

"TILDEN"

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FADE IN

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

VARIOUS CUTS: OPENING Establishing the 1876 time period with EXTRAS in costume going about their daily business in a New York City, Fifth Avenue Hotel with a campaign poster of Rutherford Hayes for President, Everett House with a campaign poster of Samuel.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NEWSPAPER ROW - TIMES BUILDING - NIGHT

EXTRAS - HORSE and CARRIAGE DRIVERS mulling around outside. JOHN REID rides to the curb and dismounts from his horse. He walks toward the New York Times building entrance.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - NY TIMES NEWSROOM - NIGHT

John Reid, enters the room holding a pad of paper. JOHN FOORD, Editor and Chief and CHARLES H Miller review election results by the blackboard. John Reid walks toward them, picks up a piece of chalk and stares at the map for a moment.

SUPERED: November 7, 1876, 10 p.m. - New York Times Editors office, John C. Reid, Newsroom Editor, John Foord, Editor and Chief, Charles H. Miller, Editor.

JOHN REID

Damn Dirty Democrats have won this
for Tilden.

JOHN FOORD

His majority is strong.

INSERT: Hand written on the blackboard - "Tilden - 4,300,316 - Hayes, 4,036,016 - Majority for Tilden - 264,300.

BACK ON SCENE:

Reid goes to a map on the wall and takes his pen out of his pocket and writes a question mark over the states of South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana. He hands off a suggested

headline he has in his hand to John Foord. Charles Miller leans over Foord's shoulder to read it.

CHARLES MILLER

(Annoyed)

You can't be serious? His supporters will go berserk.

JOHN REID

It'll create some confusion and give me time to talk to the Republicans.

CHARLES MILLER

And say what exactly?

JOHN REID

It will sell lots of papers.

CHARLES MILLER

It will make us look like fools.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK TIMES - PRESS ROOM - NIGHT

MEN stack the newspapers rolling off the presses.

INSERT: Newspaper with headline, "A Doubtful Election"

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK - ELECTION POLL - DAY

SUPERED: Earlier that day.

It's cold, damp and rainy. About mid morning, New York Governor SAMUEL TILDEN, dressed in his best black suit with a red flower in the buttonhole walks out to the sidewalk where a CROWD is waiting to greet him. Tilden's a wealthy educated railroad lawyer, who is soft spoken, thin and frail figured man in his early sixties with slight graying at his temples. His thin light brown hair parted on the left frames his face neatly and steel blue eyes. His right eye noticeably droops from Ptosis. Tilden climbs into a horse carriage and asks his CARRIAGE DRIVER to take him to his campaign headquarters.

SAMUEL

Everett House.

CARRIAGE DRIVER

Yes Sir.

Obviously displeased with the nasty weather conditions Samuel's coach driver works his way slowly through and away from the crowd lining the street.

INT. OHIO - RUTHERFORD HAYES HOME - DAY

RUTHERFORD HAYES sitting at his desk. He writes in his diary.

SUPERED: Election day - Rutherford B. Hayes writes in his diary.

RUTHERFORD HAYES (VO)

November 7, 1876. "A cold but dry day. Good enough here for election work. I still think Democratic chances the best. But it is not possible to form a confident opinion. If we lose, the South will be the greatest sufferer. Their misfortune will be far greater than ours. I do not think a revival of business will be greatly postponed by Tilden's election. Business prosperity does not, in my judgment, depend on government so much as men commonly think. But we shall have no improvement in civil service - deterioration rather, and the South will drift towards chaos again.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - EVERETT HOUSE - STREET - DAY

Tilden's carriage driver halts the horses as close as he can to the street entrance of the Everett House Campaign headquarters, in the midst of a CROWD of hundreds of well wishers that have stood in the foul weather for hours holding Tilden campaign signs. Samuel, steps out of the carriage onto the street and works his way through the crowd, shaking hands and offering his gratitude for their support. Many in the crowd wave their hats and handkerchiefs. Samuel exits into the building.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - EVERETT HOUSE - HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Once inside Samuel greets and extends his appreciation to his CAMPAIGN WORKERS scattered throughout the room counting votes. There is a large tally board, on the wall.

Samuel walks toward the board and is quickly greeted by his nephew WILLIAM PELTON and other campaign managers, JOHN BIGELOW, DAN MAGONE, and Congressman ABRAM HEWITT.

WILLIAM PELTON

You looked like you were having a good time with the crowd uncle.

SAMUEL

I was -

JOHN BIGELOW

The numbers look favorable. Bets are running one-hundred to eighty in your favor."

DAN MAGONE

We suspect a landslide.

ABRAM HEWITT

Telegrams are telling of victory every minute. None of us doubt it.

SAMUEL

Has anyone wired Hayes in Ohio and told him the good news?

The men all laugh out loud.

EXT. OHIO - HAYES HOME - STREET - DAY

It's early in the evening and hundreds of HAYES SUPPORTERS stand by the path entrance. They chant his name and hold their campaign signs in the air. The beauty of the colorful red, burnt orange and gold autumn maple, oak and birch leaves swirl and dance in the wind while they make their descent to the ground over the people.

HAYES SUPPORTERS

Hayes, Hayes, Hayes.

SUPERED: Estate of Ohio Governor Rutherford B. Hayes. His first elected office was while he was still in the army and he didn't want the job: "An officer fit for duty who, at this crisis, would abandon his post to electioneer for a seat in Congress ought to be scalped."

SUPERED: At the conclusion of the war and thus the end of his military obligations, Hayes served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1865-1867. After leaving Washington he was elected governor of Ohio, where he served two separate terms, not consecutively.

INT. OHIO - HAYES HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

LUCY HAYES tries with all the courage she can muster to hold back her tears of disappointment. Senator W. T. SHERMAN of Ohio, Rutherford Hayes and some OTHER GUESTS have gathered. All are glum.

RUTHERFORD HAYES

There, there Lucy. It was not meant to be.

LUCY HAYES

It's shameful. You are more suited for the Presidency than Tilden. What about all those poor colored folks in the South? Who will tend to their needs?" Wouldn't you agree Senator Sherman?"

W. T. SHERMAN

Yes Mam'.

RUTHERFORD HAYES

I'm confident Tilden will do right by them.

Lucy moves away from Rutherford and walks toward the

STAIRS

LUCY HAYES

Please excuse me. I feel I am becoming ill.

She continues her up the stairs. Hayes watches her for a brief moment and turns his gaze to the floor.

RUTHERFORD HAYES

It seems we Republicans had little hope for success this time.

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK - TILDEN MANSION - NIGHT

HUNDREDS OF TILDEN SUPPORTERS congest the streets and wave their campaign signs while they wait for Tilden's arrival. REPORTERS hand scribble notes in their pads. John Reid stands amongst them and observes the crowd.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MARY PELTON, watches the crowd from the window with a few of her closest friends and family. SARAH, SUSAN, SOCIALITE 1 AND SOCIALITE 2. GEORGE SMITH, Samuel's private secretary is a few feet away seated at his desk.

MARY
So many people.

SUSAN
Grandmother - this event is
astonishing.

MARY
He ate very little breakfast this
morning.

SARAH
Who could eat at a time like this.

Mary walks away from the window and calls out to George Smith.

MARY
George, are you all right in there?

GEORGE SMITH
I could use some help organizing
all these telegrams.

MARY
Susan, would you?

SUSAN
Of course grandmother.

Susan walks over to George and picks up some of the telegrams that have fallen to the floor.

Several BUTLERS and MAIDS walk in and out of the

DINING ROOM

As they prepare a dinner buffet. Mary, walks back to the

WINDOW

MARY
This rain is miserable.

SARAH
A little drizzle won't melt them

Mary.

SOCIALITE 2

I want to be the first to dance
with him at the Inaugural Ball.

SARAH

After me you will.

Mary pushes back the window curtain a little further and the
women move in closer.

MARY

I wish our parents were here to see
this.

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK - STREET - NIGHT

MORE PEOPLE flock in to the celebration. Samuel's carriage
driver works the horse and carriage carefully through the
crowd. On the back of the carriage opposite Samuel, are two
SOLDIERS dressed in uniform. They jump off the carriage and
move people back to open the street for the carriage.

CARRIAGE DRIVER

Coming through. Make room for
Governor Tilden... I mean President
Tilden.

The crowd cheers.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mary moves away from the window toward the

DINING ROOM

And inspects the buffet table and food.

MARY

He must be famished.

Sarah walks to Mary, takes her by the hand and leads her
toward the

FRONT ENTRANCE

SARAH

Come Mary...This is a big moment
for you and your brother.

Mary glances over at George Smith and Susan.

MARY

I suppose you are right. Come
Susan, Mr. Smith - all of us should
be outside.

EXT. TILDEN MANSION - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Sarah, Mary, George Smith. Susan and the Socialites join in
the fun and wave their handkerchiefs back at the crowd.

STREET

Samuel steps out of the carriage and the CROWD cheers.

SOLIDER 1

Step back please! Make room for our
President elect.

The two soldiers proceed to clear a path through the people
for a Samuel to walk through. Samuel shakes peoples hands as
he walks toward the

FRONT PORCH

Samuel climbs the stairs and kisses Mary on the cheek.

SAMUEL

We did it.

MARY

You did it dear brother. We all are
so proud of you.

Sarah, whispers in Mary's ear.

SARAH

This is the most exciting day of my
life.

Samuel greets the other ladies by taking each of their hands.
He turns and waves to the boisterous crowd then exits into
the house with the ladies and George Smith.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SAMUEL

Wires Mr. Smith?

GEORGE SMITH
Hundreds of them.

CROWD (VO)
Til-den, Til-den, Til-den.

SAMUEL
I'm famished.

SUSAN
Grandmother said you would be.
She's has a beautiful buffet in
dining room.

SAMUEL
Put the work down for now Mr. Smith
and lets all go get something to
eat.

EXT. TILDEN MANSION- STREET - NIGHT

John Reid still with the other reporters writes notes in his
pad. A SPECTATOR nudges him.

SPECTATOR (TO REID)
Isn't it exciting?

JOHN REID
(sarcastic)
He hasn't won yet.

SPECTATOR
Of course he has. All the
newspapers are reporting it.

JOHN REID
He has the popular...but it is
still doubtful.

SPECTATOR
What do you mean doubtful? He won
by a landslide.

Reid turns from the Spectator and walks toward his HORSE that
is tied to a hitching post. He mounts his steed and trots off
down the road.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - TILDEN MANSION -DINING ROOM- NIGHT

Samuel, Sarah, Mary, Susan. George and the other socialite
ladies are seated around the buffet table eating. Their

chatter is boisterous. The telegram machine is heard in the background and clicks non-stop. William Pelton, John Bigelow, George Smith and Abram Hewitt enter the room and move toward the few empty chairs at the table.

SAMUEL

Welcome gentlemen...Sit, have a bite to eat.

SARAH

Poor Mr. Hayes - He never stood a chance against you.

SAMUEL

The Ohio Governor was a worthy opponent.

MARY

He may be worthy, dear brother, but he was no match for your popularity with the voters.

SARAH

(to Samuel)

I have a lively new pink silk and will wear it for your Inaugural Ball... I claim the first dance with you.

Samuel flushes and places his arm around Mary and gives her a gentle squeeze. She looks at him and grins.

SAMUEL

I'd be honored Sarah.

MARY

(To Samuel)

You are popular with all the ladies Mr. President.

Samuel rolls his eyes at his sister and she leans into him and kisses him on the cheek. William walks over and leans into Samuel's ear. The ladies are busy chattering amongst themselves.

WILLIAM PELTON

Mother looks tired Uncle.

SAMUEL

(lowered voice)

She's had a long day William - entertaining the ladies so she can marry me off.

MARY
(lowered voice)
I have made no such effort.

SAMUEL
Uh - huh.

MARY
(lowered voice)
Perhaps you should marry...Sara
would make a wonderful First Lady."

SAMUEL
(lowered voice)
Be that as it may dear sister but,
she does not make my heart thump.

Samuel puts his hand to his heart to imitate a heart thump.

MARY
(lowered voice)
Make your heart thump? If you are
in dire need to have your heart
thump before you marry, dear
brother - may I suggest you try
running quickly up and down the
stairs a few times.

Mary pushes back her chair and stands.

SAMUEL
Where are you going?

MARY
Ladies tea and dessert in the
parlor.

The ladies push back their chairs, stand and follow Mary out
of the room. William Pelton, John Bigelow, George Smith and
Abram Hewitt change seats to move closer to Samuel.

WILLIAM PELTON
Does she know you mean to give her
the position as your Hostess?

SAMUEL
Not yet...I keep telling her my
work leaves me with no time for a
wife.

John Bigelow bangs on his glass with his fork and raises his
champagne glass.

JOHN BIGELOW

A toast...to my best friend and
confidant -our newly elected
President!

EXT - GRAMERCY PARK - STREET - NIGHT

The spectators cheer and chant Tilden's name.

CROWD IN STREET
Tilden, Tilden, Tilden.

The reporters continue to write in their pads. REPORTER 1
leans into REPORTER 2.

REPORTER 1 NYC
John Reid from the Times says the
election is still in doubt.

REPORTER 2 NYC
Wishful thinking on his part. He
and the Times editors despise the
Democrats.

REPORTER 1 NYC
The Governor took down Boss Tweed
and reformed the Canal Ring.

REPORTER 2 NYC
Reid's bitter and hates all
Democrats. He blames them for his
wartime stint in Anderson prison.

REPORTER 1 NYC
The Times can print whatever they
want...Tilden's got the victory.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NEWSPAPER ROW - NIGHT

Establishing shots. Zoom in on New York Times five story
building.

SUPERED: New York Times Building - Eleven P.M.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES - PRESS ROOM - NIGHT

John Reid, John Foord, EDWARD CARY and other REPORTERS are at
their desks in the newsroom. John Reid stands and walks
toward the blackboard where the election results are posted.

A MESSENGER enters the room and hands Reid a note. Reid unfolds the paper and reads it silently, then holds the note in the air for the others to see.

JOHN REID

This is from the Democratic
Chairman Barnum of Connecticut.
He's asking what news we have on
the count.

JOHN FOORD

He's probably checking with all the
newspapers.

JOHN REID

Don't you see? - the Democrats are
in doubt...We owe it to the
Republicans to stall even if just
for a day.

JOHN FOORD

How are you going to stall the news
that Hayes lost by over two-hundred
fifty thousands votes?

JOHN REID

The worse that can happen is other
news organizations will question
our source.

Reid scribbles the headline on a note pad and holds it up for
the others to read.

INSERT: A Doubtful Election.

BACK ON SCENE

Another MESSENGER comes in and hands off a telegram to Edward
Cary and leaves. Edward reads the message while Reid stands
at the blackboard and studies the returns by state.

EDWARD CARY

Abram Hewitt is inquiring too. What
is our response?

Reid takes an eraser and wipes off the numbers below the
Hayes and Tilden's columns under the states of Florida, South
Carolina and Louisiana and chinks in question marks in the
blank spaces.

JOHN REID

One moment...Tell them Tilden has
won by none.

EDWARD CARY
Are you serious?

JOHN REID
It's worth a try.

Edward Cary takes a moment to review the numbers on the board.

EDWARD CARY
I don't know if I'm ready to put my reputation or the paper's on the line for a stunt.

JOHN REID
Tilden is still shy by one Electoral vote.

Reid hurriedly walks away from Edward Cary toward his desk to retrieve his coat. He puts it on and walks back across the newsroom floor. Annoyed, Edward Cary checks his watch for the time.

EDWARD CARY
Where are you going at this hour?

JOHN REID
I must find Chairman Chandler and tell him...Use the Doubtful Election headline.

EDWARD CARY
Chandler will think you're insane?

JOHN REID
Maybe so, but he should at least be made aware of the discrepancy.

Reid walks toward the door to exit.

JOHN REID (cont'd)
I'll change his mind about conceding.

EDWARD CARY
It's the middle of the night John.
He'll be asleep.

JOHN REID
Then I shall wake him...

SUPERED: November 8, 1876: New York Times goes to press with a Editorial headline, "A Doubtful Election"

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - NIGHT

SUPERED: November 8, 1876, Fifth Avenue Hotel, Republican Headquarters.

John Reid rides his horse to the front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, dismounts and hitches the reins to a post and scurries into the hotel.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

John Reid walks fast through the empty lobby past the front desk. There are TWO HOTEL CLERKS working and at first, neither takes notice of John, but the older of the two clerks' looks up and glances at Reid as he passes by. The older clerk raises his eyebrow, and glances at the clock mounted on the lobby wall. Reid continues his trek down the

HALL

To the

REPUBLICAN ELECTION NATIONAL COMMITTEE ROOM

He steps over papers strewn on the floor and finds servants cleaning and resetting the rooms tables and chairs. John Reid turns and walks into the

LOBBY

Sees WILLIAM CHANDLER a small man wearing an immense pair of goggles, his hat drawn down over his ears, a greatcoat with a heavy military cloak. He has a gripsack slung over his shoulder and a New York Tribune newspaper in his hand. He calls out to John.

