIN

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

GREGORY

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

FRANKLIN

I forgot one more thing you will need to write down. Poor circulation is a chronic problem for people in my condition.

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

GREGORY

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

FRANKLIN

I don't know.

GREGORY

But you're hopeful?

FRANKLIN

Yes. I am.

61 INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

61

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

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

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

62 INT. COTTAGE - MORNING

62

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

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

FRANKLIN

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

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

MISSY

Very good. Do you want this out today?

FRANKLIN

Tomorrow will be fine.

MISSY

Alright.

FRANKLIN

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

Missy rises with a stack of envelopes and heads out.

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

ROY

Hungry, Mr. Roosevelt?

FRANKLIN

Not really.

ROY

Who do you write to every morning?

FRANKLIN

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

ROY

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

FRANKLIN

Exactly.

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

PRENDERGAST

Excuse me, are you Mr. Roosevelt?

FRANKLIN

Yes. Who are you?

Roy opens the door to Prendergast, who enters.

PRENDERGAST

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

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

FRANKLIN

I'll be damned.

PRENDERGAST

Would you be available?

FRANKLIN

(looking up)

When? Next spring?

PRENDERGAST

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

FRANKLIN

How is that possible?

PRENDERGAST

Tax dollars only cover that much.

FRANKLIN

Are you graduating?

PRENDERGAST

No, sir. I'm the principal.

FRANKLIN

I see.

But Franklin doesn't see.

63 EXT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY 63
 A small breeze or a decent rain would knock it to the ground.

64 INT. SCHOOLROOM - CONTINUOUS 64
 A bookshelf with four books.

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

Prendergast stands proudly beside three GRADUATES-TO-BE.

Tom stands in the back observing.

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

PRENDERGAST

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

FRANKLIN

Good afternoon.

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

FRANKLIN

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

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

FRANKLIN

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

He takes in their uncomprehending expressions.

FRANKLIN

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

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

FRANKLIN

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

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

65

INT. TOM'S AUTOMOBILE - DAY

65

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

They welcomed your company, Franklin.

FRANKLIN

Don't patronize me.

Tom is losing his patience.

TOM

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

They continue to drive in silence.

66

EXT. POOL - DAY

66

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

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

AUNT SALLY

Mr. Roosevelt, aren't you cold?

ROY

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

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

AUNT SALLY

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

Franklin comes up from under.

TOM

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

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

The sound of a TRAIN WHISTLE is heard.

DISSOLVE TO:

67

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

67

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

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

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

Eleanor holds up a tiny porcelain ornament to Anna.

ELEANOR

Grandmother Delano brought this
from China.

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

ELLIOT

Have you ever been to China,
Father?

FRANKLIN

No, Elliot. Just your grandmama.

SARA

I adored China. It smelled of
ginger cookies.

FRANKLIN, JR.

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

SARA

That sounds like an adventure.

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

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

JOHN

Put it on top.

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

ELEANOR

Give it to James. He's the tallest.

JOHN

No.

ANNA

John, give it to him!

JOHN

Papa always does it.

FRANKLIN

I can do it.

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

Quickly, aiding to avoid his father's embarrassment, James climbs back up and puts the star on top. Sara sensing the awkwardness of the moment begins to play and sing an overly cheery rendition of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."

68

INT. STUDY - LATER

68

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

ELEANOR

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

FRANKLIN

That's marvelous, Babs.

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

ROY

I've got you, sir.

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

FRANKLIN

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

ELEANOR

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

FRANKLIN

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

ELEANOR

How am I supposed to talk to you?

FRANKLIN

Like I was! Talk to me like I was!

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

ELEANOR

I don't know how anymore.

DISSOLVE TO:

69

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

69

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

TOM

You're a sight for sore eyes...

FRANKLIN

We missed you at the station...

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

FRANKLIN
(concerned)
Tom, are you all right?

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

Roy carries the luggage into the cottage.

FRANKLIN
(covering)
My father had ulcers. Damn irritating.

TOM
Yes, they are.

A silence hangs in the air.

TOM
Ready to swim?

70

EXT. POOL - DAY

70

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

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

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

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

FRANKLIN
What in blazes?...

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

Franklin looks up at Tom, dumbfounded.

TOM
They're here to see you.

This news hits Franklin with the force of a sledgehammer.

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

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

PAT

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

He reaches out his hand to Franklin.

PAT

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

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

FRANKLIN

I really don't know what to say.

PAT

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

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

FRANKLIN

(whispering)
Get me out of here.

71

EXT. MERIWETHER INN - GROUNDS - DAY

71

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

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

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

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

No one's asking anything of you!

FRANKLIN

Of course they are!

