

Isaiah

21.

INT. EMPLOYEES' QUARTERS - ISAIAH'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

CLOSE ON - Isaiah sleeping when a SHARPIE comes INTO FRAME writing the letters B...M...E...H above his upper lip. Isaiah wakes with a start to see...

ISAIAH
President Graves...

...President Graves sitting beside him, chair standing up, not having slept, with a delirious smile, pocketing the Sharpie.

GRAVES
Wakey, wakey eggs and bakey.

Something is way off. Graves leans forward, a Halliburton ALUMINUM BRIEFCASE in his lap, eyes wild, whispering...

GRAVES
Bring your car around back. We're slipping out today.

ISAIAH
Your Secret Service detail?

GRAVES
Fuck 'em. You in?

Isaiah catches a glimpse of the letters drawn above his upper lip in the sidetable mirror. Alarmed, he touches his mouth.

ISAIAH
Sir, what -- what's this...?!

GRAVES
Holding the pledge. Been doing it since my Alpha Sigma Phi days. It's what's always done to get into my inner circle. Wear the letters for two days without washing them off. You understand? Show me you really want in this thing. That I can trust you.

(Isaiah nods)
Good. Now don't be an asshole and pull your car around back.

EXT. ROUTE 85 - SOON AFTER

Isaiah's Prius speeds by us leaving Santa Fe.

GRAVES (V.O.)
So you really must have some Jew in you, driving around in this thing.

1/9

Sc 1

Start →

INT. PRIUS - MOVING - DAWN

President Graves, out of place in the small car, sits beside a nervous Isaiah driving through the high desert.

ISAIAH

It's a Prius. "Clean energy" was a huge part of your campaign.

GRAVES

That was all just hippie heroine I injected into the bloodstream to secure my independent base since I was being primaried to my left by that whore Bod Dole.

(looking around car)

These things don't make any sound. I don't trust anything I can't hear. We need some noise.

2/9

Graves turns on the music to some '70s southern rock then lights a cigarette. Isaiah coughs, rolling down his window.

ISAIAH

So, where exactly am I going?

GRAVES

Take the 85 all the way to the 285... I'll tell you from there.

ISAIAH

I'd just like to say, for the record, I am very uncomfortable with this - it's, without a doubt, a fireable offense which, on my second day, would be a record.

GRAVES

Two days? That Pakistani, right before you, lasted all of three hours.

ISAIAH

I'm sure this Pakistani had a *name*. You know, I think I'm just going to call Mrs. Graves. I *have* to.

Isaiah takes his iPhone out with one hand, starting to dial.

GRAVES

Relax for godssake.

Graves snatches the iPhone - goes to throw it out the window.

ISAIAH

No, no, no! Please! I just upgraded! Like a week ago!

GRAVES
You gonna man up?!

ISAIAH
Yes! I won't call her! I promise!

Graves tosses the phone down again, then suddenly...

GRAVES
Oh, shit. I used to love this
song.

He cranks up Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Simple Man," singing...

GRAVES (CONT'D)
*Forget your lust for the rich man's
gold. All that you need is in your
soul...*

Isaiah reels. Graves, blustery, croak-sings as they head
through the miles of WIND FARMS, in the desert --

INT. PRIUS - MOVING - DAY

Graves is staring out as the desert turns to mountains, eyes
fixated forward, gripping his aluminum briefcase.

GRAVES
Take the 68 up ahead.

Isaiah nods, then after a self-conscious moment, takes a
PHOTO from his jacket pocket.

ISAIAH
I wanted to show you this.

Graves takes a PHOTO from Isaiah. Isaiah is THREE YEARS OLD
and chubby as Young Graves kisses him at a campaign stop.

ISAIAH
That's me. I was one of those
babies you kissed at a campaign
stop - my mom worked for the local
"Graves For President" office in
Orlando. She always loved you, sir
- we had the lawn signs, she worked
the phone banks, went door-to-door
for you. My dad left before I was
born - I never really even had a
picture of him so, growing up, when
things got really tough... I sort
of always came back to this picture
of you holding me up. Your smile.
In a weird way it made me feel like
I belonged to something, to
someone.