SUPERED: William Chandler, Republican National Committee man from New Hampshire

WILLIAM CHANDLER
Mr. Reid is that you?

JOHN REID
Is that you Mr. Chandler?

WILLIAM CHANDLER
Yes, I have just arrived from New Hampshire by train.

William Chandler looks at him wearily, his eyes bloodshot

from lack of sleep and he holds up his newspaper.

WILLIAM CHANDLER

Have you seen the Tribune? It's a disaster. Damn the men who brought this disaster upon the Republican party.

INSERT: Tribune newspaper, November 8, 1876 "TILDEN VICTORY"

BACK ON SCENE

JOHN REID

The Republican Party has sustained no disaster. If you would only keep your heads up here there is no question of the election of President Hayes. He has been fairly and honestly elected.

WILLIAM CHANDLER

He has?

JOHN REID

Allow me to show you...

The two men sit at a desk and go over the results.

WILLIAM CHANDLER

It's iffy...What are you suggesting we do?

JOHN REID

Immediately telegraph the leading Republicans, men in authority in South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, California, Oregon, and Nevada.

WILLIAM CHANDLER

I cannot authorize this...We must go wake Zach.

The two men walk down the

HALL

And search for Zach's room.

WILLIAM CHANDLER

It's one of these rooms.

JOHN REID

I must speak with him...

William Chandler brushes off Reid's urgency.

WILLIAM CHANDLER
He's probably drunk and asleep.

JOHN REID
If I need his permission to send
wires to the Southern Republican
Party leaders then I must wake him.
The New York Times has not declared
Tilden's win and Hayes may still
have a chance if we hurry.

WILLIAM CHANDLER
Ah -think this is it.

William Chandler with the anxious John Reid behind him,
approaches Zach's hotel room door and knocks on the door.
William Chandler puts his face to the door.

WILLIAM CHANDLER (cont'd)
Zach...It's me...I need for you to
wake up.

HOTEL ROOM

ZACH CHANDLER lies on his bed dressed in a rumpled bed
nightshirt and cap, asleep. There's an empty whiskey bottle
next to his bed on the floor. He hears the knocking, stirs
and puts a pillow over his head.

SUPERED: Zachariah Chandler, Chairman Republican National
Executive Committee.

ZACH CHANDLER
(groggy)
Go away - I'm sleeping.

HOTEL HALLWAY

Reid joins William Chandler and helps with the door knocking.

WILLIAM CHANDLER
It's William. Please Zach - wake up
and answer the door. There is
important news concerning the
outcome of the election.

HOTEL ROOM

Zach, annoyed, struggles to get out of the bed and walks to
the door and peeks through the peephole.

ZACH CHANDLER

What is it?... And who is that with you?"

HOTEL HALLWAY

WILLIAM CHANDLER

John Reid the Managing Editor from the New York Times. He says he has news about the election.

ZACH CHANDLER (V.O.)

We lost dam it - go away.

Reid, gets impatient with the conversation through the closed door.

JOHN REID

Sorry to wake you Chairman - but the news I have may change the outcome of the election. Please sir can I come in and discuss this with you?

HOTEL ROOM

With an audible sigh, Zach fumbles with the door and opens it. He walks back toward his bed and motions with his hand for the men to enter. John Reid and William Chandler enter and stand just inside the door as Zach lies back down on the bed, placing an arm to cover his eyes from the light.

ZACH CHANDLER

What's so important that you woke me at this hour?

JOHN REID

Sir, there's a chance to turn the tables on Tilden to favor Hayes. After a careful examination of the results by myself and the editorial staff at the Times, we - well I - realized that the Southern States of South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana are in doubt.

ZACH CHANDLER

Are you a madman? Tilden didn't win by just a few votes - he crushed us.

JOHN REID

In the popular he did, but not the

Electoral. These three states are still under Reconstruction and Federal control.

ZACH CHANDLER
So...oh you mean Republican control because of Grant.

John Reid sees that Zach Chandler is catching on. Zach sits up in his bed and turns to stare out the window.

JOHN REID
Hayes still has a shot to take it by Electoral College if we can convince the Republican state leaders to count Hayes as the winner.

ZACH CHANDLER
A little to late for that since the counts have already been reported...What is it you want from me?

JOHN REID
Your permission to send wires to the Republican Chairmen of these states to make them aware.

Zach ponders the request for a moment.

ZACH CHANDLER
Any others?

JOHN REID
Oregon, Nevada and California.

Zach contemplates the request for a moment and questions Reid's motives.

ZACH CHANDLER
You must really despise Tilden to be doing this.

JOHN REID
He's a Democrat and that alone is reason enough.

Zach stands up and approaches Reid.

ZACH CHANDLER
Very well. Go ahead - Do whatever you think is necessary - Although I think you crackbrained and wasting

everyone's time."

JOHN REID

The press can be a very powerful
tool Chairman.

ZACH CHANDLER

If there is more than one newspaper
reporting it -

JOHN REID

Thank you Chairman for allowing me
to try.

Zach and Reid shake hands and Reid turns, giving W.E Chandler
a quick nod, and walks briskly out of the hotel room. Zach
leans over into William Chandler's ear.

ZACH CHANDLER

Follow him William and report his
actions back to me.

HOTEL LOBBY

Moments later, William Chandler rushes through the lobby and
catches up with John Reid. They walk to the

HOTEL TELEGRAPH OFFICE

and find a Closed sign on the window. John Reid walks to an
empty desk and pulls out a chair and sits down. He searches
for a pen and some paper in the desk and finds it. William
Chandler stands behind him for a moment then sits in the
chair next to the desk. Reid hands him the pen and paper.

HOTEL REGISTRATION DESK

The older desk clerk that had observed Reid earlier, strains
to listen to John and William Chandler's conversation. The
younger clerk looks up at his boss curiously.

OLDER HOTEL CLERK

(to younger hotel Clerk)
Mind your business.

HOTEL LOBBY

JOHN REID

I'll dictate, you write.

WILLIAM CHANDLER

How will we send these? The office

is closed.

JOHN REID

The main wire office will be open.
We must hurry. Write this, To D.H.
Chamberlain - South Carolina. Hayes
is elected if we can carry South
Carolina. Can you hold your State?
Answer immediately. Sign it
Chairman, Zach Chandler... We'll use
the same message to the other
states.

After William Chandler finishes writing the message he and
John Reid get up and walk toward the hotel's front entrance
door and exit.

LOBBY HOTEL REGISTRATION DESK

The older hotel clerk watches John Reid and William Chandler
exit the hotel. He walks to a nearby coat rack and pulls his
coat off the stand. He exits the hotel.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - TELEGRAPH OFFICE - NIGHT

John Reid and William Chandler ride their horses to the 23rd
Street Western Union office. Both dismount, tie their horse
reins to a hitching post and walk toward the building
entrance.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - TELEGRAPH OFFICE - NIGHT

A TELEGRAPH CLERK behind the counter takes the paper from
William Chandler and reads it silently.

JOHN REID

Is there a problem?

TELEGRAPH CLERK

Who will pay for these?

WILLIAM CHANDLER

The Republican Party committee.
I'll authorize them.

TELEGRAPH CLERK

I'll need approval directly from
Chairman Zack Chandler to send
these.

Reid grabs the invoice from the clerk and signs his name to the invoice and writes down an account number. He pushes the paper back to the clerk.

JOHN REID

Use my account at the New York Times.

The clerk pauses for a moment, examines the signature on the invoice, turns and walks over to the telegraph machine and proceeds to send the wires.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - DINING ROOM - DAY

Mary is seated at the dining room table having breakfast. She beams with delight when Samuel enters the room and and seats himself in a chair. A MAID walks over to Samuel and pours him a cup of coffee.

SUPERED: November 8, 1876 - the morning after the election.

MAID

Anything else, Mr. President?

MARY

Good morning indeed. What time did you get to bed last night?

SAMUEL

Later than my usual and for the record I am the President elect.

MARY

A mere technicality.

SAMUEL

I didn't get a chance last night to thank you.

MARY

It was my pleasure.

SAMUEL

You will be my Hostess at the White House?

MARY

Hostess?

SAMUEL

Yes...you can't be First Lady you're my sister.

MARY

What will I tell Sarah? If only you would propose to her, I have great confidence she would accept.

SAMUEL

I have no time for husbandry duties. Nor do I wish to marry Sarah -

MARY

Why not? She is in perfect social standing and comes from a good family.

SAMUEL

If you accept you'll be able to work on the women's rights cause.

MARY

Tempting.

SAMUEL

Within reason.

MARY

If free slave men can vote - women should be able to.

SAMUEL

You know I agree with you. Stop arguing and say yes.

MARY

I'll do it for the women.

SAMUEL

Fantastic.

George Smith, enters the room with a glum expression on his face. Without saying a word, he walks over to Samuel and hands him a few telegraph wires. Before reading them, Samuel invites George Smith to have breakfast with him and Mary and sets the telegrams aside.

SAMUEL(cont'd)

Good Morning Mr. Smith...

GEORGE SMITH

Good Morning Sir.

SAMUEL

Come, sit - have some breakfast.

GEORGE SMITH

The wires.

SAMUEL

They can wait a few moments.

MARY

Oh - he doesn't say that often Mr. Smith. Better sit before he changes his mind.

SAMUEL

I'm not that bad.

George Smith sits in a chair across from Samuel and Mary. A butler walks to the table and pours George Smith a cup of coffee. Mary notices George is restless.

MARY

Mr. Smith are you all right?

GEORGE SMITH

A small concern.

MARY

(to Samuel)

You've just been elected President and already bad news?

Samuel picks up a few of the telegrams and reads them. George Smith sits back in his chair and anxiously waits for Samuel's response. There is none. Smith glances at Mary for a moment then looks back to Samuel. Samuel places the telegrams back on the table and sips his coffee. Susan and William Pelton enter the room and seat themselves at the table.

SAMUEL

(to George Smith)

What other editors are reporting this?

GEORGE SMITH

So far, just the New York Times...It's rumored that the managing editor John Reid is behind it.

MARY

Who is John Reid?

SAMUEL

I've heard of him...He's one of their night editors.

GEORGE SMITH

I talked with an old friend of mine
early this morning from the Fifth
Avenue hotel. He says Reid was in
the lobby late last night
conspiring with William Chandler.

MARY

The Chairman of the Republican
party?

GEORGE SMITH

No - Zach Chandler is the Chairman.
William is another not related.

Samuel places the telegrams down and resumes eating his
breakfast as if nothing is wrong. Mary and William take the
telegrams from the table and read them.

MARY

A Doubtful Election? How dare they
report such lies.

WILLIAM PELTON

Probably a stunt to sell more
newspapers...All the other papers
have declared Uncle's victory.

SAMUEL

You and I will visit headquarters
after breakfast.

George Smith stands.

GEORGE SMITH

I'll ready your carriage and
guards.

George Smith exits and the others remain at the table eating
breakfast.

MARY

Hayes must have conceded by now.

SAMUEL

I'm not concerned and none of you
should be either...Susan I would
like you to come to Washington too.

SUSAN

I'd love to - thank you Uncle.

MARY

You will enjoy your time there.

SUSAN

It will be a grand adventure
grandmother.

MARY

William, will you come to?

WILLIAM PELTON

No, my business is here.

MARY

Samuel?

SAMUEL

William is right. A man has to take
care of his own affairs.

EXT. OHIO - HAYES HOME - STREET - DAY

SUPERED: Hayes first informal concession

A crowd of displeased Hayes Supporters stand by the main
entrance and listen while Hayes talks to reporters.

REPORTER 1 OHIO

The New York Times claims this race
is not yet decided. Any comments
Governor?

RUTHERFORD HAYES

I've heard the rumors - though I
think we are defeated in spite of
recent good news.

REPORTER 2 OHIO

Does that mean you are conceding?

RUTHERFORD HAYES

I am in the opinion that the
Democrats have carried the country
and Tilden has been elected.

Some of Hayes supporters in earshot jeer at his response.
While a smaller group of TILDEN SUPPORTERS wave their signs
and cheer.

REPORTERS OHIO

What now Governor? Governor, one
more question?

Hayes, not yet wanting to confirm his concession, waves to
the crowd and walks back toward the house.

RUTHERFORD HAYES
That's it for me boys. Thank you
all for your support.

Rutherford Hayes walks back toward his house.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - BALLROOM - DAY

SUPERED: November 8, 1876 - Day after election. New York
City, Republican Headquarters at the Fifth Avenue Hotel

Zach Chandler stands near John Reid and William Chandler
inside Republican headquarters. The three men review
telegrams. Several lingering CAMPAIGN WORKERS busy themselves
in the room and chat amongst themselves.

JOHN REID
Several other newspapers across the
country will follow our lead and
report Hayes may overturn Tilden by
the Electoral College.

ZACH CHANDLER
Florida sent a favorable response.

JOHN REID
Have you heard anything from South
Carolina and Louisiana?

Zach hands Reid the wires from the two other states.

ZACH CHANDLER
Strangely they are favorable too.

JOHN REID
And the western states?

ZACH CHANDLER
Nothing yet.

JOHN REID
One vote in the electoral is all we
need.

ZACH CHANDLER
With nineteen in question, your
scheme to overturn this election
will cause a lot of trouble with
the voters.

JOHN REID

They'll get over it.

ZACH CHANDLER

Two hundred and fifty four thousand voters and Tammany Hall men will want to hang you from the highest tree.

JOHN REID

Ha - Hayes will protect me.

ZACH CHANDLER

Don't count on that.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - EVERTTE HOUSE - STREET - DAY

SUPERED: Same day. Everett House Democratic Headquarters - Congressman Abram Hewitt, Chairmen of Democratic National Committe and John Bigelow help to sort out the count.

Samuel Tilden, William Pelton and the two body guards, make their way through the CROWD of well wishers. Samuel greets them with enthusiasm and shakes hands with several people before entering the building.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - EVERTTE HOUSE - DAY

John Bigelow and Abram Hewitt review the returns. Samuel and William enter the room and walk to them.

JOHN BIGELOW

John Reid, of the New York Times is behind this.

SAMUEL

So I've heard from another.

WILLIAM PELTON

Mr. Smith's friend claims he was in the editorial room when Reid received a dispatch from Barnum and Magone asking them to confirm the results.

JOHN BIGELOW

This is obviously a combination of Reid's bitter partisanship combined with a gambler's wish to encourage the Republicans to try to steal your Presidency.

SAMUEL

What are the Democratic leaders
from the southern states reporting?

ABRAM HEWITT

Louisiana reported and confirmed we
have defeated Hayes by some twenty
thousand votes.

SAMUEL

Then the Republicans and Mr. Reid
are wasting everyone's time.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA PA - EXHIBITION OF 1876 - MAIN HALL - DAY

SUPERED: November 8, 1876 - Centennial International
Exhibition of 1876, the first official World's Fair in the
United States. President Grant is in attendance for the
closing ceremonies.

PRESIDENT GRANT is with some FRIENDS walking through the main
hall of the fair. A SOLIDER walks up to Grant and hands him a
telegraph, salutes him and walks away.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Thank you.

President Grant reads the message, folds it up and tucks it
in his jacket.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Election returns confirm Tilden
will replace me as President.
Although a democrat he's a good
man.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - WHITE HOUSE - STREET - NIGHT

SOLDIERS mounted on horses are lined up along in military
style. The COMMANDER of the unit walks to his horse and
climbs up into the saddle. He motions with his arm to move
his troops forward. A few PEOPLE strolling by the watch the
soldiers trot away.

INT. WASHINGTON DC - WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENTS OFFICE - NIGHT

Secretary of War, JAMES DONALD CAMERON and President Grant's

personal assistant ORVILLE E BABCOCK are talking by a desk.

JAMES CAMERON

The President must be advised of our actions. Sending these men south to the disputed states under reconstruction without his permission won't sit well with him.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

Tell me - what do you know about this John Reid fellow from the New York Times?

JAMES CAMERON

Heard he hates Democrats.

Both men laugh.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

All joking aside I see the worst case scenario as Hayes and Tilden canceling each other out and I'll get to keep my job serving Grant in a third term.

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK - NIGHT

Crowds swell and Horse and Carriages arrive dropping off HIGH SOCIETY PEOPLE for Tilden's victory party.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - DINING - NIGHT

Mary is busy with the staff making preparations for the victory celebration.

LIVING ROOM

Samuel, dressed in formal attire, checks himself in the mirror. A BUTLER is assisting him.