TOM

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

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

My God, you're afraid of these people.

FRANKLIN

Afraid? What you're talking about?

TOM

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

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

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

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

FRANKLIN

God damn it!

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

FRANKLIN

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

Franklin wheels himself off.

72

EXT. BULLOCHVILLE TRAIN STATION - DAY

72

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

ROY
Right on time.

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

He walks closer towards Franklin and Roy.

TOM
Good evening.

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

FRANKLIN
Expecting someone?

TOM
Yes.

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

TOM
(to the Conductor)
I'm looking for a young gentleman
by the name of Botts. Fred Botts?

CONDUCTOR
Don't know anything about that.

TOM
I expect he would be in a
wheelchair.

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

73

EXT. BAGGAGE CAR - DAY

73

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

74 INT. BAGGAGE CAR - DAY

74

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

FRANKLIN
Mother of God.

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

TOM
His pulse is slow.

75 EXT. STATION PLATFORM - DAY

75

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

FRANKLIN
Son, can you hear me?

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

FRANKLIN
Fred?

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

FRED
Mr. Roosevelt?...

FRANKLIN
It's going to be all right, son.

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

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

Franklin looks at the clipping, then at Fred.

FRANKLIN
When did you last eat?

FRED
Knoxville.

TOM
Knoxville had to be three days ago.

FRANKLIN
Roy, take him to the car.

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

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

CONDUCTOR
He had polio. Probably still
contagious.

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

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

CONDUCTOR
Get away from me.

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

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

TOM
Franklin...

The Conductor struggles to get up.

CONDUCTOR
Get this lunatic off me!

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

FRANKLIN
Where's the nearest hospital?

TOM
Atlanta.

FRANKLIN
What about a doctor?

TOM
Closer, but not by much.

The train whistle BLOWS.

ROY
Train's ready.

Franklin looks at Fred, then at Roy and Tom.

FRANKLIN
(quietly)
Let's go home.

76 INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

76

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

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

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

Franklin looks away.

77 INT. COTTAGE - DAY

77

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

FRANKLIN
How many can pay?

TOM
Fewer than half.

Franklin opens the check book and begins writing.

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

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

FRANKLIN

What do you mean?

TOM

I've already had some complaints.

(awkwardly)

This is the start of the season, Franklin. I've got regulars who have come for years. Healthy folks over all... They're threatening to check out, afraid they might catch polio.

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

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

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

Of course for you I can make other accommodations.

FRANKLIN

(a beat)

That won't be necessary.

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

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

TOM

Thank you.

FRANKLIN

We still need a doctor here.

TOM

For Fred?

FRANKLIN
 (pointedly)
 For everyone.

78 EXT. COTTAGE - NIGHT 78

Franklin is in his wheelchair, writing.

FRANKLIN (V.O.)
 "Dear Babs, Things are very
 different upon my return."

79 INT. HYDE PARK - DAY 79

Eleanor sits in a chair reading Franklin's letter.

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

80 INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT 80

Franklin is tucking Fred in for the night.

FRED
 When can I swim?

FRANKLIN
 Soon. When you're a little stronger.

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

FRANKLIN
 Me too.
 (a beat)
 How long has it been... since you
 walked?

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

FRANKLIN
Did she sell it?

FRED
No. She took it out back and shot it.

Franklin howls with laughter, joined by Fred.

81

EXT. POOL - DUSK

81

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

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

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

FRANKLIN
And who is this delightful child?

DAISY
(giggling)
Daisy.

FRANKLIN
All right Daisy, try and kick your legs.

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

FRANKLIN
Excellent, Daisy!

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

JAKE
Jake Perrini, Bronx, New York.

ROY
Roy, sir.

JAKE
How you doin'?

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

JAKE
C'mon -- I won't bite.

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

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

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

JAKE
Do me one more favor? Throw me in?

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

He bobs up to the surface. There is applause.

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

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

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

He swims to the edge of the pool.

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

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

FRANKLIN
Go ahead now, do your best!

Their legs barely rise up to splash the surface. Undeterred, Franklin leads them on, spiritedly.

In the distance we see Tom, leaning against a tree, watching everything.

82 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT 82

Tom oversees the dinner service of paying guests -- none of whom have disabilities.

83 INT. BACK ROOM - NIGHT 83

Segregated in a back room, all the polio guests are gathered for dinner seated around a couple of sawhorses with old doors thrown across them serving as makeshift dining tables.

Roy carries DAISY in and places her in the chair next to Franklin.

FRANKLIN

Do you have a reservation?

She begins to giggle. It's infectious and soon everyone has a smile on their face, overriding the awkwardness of the situation.