3/9

After a long beat of looking at the photo...

GRAVES

You are the fattest goddamned baby
I think I've ever seen. I remember
the hernia you gave me after I
picked you up for this photo, that
I remember.

ISAIAH

(softer)

I had a bit of thyroid issue.

GRAVES

A bit?

Isaiah, now embarrassed, veers through the trees. Graves
glances down at the photo, for a moment, quietly touched.

4/9

end

EXT. TAOS, NEW MEXICO - DAY

The Prius drives through this destination mountain town
bordered by ranches and the Pueblo. Graves stares forward,
eyes distant. Isaiah, excited, smiles, realizing...

ISAIAH

Taos? This is where we were born.

GRAVES

No shit. Take a left at the light.

They round a corner, up to the... GRAVES PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY
AND CULTURAL CENTER - a concrete and glass complex, like the
model. A life-size BRONZE STATUE of Richard Graves, as a
young cattle wrangler beside his horse, stands out front.

GRAVES

Go around back.

EXT. GUARD BOOTH - GRAVES PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY - SOON AFTER

Isaiah drives up to the GUARD BOOTH at the back of the
library. The blue collar SECURITY GUARD leans in.

SECURITY GUARD

Sir, we're closed on Mondays.

Isaiah rolls down the window, self-conscious, hand covering
the letters above his lip. The guard is confused.

ISAIAH

I have a special guest.

The guard bends down seeing... Graves in the passenger seat.

Scaled

25.

GRAVES
Afternoon, Freddy.

SECURITY GUARD
President Graves...?

INT. GRAVES PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY - DAY

Graves, holding his aluminum briefcase, and Isaiah walk through the cavernous concrete space. Their footsteps echo.

Fifty-foot partitions rise up creating a maze-like, interactive experience, taking one through the Graves presidency.

Graves looks at a blow-up of the WHITE HOUSE. A flash of primal fear washes over him.

GRAVES
(hushed)
That house. Those rooms. All that was done... that can't be undone.

He continues on as if walking through a haunted house, Isaiah behind him, moving through the exhibits:

President Graves's MARINE ONE CHOPPER -- a replica of his OVAL OFFICE -- a PHOTO MURAL of the moment he was shot by MARTIN TREADWELL, caught by a photographer, Graves's face wincing in agony, SECRET SERVICEMEN diving for Treadwell --

GRAVES
Shot me three times... bullets went straight through.

They pass a COLLAGE of young President Graves, Margaret and Young Olivia holding her younger BROTHER'S hand.

ISAIAH
Your son, Jeremy. He's in Afghanistan, isn't he?
(no response)
I read about his tour - all his medals. A real hero.

Still nothing. Isaiah smiles looking at a blow-up of YOUNG JEREMY GRAVES in a Boy Scout uniform.

ISAIAH
To be truthful and a total nerd about it, when I was a kid, Jeremy's national Boy Scout campaign really inspired me. I joined because of him - got over 100 merit badges. 102 to be exact.

Graves turns to Isaiah, not having heard a word.

Start

5/9

GRAVES

Huh?

ISAIAH

Nothing, sir.

They move on. Isaiah nods as Graves stops, looking up at a 50 FOOT mural of Graves done by NATIVE AMERICAN CHILDREN.

ISAIAH

It's so impressive in person, I --

GRAVES

Would you *please* stop talking.

Isaiah nods. Graves, tension building, continues on through BLOWN UP PHOTOS of him as the younger president - meeting with WORLD LEADERS, in the WHITE HOUSE, being INAUGURATED.

He stops at a... GRANITE WALL, like the Vietnam Memorial, commemorating the thousands that died in the Libyan war he declared and fought for eight years. He takes it in.

GRAVES

So many...

(pained)

These were kids...

He touches the etched names. Isaiah stops beside him.

GRAVES

And for what...? I don't even remember. Not really. It's like the book you read in school... you remember the main characters and generalities but not the small things... the details... the *why* of it. I sent them to be slaughtered so I could scratch a military itch on our country's back that still, decades later, we can't reach.

ISAIAH

(whispering)

Permission to speak?

Graves, foggy, turns to Isaiah.