FOYER

Mary enters the area and begins to greet Society Guests. Samuel walks down the stair toward Mary.

MARY

Mr. President elect you are supposed to wait to make your grandiose entrance.

Samuel places his arm around his sister and gives her a kiss on her cheek.

SAMUEL

Why wait? I know most of these people.

MARY

(to Guests)

Hello - so good to see you.

SAMUEL

(to some of the guests)

Welcome...

(to Mary)

Thanking you.

MARY

No thank you's needed. I wish Mother and Father were here to see this.

SAMUEL

(to one of the guest's)

Hello -

Samuel and Mary can hear the crowd cheering from outside.

SAMUEL

Aunt Polly too. I have fond memories of her as a child with all the books she brought me.

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK - STREET -NIGHT

The park is now roped off to hold back the curious and upbeat crowds. Carriages continue to arrive with more passengers. Samuel walks down the stairs to the rope line and shake hands with people in the crowd. Tilden supporters hold up their campaign signs while others wave their hats and handkerchiefs. There are several reporters present following Samuel as he works the rope line including John Reid.

REPORTER 1 NYC

Governor, I mean President Tilden, a moment please.

REPORTER 2 NYC

Mr. Tilden, how's it feel to be elected?

PORCH

Mary walks out to watch Samuel.

STREET

Samuel acknowledges their questions with a wave of his hand, smile and continues to walk the rope line. For a brief second, he catches the eyes of John Reid. He stares at him for a moment and then tries to ignore him. John Reid steps closer and calls out to him.

JOHN REID

Mr. Tilden, John Reid from the New York Times...What say you of Chairman Chandler's claims you are short in Electoral College?

PORCH

Mary see's John Reid and becomes visibly annoyed.

STREET

The crowd tones down to a low whispers and some boo John Reid's question. Samuel stops, turns back and stares directly into Reid's eyes for a moment, and then turns his attention back to his supporters. The crowd whispers with chatter. Samuel holds his arms in the air to quiet them. After a few moments the noise level lessens.

SAMUEL

My election victory was due to the issues. I received a great number of Republican votes. The election was decided in part on my record as Governor of New York as the closeness of the contest shows. The opposition I had to overcome, well - I did not expect a large majority in the Electoral College. All will be fine...That is all for now.

The crowd cheers Samuel's remarks. Samuel holds his arms in the air for victory and the crowd cheers louder and start to chant his name again and wave their campaign signs, hats and handkerchiefs. Samuel bows to his encouraging audience and puts his hand to his heart and thumps his chest lightly by his heart in a sign to thank them for their support. The crowd roars even louder. He turns and climbs the stairs.

PORCH

Mary links her arm with Samuels and both wave to the crowd.

MARY

Your friends and family are vying
for your attention.

As Mary and Samuel turn to exit into the house, Mary turns her head back and locks eyes with John Reid. Samuel notices it.

SAMUEL

Ignore him...He needs to sell
newspapers with sensational
headlines.

MARY

Damned Republicans must have sent
him here.

SAMUEL

Ignore him - he's just doing the
job they pay him to do.

STREET

Reporters gather around John Reid.

REPORTER 1 NYC

Did something change in the poll
count?

REPORTER 2 NYC

Tilden beat Hayes in a landslide
and Hayes conceded. Reid is
delusional.

JOHN REID

It doesn't matter if Tilden has a
million more popular votes. He
falls short by one Electoral Vote
boys and that one vote will elect
Hayes.

Some of the crowd overhear what John Reid stated to the
newsmen and boo him.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - EVERETT HOUSE - DAY

SUPERED: November 9, 1876 - New York City, Everett House -
Democratic Headquarters. Tammany Hall's New Boss Honest John
Kelly.

Campaign workers are busy counting election returns. JOHN KELLY enters the room holding a rolled up newspaper in his hand. He is accompanied by TWO LARGE IRISH BODYGUARDS. They wait by the door and Kelly walks over to John Bigelow, William Pelton and Abram Hewitt. All three men take notice of him but keep their focus on election results at the tote board. John Kelly taps a rolled up newspaper against the palm of his hand. In his usual confident gruff voice he announces his presence.

HONEST JOHN KELLY
Good morning Gentlemen.

John Bigelow, somewhat annoyed, continues to review the tote board.

JOHN BIGELOW
Good morning Mr. Kelly. We were all wondering when you'd show up.

HONEST JOHN KELLY
Busy with Tammany business Mr. Bigelow. Where is Governor Tilden? I need to speak with him.

WILLIAM PELTON
He'll be here shortly.

Noting the negative mood, John Kelly decides to change the tone of the conversation with some comical sarcasm.

HONEST JOHN KELLY
I have big dollars on this election.

ABRAM HEWITT
I'm sure Governor Tilden has no concern with your wager, Mr. Kelly.

Kelly realizes his attempt at good humor has backfired and he places his newspaper in his side jacket pocket. He raises both of his hands, palms up in a noncommittal manner.

HONEST JOHN KELLY
Relax Congressman - my ten-thousand is on Tilden's win - not his loss.

Bigelow lightens his mood and relaxes his stance.

JOHN BIGELOW
Then your wager is safe.

HONEST JOHN KELLY
How many votes are in dispute?

ABRAM HEWITT

It appears we are shy just one
Electoral vote in the south needed
to claim victory.

JOHN BIGELOW

Not all of the states laws are
bound by party loyalty or popular
votes.

HONEST JOHN KELLY

What now?

ABRAM HEWITT

We have made arrangements to send
our best party leaders from the
North to disputed Southern states.
Three are still under Republican
control and reconstruction. If they
are planning to cheat us this is
where they'll most likely do it.

JOHN BIGELOW

We could us your help to organize
the effort.

HONEST JOHN KELLY

You'll have my full support but as
you know the south is out of my
territory.

JOHN BIGELOW

Good to hear. The cheats with
Grant's Authority will try anything
to swindle their way to victory.

Samuel enters the room and pauses for a moment to look at the
two Tammany Hall guards. He gives them a slight nod and walks
over to the tote board. Samuel is in good spirits and reaches
out to shake John Kelly's hand.

SAMUEL

Good to see you Mr. Kelly.

HONEST JOHN KELLY

You too Mr. President elect.

SAMUEL

How is the family?

HONEST JOHN KELLY

Good --all good. I was just saying
if there is anything I can do.

SAMUEL

Our friends in Louisiana need our moral support and my personal endorsement. Bayard, Thurman, Barnum, Randall, McDonald Dorsheimer, Kerand and a group of others are on their way to New Orleans as we speak. A strong demonstration there will defeat the designs of the Returning Board.

HONEST JOHN KELLY

And Florida?

SAMUEL

Henry Watterson will go to Florida with Beck and McHenry. They are requesting funds for reinforcements to resist the radical pranks expected. Coyle and a few others left for South Carolina. Those fiery zealots of the Republican Party may attempt to count me out, but I don't think the better class of the Republicans will permit it.

HONEST JOHN KELLY

Trust no Republican... Your reform tactics, honorable as they are have gained you many political enemies.

SAMUEL

Yes - so it seems.

INT. HAYES HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

SUPERED: Hayes writes a concession in his diary.

Rutherford Hayes is sitting at his desk writing in his diary.

VARIOUS CUTS VIDEO AND PHOTO INSERTS: of POLITICAL MEN boarding trains for the southern states. Add to this some historic stills of slaves and white men at the polls with guns and signs for the candidates.

NOTE to DIRECTOR: This dialog is the actual words written by Hayes - cut out what can be but leave in his conceding to Tilden.

RUTHERFORD HAYES (V.O.)

Saturday, November 11, 1876 - The

election has resulted in the defeat of the Republicans after a very close contest. Tuesday evening a small party assembled in our parlor to hear the news. General Mitchell and Laura, our boys, Birch and Webb, Governor Dennison, a reporter of the Chicago Tribune, Mr. Huntley, W. K. Rogers, Rutherford Platt, and a few others at times. Emily Platt, Dr. Fullerton, and Fanny. We all felt that the State of New York would decide the contest. Our last dispatches from our committee in New York were very encouraging - full of confidence. Mr. A. B. Cornell, Chairman New York State Committee, said in an experience of ten years he had never seen prospects brighter on the eve of an election. But we all knew - warned by the enormous registration in the cities of New York and Brooklyn and other facts - that we must not count confidently on carrying the State. The good omen from Ithaca was accepted with a quiet cheerfulness. Almost at the same instant came a gain of thirty-six in Ballville, the township nearest my own home. This was good. Then came, one at a time, towns and precincts in Ohio. The comparison was made with the vote in 1875, instead of with the
vote
of October last. This was confusing. But soon we began to feel that Ohio was not doing as well as we had hoped. The effect was depressing. I commanded without much effort my usual composure and cheerfulness. Lucy felt it more keenly. Without showing her depression, she busied herself about refreshments for our guests, and soon disappeared. I found her soon after abed with a headache. I comforted her by consoling talk; she was cheerful and resigned, but did not return to the parlor. Without difficulty or much effort I became the most composed and cheerful of the party. At- P. M.,

or thereabouts, we heard that in some two hundred districts of New York City, Tilden had about twenty thousand majority, which indicated fifty thousand in the city. The returns received from the rural districts did not warrant the belief that they would overcome such a large city majority. From that time, I never supposed there was a chance for Republican success. I went to bed at 12 to 1 o'clock. Talked with Lucy, consoling her with such topics as readily occurred of a nature to make us feel satisfied on merely personal grounds with the result. We soon fell into a refreshing sleep and the affair seemed over. Both of us felt more anxiety about the South - about the colored people especially- than about anything else sinister in the result. My hope of a sound currency will somehow be realized; civil service reform will be delayed; but the great injury is in the South. There, the Amendments will be nullified, disorder will continue, prosperity to both whites and colored people will be pushed off for years. But I took my way to my office as usual

Wednesday

morning, and was master of myself and contented and cheerful. During the day the news indicated that we (had) carried California; soon after, other Pacific States; all New England except Connecticut; all of the free States West except Indiana; and it dawned on us that with a few Republican States in the South to which we were fairly entitled, we would yet be the victors. From Wednesday afternoon the city and the whole country has been full of excitement and anxiety. People have been up and down several times a day with the varying rumors.

Wednesday evening on a false rumor about New York, a shouting multitude rushed to my house and

called me out with rousing cheers.
I made a short talk, saying (as reported by the papers): "Friends. - If you will keep order for one half minute, I will say all that is proper to say at this time. In the very close political contest, which is just drawing to a close, it is impossible, at so early a time, to obtain the result, owing to the incomplete telegraph communications through some of the Southern and Western States. "I accept your call as a desire on your part for the success of the Republican Party. If it should not be successful, I shall surely have the pleasure of living for the next year and a half among some of my most ardent and enthusiastic friends, as you have demonstrated tonight. From that time, the news has fluctuated just enough to prolong the suspense and to enhance the interest. At this time the Republicans are claiming the election by one electoral vote. With Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida, we have carried one hundred and eighty-five [electoral votes]. This creates great uneasiness. Both sides are sending to Louisiana prominent men to watch the canvassing of the votes. All thoughtful people are brought to consider the imperfect machinery provided for electing the President. No doubt we shall, warned by this danger, provide, by amendments of the Constitution, or by proper legislation, against a recurrence of the danger.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - WHITE HOUSE - STREET - DAY

SUPERED: President Grant and First Lady Julia Dent Grant

Large CROWDS of Hayes and Tilden supporters are marching, with political signs in support of their candidates.
HORSE and CARRIAGES with their DRIVERS fill the streets.
President Grant's carriage arrives and turns into the

WHITE HOUSE DRIVEWAY

And parks. Two SOLDIERS walk over the to carriage, pull down the carriage stairs and open the door. Grant steps out and helps his wife JULIA GRANT out. They walk toward the White House entrance and the carriage drives off.

INT. WASHINGTON DC - WHITE HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

President Grant enters his office and walks to the window to watch the crowds of people. He lights a cigar and takes a few puffs then walks back to his desk and sits down. He notices a telegram on his desk.

ORVILLE BABCOCK enters the room and walks toward Grant.

PRESIDENT GRANT
Would you please explain why my
Secretary of War sent troops
without my permission?

ORVILLE BABCOCK
They were needed Sir.

Grant leans back in his chair, puffs on his cigar. Then he pushes the telegram toward Orville Babcock.

PRESIDENT GRANT
Please read the telegram from
General Sherman out loud.

Orville Babcock picks up the telegram from Grant's desk.

ORVILLE BABCOCK
Yes Sir...The Secretary of War,
Cameron, has ordered me to send
soldiers to Florida. Please
confirm.

PRESIDENT GRANT
On whose authority was this
telegram sent?

ORVILLE BABCOCK
Governor Hayes' Electoral count is
One-Hundred-Sixty-Six with nineteen
votes still undetermined.
Tilden's count remains at One
Hundred-Eighty-Four. Tilden needs
just one and Hayes needs all
nineteen.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Um hmmm-

ORVILLE BABCOCK

I thought -

PRESIDENT GRANT

One moment. I do not want to lose
my train of thought.

Orville walks to a desk and retrieves a pad and pencil then walks back toward the President's desk and sits in a chair close-by. Grant takes a few final puffs on his cigar, slightly rocks his chair back and stares blankly for a few moments.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

Sir?

PRESIDENT GRANT

Address it to General W.T. Sherman.
Instruct General Auger, in
Louisiana, and General Ruger in
Florida.

Grant waits for Orville to finish writing.

PRESIDENT GRANT (cont'd)

Tell them to be vigilant with the
force under their command and to
preserve peace and good order.

He pauses for another moment.

PRESIDENT GRANT (cont'd)

See to it that the legal Boards of
Canvassers are unmolested in the
performance of their duties. Should
there be any grounds of suspicion
for fraudulent counting on either
side-

Grant looks directly at his Orville and says sternly,

PRESIDENT GRANT (cont'd)

it should be denounced at once.

He waits for his Orville to finish writing.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

Is that it Sir?

PRESIDENT GRANT

For now...

Orville stands and starts to walk out of the room.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

I'll get right on this.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Mr. Babcock - No man worthy of the office for President would be willing to hold the office if counted in or placed there by fraud. Either Party can afford to be disappointed in the result, but the country cannot afford to have the results tainted by the suspicion of illegal or false returns.

Orville pauses for a moment and watches President Grant rise from his chair and walk around to the front of his desk toward him, still puffing on his stubby cigar.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

Sir?

PRESIDENT GRANT

Add a post script...
Tell the General to keep it honest and to make sure the colored men of the South are treated with respect.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

Yes sir.

Orville Babcock turns and starts to walk away again.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Orville...

ORVILLE BABCOCK

Yes sir?

PRESIDENT GRANT

Don't you dare ever go behind my back again.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

No - I mean yes Sir.

EXT. OHIO - HAYES MANSION - STREET - NIGHT

A large and unruly crowd of Hayes and Tilden supporters have gathered at the Hayes estate. Several REPORTERS wait with them for Hayes to come outside. A few of the Tilden supporters start to push and shove the Hayes people.

TILDEN SUPPORTERS OHIO
Hayes lost and must concede the
election.

HAYES SUPPORTER 1 OHIO
Tilden ain't won nothing yet! The
votes ain't all counted!

TILDEN SUPPORTERS OHIO
They're counted and Tilden has more
than a quarter million more votes.

HAYES SUPPORTER 1 OHIO
Doesn't matter if he has a million
more votes- He needs another
elector - without is stinkin'
democrats are out.

The Tilden Supporter throws a punch at the Hayes Supporer and
the two wrestle each other to the ground. A crowd gathers
around them and the reporters move in closer.

REPORTER 1 OHIO
This kind of action will sell
thousands of papers.

INT. OHIO - HAYES MANSION - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

While the melee commences outside inside the mansion Hayes
and his wife Lucy are seated at the dining room table. Two of
their children, FANNY their nine year old daughter and SCOTT
their six year old son are with them at the table. They hear
the commotion erupting outside. Hayes tries his best to
ignore it.

LUCY HAYES
These people fight for your
Presidency.

FANNY HAYES
You're the President?

SCOTT HAYES
I'm not going.

RUTHERFORD HAYES
Children, no one is going anywhere
right now. Finish your lunch.

LUCY HAYES
Mind your father.

They are disrupted when they glass breaking.

HAYES SUPPORTER 1 OHIO (V.O.)
Governor Hayes - Come outside and
talk with us!

LUCY HAYES
Rutherford - Tell them to stop
shouting. They are frightening the
children.

Little Scott jumps up in his own defense and runs to his
father's side.

SCOTT HAYES
I'm not afraid!