FRANKLIN

Whether in here or our there, I guarantee you the food will taste the same... terrible.

DAISY

Shouldn't we pray first?

FRANKLIN

By all means. Would you do us the honor?

Franklin bows his head for grace.

DAISY

Bless the food on our table. Keep us healthy, strong and able. Amen.

ALL

Amen.

EXT. FACTORY - DAY

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

ELEANOR (V.O.)

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

85 EXT. BUILDING - DAY 85

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

ELEANOR (V.O.)

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

86 INT. NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY - DAY 86

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

ELEANOR (V.O.)

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

87 EXT. POOL - DAY 87

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

ELEANOR (V.O.)

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

88 EXT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY 88

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

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

89 EXT. COTTAGE PORCH - DAY 89

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

Helena approaches. Roy pulls off a triple jump.

FRANKLIN

Damn!

ROY

King me.

Franklin reluctantly tops Roy's checker.

FRED

You're losing, Doc.

HELENA

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

FRANKLIN

Depends.

(suspiciously)

Are you a lawyer?

HELENA

No.

FRANKLIN

Then Roosevelt it is. Wait!

He jumps one of Roy's checkers.

HELENA

I'm Helena Mahoney. I'm a physical therapist.

(off their blank looks)

You have no idea who I am, do you?

FRANKLIN

Should I?

HELENA

I wrote you a letter right after I saw the article in the paper.

Didn't you read it?

FRANKLIN

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

Helena glances down at the checkerboard and points to it.

HELENA

(to Roy)

He's open right there.

ROY
He sure is.

Roy trounces Franklin with three swift moves.

ROY
Thank you, ma'am.

Helena sits at the table with them.

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

FRANKLIN
It can help them regain lost strength.

HELENA
Yes.

FRANKLIN
Incredibly I've come to the same conclusion myself.

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

90 EXT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY

90

Helena is wheeling Franklin around the grounds.

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

FRANKLIN
Don't believe everything you read.

HELENA
I feel like I was brought here under false pretenses.

FRANKLIN
Join the club.

91 INT. A BARN - DAY

91

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

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

HELENA

Push against my hand.

Franklin, with difficulty, tries to do so.

FRANKLIN

Give me the good news first.

HELENA

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

FRANKLIN

Must be all that sitting.

HELENA

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

FRANKLIN

I'm supposed to walk on one side?

HELENA

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

92 EXT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY

92

Tom is pushing Franklin in his wheelchair.

FRANKLIN

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

(MORE)

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

TOM
 Sounds like you've been reading up.

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

TOM
 It's a waste. An awful waste.

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

FRANKLIN
 What's the acreage here?

TOM
 Roughly twelve hundred or so. Why?

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

TOM
 Investment?

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

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

FRANKLIN
 (undeterred)
 Do you think old Peabody will sell?

TOM
 He'll sell.

FRANKLIN
 How can you be so sure?

TOM
 Have you taken a look at this place?

93 INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

93

Franklin sits in his chair at a desk.

FRANKLIN
(full of charm)
Peabody you old reprobate! How are
you?

Tom is pacing back and forth

FRANKLIN
You'll never guess why I'm calling.

94 EXT. MERIWETHER INN - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

94

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

HELENA
Woodhall, this is Eloise. Lift her
gently.

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

WOODHALL
Yes, ma'am.

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

HELENA
Very good! Watch her braces.

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

WOODHALL
You're light as a ...

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

ELOISE
(looking away)
I was a dancer...

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

HELENA

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

FRANKLIN

Welcome Push Boys! Good day, Eloise.

ELOISE

Hello, Mr. Roosevelt.

TOM

Want to tell them your good news?

Franklin is smiling like the cat that ate the canary.

FRANKLIN

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

95

INT. COTTAGE - EVENING

95

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

PAT

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

FRANKLIN

I am buying it. Make no mistake
about that.

PAT

Good for you, Doc.

FRED

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

TOM

(gently)

The boy makes a good point, Franklin.

FRANKLIN

Not everything in this world has to
be about profits.

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

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

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

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

Fred and Pat fold immediately as does Franklin.

FRANKLIN
Too rich for my blood.

JAKE
(to Tom)
Fine! Here's your twenty-five! You
better have something.

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

TOM
Take it. I was bluffing.

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

PAT
(handing Franklin a fresh
deck)
Your deal, Doc.

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

Everyone groans.

FRANKLIN
Sevens are wild and you can all go
to Hell!

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

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

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

FRANKLIN (O.S.)

Where do you think you're going?

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

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

TOM

Going to Asheville to see my parents.

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

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

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

Franklin is stunned -- utterly thrown.