ISAIAH

You saved alot of lives, Mr. President. In Libya. During my debate class, in tenth grade, I argued your pre-emptive action was the only humane choice. You had to do what you did, sir. It was genocide there.

Graves turns back to the wall of American soldiers' names...

end

6/9

Scene 3

33.

GRAVES

I've done some really, really terrible things.

SAMANTHA

(lights joint)

So now go do some really, really good things.

GRAVES

At my age? Not sure I have more than five good years left.

SAMANTHA

Five... fucking... awesome years.

He can't help but smile. She takes a hit, holding it in...

SAMANTHA

You have young eyes in that old face.

7/9

~~INT. SAMANTHA'S TRAILER - SAME~~

Isaiah, in Samantha's messy trailer, is grabbing Doritos and Twinkies, losing it.

ISAIAH

This is soooo bad.

Start ▸

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DESERT MESA - MOMENTS LATER

Isaiah, arms filled with snacks, exits the trailer - he looks to see Graves and Samantha are not around the fire.

ISAIAH

President Graves?
(they are gone)
Oh no... oh, Jesus...

He drops the food, spinning around as the WIND picks up. He spots... a FEW ROCKERS coming out of a TRAILER, a couple down from Samantha's. They are tattooed and pierced desert rats.

ISAIAH

Excuse me...?! Hello!

HELLER, 30s, the intense bearded leader of the pack, turns to see Isaiah running up to him.

ISAIAH

Sorry to bother you. Funniest thing, well not so funny. Did you see a tall man in a hoodie leave --

HELLER

With Sammy? Yeah. They took off.

ISAIAH

Took off? WHEN?! I didn't hear them take off!

DESERT RAT

That's 'cuz they were in a Prius.

Isaiah spots an old beat up TRUCK painted black with legalize pot and socialist bumper stickers all over it. Turns back.

ISAIAH

I need help.

EXT. SANTA FE - NIGHT

Heller's TRUCK cruises through Santa Fe's narrow streets.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

Isaiah, a frantic mess, is squashed between Heller, hitting a joint, and two other wasted DESERT RATS in the smoky cab.

HELLER

So, who's this guy with Sammy?

ISAIAH

Literally the most consequential person I could possibly lose.

DESERT RAT

I lost a vintage Fender guitar at this stripclub in Reno last summer.

ISAIAH

Not the same, Chaco. Trust me. My mother's going to kill me. I mean, you can't blame her, I'm an only child who she's convinced is going to be President of the United States one day and not like she thinks I can "do whatever I want if I put my mind to it," more like *literally* be the *actual* President and anything less would be a major disappointment. But, I dunno Chaco, it's probably my fault. Politics is the only thing I've been talking about since I was six and this was my first big break, working for my political GOD, but after today, I'm not sure I can HANDLE IT! ANY OF IT!

8/9

He takes a huge breath, turning to Chaco, calmer...

ISAIAH
It's hard when someone's put all
their eggs into one basket and
you're the basket.

Chaco glares at him blankly. Isaiah, with a sigh, gazes out
as WIND blows sagebrush across the Santa Fe street.

ISAIAH
You know what. Just drop me off at
the edge of town.

end

EXT. GOLF COURSE - SANTA FE - NIGHT

Wind blows across the golf course where... Samantha, like a
gypsy, spins ahead of President Graves who, high, walks
barefoot, arms out in the wind. He tears at his shirt.

9/9

GRAVES
This place is so goddamn hot...
even at night...

Graves takes off his shirt, revealing THREE BULLET SCARS in
his shoulder above his heart. He stops. Samantha approaches
him, head cocked, looking at his scars.

SAMANTHA
I'd forgotten you were shot. They
taught us that in history class.
(touching the scars)
Did it hurt?

Graves's blood shot eyes search for the answer, then...

GRAVES
I don't remember.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT ROAD - GRAVES COMPOUND - NIGHT

Isaiah trudges down the dark, windy desert road. He squints
as the desert wind swirls around him, blowing DUST in his
face - a TUMBLEWEED flies at him...

ISAIAH
SHIT!

...getting caught on and ripping his suit. He SCREAMS in
frustration, approaching the Graves compound. Sees a LIMO.