Hayes affectionately pats his son on the head and senses his
wife's fears. Rutherford he pulls his chair away from the
table, stands and walks toward the

LIVING ROOM

To the front door and Scott trails behind him. Hayes stops
and firmly turns Scott around.

RUTHERFORD HAYES
Back to the table young man and
finish your lunch.

EXT. OHIO - HAYES MANSION - STREET - NIGHT

Hayes walks down the path to the street. His supporters cheer
him while the Tilden supporters are rude and jeer. Hayes
holds up his hands for silence from the crowd.

RUTHERFORD HAYES
Friends, if you will keep order for
me half a minute - I will say all
that is proper to say at this time.

The crowd quiets to a whispering hush and Hayes waits until
there is silence for him to continue. The reporters ready
their cameras on tri-pods while others scribble notes on note
pads.

RUTHERFORD HAYES
Thank you all for coming... In a
very close political contest, it is
impossible at so early a time, to
obtain a result. The telegram

communications from some of the southern and western states are still incomplete.

HAYES SUPPORTER OHIO
You won!

More cheers and jeers fill the air. Hayes again holds up his hands up for silence.

RUTHERFORD HAYES
I accept your call as a desire on your part for the success of the Republican party. If it should not be successful, however, I shall surely have the pleasure of living for the next years among some of my most ardent and enthusiastic friends, as you have demonstrated here today.

The Hayes supporters cheer again while Tilden supporters remain respectfully quiet. Hayes waves to the crowd and then turns and walks back toward the house.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Samuel is seated at his office desk reading a document he has just finished writing.

DIRECTORS NOTE: Can be edited down...INSERT VARIOUS CUTS: PHOTOS and VIDEO of PEOPLE in the streets protesting in different cities around the country.

SAMUEL (V.O.)
Thanksgiving Proclamation - The unfailing mercies of God of which another year has given witness, call us to renew our acknowledgment of Him in thanksgiving and prayer. We are specially reminded of His protection, in the absence of any great disaster or calamity throughout the Commonwealth; and of His bounty, in the large and generous returns of nature. Let us rejoice in the spirit of order and of charity and of the hopefulness which has pervaded all classes under the depression in the industries and trade, and in the growth of the public sentiment toward wise and humane methods of dealing with want and suffering.

Let us give thanks for the maintenance of our social and religious institutions in their integrity, and improve the Divine blessing upon all efforts in behalf of good government and a true morality. In common with the people of the other States of the Union, we recall, at this time, the blessings which we hold by inheritance. It becomes us, with them, to gratefully and humbly acknowledge the God of our fathers, whose mercies have been from generation to generation, beseeching Him for the continuous of His favor to the nation of His planting, that He may not "deliver our glory unto another." I do, therefore, set apart and appoint Thursday the 30th day of November, recommending to the people that on that day they put aside their usual employments, and in their homes and in their respective places of worship, render thanks to Almighty God for His mercies to us as individuals and as a State. Done at the Capitol, in the City of Albany, this sixth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy six.

BACK ON SCENE

Satisfied with the proclamation, Samuel signs it.

JOHN BIGELOW
Am I disturbing you?

SAMUEL
Not at all. What's on your mind?

JOHN BIGELOW
Thought we might take a carriage ride to Central Park.

Samuel takes the proclamation document from the desk.

SAMUEL
I'll get my coat...A spirited ride in the fresh air will do us both some good.

JOHN BIGELOW
The carriage is out back.

Samuel and John walk to George Smith's desk.

SAMUEL
Here you are, Mr. Smith. It's
signed and ready for print.

Samuel slips his arms into his coat. John Bigelow picks up
his newspaper.

SAMUEL
See you later.

JOHN BIGELOW
That's a catchy phrase.

SAMUEL
I came up with it yesterday.

Samuel and John Bigelow walk toward the

LIVING ROOM

And Samuel sneezes. Mary enters the room

MARY
You've got another cold. Where are
you going dressed like that?

Samuel reaches over and gives Mary a kiss on her cheek - then
sneezes again. He blows his nose into a handkerchief.
Frowning, Mary glances over at a butler who is standing off
to the side. Without a word, he walks to the rack and
retrieves a hat and scarf and brings them to Mary and she
wraps the scarf around Samuel's neck.

MARY
Humor me...

Samuel rolls his eyes.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - STREET - DAY

SUPERED: Central Park, New York City

Samuel has the horse reins and he trots the horses at a
steady pace. John Bigelow holds the newspaper and reads it
aloud to Samuel.

JOHN BIGELOW

Nip and Tuck. Tilden still has one hundred-eighty-four votes to Hayes' one-hundred-sixty-six. Nineteen votes are still undecided.

SAMUEL

They left out I won by a quarter million?

Bigelow grabs the side of carriage when Samuel takes a sharp corner.

JOHN BIGELOW

You are making it most difficult to stay in my seat.

Samuel slows the horses and carriage to a slow walk.

SAMUEL

Better?

Bigelow relaxes his grip, straightens the newspaper and continues to read.

JOHN BIGELOW

Ha -

SAMUEL

Enlighten me.

JOHN BIGELOW

It says here - Tilden's a most accomplished and astute politician - less confiding and more distrustful than Grant.

A man of modest, unobtrusive personality - stooped and hence looks smaller than he is - a small boyish face - round head bent with that sleepy droop in the left eyelid - caused by Ptosis. He dresses with plainness.

SAMUEL

More distrustful than Grant?

JOHN BIGELOW

Governor Marcy predicts you would be President, except for your physical stamina.

SAMUEL

Marcy said that?.

JOHN BIGELOW

And more...He claims it is like putting a two hundred-horse power engine in a craft built for only one hundred horse-power. He states that you have too much mind for your body.

SAMUEL

Ha - I've said much worse about him.

Without warning, a black stallion spooks Samuel's horses when it races by. CELESTE STAUFFER turns in her saddle and tips her hat in apology for the upset.

SAMUEL

Vivacious. I've never seen anything like her.

JOHN BIGELOW

The woman?

SAMUEL

My eye may droop but I am not blind.

The two men laugh - Samuel snaps the reins against his horses' backs and maneuvers the team to turn around.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - STREET - DAY

Hundreds of PROTESTORS fill the sidewalks and march around with Tilden and Hayes signs. Military men are lined up and civilian horse and carriages drive by.

SUPERED: December 4, 1876 - No clear winner.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

President Grant stands by the window and observes the protestors. Orville Babcock enters the room with a telegram.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

Response from General Sherman, sir.

Without turning away from the window, Grant chomps on his cigar.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Read it aloud.

ORVILLE BABCOCK

Disruption is being reported throughout the union. The Republican and Democratic parties are both taking action in the streets to resolve the issues concerning which candidate will succeed you.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Is that all?

ORVILLE BABCOCK

It has also been reported that many military veterans, even though out of uniform are a threat.

President Grant turns and slams his hand down on his desk, startling Babcock.

PRESIDENT GRANT

This country cannot afford another bloody battle!

Babcock places the telegram on the President's desk and walks out of the office.

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DRIVEWAY - DAY

SUPERED: Same Day at Capitol Building.

Several SENATORS and CONGRESSMEN walk with their AIDES toward the building entrance and ignore and avoid PROTESTORS vying for their attention.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - HOUSE FLOOR - DAY

Senators, Congressmen and their Aides enter the House Chambers and go toward their seats. Congressman JOHN GOODE JR. Democratic representative from Virginia enters the Chamber with his AIDE walking behind him. John Goode taps a folded up newspaper against his left palm and walks to SAMUEL J. RANDALL who is in a conversation with a few other CONGRESSMEN.

JOHN GOODE

(to his Aide)

When I signal, please read the
President Grant's statement out
loud.

The Aide walks away and John Goode Jr. moves to the front of
the room and clears his throat.

JOHN GOODE(cont'd)
Excuse me Gentlemen... My Aide will
read a statement from President
Grant.

John Goode signals with his hand for the Aide to begin
speaking.

JOHN GOODE'S AIDE
(Loud)
President Grant and the Republicans
will have the regular army and the
Governors of the Democratic States
will have to call upon the militia
if needed.

A buzz of voices fill the room.

JOHN GOODE
Thank you. That will be all.

Speaker Randall walks to the

PODIUM

picks up his gavel and bangs it a few times. All in the room
begin to take their seats. John Goode walks to a seat near
the other Congressmen.

HOUSE FLOOR

CONGRESSMAN 2, leans close to John Goode.

CONGRESSMAN 2
The fear amongst us is heightening
with the threats of violence
surrounding this election.

JOHN GOODE
(stern)
We must enforce the law.

Congressman 2 slips his hand into his jacket and pulls the
flap back to reveal a pistol.

CONGRESSMAN 2
The laws will not protect us from

those violent crazies in the streets.

Goode puts his face inches away from the other man.

JOHN GOODE
Is that necessary?

CONGRESSMAN 2
I'm not the only one. Several are armed. You should do the same to protect yourself.

PODIUM

Speaker Randall, bangs his gavel to quiet the noisy room.

SAMUEL RANDALL
The House will come to order.

HOUSE FLOOR

Within moments, the Congressmen are silent and take their seats. John Goode stands.

JOHN GOODE
Mister Speaker, one Party or another must surrender or we must fight!

John turns to face the assembly.

JOHN GOODE
Are the Gentleman prepared for a fight?

Several Congressmen rise to their feet.

ALL CONGRESSMAN
(Loud)
YES!

The room fills with voices of noisy chatter. John Goode is stunned by the quick and maddened response and slowly falls back into his seat. Speaker Randall bangs his gavel several times at the

PODIUM

JOHN RANDALL
Order! The House must come to order!

HOUSE FLOOR

A Congressman leans into John Goode.

CONGRESSMAN 3

The newspapers are reporting Grant
wants a third term so he can lead
another war.

EXT. TALLAHASSEE FLORIDA - REPUBLICAN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

SUPERED: Florida Republican Headquarter's - Governor Noyes,
William Chandler, Zach Chandler, General Ruger, General Lew
Wallace and Governor Marcellus Sterns arrive to cut deals
with the state's returning board.

A group of angry protestors, a mixture of WHITE and BLACK
MEN, surround Republican headquarters and wave political
signs for both Hayes and Tilden. SOLDIERS, dressed in
confederate uniforms, surround the social unrest. GOVERNOR
NOYES, William Chandler, Zach Chandler, GENERAL RUGER,
GENERAL LEW WALLACE and GOVERNOR MARCELLUS L. STERNS are
inside a horse carriage and moving through the crowd.
The PROTESTORS wave their campaign signs and shout
obscenities at the political men passing.

TILDEN PROTESTOR

We will defend your Presidency!

TILDEN PROTESTOR 2

Tilden or blood!

The CARRIAGE DRIVER halts his horses at the barrier line
manned by the soldiers when he can go no further. The driver
leans back to talk to the men inside the coach.

CARRIAGE DRIVER FLORIDA

This is as far as I go.

INSIDE CARRIAGE

The men look apprehensively at one another. After a moment of
hesitation, they begin, one by one, to exit the carriage.

STREET

A few of the soldiers rush over to the carriage and assist
the politicians and create a human barrier for Governor
Noyes, William Chandler, Zach Chandler, General Ruger,
General Lew Wallace and Governor Marcellus Sterns walk
through the barrier toward the front entrance

REPUBLICAN HEADQUARTERS

A few of the protestors manage to slip through the barriers and race toward them. Much to their dismay they are quickly halted by the soldiers and pushed back.

The rowdy crowd continues to rant and rave and shout their obscenities at the politicians.

TILDEN PROTESTORS
Tilden or Blood!

TILDEN PROTESTOR 2
Count our votes... We're being
disenfranchised.

HAYES SUPPORTERS
Hayes won our state.

TILDEN PROTESTOR 2
You cheaters are trying to steal
Tilden's Presidency. Go home you
Yankees.

HAYES SUPPORTERS
We have the military on our side.

The Carriage Driver maneuvers his horses and turns away from the shouting throng of protestors. Zach Chandler notes the insignia on the uniform of one the soldiers close to him.

ZACH CHANDLER
Are you the commanding officer? You
should push these Tilden people
further down the road.

The officer grunts as he pushes a protestor back, and then turns back to Zach Chandler.

FLORIDA SOLIDER 1
We're doing the best we can, sir,
without shooting them.

GOVERNOR NOYES
If you must shoot them to make them
move then shoot them.

GENERAL RUGER
I gave my men strict orders not to
do that Mr. Noyes, unless someone
fires upon them first.

Sterns turns to William Chandler.

GOVERNOR STERNS

This is going to cost the party more than the two thousand you've already paid. I will authorize your Elector Certificates legal or not - but the party will pay for this disruption.

WILLIAM CHANDLER
Whatever it takes, Mr. Noyes.
Whateve it takes.

INT. FLORIDA - REPUBLICAN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Governor Noyes, William Chandler, Zach Chandler, General Ruger, General Lew Wallace and Governor Marcellus Sterns enter through the front door. CAMPAIGN WORKERS are scattered throughout the room.

GENERAL WALLACE
We will need at least another five thousand to be rendered soon. The soldiers have to eat.

ZACH CHANDLER
You'll get your money.

WILLIAM CHANDLER
It's a small price to pay for a Presidency.

GOVERNOR STERNS (TO ZACK)
I heard the Governor of Georgia is here to represent the Democrats with the State Board of Canvassers.

ZACH CHANDLER
How many other treacherous Democratic Statesmen arrived ahead of us?

GOVERNOR STERNS
Several...

ZACH CHANDLER
Also heard George Drew is suing for a recount for the Florida Governor's seat. Any chance he'll get it?

GOVERNOR STERNS
(sarcastic)
Don't know but if he does that re

count will be as fair as the one
were doing for Hayes.

Sterns and Zach Chandler walk to an

OFFICE

And close the door behind them. Sterns walks to desk and opens a drawer and pulls out a bottle of whiskey and two glasses. He places them on his desk and pours whiskey in both.

GOVERNOR STERNS
Whiskey?

ZACH CHANDLER
Sure.

GOVERNOR STERNS
This is southern moonshine and will
curl your toes.

Zach Chandler takes one of the glasses off the desk. He swirls the amber liquid around the bottom of the glass and in one swift motion, shoots the hard liquor down his throat in single gulp. His eyes water and he coughs from the sting.

ZACH CHANDLER
Not bad.

Zach puts the shot glass down on the desk and Sterns fills it to the brim.

GOVERNOR STERNS
Most Yankees can't handle southern
whiskey.

ZACH CHANDLER
Did you lose that arm in the war?

GOVERNOR STERNS
Fighting with the union army.

ZACH CHANDLER
How did you end up here?

GOVERNOR STERNS
Came after the war to study law.

ZACH CHANDLER
Too hot and humid for my taste.

GOVERNOR STERNS
Does take some getting use to.

ZACH CHANDLER

We have to play our cards close to
the vest--

GOVERNOR STERNS

What we want is an end to re
construction. If Hayes is promising
it we can do business.

ZACH CHANDLER

You'll have it. Those insidious
Carpetbagger Dems would trade their
mothers to keep that land.

GOVERNOR STERNS

Greed is a powerful tool.

ZACH CHANDLER

They call it progressive.

Governor Sterns pours Zach another whiskey.

GOVERNOR STERNS

They can call it whatever they want
- a trade off of farmland for a
Presidency works fine for me.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - EVERTTE HOUSE - NIGHT

Samuel Tilden, William Pelton, Abram Hewitt and John Bigelow
are busy with the returns. Campaign workers are scattered at
throughout the room.

ABRAM HEWITT

Floyd in Florida claims he needs
ten thousand dollars more.

SAMUEL

For what purpose?

ABRAM HEWITT

Says to guarantee strong and honest
men in every precinct. He's
offering to put up one-thousand
dollars of his own money.

SAMUEL

Election bribery is wrong.

WILLIAM PELTON

Tell that to the Republicans

They'll spend hundreds of thousands
of dollars to get those electors.

JOHN BIGELOW

All that and a free Federal army,
courtesy of President Grant to
persuade them to turn.

SAMUEL

The ballots are already cast - if
they try to cheat the count now
they will be jailed.

WILLIAM PELTON

In a perfect world they would.

SAMUEL

I will not buy my way into the back
door of the White House! Hayes is
an honorable man. If he allows it,
shame will come to his good name.

George Smith enters the room with a telegram. He hands it to
Samuel. He reads it and passes it off to Abram Hewitt.

ABRAM HEWITT

Seems there's a problem with the
three Oregon Electors.

SAMUEL

There shouldn't be. Hayes won the
popular vote by thousands there.

ABRAM HEWITT

Says Governor Grover disqualified
one of the Republican electors
because he was a Postmaster. Seems
he wants to replace him with a
Democrat...

WILLIAM PELTON

It would be the one elector we
need.