FRANKLIN

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

TOM

I've seen the best doctors. When
you were in New York they opened me
up for the second time. Now I just
want to die in the bed I was born.

Franklin is struggling with this.

TOM

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

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

TOM
Take care of yourself, Roy.

ROY
God be with you, Mr. Loyless.

Tom takes one last look at Franklin.

FRANKLIN
You never pitied me. Thank you for that.

TOM
On the contrary, I envy you.

FRANKLIN
I will miss you all the days of my life.

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

TOM
Good luck, Franklin.

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

97

INT. HYDE PARK, NEW YORK - LIBRARY - DAY

97

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

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

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

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

ELEANOR
I beg your pardon, Mama?

SARA
 You have indulged him and this is
 the result.

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

Sara looks away.

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

SARA
 But he does not need to buy it.

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

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

SARA
 Then it is settled. We tell him no.

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

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

SARA
 Perhaps I have underestimated you.

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

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

HELENA

Excellent, Fred! Keep going...

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

The BEEPING of a car horn gets their immediate attention.

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

PETE

Morning, Mr. Roosevelt.

FRANKLIN

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

PETE

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

FRANKLIN

What are you talking about?

PETE

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

FRANKLIN

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

PETE

You can now.

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

PETE

Get on in and I'll teach ya'!

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

PETE

That one there is your brake.

FRANKLIN

Got it.

PETE

And this here's the gas.

FRED

Hot damn! You got hand controls.

PAT

That is a thing of beauty!

Franklin begins running his hands over the polished wood knobs.

PETE

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

Franklin excitedly turns the key and starts it up.

PETE

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

FRANKLIN

Oh, yes I am!

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

They all watch as he pulls away.

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

OVER MUSIC:

99

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

99

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

DISSOLVE TO:

100

EXT. BULLOCHVILLE TRAIN STATION - MORNING

100

A spent and anxious Eleanor, with Louis in tow, stands on the station platform, suitcase in hand.

LOUIS

It's a far cry from Grand Central
Station.

They are both silent for a moment.

ELEANOR

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

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

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

FRANKLIN

Your chariot awaits, Madame!

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

LOUIS

When did you learn to drive this
thing?

FRANKLIN

Tuesday!

101 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 101

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

102 EXT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY 102

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

FRANKLIN

Can't wait to give you the tour!

103 EXT. GROUNDS - DAY 103

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

FRANKLIN

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

He points to a dilapidated gardener's shed.

FRANKLIN

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

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

104

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

104

Surrounded by peeling wallpaper and threadbare furniture Eleanor and Louis exchange glances.

ELEANOR

What exactly are you proposing, Franklin?

FRANKLIN

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

LOUIS

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

ELEANOR

And there are other costs to consider.

FRANKLIN

Mama will see that the children are provided for.

ELEANOR

I'm not speaking of money.

FRANKLIN

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

ELEANOR

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

FRANKLIN

(furious)

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

ELEANOR

I don't care for ultimatums disguised as debate.

Eleanor starts to leave.

FRANKLIN

Where are you going? Eleanor! Get back here.

ELEANOR

I will see you gentlemen tonight.

She leaves.

LOUIS

You can't talk to her like that.

FRANKLIN

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

LOUIS

With the respect she deserves.

(a beat)

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

FRANKLIN

Could be?

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

When I can walk, I'll run.

105 EXT. POOL - DAY

105

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

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

Eleanor sits down in a chair and watches fascinated.

106 INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

106

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

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

FRANKLIN (O.S.)

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

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

ON FRANKLIN

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

FRANKLIN

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

CLOSE-UP ON JACKIE

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

ON FRANKLIN

FRANKLIN

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

ON ELEANOR AND LOUIS

Waving politely from their seats.

FRANKLIN

Now for the musical portion of our program...

JAKE

Wait a minute! I can't let this opportunity pass without saying out loud what a lot of us feel in our hearts right now.

(a beat)

You're a man among men, Franklin.

A WOMAN'S VOICE

And women!

DAISY

And children!

JAKE

(laughing)

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

(to Franklin)

You listening?

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

JAKE

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

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

ELOISE

(singing)

"Think of what you're losing by
constantly refusing to dance with me.
You'd be the idol of France with me.
And yet you stand there
And shake your foolish head dramatically,
While I sit here so ecstatically.
You just look and say emphatically:
Not this season!
There's a reason!"

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

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

ELOISE & CHORUS

(singing)

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

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

ELOISE & CHORUS

"My heart won't let my feet do
things they should do."

CHORUS

"You know what? You're lovely."

ELOISE

"And so what? I'm lovely."

CHORUS

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

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

The song finished, Franklin quiets down the crowd.

FRANKLIN

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

Helena rises from her seat.