INT. OREGON - GOVERNOR GROVERS OFFICE - DAY

SUPERED: Each State sends their Electors Certificates to
Washington by December 6th for Congress to count and name the
winner of the Presidency.

SUPERED: Oregon Governor L.F. Grover's Office

LA FAYETTE GROVER is seated behind his colonial desk reviewing the Electoral Certificates. GROVER's ASSISTANT is seated a few feet away reading to himself a copy of the U.S. Constitution.

LA FAYETTE GROVER

Please read me the Twelfth Amendment. Maybe there is wording in there I can use.

GROVER'S ASSISTANT

The Electors shall meet in their respective states and vote by Ballot for President and Vice President.

LA FAYETTE GROVER

Skip to the sign and certify part.

Assistant scans the document.

GROVER'S ASSISTANT

Ah - here it is...says they, the Electors, shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate; - The President of the Senate shall, in presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted-

LA FAYETTE GROVER

Nothing there to guide me.

SUPERED: Secretary of State Steven Chadwick was just elected to replace Governor Grover because Grover elected by the Oregon Legislators to be U.S. Senator.

STEVEN CHADWICK enters the room.

LA FAYETTE GROVER

Hello Mr. Secretary, or shall I address you Governor? Please-- have a seat --

Steven sits in a chair close to the Governor's desk.

LA FAYETTE GROVER

I presume you are aware of the electoral situation?

STEVEN CHADWICK

I am.

Grover's Assistant exits the room when Grover waves him off.

STEVEN CHADWICK (cont'd)

Hayes won our state by over one
hundred-thousand votes-

La Fayette Grover settles back in his chair, removes his reading glasses and tosses them on top of the paperwork on his desk. Looking up at the ceiling, he begins to rub the weariness from his eyes.

GOVERNOR GROVER

And Tilden won the country by over
a quarter million votes...If I can
help him by disqualifying Watts
legally--

STEVEN CHADWICK

The Republicans will come after
you.

GOVERNOR GROVER

(sarcastic)
They always do.

INT. - NEW YORK TIMES - EDITORIAL ROOM - DAY

John Reid reviews the tote board and a MESSENGER walks in and hands him a few telegrams then exits. John Reid sifts through the wires quickly but stops to read one more closely. After reading it he crumples it in his hand. The other reporters in the room are busy with their own work and do not notice. John Foord walks out of his office toward Reid.

JOHN REID

Governor Grover is going to
disqualify a Republican Elector and
replace him with a Democratic.

JOHN FOORD

Governor's can't switch out
Electors -

JOHN REID

They can if they are Postmaster's,
which this one was. The fool didn't
resign his position until a week
after the election.

JOHN FOORD

That is stupid. It opens the door
legally for the one elector Tilden
needs.

JOHN REID

We must discredit him.

JOHN FOORD

Who?

JOHN REID

Grover.

JOHN FOORD

Report the story by facts. I'm not
willing to risk my career on a
fools mistake.

JOHN REID

I have no fear of Tilden's people.

JOHN FOORD

You may not, but I certainly do.
Need I remind you I am the Editor
and Chief of this paper and my word
is final...Where's Cary's, I want
his input.

JOHN REID

For what? I'm closer to Chairman
Chandler.

Edward Cary and CHARLES MILLER enter the room.

JOHN FOORD

Maybe so, but Cary and Miller are
our political writers - take them
with you when you meet with
Chandler.

JOHN REID

Miller is a Tilden supporter - I
cannot take him to see Chandler.
He'll shut down and tell me
nothing.

John Reid, annoyed by his boss's request glares at all of
them as he walks back into his office and slams the door.

INT. OREGON - GOVERNOR GROVERS OFFICE - HALL - DAY

SUPERED: Republican Electors arrive to retrieve the legal Electoral Certificates from Governor Grover.

Oregon Republican Electors J.W. WATTS, JOHN CARTWRIGHT, WILLIAM ODELL, JOHN MILLER and JOHN PARKER wait outside the Governor's office door. Across the hall are Democrat E.A. CRONIN and Steven Chadwick.

Chadwick makes the first move and walks to the Governor's door that is slightly ajar. He knocks first, then peeks his head inside the door.

STEVEN CHADWICK
May I come in?

GOVERNOR GROVER
Of course.

Chadwick enters the

GOVERNORS OFFICE

walks to the desk and sits down.

STEVEN CHADWICK
Odell and Cartwright have brought two witnesses along with Mr. Watts.

GOVERNOR GROVER
(very loud)
Have they now. Are they are here to argue?

STEVEN CHADWICK
They claim they are not.

GOVERNOR GROVER
Fine - show them in.

Steve Chadwick rises from his chair and exits into the

HALLWAY

and motions with his hand for the men to enter. All of the men walk into the

GOVERNORS OFFICE

And stand near the desk.

GOVERNOR GROVER
Good afternoon.

Governor Grover picks up three Electoral Certificates from his desk and hands two of them off to Odell and Cartwright.

GOVERNOR GROVER (cont'd)
Mr. Odell and Mr. Cartwright these
are signed and ready for your
signatures.

Odell and Cartwright take the two certificates and review
them. As they are doing so, the Governor motions to E.A.
Cronin to come closer to his desk. Grover hands Cronin the
third certificate.

GOVERNOR GROVER (cont'd)
This one is yours Mr. Cronin.

E.A. Cronin takes the certificate, folds it and places it in
his jacket pocket.

GOVERNOR GROVER
The Elector's certificates have
been authorized with my signature.
Sign them and express mail them to
Congress before the sixth of
December as required by law.

WILLIAM ODELL
We want Mr. Watt's certificate.

GOVERNOR GROVER
Mr. Watt's is disqualified. The
certificate now belongs to Mr.
Cronin to vote as he pleases.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT
We stand firm that Mr. Watt's is
here as the official Republican
Elector.

GOVERNOR GROVER
You can stand on your heads for all
I care... Mr. Watt's forfeited his
right as an Elector when he delayed
his resignation as Postmaster at
Lafayette. As a result of that
delay, Mr. Cronin here will fill
the vacancy as the official and
legal elector for the state of
Oregon. He received the highest
amount of votes required by law
which gives me the legal authority
to appoint him.

WILLIAM ODELL
Mr. Watt's resigned his position.

GOVERNOR GROVER
A week after the Election.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT
Mr. Cronin is a Democrat... He will
vote the certificate for Tilden.

GOVERNOR GROVER
Mr. Cronin may vote his certificate
as he deems fit. No one is telling
him how to vote...Could be Hayes.

Governor Grover pauses slightly for effect, then raises an
eyebrow.

GOVERNOR GROVER (cont'd)
Or Tilden.

Grover sits back in his chair and waves the men off.

GOVERNOR GROVER (cont'd)
Now gentlemen, if you please... I
have other work to attend to. This
matter is closed.

John Cartwright leans both hands aggressively on the
Governors desk and leans in.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT
We hereby officially object to this
decision on the grounds that you
yourself are a Democrat! We want it
noted that you are using this
office to hand Tilden the
Presidency!

Grover, annoyed by the threats and accusations, narrows his
eyes at Cartwright. Keeping his voice steady, Grover sternly
counters.

GOVERNOR GROVER
Are you challenging my authority
Mr. Odell? I guarantee you I
followed the law of the U.S.
Constitution and am doing my sworn
duty as the Governor of this state.
I suggest you do the same.
Furthermore - do not stand in front
of my desk all righteous and dare
to call me a cheat when it is your
party that cannot accept the voters
wishes to seat Governor Tilden as
their President. Good Day
Gentlemen.

The Electors walk out of the Governors office to the

HALL

And walk to the a

VACANT ROOM

where there are a few empty desks and chairs. E.A. Cronin walks to one of the desks and seats himself in a chair. He places the Electors certificate neatly on the desk and signs it. The other five Republicans, Parker, Miller, Watt's, Odell and Cartwright stand close by and watch him.

WILLIAM ODELL

Mr. Cronin.

E.A. CRONIN

What is it?

WILLIAM ODELL

Cartwright and I are declaring our positions vacant. We are appointing Mr. Parker and Mr. Miller to replace us.

E.A. CRONIN

That is not a legal option Mr. Odell.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT

It is and we are.

Cartwright takes the two certificates and hand them to Parker and Miller.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT

Mr. Parker, Mr. Miller... Mr. Odell and I declare that you two are to fill our vacancies and are now the Oregon Electors. Sign these certificates and give them to Mr. Cronin so he can express them to Congress immediately.

Miller and Parker take the certificates, walk to another empty desk in the room, seat themselves and sign the documents, then hand them off to Cronin. Cartwright, Odell and Watts walk out of the room back into the

HALLWAY

Cronin stands up from the desk and walks over to Parker and

Miller. Cronin waits for the men to acknowledge him.

JOHN PARKER
What is it Mr. Cronin?

E.A. CRONIN
You are committing fraud.

JOHN PARKER
It's as legal as the Governor
appointing you to replace Mr.
Watts. Hayes won our state by
popular vote.

EXT. OREGON - RESTAURANT - DAY

Cartwright, Odell and Watts enter through the door of a small restaurant where a few PEOPLE are dining. The three men walk to a table and quietly seat themselves. Cartwright reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out three new sets of Electoral certificates. He hands one to Watts and one to Odell.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT
Here is your certificate Mr. Watts.
Mr. Odell and I are declaring your
vacancy filled. Complete this
certificate as a true and official
Oregon Elector for the Republican
Party.

WILLIAM ODELL
I'll wire Chairman Chandler of our
actions.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT
What about Mr. Cronin?

WILLIAM ODELL
No need to worry about him. By the
time he explains what we've done to
the Governor, it will be too late
for him to do anything about it.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT
Oh and be sure to send the five
thousand back to Tilden's nephew
Pelton untouched. His bribe will
justify our actions in appointing
Watts.

J.W, WATTS

Can we go to jail for this?

JOHN CARTWRIGHT
Hell no- we'll be heros for gettin'
Hayes elected.

INT. OREGON - GOVERNOR GROVERS - OFFICE - DAY

E.A. Cronin knocks at the door and enters with the three certificates in hand. He walks to the Governor's desk and places them down. Secretary Chadwick is present.

GOVERNOR GROVER
Is there a problem, Mr. Cronin?

E.A. CRONIN
Odell and Cartwright have both
declared their positions vacant.

STEVEN CHADWICK
They cannot do that.

E.A. CRONIN
Parker and Miller were appointed by
them as the new electors... Here
are their signatures on the
official certificates.

Cronin places the certificates on the Governor's desk. Grover pounds his hand on his desk.

GOVERNOR GROVER
Those dirty...

Grover turns to Chadwick.

GOVERNOR GROVER (cont'd)
Send a wire immediately to alert
Mr. Tilden and the others in New
York.

Grover paces for a few moment.

GOVERNOR GROVER (cont'd)
Tell him there are counterfeit
Electoral certificates headed to
Congress.
Tell him that we are not party to
this action and Congress should
issue a warrant to arrest these
cheats immediately...Also tell them
I am sending the money back because

we didn't need it.

STEVEN CHADWICK

I can only send back part of the money...Odell took five thousand of it for expenses.

GOVERNOR GROVER

Add that to the wire too so Tilden doesn't think we kept his money.

INT. NEW YORK CITY - EVERTTE HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPERED: Early December 1876

POV William Pelton to

CAMPAIGN ROOM WINDOW TO STREET

PEOPLE walking along the sidewalks with their packages and horse and carriages passing by while CHILDREN frolic in the snow. There are a few Tilden Supporters marching around with signs and some huddled by a trash barrel fire to keep the men warm. After a few moments, William turns from the frosty scenery outside to

CAMPAIGN ROOM

William Pelton sighs and walks back to his desk. He takes a seat across from George Smith at the table to assist in sorting telegrams.

GEORGE SMITH

Lost in thought?

WILLIAM PELTON

Some -

GEORGE SMITH

Mmm-hmmm.

WILLIAM PELTON

The holidays are distracting...

GEORGE SMITH

Mmm -

William reads a telegram and seems confused. He places the document aside and searches for a moment through other telegrams on his desk until he finds the one he wants. He reviews it and leans back in his chair and seems puzzled. Raising his eyes up from his work, George Smith looks to

William.

GEORGE SMITH (cont'd)
What's wrong?

WILLIAM PELTON
The money from Oregon has been
returned in two separate wires...

Crooking an eyebrow, George Smith stands and takes the two telegrams from William and reads both.

WILLIAM PELTON (cont'd)
We should tell Uncle.

GEORGE SMITH
There is no need to anger him over something that didn't pan out...Don't worry William if the money subject ever comes up, we can easily justify the expenditure as covered legal expenses. Congress will most likely toss out the certificates not signed by Grover.

INT. TALLAHASSEE - REPUBLICAN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

LEW WALLACE hands a telegram to Zach Chandler.

ZACH CHANDLER
Good news from Odell in Oregon. He set up Tilden's nephew in a money scheme to make it look like he tried to buy off the Oregon electors.

Lew Wallace is not won over by Zach's enthusiasm.

ZACH CHANDLER (cont'd)
The wire states they are submitting duplicate sets of certificates.

LEW WALLACE
What would happen if we did the same?

ZACH CHANDLER
We'd probably get arrested for fraud.

Zach pulls out a bottle of whiskey and two shot glasses. He fills them to the brim.

ZACH CHANDLER (cont'd)

If all the certificates are counted
in Congress they could move to toss
out the ones without a Governors
signature.

LEW WALLACE
Might be worth a try.

ZACH CHANDLER
Maybe --I'm still surprised John
Reid's little scheme has gotten us
this far.

LEW WALLACE
Who's John Reid?

ZACH CHANDLER
He's the newsman from the New York
Times that came up with the idea.

LEW WALLACE
You must be paying him good money

ZACH CHANDLER
Ha - Not one dime. He's a smart guy
but a damned fool to think Hayes
would pay him any attention.

The men knock down another shot of whiskey.

ZACH CHANDLER (cont'd)
I have to figure out how to silence
him win or lose.

Lew Wallace pulls his gun out and lays it on the desk.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Samuel, John Bigelow and Mary are seated with cocktails near
the glow of the lit fireplace.

JOHN BIGELOW
Do you have any concerns?

SAMUEL
A few.

MARY
I despise dirty politics. Deceit
and trickery is dishonorable.

Samuel reaches out to pat his sister's hand.

MARY
Hopefully someday it won't be just
behind closed doors.

For a moment there is an awkward moment of silence.

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Protestors and regular city people fill the sidewalks. Horses
carriages are parked along the side of the road and a few
drive by.

INT. WASHINGTON DC - CAPITOL BUILDING - HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY
SUPERED: December 6, 1876 - Electoral Certificates are Opened
and Counted by Congress.

Samuel Randall, stands with other CONGRESSMEN and
CONGRESSIONAL TELLERS.

HOUSE CHAMBER PUBLIC GALLEY AREA

The CROWD and REPORTERS watch and talk amongst themselves.
John Reid enters the viewers galley.

HOUSE CHAMBER

Randall, walks through the Congressmen to the

PODIUM

And picks up his gavel and bangs it numerous times to quiet
the voices filling the room.

SAMUEL RANDALL
ORDER! ORDER! THE HOUSE MUST COME
TO ORDER

It takes a few moments, but the congressmen finally settle
down and sit in their designated seats.

HOUSE CHAMBER PUBLIC GALLEY AREA

Several REPORTERS surround John Reid.

HOUSE CHAMBER - Time lapse

The President of the Senate, THOMAS FERRY, enters and walks
to Randall. A hush comes over the room.

SAMUEL RANDALL
(Loud)
The States of Oregon, Louisiana,
Florida and South Carolina have
submitted two and three sets of
electoral certificates. We must
decide today which are legal.

All the Congressmen stand and jeer.

CONGRESSMAN
Obviously some states think they
can cheat their way to the
Presidency with extra votes.

HOUSE CHAMBER PUBLIC GALLEY AREA

John Reid smirks.

HOUSE CHAMBER

Congressman Hewitt stands.

ABRAM HEWITT
I have prepared a draft for this
unusual day in our history. The
people must assemble to protest
against this fraud - They should
not be robbed of their ballots for
President.

A REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN stands

REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN
There is no deception! Tilden does
not have the Electoral.

Democratic Congressman stand. The noise is deafening.

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSMEN
Hayes lost by hundreds of thousands
of ballots and your corrupt party
is attempting to steal the
Presidency.

SAMUEL RANDALL
ORDER! ORDER!
Gentlemen we must have Order in the
House!

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OFFICE- NIGHT

President Grant stands by the window.

His AIDE walks into the room.

Clearing his throat, the Aide extends his hand out with a document. With an audible sigh Grant turns and takes it from him and the Aide exits the room. Grant unfolds the paper, reads the message and then crumples it in his hand. He then turns back to the widow and resumes his POV vigil on the marching protesters. Julia enters the room, walks over to her husband and puts her arms around his waist from behind him.

JULIA GRANT
Busy?

Welcoming the touch of her thin arms around him, he reaches down and gently takes her hands into his and lifts them to his lips and kisses them.

PRESIDENT GRANT
My sweet Julia -

JULIA GRANT
What's wrong?

Grant slips out of her embrace and walks over to his desk and sits in his chair.

PRESIDENT GRANT
The election has been compromised further.

JULIA GRANT
How so?

PRESIDENT GRANT
The Oregon electors sent duplicate certificates and now the southern states followed their lead.

JULIA GRANT
Can't you declare a winner?

PRESIDENT GRANT
I cannot, Congress must.

Grant articulates.

PRESIDENT GRANT (cont'd)
In 1804 the system was modified by the Twelfth Amendment and it delegates the election of President to the House and leaves the determination to the Vice President

who is in charge in the Senate.

JULIA GRANT
Your Vice President died.

PRESIDENT GRANT
Exactly.

JULIA GRANT
They will resolved it one way or another.

PRESIDENT GRANT
They must or I will be forced to serve a third term.

JULIA GRANT
No you will not...I have reschedule our travel arrangements and meticulously prearranged them for our departure. I have shared you long enough with the government.

PRESIDENT GRANT
The Liberal Republicans are narrow headed men with their eyes so close together that they can look out of the same gimlet hole without winking.

Both President Grant and Julia are startled when they hear gunshots from outside. The President, followed by Julia, rush over to the

WINDOW

to see what is going on.

JULIA GRANT
Those men better not be shooting at the fountains we built.

PRESIDENT GRANT
They shouldn't be shooting at anything.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - STREET - NIGHT

Protestors, who have dropped their signs but not their torches are fighting with the soldiers who have been stationed near the crowd to keep order. Horse and carriage drivers try to maneuver their charges away from the

commotion, but have a difficult time because the animals are spooked by the violent outbreak. The horses not tied to posts start to scatter in different directions. A few of the protestors with torches move toward some nearby trees and set them on fire. People in the crowd panic, shriek and run away to escape the confrontation.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WINDOW - NIGHT

President Grant and Julia witness the violent activities. Julia raises a hand to her mouth and cries out in horror.

JULIA GRANT

Oh my Lord, they are setting fire to the trees!

A moment later a SOLIDER of the guard enters the room, walks to the President, salutes him.

SOLIDER

Sir, the perimeter guards are having a difficult time with the demonstrators.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Get more men out there! Those people may protest but they will not be allowed to destroy public property. Arrest them if need be.

The Solider salutes Grant and walks briskly out of the room.

EXT. TALLAHASSEE - CAPITOL BUILDING -ESTABLISHING- NIGHT

SUPERED: Tallahassee Florida - Capitol Building.

Protestors march with makeshift signs and some brawl and hit each other with them. Soldiers on horseback and foot try to stop them. One of the soldiers fires a few shots in the air to calm the crowd down. They ignore him and keep fighting amongst themselves.

INT. TALLAHASSEE - CAPITOL BUILDING - GOVERNOR OFFICE -NIGHT

GOVERNOR STERNS watches the mob scene from a window inside his office. One of the soldiers, a MAJOR dressed in a federal blue uniform enters the Governor's office.

MAJOR

We are trying our best to control
the situation.

GOVERNOR STERNS

This is impossible. I can barely
enter the building anymore without
fear of being attacked.

The Major walks to the window and stands next to the
Governor.

MAJOR

The riots are becoming rampant
throughout the city.

The Governor walks over to a coat rack in the room and takes
his coat from it. He slings the garment over his shoulders
and prepares to leave.

GOVERNOR STERNS

Get my carriage at once - And four
of your best men. I want to tour
the city and see this for myself.

The Major walks toward Sterns.

MAJOR

With all due respect, sir, it's
mighty dangerous out there. Small
parts of the city are
uncontrollable.

GOVERNOR STERNS

Don't argue with me Major. It is my
duty as Governor of this state to
protect it.

EXT. TILDEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPERED: Negotiations begin with Senator Allen G. Thurman
from Ohio.

Tilden, along with his sister Mary, William Pelton are seated
when John Bigelow, George Smith and SENATOR ALLEN THURMAN
from Ohio enter the room. The Senator reaches into his jacket
pocket and pulls out a telegram and hands it to Samuel. They
all wait in silence as Samuel reads the message. Once read,
Samuel crumples the message in his hand.

SAMUEL

Congress shouldn't of call off the

count.

ALLEN THURMAN

They had no choice after two and three sets of certificates were submitted. None of us can verify which are the frauds.

SAMUEL

This is preposterous.

WILLIAM PELTON

Uncle - Maybe we can persuade the Oregon Electors--

SAMUEL

It's too late for that.

Samuel looks over to Bigelow.

SAMUEL(cont'd)

Your thoughts?

JOHN BIGELOW

A peculiar dilemma. It's never happened before in any election.

ALLEN THURMAN

Indeed.

MARY

Your supporters will not stand for much more of this nonsense.

SAMUEL

I'll surrender my Presidency before I see more bloodshed.

Samuel walks over to a window, pulls back the curtain.

STREET

Tilden supporters march with signs in the cold and snowy weather. Some of the supporters are former Civil War Veterans wearing blue union uniforms.

LIVING ROOM

Samuel turns back to his sister and the others gathered in the room.

SAMUEL

Each of you know it is not in my nature to support violence. I pride

myself on high principals,
discipline and reason - strategies
of the mind. I have never used
ruff and tumble politics in place
of justice.

JOHN BIGELOW

Has Abram Hewitt sent any
advisement on how Congress will
decide which certificates are
legal?

WILLIAM PELTON

Mr. Hewitt suggested to me we
should organize the Democrats
across the country to protest.

ALLEN THURMAN

The way I see it, Samuel, you have
three choices. We can fight, we can
back down or we can arbitrate.

SAMUEL

Violence is never a good solution.
We have just emerged from one Civil
War and it will not do to engage in
another...
At the same time, however, 'backing
down' is not a solution I find very
appealing.

Samuel pauses for a moment.

SAMUEL(cont'd)

I like arbitration.

MARY

That is the last thing I would have
selected.

Samuel walks over to a table and picks up a book and waves it
in the air.

SAMUEL

There should be no secret
agreements hidden from the public.
We must demand open hearings.

The others let out a moan and William looks at the floor,
mumbling unintelligibly under his breath.

MARY

They might as well just throw names
in a hat-

SAMUEL

I may lose the Presidency but I will not raffle for it.

JOHN BIGELOW

You know as well as I the Constitution says nothing about a lawyer's arbitration with regards to deciding Electors Certificates.

SAMUEL

True, but the President of the Senate has the power to decide which certificates are valid.

ALLEN THURMAN

He's a Republican...How's a legal argument going to stop him?

SAMUEL

Because it will force his hand and throw the election count into the House of Representatives.

JOHN BIGELOW

Which the Democrats have control of... Very clever.

SAMUEL

There is a flaw though... The Twenty-second Joint Rule was repealed earlier this year and the Republicans will never agree to adopt it again.

JOHN BIGELOW

Maybe they will if Speaker Randall insists both houses never agreed on it.

ALLEN THURMAN

With no Vice President it could complicate things when Senator Ferry fills in. He's bias for Hayes.

SAMUEL

His bias be damned. Wire Hewitt and the others. Tell them to start negotiations with the Republicans and to report back to me with the best deals they are offering.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - 42ND ST & FIFTH AVE - DAY

SHOPPERS carry bags filled with merchandise. PROTESTORS for Tilden and Hayes are gathered and continue to march in support for their candidates. The sound of clip-clopping horses and carriages with their DRIVERS move gracefully east and west. A few PROSTITUTES stand in front of a gambling hall soliciting men.

William Pelton, Mary and Samuel stand on the sidewalk waiting for their CARRIAGE DRIVER to finish loading their packages into the coach. Mary watches anxiously and directs the man during the process.

MARY

Be careful with that one.

Samuel turns and waves to his supporters before he climbs into the coach.

PROTESTOR ONE

Demand what is yours Mr. Tilden and the people will sustain you.

PROTESTOR TWO

Issue the call that our liberties are best preserved by the sword.

PROTESTOR THREE

Fair count or fight!

PROSTITUTE

If women could vote we would screw those Republicans like they are trying to do you.

MARY

Oh Lord.

SAMUEL

Ladies.

Samuel tips his hat and climbs into his

CARRIAGE

Once inside he is surprised by a jolt from another horse and carriage driver that passes by in a full trot nearly hitting his coach.

STREET

A carriage hits a mud puddle and throws water and mud on to two nicely dressed women, Celeste Stauffer and her mother MRS. STAUFFER...The women are taken by surprise and their packages fall to the sidewalk. Both Celeste and her mother scramble to retrieve them. In the midst of this scuttle, the mother slips and falls to the ground. Celeste helps her mother off the ground. Both women have strong New Orleans southern accents.

CARRIAGE

MARY

Oh William, those women are in need of assistance. Would you be so kind?"

WILLIAM PELTON

Of course.

William retrieves his hat that he had just taken off. While holding it in his hand he carefully maneuvers his exit from the coach. Once he is outside, Samuel leans out his window.

SAMUEL

Do not get too distracted nephew-

STREET

WILLIAM PELTON

(looks at the prostitutes)
With them? Hardly.

Samuel nods his approval and motions for his carriage driver to go forward. Samuel's driver snaps the reins in his hands and the horses move forward into traffic. Samuel and Mary watch from the carriage window as William and a few of the protestors who have put down their signs, rush over to assist the ladies. Samuel waves at them as his carriage passes. At that moment, he realizes that the younger woman is someone he has seen before but cannot place. As this thought races through his mind, the young woman, Celeste, raises her head in Samuel's direction and their eyes meet for a brief but defining moment.

CARRIAGE

MARY

Really Samuel --put your eyes back in your head.

SAMUEL

I think I've seen her before.

MARY

Need I remind you, there are other matters more important right now than beautiful women.

SAMUEL

Not the ladies of the day - the one younger woman with her mother.

Samuel brings his hand to his chest and thumps it gently against his heart.

STREET

William helps the ladies with their packages.

WILLIAM PELTON

Are you in need of medical attention?

MRS. STAUFFER

Heavens no.

WILLIAM PELTON

Thank goodness.

MRS. STAUFFER

Who was that man and woman with you sir? Was it Samuel Tilden?

WILLIAM PELTON

Yes. He and my mother who is also were shopping today.

CELESTE STAUFFER

Samuel Tilden?

The woman winks at William and says with a slight snicker to her daughter,

MRS. STAUFFER

Look around you dear...These people are marching in support of his Presidency.

Celeste is not amused by her mother's remarks or the mud spattered situation which has now begun to soak through her dress.

CELESTE STAUFFER

What do I care what man is elected President? Women are not allowed a say in such matters.

She turns to William.

CELESTE STAUFFER (cont'd)

Thank you, sir, for your kind assistance. We can handle it from here.

MRS. STAUFFER

(scolding)

Celeste, your manners...I'm sorry
Sir - I did not hear your name.

William touches the brim of his hat and slightly nods.

WILLIAM PELTON

Colonel William T. Pelton, Ma'am.

The women swipe more of the mud from the front of their dresses.

MRS. STAUFFER

Oh, you are a military man?

WILLIAM PELTON

Retired Ma'am.

MRS. STAUFFER

My name is Mrs. Stauffer, of New Orleans. And this is my daughter Celeste Stauffer, who, as you now know, speaks her mind without pause...We are here for travel by ship to Europe in the morning.

CELESTE STAUFFER

Mother we must go.

MRS. STAUFFER

One moment dear. My husband is in pharmaceuticals too.

WILLIAM PELTON

Oh you know of my grandfather Elam.

MRS. STAUFFER

Of course - My husband spoke often of your grandfather's successes with cures.

The three commence walking toward the entrance of the

FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL

WILLIAM PELTON

My mother is a strong advocate for

women's voting rights.

CELESTE STAUFFER

She sounds like a very wise woman.

WILLIAM PELTON

(laughs out loud)

She keeps us all in line.

CELESTE STAUFFER

If more women were ambitious like
your mother the laws that guide us
well this country would be better
for it.

Before entering the hotel, Mrs. Stauffer stops and reaches
her hand out to William.

MRS. STAUFFER

Thank you again for your assistance
Colonel Pelton. I shall tell my
husband when we see him abroad that
we had the pleasure of meeting you.
Please tell Governor Tilden we hope
to hear good news about his
Presidency soon.

INT. - FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - REPUBLICAN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

SUPERED: Republican Headquarters New York City. Samuel
Tilden's "Presidential Counts" booklet was delivered to
every Congressman's desk at the Capitol.

John Reid reads Tilden's recently published case and Zach
Chandler is seated behind his desk, busy working on another
project. Reid walks to Zach, with the pamphlet in hand.

JOHN REID

Have you read this yet?

Zach briefly looks at the cover.

ZACH CHANDLER

No.

Reid waves the booklet in the air to get Zach's attention and
gripes.

JOHN REID

John Bigelow wrote the introduction
and it's quite effective. It could
possibly sway some of the

Republican Senators to vote for
Tilden.

Zach, annoyed by Reid's interruption, stands up from his desk and walks to a campaign staffer and hands off a slip of paper to him.

ZACH CHANDLER

(to John Reid)

You started this election fiasco -
don't complain.

(to campaign staffer)

Please send this immediately.

The staffer takes the paper from Zach and exits the room. Zach walks back to his desk and sits down. He continues with his work and tries unsuccessfully to ignore John Reid.

ZACH CHANDLER

Read it aloud to me while I finish
this report.

Reid opens the booklet.

JOHN REID

It begins with, it is shown that in
Seventeen-Ninety Three - two
Houses, by concurrent Resolution,
prescribed the mode of the
counting, which was followed down
to Eighteen-Sixty-Five.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE:

SUPERED: President Grant, First Lady, Julia Grant and General
Tecumseh Sherman, Commanding General of the Army.

Seated behind his desk in his office, President Grant leans
back in his chair, relaxed and smoking a cigar and listens
attentively to Julia read Tilden's pamphlet to him. WILLIAM
TECUMSEH SHERMAN is seated in a nearby chair, chews on a
cigar with his legs crossed and arms folded.

JULIA GRANT

Subsequently, a standing rule of
Congress for counting prevailed in
Eighteen-Sixty-Five, Eighteen-Sixty
Nine and Eighteen-Seventy-Two. The
two Houses invariably appointed
tellers to make the count - two for

the Lower House and one for the Senate.

CUT TO:

INT. HAYES MANSION - LIVING ROOM

SUPERED: Rutherford Hayes, Lucy Hayes and Ohio Senator John Sherman, younger brother of General Tecumseh Sherman.

Inside the living room at the Hayes home in Ohio, Senator JOHN SHERMAN is seated by a desk and reads Tilden's Presidential Counts pamphlet.

SENATOR JOHN SHERMAN

In this survey, with citations to sources, Tilden contends: that the two Houses have exclusive jurisdiction to count the electoral votes under their own rules and had exercised that power.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - STREET

Tilden and Hayes supporters in the streets carry their signs.

JULIA GRANT (V.O.)

From the beginning of the Federal Government, the President of the Senate merely opened the votes and presented them to the two Houses for action, but it's never gone beyond that limit-Function in a single instance.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPITOL SENATE CHAMBERS

SUPERED: Senator Thomas W. Ferry, President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate and other Republican Senators.

SENATOR THOMAS W. FERRY

To allow him to count the votes would permit him to disfranchise a State, and even to elect himself President. Three, that the two Houses had-

CUT TO:

INT. CAPITOL - HOUSE CHAMBERS

SUPERED: Samuel Jackson Randall, 33rd Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and Congressman Abram Hewitt, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

Inside House Chambers Speaker of the House SAMUEL JACKSON RANDALL stands by the door and reads out loud to Abram Hewitt who is seated in a chair nearby.

SAMUEL JACKSON RANDALL

Authority to decide upon the
legality of votes and might go
behind the returns to do so.

CUT TO:

INT. FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - REPUBLICAN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Zach stands and stretches and reaches over and takes the Presidential Counts booklet from John Reid.

ZACH CHANDLER

Tilden makes a notable case...
Are you worried Mr. Reid? Go ahead
and print it. Most people won't
understand the content. In fact,
most are amazingly ignorant when it
comes to politics.

STREET

Tilden supporters are huddled near a fire and reading newspapers.

INSERT: New York Sun newspaper headline, "Presidential Counts."

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK - DAY

Tilden's supporters are gathered in front of the mansion, with signs and call out for Samuel to claim his Presidency. The local POSTMAN has difficulty maneuvering his horse and mail carriage through the crowd. He pulls up to the curb, halts and jumps down from the carriage and struggles with the over-stuffed mailbag.