HELENA

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

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

The room is hushed.

Daisy then begins to WALK tentatively towards her mother.

ON FRANKLIN

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

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

ON DAISY

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

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

107 INT. COTTAGE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

107

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

Eleanor enters holding a lit candle.

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

ELEANOR

Let me.

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

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

ELEANOR

What is your most pressing concern?

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

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

FRANKLIN

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

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

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

ELEANOR

And that costs more money.

FRANKLIN

Yes.

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

FRANKLIN

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

(his anger surfacing)

They turned me down flat.

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

ELEANOR

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

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

ELEANOR

It took awhile, but we finally got in.

FRANKLIN

We?

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

Eleanor sits in a chair across from him.

ELEANOR

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

FRANKLIN

What are you suggesting?

ELEANOR

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

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

ELEANOR

Good night, Franklin.

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

FRANKLIN

Good night, Babs.

She blows the candle out and closes the door.

108 EXT. ATLANTA STREET - DAY 108

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

109 EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS 109

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

110 INT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY 110

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

DOCTOR

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

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

ELEANOR

So sorry we're late!

FRANKLIN

Good afternoon!

Eleanor talks quickly while wheeling Franklin down the aisle.

ELEANOR

(introducing herself)

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

FRANKLIN

(sotto to Eleanor)

Are you sure this worked on 27th
Street?

ELEANOR

(under her breath)

It seemed to at the time.

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

ELEANOR

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

Dr. Bissell smiles limply, saving face. The audience vaguely applauds. Franklin and Eleanor are now center stage.

ELEANOR

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

He looks at her completely amazed. Eleanor gives him an encouraging nod to take over.

FRANKLIN

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

CLOSE-UP

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

FRANKLIN

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

ELEANOR

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

(MORE)

However, ~~until Eleanor (cont'd) arrives~~
 more emphasis has be placed on
 rehabilitation. We personally
 invite you to Warm Springs to come
 and take a look. Thank you.

ON THE AUDIENCE

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

ON FRANKLIN and ELEANOR

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

111 INT. LOBBY - DAY

111

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

DR. WILLIS

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

ELEANOR

For the League of Women Voters?

DR. WILLIS

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

Franklin is ready to intervene but Eleanor puts her hand on
 his shoulder stopping him.

ELEANOR

(all smiles)

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

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

DR. HEBERT

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

(MORE)

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

Franklin looks to Eleanor, elated.

FRANKLIN
 The sooner the better.

112 EXT. FRANKLIN'S CAR - TWILIGHT 112

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

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

ELEANOR
 What is it?

FRANKLIN
 (a beat)
 Who are you?

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

ELEANOR
 I don't know how to drive.

FRANKLIN
 I'll teach you.

They operate the car together -- their connection complete.

113 EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY 113

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

ELEANOR
 I'll break the news to Mama.

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

ELEANOR
 I think it's going to be fun.

Eleanor bursts out laughing, Franklin joins in.

FRANKLIN
Babs... words fail me.

ELEANOR
You? Franklin Roosevelt?

She leans in and kisses Franklin on the mouth.

ELEANOR
I do so love you.

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

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

FARMER
Mr. Roosevelt you lookin' mighty fit.

FARMER'S WIFE
Fine day, isn't it.

FRANKLIN
It is. How's the Boll Weevil situation?

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

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

114 INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

114

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

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

The train begins pulling out.

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

LOUIS
He's ready.

115

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

115

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

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

HASTINGS

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

TELLER

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

LOUIS

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

They laugh knowing this is a huge understatement.

LOUIS

Franklin can help soften his image.

HASTINGS

How?

LOUIS

Let him put Smith's name in nomination.

Teller and Hastings are none to sure.

TELLER

Well, he is a helluva speech maker.

HASTINGS

Yeah, but is your man up to it?

LOUIS

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

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

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

LOUIS

Hey, Stansbury, give my best to the Misses!

(to Hastings and Teller)

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

116 INT. MERIWETHER INN - HALLWAY - MORNING 116

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

117 INT. MERIWETHER INN - DAY ROOM - MORNING 117

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

118 INT. MERIWETHER INN - NIGHT 118

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

119 EXT. GROUNDS - NIGHT 119

An empty wheelchair, illuminated by a sliver of moonlight.

On a blanket nearby are Jake and Mary Beth.

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

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

INT. MERIWETHER INN - NIGHT

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

120 EXT. COTTAGE - NIGHT 120

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

FADE OUT:

121 INT. MERIWETHER INN - FRONT DESK - DAY

121

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

FRANKLIN

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

(clearly not)

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

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

122 EXT. GROUNDS - DAY

122

Franklin is walking on crutches aided by Roy. Nearby, a group
 of children practice on parallel bars with Helena.

FRANKLIN

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

ROY

That you did the best you could.

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

Lionel hands Franklin a fistful of open envelopes.

FRANKLIN

Any good news?

LIONEL

Creditors are gettin' cranky.

FRANKLIN

The operative word was good.

LIONEL

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

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

LIONEL
Save me the stamps?

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

FRANKLIN
(reading)
"... therefore, in conclusion, my research has shown that the overwhelming majority of patients here have shown some improvement. Enough for me to recommend warm water therapy as the standard post polio treatment to the Orthopedics Society of America!"
(he grips Roy's arm)
Roy!

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

ROY
What is it, sir?

123 INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

123

Helena entering the cottage.

HELENA
It's not as bad as you think.

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

FRANKLIN
Read it. Out loud. Page twenty-nine.

HELENA
I already...

FRANKLIN
(angrily)
Read it!

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

FRANKLIN

Keep reading.

HELENA

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

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

HELENA

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

It is difficult for her to continue.

FRANKLIN

Please.

HELENA

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

FRANKLIN

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

HELENA

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

FRANKLIN

It won't change anything for me.

HELENA

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

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

HELENA

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

(a beat)

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

INT. MERIWETHER INN - FRONT DESK - DAY

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

Helena is behind him reading a file.

LIONEL

(entering)

Here's another one he's refusin'.

He throws a telegram onto an already large stack.

HELENA

Why don't you read it?

LIONEL

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

HELENA

Make you dizzy, Lionel.

LIONEL

A little bit.

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

FRED

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

LIONEL

Who's he?

HELENA

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

LIONEL

All right. Probably slide it
 right back.

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

FRED

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

HELENA

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

FRED

But all the people at the
 convention will.

Helena nods, "That's right."

CUT TO:

125 INT. COTTAGE - AFTERNOON

125

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

He opens the door to Louis who walks right in.

ROY

Good afternoon, Mr. Howe.

LOUIS

Hello, Roy.

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

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

I've done no such thing.

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

I'm not going.

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

LOUIS

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

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

LOUIS

Ever hear of a Civil War General
named Francis Nicholls?

FRANKLIN

No.

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

He was a war hero.

LOUIS

(with emphasis)

Twice.

(a beat)

Look, I've worked like a dog to
keep your name in play, grovelling
at the feet of the powers-that-be
in back rooms.

FRANKLIN

As much for you as for me.

LOUIS

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

126 EXT. COTTAGE - AFTERNOON

126

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

LOUIS

Your turn.

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

127 INT. COTTAGE - CONTINUING

127

ELEANOR

Roy, so good to see you.

ROY

Very good to see you, Mrs.
Roosevelt.

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

ELEANOR

You're a mess.

FRANKLIN

The report. I'll never...

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

ELEANOR

Oh my darling...

FRANKLIN

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

ELEANOR

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

Finally, his sobs subside.

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

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

ELEANOR
 Let's get you in the water.

128 EXT. THE POOL - DAY

128

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

ELLIOT
 Hi, Pop!

FRANKLIN
 (squinting)
 Who's that?

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

FRANKLIN
 Elliot!

ELLIOT
 Come on! You getting in?

Louis and Helena approach the pool.

FRANKLIN
 I sense a conspiracy.

LOUIS
 You ain't seen nothin' yet.

Franklin smiles, warily.

129 EXT. A CLEARING - DAY

129

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

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

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

FRANKLIN

What?

HELENA

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

FRANKLIN

How is that possible?

HELENA

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

ELLIOT

Think this may work, Pop.

HELENA

Eleanor, take the crutch.

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

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

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

HELENA

(to Franklin)

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

He does so.

HELENA

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

FRANKLIN

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

HELENA

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

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

HELENA
(ever the taskmaster)
Elliot, don't lean in -- stand up
straight. Pull against him. He
needs you!

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

FRANKLIN
I can't.

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

HELENA
You can do this, Franklin! Keep
going!

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

LOUIS
(under his breath)
I'll be damned.

Franklin stops, exhausted.

ELEANOR
Franklin, are you all right?

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

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

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

FRANKLIN
I know, I know.

HELENA
I know it's not practical --

FRANKLIN

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

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

130

EXT. GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

130

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

HELENA

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

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

ELOISE

Why is he working so hard to hide it?

JAKE

He doesn't have a choice.

ELOISE

Oh, I disagree.

JAKE

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

ELOISE

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

PAT

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

JAKE

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

Franklin, getting closer, raises his cane in greeting.

FRANKLIN

Good afternoon, everyone!