VARIOUS TILDEN SUPPORTERS

Demand what is yours and the people
will sustain you. Fair Count or
Fight! Tilden or Blood! Our
liberties are best preserved by the
sword!

INT. TILDEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mary sighs at the window while observing the crowd. She notices George struggling with the heavy mail bag. She walks over to the

FRONT DOOR

And opens it for him. The Postman makes his way up the stairs.

MARY

I am so sorry. Carrying all this
mail every day must be burdensome.

The Postman enters the mansion and drops the heavy bag onto the floor.

POSTMAN

It seems your brother is getting
letters from the entire country on
this matter.

MARY

Indeed.

POSTMAN

Does he read all of these?

MARY

As many as he can fit into his
schedule.

With a grunt, the Postman picks up the heavy bag again and slings it over his shoulder and follows Mary into the

LIVING ROOM

And drops the bag to the floor again.

MARY

Leave it and I will have a couple
of the staff pick it up.

Samuel descends down the staircase and greets the Postman.

SAMUEL

I see you have the daily cart load.

The Postman walks to the door to leave.

POSTMAN

There's a lot of people out there
that love you sir.

SAMUEL

And I them.

Samuel walks toward his

READING ROOM

George Smith is working at his desk. Samuel walks to his own
desk and sits down. Mary enters the room.

MARY (TO GEORGE)

He's in good spirits.

GEORGE SMITH

He has been ever since he finished
the Presidential Counts pamphlet.

MARY

Any other news?

GEORGE SMITH

Supporters are gearing up for a
war.

SAMUEL

I will not endorse bloodshed.

MARY

If you are not declared President
elect soon there may be no
controlling it.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Several members of Congress walk the grounds.

STREET

Soldiers keep the boisterous Protesters at bay.

INT. WASHINGTON DC - CAPITOL BUILDING - ROOM - DAY

SUPERED: December 22, 1876, Members of the Committee on Privileges, Powers and Duties of the House of Representatives are assembled. Representative J. Proctor Knott of Kentucky, is Chairman of the committee, is seated at the center of the table surrounded by the other eleven Congressmen who make up the committee to review the Electoral Certificate documents. Their focus is to make any major decisions and to write any new laws pertaining to the current election rules.

Rising from his chair, CONGRESSMAN KNOTT picks up some of the papers laid out before him and begins to read out loud the final decision of the rules. Congressman Abram Hewitt is one of the twelve on this committee and he sits and listens attentively while Knott reads the resolution out loud.

CONGRESSMAN KNOTT

The resolution is complete as follows; One, that the Constitution does not confer upon the President of the Senate the power to count the electoral votes for President. . . Two, that he may only receive, preserve and open them. Three, that the Senate and House only may examine and ascertain the votes to be counted. Four, that in the exercise of this power the House is at least the equal of the Senate. Five, that no vote can be counted against the judgment of the House.

Knott places the document back on the table and looks at the other members.

CONGRESSMAN KNOTT (cont'd)

If there are no further questions or remarks then this meeting is adjourned.

SUPERED: In the first months of 1876, never suspecting any issues with the upcoming election between Hayes and Tilden, the Republican controlled Senate had repealed Joint Rule 22. This rule provided for both houses of Congress during an electoral count that both houses would have to see eye to eye, meaning they would agree on counting a certificate as legal or it would be thrown out.

HALLWAY

Just outside of the committee room, Samuel Randall waits for Abram Hewitt to leave the room at the conclusion of the

resolution vote. Hewitt exits the room. The two turn and walk down the hall.

SAMUEL RANDALL

With the Twenty Second Joint rule repealed the Republican Senate must abide by the law.

ABRAM HEWITT

And the House?

SAMUEL RANDALL

Can object questionable certificates and thrown them out.

ABRAM HEWITT

Senator Thurman offered Tilden three courses to follow. He can fight, back down or arbitrate... Tilden has chosen the latter.

SAMUEL RANDALL

I'm not surprised...If it was my presidency, I'd fight.

ABRAM HEWITT

Tilden's all about keeping it honest.

SAMUEL RANDALL

Good thing it's not my choice, aye, Hewitt?

The two continue their walk toward the exit.

SAMUEL RANDALL (cont'd)

I'm on my way to meet with President Grant now.

ABRAM HEWITT

Tread lightly my friend, Grant may not be very receptive to the words of a Democratic.

SAMUEL RANDALL

Probably not- but what Republican does?

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - STREET - DAY

Randall walks briskly toward the street which is packed with TILDEN and HAYES supporters and SOLDIERS. He hails a horse

and CARRIAGE DRIVER. When the carriage stops Randall climbs into the coach. Some REPORTERS run toward him.

REPORTER DC

Mr. Speaker, how did your meeting go with the President?

Randall leans out of the carriage window.

SAMUEL RANDALL

I have no comment at this time.

Randall motions with a wave of his hand for the driver to go. The driver moves his horse slowly forward. A few reporters follow the slow moving carriage to ask more questions.

REPORTER

The president told me he would not seat any man in the White House - but would be bound by the action of Congress whether the choice is Tilden or Hayes.

Randall leans out the window of the carriage window.

SAMUEL RANDALL

(to Carriage Driver)

Halt for a moment.

The driver pulls back on the reins and stops.

SAMUEL RANDALL

Did you ask the President who he preferred?

REPORTER

He was out here earlier and told us his opinion.

SAMUEL RANDALL

That is the cheekiest thing I've ever heard a President to do.

REPORTER 2

We heard Congress is going to count Hayes in rightly or wrongly. Any comment?

SAMUEL RANDALL

Congress will be fair to both candidates...I'm sorry Gentlemen; I'm late for my train.

Randall motions to his driver to move on. The Reporters

scribble more notes.

REPORTER 1

I can't believe you told him Grant was out here and said that.

REPORTER 2

It's the news business kid. Sometimes you have to fabricate to get answers.

INT. TILDEN MANSION -READING ROOM - NIGHT

A fire burns brightly in the hearth. Samuel is snuggled in a chair and a little distracted as he reads a book. He lets out a sigh as he stares at the dancing flames flickering in the fireplace. After a few moments he hears voices just outside the room. As if on cue, one of Samuel's household butlers opens the door.

BUTLERS

Abram Hewitt.

SAMUEL

Send him in.

Hewitt enters the room, walks over to Samuel and two shake hands.

SAMUEL

A drink?

ABRAM HEWITT

Bourbon.

The Butler walks to the bar area and carefully dispenses two drinks from a lead crystal decanter to whiskey glasses, walks to the men and hands them off then walks to toward the door and stands near it.

SAMUEL

Any news?

ABRAM HEWITT

President Grant's exact words to Randall. He says no man can take the office of President unless the people believe he has been fairly elected.

SAMUEL

Grant knows I'm elected.

ABRAM HEWITT

Grant claims South Carolina has gone for Hayes and Florida by a majority of forty-five.

SAMUEL

Yet our visiting statesmen say my majority in Florida is ninety three.

ABRAM HEWITT

He believes Louisiana gave you the majority by six to eight thousand votes.

SAMUEL

So if it were Grant's decision the dispute is over and I'm elected.

ABRAM HEWITT

He added due to the irregularities of the vote from the last named state, it should be thrown out, leaving the House to elect the President.

SAMUEL

And?

ABRAM HEWITT

He said his obligation as President is to call up the arm forces to save public property.

SAMUEL

He conveniently left out how his administration called up the army without his approval.

ABRAM HEWITT

Randall and I are convinced that Grant believes you have been properly and legally elected.

SAMUEL

(annoyed)

I am elected! The Republicans just won't give in to it. Florida is under military siege and Drew had to sue to get a recount for his win as governor. Republicans are so far out on a limb they will stop at nothing.

ABRAM HEWITT

I heard reports Governor Sterns is
declaring the win.

SAMUEL

He can declare all day and
night...Drew won his appeal for a
recount in the Florida Supreme
Court. The margins are thin there -
but the recount verifies the state
was mine too.

Samuel walks to the window

SAMUEL POV

and his mood suddenly lightens when he sees FOUR WOMEN walk
up the steps.

BACK ON SCENE

Samuel waves at the women.

SAMUEL

(to Butler)

Please tell my sister her friends
are here.

Hewitt pulls a sealed envelope from his jacket pocket and
walks over to Samuel and hands it to him.

INSERT ENVELOPE marked with tag "Committee Resolutions"

BACK ON SCENE

ABRAM HEWITT

Review these by tomorrow. I'd like
to talk with you again before I
return to Washington.

HALLWAY

The Butler proceeds to the

FRONT DOOR

And welcomes the four Socialite women. Mary enters the

READING ROOM

Walks over to Abram Hewitt and shakes his hand.

MARY

Mr. Hewitt, good to see you again.

ABRAM HEWITT

You too...

MARY

(to Samuel)

When you have a moment.

SAMUEL

Of course.

ABRAM HEWITT

We will talk tomorrow.

Mary, Samuel and Hewitt move toward the door and exit into the

HALLWAY

Where the four women hand off their overcoats to the Butler. Mary leans into her brother.

MARY

It's your affections they seek.

Mary and the four women exit into the

LIVING ROOM

And seat themselves.

HALLWAY

Samuel turns to Hewitt and shrugs his shoulders with an amused grin on his face. The Butler bring Hewitt his coat and hat.

SAMUEL

When do you meet with Randall again?

ABRAM HEWITT

Tomorrow night in Washington.

Hewitt to the front door.

SAMUEL

Good -

ABRAM HEWITT

We will do whatever it takes.

SAMUEL

Our Supporters are counting on it.

Abram Hewitt exits out the door and Samuel walks to the

LIVING ROOM

To join the women who are already in conversation. The women pause for a moment and acknowledge Samuel's entrance. Mary catches her brother's glance and winks at him.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - CORRIDOR - DAY

SUPERED: Two days later.

Congressmen Randall and Hewitt converse with each other as they walk down the corridor. Several other Congressmen nod their usual good-mornings and pleasantries as they pass by. Hewitt and Randall offer a slight wave of their hands to acknowledge them.

RANDALL

I've been informed Republicans are intercepting our wires and duplicating them.

ABRAM HEWITT

They must have someone on the inside.

RANDALL

Probably William Orton President of the telegraph company. Add him to the subpena list to testify.

ABRAM HEWITT

Anyone else?

RANDALL

It's rumored Chandler has evidence Tilden's nephew William paid a bribe for an Elector in Oregon. Any truth to it?

ABRAM HEWITT

If doubt he did, but nephew or not he would be disowned. Family honor and integrity is everything to Tilden... What news from the Senate?

RANDALL

They're planning to propose a

special electoral commission.

ABRAM HEWITT

A few men deciding instead of
entire Congress?...We must block
it.

RANDALL

See if you can arrange a meeting
with Thurman and Bayard. Their
input will be valuable and I know
they'll never agree to back another
resolution. Together we need to
calculate the consequences of ruin
it could bring to our party as
well.

ABRAM HEWITT

Tilden would surrender his
Presidency before he allowed that
to happen.

SAMUEL RANDALL

His Supporters would start a second
Civil War -

EXT. HAYES HOME - STREET - NIGHT

A large CROWD of HAYES and TILDEN SUPPORTERS parade around
outside the Hayes's estate with campaign signs. A group of
Christmas CAROLERS sing 19th Century holiday songs. Lucy and
Rutherford Hayes stroll through the crowd and greet their
supporters and some of the Tilden people as well. Rutherford
watches his wife with a protective eye and after a few
moments Lucy waves good-bye, walks to Rutherford and takes
his arm and they walk back toward the house.

INT. HAYES MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Senator John Sherman waits with his WIFE and some other
GUESTS. Rutherford and Lucy enter the room.

RUTHERFORD HAYES

That was an exhilarating
experience.

The two men shake hands and Lucy walks away toward their
house guests.

JOHN SHERMAN

Word from Washington is a special electoral commission.

RUTHERFORD HAYES

I cannot influence the action of the Senate.

JOHN SHERMAN

I wonder what Henry Wilson would have said about this.

RUTHERFORD HAYES

Henry had his own scandals to deal with. His passing while Vice President left both the Senate and Grant in a lurch.

JOHN SHERMAN

You do realize the tide is turning for you.

RUTHERFORD HAYES

I will serve for the sake of the party if it happens - but the people behind this fraud will get no special favors from me.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - STREET - NIGHT

SUPERED: Christmas Eve

Several CAROLERS sing 19th Century Christmas songs. Not far from them are protestors waving Tilden or Blood signs. Soldiers stand guard at the front entrance of the White House.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

WINDOW

President Grant is behind Julia and has his arms around her.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Can you hear it?

JULIA GRANT

The Carolers?.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Yes them too - but I meant no

bickering.

JULIA GRANT
It's Christmas Eve.

PRESIDENT GRANT
Will you miss being First Lady?

JULIA GRANT
Not at all...By next summer we will
be abroad enjoying civilian life.
And a perfect time for you to start
your memoirs.

Grant lets out a moan and walks over to his desk. He reaches out and picks up his partially smoked cigar from an ashtray. Julia follows him and takes the cigar from his hand and places it back in the ashtray.

JULIA GRANT
You have been President for eight
years and a war hero...People will
want to read about your life.

PRESIDENT GRANT
Maybe so.

JULIA GRANT
I've heard of a very talented
writer who would be willing to work
with you...I particularly like this
man because of his stance on
women's rights.

Raising an eyebrow, Grant picks up his cigar again and lights it.

PRESIDENT GRANT
Women's rights? You mean that
Declaration signed on July 4th?

JULIA GRANT
Do not snicker Grant- Someday women
will be voting.

PRESIDENT GRANT
Hopefully not in my lifetime.

JULIA GRANT
Women are much smarter than many
men.

PRESIDENT GRANT
You are... So tell me - who is this

writer you speak of?

JULIA GRANT
Mark Twain.

Grant turns and looks back out the window at the people outside. A wisp of cigar smoke curls around above his head.

PRESIDENT GRANT
Never heard of him.

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK - TILDEN MANSION - NIGHT

Hundreds of Tilden supporters surround Tilden's home, streets and the park. Several horse and carriages arrive, dispatch ladies and gentlemen dressed in their best attire in front of the mansion.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN THRU A WINDOW

to a STRING QUARTET then

PANS BACK to expose the

LIVING ROOM with

Filled with PEOPLE in formal attire.

INT. GRAMERCY PARK - TILDEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mary, dressed in a gown greets guests as they enter the room.

READING ROOM

Honest John Kelly, Samuel, William Pelton, Abram Hewitt, John Bigelow, George Smith and MANTON MARBLE, are gathered together in the

LIVING ROOM

A Socialite enters the room and walks to Mary.

SOCIALITE
Wonderful party.

MARY
Thank you.

READING ROOM

JOHN BIGELOW
(to Samuel)

Any decisions for your Cabinet?

SAMUEL

Some.

SAMUEL

Charles Adams for Secretary of State.

JOHN BIGELOW

The son of a President and grandson of another, good traditional choice.

The other men agree and nod their approval.

SAMUEL

Charles O'Connor for Attorney General and David Wells for Secretary of the Treasury. I need the brightest people working with me. Men I can trust which of course includes you John.

ABRAM HEWITT

What have you heard from Hendricks?

SAMUEL

Not much. I think he and the Tammany boys wish he'd won the nomination instead of me. Their support of him for President was rather strong.

JOHN BIGELOW

The Republicans would have shown Hendricks no mercy either.

SAMUEL

(to Abram Hewitt)

The reconstruction issue in the South must be resolved. Our party leaders in the confederate states want the army out and I agree.

ABRAM HEWITT

And the Negroes?

SAMUEL

They've received several promises from Hayes people to remove the army.

MANTON MARBLE

Assuredly promises to sway them to their side.

SAMUEL

The Negroes civil rights must be protected. I had already planned to move the soldiers out.

MANTON MARBLE

It's long overdue.

SAMUEL

We need to schedule a meeting to discuss this idea of a Special Electoral Commission. The thought of a few men deciding my Presidency will not sit well with the voters.

Mary enters the room walks to Samuel, takes his hand in hers and gently leads him out of the room.

MARY

Come Gentlemen - there are many here waiting patiently to meet all of you.

Abram Hewitt reaches out and takes hold of William Pelton's shoulder. He leans into William's ear and in a hushed voice.

ABRAM HEWITT

I've heard a nasty rumor about you. Is there any truth to you bribing an Elector in Oregon?

WILLIAM PELTON

No.

ABRAM HEWITT

We'll talk tomorrow.

Hewitt walks away and William turns toward George Smith, who was in earshot of the exchange shrugs it off.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES - EDITORIAL ROOM - NIGHT

A few reporters are focused on their work at desks. John Reid and Zach Chandler stand off to the side near John's office.