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

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

HELENA

Take a moment to catch your breath...

FRANKLIN

Damn. You okay son?

ELLIOT

I'm fine, Pop.

DAISY

You fell down.

FRANKLIN

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

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

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

131 INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

131

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

FRANKLIN

(reading aloud)

And so America must find...

(reconsidering)

No, America needs a pathfinder...

Louis, pacing in shirtsleeves, nods approvingly.

LOUIS

That's good.

FRANKLIN

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

Discouraged, Franklin pushes aside the pages.

LOUIS

What is it? What's wrong?

FRANKLIN

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

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

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

(a beat)

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

LOUIS

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

FRANKLIN

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

ELEANOR

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

132

EXT. MERIWETHER INN - MORNING

132

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

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

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

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

FRED

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

FRANKLIN

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

(a beat)

I am proud more than you will ever know to be part of this community.

(his voice growing stronger)

A community based not on birthright or privilege, but on compassion and courage. The true power of these waters is that they brought us all together. Our ability to help one another is what will make our victory over polio endure. Our ability to survive... despite the odds.

Franklin looks out at the sea of faces.

FRANKLIN

What we have done and will continue to do until this disease is defeated is come together -- like a family -- and do what we do best...

(his voice breaking)

Lift each other up.

Franklin starts the car as the crowd begins to disperse. Then, spying Helena, Franklin calls out to her.

FRANKLIN

Miss Mahoney I need to speak with you, please.

HELENA

Sure, Doc.

Off her smile, Franklin reaches into his pocket and withdraws a small box.

FRANKLIN

Thank you.

He hands it to Helena. She just stares at it, at a loss for words.

FRANKLIN

Open it.

She does so, tentatively, revealing a ladies watch.

HELENA
It's beautiful.

FRANKLIN
Don't wear it in the pool.

HELENA
I'll try not to. Good luck,
Franklin.

FRANKLIN
I'm throwing myself to the wolves.

HELENA
You've faced worse. And if they
bite, you can come back here.

FRANKLIN
I'll always come back here.

Helena steps away and Franklin pulls out and down the driveway.

CUT TO:

133 INT. HOUSTON TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

133

Dark and deserted Roy is carrying Franklin down a flight of stairs. Louis is hastily checking over his shoulder. If possible, Eleanor appears even more nervous than Louis.

FRANKLIN
You're being superstitious, Louis.
There aren't any reporters here.

Suddenly out of the darkness a FLASHBULB POPS revealing a dozen or more REPORTERS staring incomprehensibly at the sight of a six foot, 200 lb. man being carried like a baby in the arms of a black man.

No one does or says a thing. The PHOTOGRAPHER who had the wherewithal to snap the one picture raises his camera to take another.

But DAN REED, a reporter for The New York Herald Tribune and a gentle giant at over six foot-four, reaches out and places a massive hand over the lens.

Slowly, but firmly, he pulls the camera down.

REED
(quietly)
No.

Louis and Eleanor stand stock still, tense, watching the scene unfold

Roy is sweating; his arms growing weak. Elliot brings the chair around and Roy gently lowers Franklin into it.

It's a measure of Reed's standing with this group that his authority is unquestioned.

But the Photographer raises his camera again. Only now Reed isn't as kind. He grabs the camera from him and opens the back, pulling out the film and exposing it.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Hey!

REED

(tipping his hat)

Good to see you, Mr. Roosevelt.

FRANKLIN

Thank you.

134 INT. CONVENTION HALL - HOUSTON - NIGHT

134

The enormous arena is empty but for some maintenance WORKERS and JANITORS. Louis enters and makes his way to the stage.

He approaches dead center and stands behind the podium looking out. GRIPPING the podium hard he ROCKS it back and forth.

Taking no chances, he pulls a hammer out from the rear of his waistband and a bunch of nails from his coat pocket.

Looking around to see if anyone is paying any attention to him he quickly ducks down behind the podium.

The sound of HAMMERING fills the hall as Louis, on his knees, NAILS the podium to the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

135 INT. CONVENTION HALL - DAY

135

Twenty thousand CONVENTIONEERS are roasting in the hall. It is Houston in the summer and it's broiling hot. A sea of hand-held red, white and blue fans are being waved all at once -- most bearing the words "SMITH FOR PRESIDENT."

Near the stage is a long table where the new breed of RADIO REPORTERS are seated, each in front of a primitive looking microphone.

Hovering in a group off to the side are Dan Reed and the REPORTERS from the previous night.

136

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUING

136

Franklin is standing ramrod straight holding onto Elliot's arm. He looks handsome in a navy pin-striped suit. As everyone else is sweating no one notices that Franklin is perspiring more than most.

FRANKLIN

Where is she seated?

Louis, a human train wreck himself, reaches over to mop Franklin's brow with a handkerchief.

LOUIS

In a box stage left. Give me your hand.

Franklin takes his hand off his cane. It's soaking wet. Louis wipes it, gently.

FRANKLIN

Louis, what the hell am I doing?

LOUIS

Putting your big toe in the water.

Just then, a VOICE booms out from the loudspeakers:

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce to you a man who as Assistant Secretary of the Navy served our country with distinction. A member of an illustrious family of long-standing political commitment to our great nation... Ladies and gentlemen: Franklin Delano Roosevelt!

Franklin turns to Elliot and they both take deep breaths.

FRANKLIN

(to Elliot)

Let's go.

The curtains part and they begin moving forward.

137 INT. THE STAGE OF THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION - CONTINUING 137

A BLINDING SPOTLIGHT picks up Franklin and Elliot. The SPOTLIGHT follows them as they make their way to the podium.

Franklin is hitching each leg forward, slowly. The tip of his cane hits the floor with pinpoint accuracy for balance and support.

He leans heavily on Elliot's arm. The walk appears effortless.

He chats with Elliot the whole way, still managing to flash the CONVENTIONEERS his million dollar smile. But the walk is slow and the ovation is beginning to fade.

138 INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUING 138

Louis stands in the wings clutching the curtain with one hand and covering his eyes with the other.

139 INT. DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION BOX - CONTINUING 139

Eleanor sits looking down at her lap, afraid to even breathe.

140 INT. THE STAGE - CONTINUING 140

Franklin and Elliot are still ten steps away from the podium. Sensing the crowd noise weakening, he whispers to Elliot.

FRANKLIN

Laugh as if I'm making a joke.

Elliot throws back his head and laughs. The crowd, wanting to be in on it, rise as one in a sustained CHEER!

But a puddle of sweat caused by the dripping perspiration from Franklin's hands is causing the tip of his cane to slip.

Elliot, ever aware, grips him tighter, averting disaster and finally they reach the podium.

Franklin grabs one side of the podium while Elliot, with a sleight of hand Houdini would admire, LOCKS his father's braces, whisks the cane away, pulls his father's speech from his breast pocket and lays it smoothly on the podium.

THE VIEW FROM BEHIND displays how Franklin's legs are spread wide for stability as he clutches the podium. He holds on tightly, as if the wood might snap from his grip.

FROM OUT FRONT the crowd sees only a powerful man standing tall amidst the flashbulbs POPPING.

Franklin has made it. He is home.

141 INT. MERIWETHER INN - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS 141

All the denizens of Warm Springs are crowded around the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Here on the stage is Franklin
Roosevelt... a figure tall and
proud even in suffering; a face of
classic profile; a frame nervous
and yet self-controlled. A man
softened, cleansed and illumined
with pain.

142 INT. WARWICK HOTEL, HOUSTON - SMITH'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS 142

GOVERNOR AL SMITH, 51, is seated by a radio, surrounded by
CRONIES. An overblown Irishman with gold capped teeth and
heavy New York accent. He chomps on a lit cigar that never
leaves the side of his mouth.

CRONY #1

Hell of an ovation, Al. Couldn't
have asked for anything more.

Smith sits silently puffing on his cigar.

CRONY #2

You may have to be careful though.
Looks like you're raising up a rival.

SMITH

(after a beat)

Mark my words. He'll be dead in a year.

143 INT. DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION BOX - CONTINUING 143

Eleanor applauds Franklin as a REPORTER leans in.

REPORTER

Mrs. Roosevelt, one last question.

ELEANOR

Yes?

REPORTER

Do you think polio has affected
your husband's mind?

ELEANOR

(smiling)

Yes, I do. I certainly do.

144 INT. CONVENTION STAGE - CONTINUOUS 144

Franklin stands before the crowd. His magnetism is incontestable. He radiates infinite possibility.

He looks up to Eleanor's box and they smile at one another as the crowd continues to applaud.

DISSOLVE TO:

145 EXT. WARM SPRINGS - DAY 145

The mineral springs gently ripple as Franklin appears in the water. As the following words appear on the screen, Franklin slowly and confidently swims out of frame.

CRAWL

Four years later, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President of the United States. He was elected three more times -- unprecedented in U.S. History.

During his years as President, he saw the country through the Great Depression and a world war waged on six continents.

On April 12, 1945, in the thirteenth year of his presidency, at the age of sixty-three, Franklin Roosevelt died in his cottage at Warm Springs.

The beneficiary of his \$562,000 life insurance policy was Warm Springs... which continues to flourish as a rehabilitation center to this day.