JOHN REID

What have you heard about the Electoral Commission proposal?

Chandler grunts.

ZACH CHANDLER
Democrats are supporting it and we
are not.

JOHN REID
Can it be blocked?

ZACH CHANDLER
House and Senate have to agree on
terms before that happens.

JOHN REID
How would it work?

ZACH CHANDLER
Several members of Congress and the
Senate, maybe some judges from the
Supreme Court.

JOHN REID
How many Republicans?

ZACH CHANDLER
Half, plus one. Senator Conkling
would be our thorn. He's still
angry Hayes's took the nomination
from him.

JOHN REID
Can't he be reasoned with?

ZACH CHANDLER
So many questions -

Chandler reaches for his coat and hat on a nearby chair. He
places his hat on his head then puts on his coat.

ZACH CHANDLER
Leave the politics of this to those
of us who know what we're doing.
Once Hayes is sworn in you will
receive a generous reward.

JOHN REID
A staff position in the White House
would be good.

ZACH CHANDLER
Don't take this personal - but a
job in a Hayes' White House would
be next to impossible for any man
involved in this plot. Grant and
the others are aware of your plot
brilliant as it was they would

never allow someone smarter than themselves in...Have a Merry Christmas John...and for God Sake - go home to your wife and enjoy the holiday.

Zach touches the brim of his hat, turns and walks out the door. John Reid visibly angry by Zach's comments, walks into his office and slams the door and kicks a chair over.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - READING ROOM - DAY

SUPERED: Two days after Christmas 1876.

Samuel, Abram Hewitt, William Pelton, Manton Marble, George Smith and John Bigelow are all seated. Samuel stands with a piece of paper in his hand.

SAMUEL

New Year's day, I must make an appearance at the Inauguration for Robinson when he takes my place as Governor. I should not be absent but a day.

JOHN BIGELOW

(to Abram Hewitt)

Tell us more about the Special Commission.

SAMUEL

Will there be a House Resolution first?

ABRAM HEWITT

We will try for one.

MANTON MARBLE

This is all insanity...Only a handful of men will decide which Electors Certificates are valid and which are not is a slap in the face to the election process. This business with the Oregon Republicans and their duplicate certificates is outright fraud and no one in Congress is going to arrest the criminals involved?

Samuel places the document he had in his hand on a nearby table.

SAMUEL

After I'm in the White House we can instigate an investigation into the people responsible and expose them to the voters. The million dollar question on my mind is will a resolution in the House assert exclusive rights? And will the Republican controlled Senate act concurrently to count the Electors votes?

ABRAM HEWITT

They'll wait until the duplicate certificates are presented before Congress.

SAMUEL

Are you suggesting neither the House nor the Senate will have any say about which are valid?

ABRAM HEWITT

I am saying they will make an attempt to, yes.

SAMUEL

Will they debate these certificates in public or behind close doors?

ABRAM HEWITT

Behind closed doors with no public debate.

MANTON MARBLE

Hogwash.

ABRAM HEWITT

The Senate has no say either.

JOHN BIGELOW

Ha - the Republicans will have plenty to say - they always do.

ABRAM HEWITT

Not this time...Their voices will be blocked and rejected by rule of the House which we Democrats control.

SAMUEL

How does it serve us?... What are Senators Thurman and Bayard advising?

ABRAM HEWITT

Before leaving Washington, I met with Thurman, Bayard and Speaker Randall. We all agreed there will be two plans of action. One, to follow the Committee of Privileges for a decision with that body.

And two, to create a new agency outside of Congress to encourage a Committee on an Electoral Count Bill. The latter will decide on the duplicate certificates issue. Keep in mind, gentlemen, the Republicans in the Senate are not happy about any of it. They think their chances are better with Florida, South Carolina and Louisiana returning boards, which they currently control with the assistance of Grant's army.

JOHN BIGELOW

Risky on both sides.

SAMUEL

I agree.

JOHN BIGELOW

Grant should be doing something to stop these cheats.

MANTON MARBLE

Grant has no control over his party..He's lucky they didn't give him the boot.

SAMUEL

My fear is he'd order me shot by one of his soldiers before he turned his back on his cronies.

MANTON MARBLE

If he did there would be riots across the nation.

SAMUEL

That won't do...My Presidency must be resolved legally or we'll be accused of being war mongers like they are. I ran to reform not kill people.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENTS OFFICE - DAY

President Grant is seated at his desk reviewing paperwork when his aide knocks on the door.

PRESIDENT GRANT

What is it?

The aide peeks his head into the room.

GRANT'S AIDE

Pardon me, Mr. President, but
Representative Conger of Michigan,
is here to speak with you.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Show him in.

Congressman Conger strolls through the door and heads toward Grant's desk. The President stands and walks around the large desk to greet him and the two shake hands.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Good Morning - Let me guess, the
election matter?

CONGER

To get straight to the point, I'm
not one for idol rumors but it has
been told to me that Tilden was
intending to take the oath of
office, even at the risk of being
shot. Would you order it if he did
such a thing?

PRESIDENT GRANT

Now how would that look if I shot a
man that won an election by over
two-hundred fifty thousand votes.
To answer your question - No Mr.
Conger, I will not shoot Mr. Tilden
- but I would have to arrest him if
he illegally took the oath of
office.

CONGER

Oh -

PRESIDENT GRANT

What have you heard from Mr. Hayes?

CONGER

He has written me.

Grant reaches for a cigar from his desk, stands and walks over and sits in a chair. A moment of silence passes between the two as he lights his stogie and takes a few puffs.

PRESIDENT GRANT

I am not a mind-reader - are you going to make me wait all day?

CONGER

Governor Hayes has concerns about the proposed electoral commission.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Does he now?

Grant takes another puff, blowing the blue smoke above his head.

CONGER

He questions the authority of the Constitution on the matter.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Next time you talk to Governor Hayes tell him he lost this election by a clear majority and he should be concerned, rightly so.

Grant takes a few more puffs from his cigar and then leans forward and places the stogie in an ashtray on a table.

PRESIDENT GRANT (cont'd)

It is my opinion that Congress should consider eliminating any state that submits duplicate certificates and disqualify their electors from the count.

Conger dumbfounded by Grant's statement. Grant picks up the still smoldering cigar and clamps it between his teeth.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Have a good evening.

The Congressman nervously turns and makes a hasty exit. Grant stands alone for a moment and stares off. He stands and walks back behind his desk and sits down in his chair.

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK - STREET - NIGHT

A MESSENGER with a large envelope walks through the crowd of Tilden supporters. He is stopped when he reaches a couple of guards at the front steps. One of the guards takes the envelope, reviews it, and climbs the steps to the

FRONT DOOR

and knocks on the door.

INSERT ENVELOPE: "Strictly Confidential" Congressman Abram Hewitt.

BACK ON SCENE

The guard waits for the door to be opened.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

George Smith hears the knock and continues to work at a small desk. He takes little notice as one of the butlers walks past him to the door. Smith looks UP when he hears the guard's voice.

GUARD (V.O.)
Confidential, for Governor Tilden.

George Smith waits for the Butler to enter the room and takes the envelope from him and walks into the

READING ROOM

With the envelope and quietly lays it on Samuel's desk.

SAMUEL
Is that what I think it is?

GEORGE SMITH
It is.

Samuel carefully tears open the envelope and pulls out several papers that are neatly packaged inside. George Smith starts to exit the room when the Butler appears again, this time with a telegram in his hands. George reads it and hands it off to Samuel.

Samuel lays the papers down on the table.

GEORGE SMITH
A wire from Attorney Whitney.

SAMUEL
Read it to me.

GEORGE SMITH

You should consider forcing a modification of the resolution in order to preserve the Constitutional right of the two Houses to participate equally in the count - That is all we want and the country is with us....Whitney.

SAMUEL

Wire him back at once and tell him I will consider his proposal.

George Smith walks out of the room. Samuel picks up the proposed bill again and begins to study it. Samuel hears another knock at the door and the butler announces John Bigelow.

JOHN BIGELOW (V.O.)

Is he busy?

SAMUEL

Never too busy for you. Come in.

LIVING ROOM

Bigelow hands his coat and hat to the Butler then walks into the

READING ROOM

Samuel smiles when he sees Bigelow and waves the papers in his hand at him. Bigelow walks toward him.

JOHN BIGELOW

May I?

SAMUEL

It just arrived and I haven't had a chance to read it myself.

JOHN BIGELOW

Is it the McCrary House Bill? How did you get it so soon?

SAMUEL

All confidential of course.

JOHN BIGELOW

You do not trust me?

SAMUEL

You dare ask me that --sit down.

Bigelow smiles and gives an audible grunt. Samuel hands him the papers.

JOHN BIGELOW

I've heard secrecy has been imposed on all committee members.

SAMUEL

None of it should be...It should be public and published...

JOHN BIGELOW

The cloak and dagger people love their secrecy.

SAMUEL

Which is why their constituents don't trust them.

JOHN BIGELOW

According to these documents the Revisions provide for a special commission of fifteen members - five from the House, five from the Senate and five from the Supreme Court. The judges will be determined by putting the names of the Senior Justices into a hat and drawing out one. There's to be seven Republicans and seven Democrats. The draw for the fifteenth member would break the deadlock.

SAMUEL

Ha - from names in a hat.

Samuel stands and walks over to the

BAY WINDOW

SAMUEL POV

He pulls back the curtain and looks out at the crowd in the street.

SAMUEL

Hewitt will be here tomorrow to discuss the particulars. He and the others seems to think this is the best solution. I do not agree with any of them.

Samuel turns back to face Bigelow, and points toward the window.

SAMUEL

Those are good people standing out there in the cold. Many of them Civil War soldiers who gave their blood to preserve this government. Fifteen men deciding a Presidency for an entire nation is wrong...Hayes knows this and yet he has done nothing to stop his party from tarnishing his good name.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES - PRESS ROOM - NIGHT

John Reid is seated behind his desk and he is busy working. A messenger arrives with a large envelope and knocks on his door. He waves the messenger in and takes the envelope from him.

INSERT: Large envelope marked "Confidential" Zach Chandler.

BACK ON SCENE

JOHN REID

Close the door on your way out.

John Reid opens the envelope and pulls out the enclosed paper work.

INSERT: McCrary House Bill.

BACK ON SCENE

John walks over to his door and locks it.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - READING ROOM - DAY

Congressman Hewitt is seated in a chair and watches for Samuel's reactions as he marks up the proposed revisions in the McCrary House Bill.

John Bigelow is present and turns in his chair when he hears a knock at the door. Mary leans her head in.

MARY

Mr. Marble is here.

SAMUEL

Oh -Please send him in. You should be in here too Mary to hear what I have to say.

Manton Marble enters the room quietly and sits down next to Bigelow. Mary enters and closes the doors behind her and sits in a chair. Samuel continues to review and mark the proposal silently and does not notice when Marble leans over and whispers in Bigelow's ear,

MANTON MARBLE
(to Bigelow)
Who else has this report?

JOHN BIGELOW
No one should have it except the candidates.

Samuel finishes reading and with a deep sigh, places the documents on a nearby table.

SAMUEL
Let's discuss details. Who agrees with this?

ABRAM HEWITT
Bayard and Thurman are absolutely committed to it. They concur with the Republican members.

SAMUEL
How many oppose it in Congress?

ABRAM HEWITT
Several...The House Committee has suggested killing it.

SAMUEL
Is it not rather late then to consult with me?

ABRAM HEWITT
They will not consult with you. They are public men Samuel and they have their own duties and responsibilities. I consult with you.

SAMUEL
(Intense)
I know I cannot advise you or the other Democratic members to agree to the bill one way or another, but I will advise you to my thoughts and details I feel are inadequate.

Samuel stands and waves the papers in the air.

SAMUEL (cont'd)

(annoyed)

This turns the election into a raffle for the Presidency...I do not approve of it and neither will the voters.

ABRAM HEWITT

None of us expected you to.

Samuel takes a moment to compose himself.

SAMUEL

The way I see it, arbitration should be adopted into the bill. Then it would be the duty of the arbitrators to investigate and decide the case on its merits. This should be mandatory and would eliminate the element of gambling for the Presidency.

Samuel wrings his hands.

JOHN BIGELOW

Do you need a break?

SAMUEL

No - I'm fine. Consider this. If you go into a conference with your adversary and can't break it off because you feel you must agree to something, you cannot negotiate. You will be beaten on every detail.

Pauses for a moment.

SAMUEL (cont'd)

Why surrender now? You can always surrender, at any time. Why surrender before the battle for fear you may have to surrender after the battle is over?

Bigelow, Mary, Marble and Hewitt nod in agreement.

SAMUEL

President Grant's term ends on March fourth by Constitutional law. This argument leaves it open for him to try to insert himself for a third term.

ABRAM HEWITT

No one would agree to have him for a third term...no one. What is your objection? Is it the five Supreme Court justices on the commission?

SAMUEL

Absolutely.

JOHN BIGELOW

I have to agree. They are justices and shouldn't be deciding elections.

SAMUEL

(calmer)

I agree with John...There is no need for hot haste. We still have time to consult and to debate this publicly. The secrecy surrounding this bill...I don't trust it. Tell the others I think they should allow the House to debate.

ABRAM HEWITT

What shall we do if the bill is adopted?

SAMUEL

(visibly angry)

Alert the public and stop the secrecy so the voters know what is happening. They have a right to know.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - WHITE HOUSE - STREET - DAY
SUPERED: January 25, 1877, the Senate votes in favor of the Electoral Commission Bill 47-17; the House followed suit the next day, 191-86. On January 29, President Ulysses S. Grant signs the bill into law.

An angry group of Tilden and Hayes protestors stand in the street and wave copies of the New York Times newspaper.

INSERT: Newspaper headline, "Dice Box VS Ballot Box"

BACK ON SCENE

VARIOUS PROTESTORS

(Shouting)

They might as well draw straws! The presidency is being raffled like a

Thanksgiving turkey!

The Tilden Supporters are being held back from entering the Capitol grounds by FEDERAL TROOPS.

PROTESTOR

How did this happen?

PROTESTOR

They are stealing Tilden's
Presidency.

PROTESTOR

I want my ballot counted.

PROTESTOR

Hold another election.

PROTESTORS

(Chant)

Tilden or Blood!

EXT. WASHINGTON - CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

An angry CROWD swells and surround the Capitol building.
Horse and carriages fill every available parking space.

Several DIGNITARIES from other countries, as well as
Senators, Congressmen and Newsmen are being protected and
escorted into the Capitol building by federal soldiers.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - HOUSE FLOOR - DAY

SUPERED: Foreign dignitaries, Newsmen and some of the general
public are assembled to listen, watch, report and participate
in America's most disputed election ever.

DIGNITARY

Where are Tilden and Hayes?

NEWSMAN

Candidates stay at home until they
are elected.

DIGNITARY

What? They have no say in the
process? Your political system is
very odd.

JOHN REID

(Smirks)

Indeed it is.

The room is buzzing with noisy men. Speaker Randall bangs his gavel for quiet. Randall reads the bill.

Time Lapse - skips to section 6 of the bill.

SAMUEL RANDALL

SEC. 6. That nothing in this act shall be held to impair or affect any right now existing under the Constitution and laws to question by proceeding in the judicial courts of the United States, the right or title of the person who shall be declared elected or who shall claim to be President or Vice President of the United States, if any such right exists.

SEC. 7. That said commission shall make its own rules, keep a record of its proceedings, and shall have power to employ such persons as may be necessary for the transaction of its business and the execution of its powers.

President Ulysses S. Grant signed this into law and approved, January 29, 1877.

It will be the Commission's responsibility to decide which of these rejected Electors certificates will be deemed valid.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - HOUSE FLOOR - DAY

INSERT: CLOCK ON WALL set at one p.m. - IT STRIKES ONE CHIME

BACK ON SCENE

Representatives FIELDS, KASSMAN and Senator SARGENT watch SENATOR FERRY as he walks to the House of Representatives desk. House Speaker Randall is seated beside him.

SENATOR FERRY

(loud)

The Joint Session is now called to order. The Certificates will be opened in alphabetical order starting with the state of Alabama.

Senator Ferry opens a wooden box and takes out the first sealed certificate from Alabama and hands it to one of the four tellers in the room. The teller opens the certificate and reads it out loud.

TELLER

Alabama casts its ten electoral
votes for Samuel J. Tilden.

TIME LAPSE: Votes being counted.

SUPERED: The process continues smoothly until the Teller
brings up state of Florida which submitted three
different sets of electoral certificates.

TELLER

Florida casts it four votes for
Tilden.

Teller opens another certificate.

TELLER (cont'd)

Florida again casts it four votes
for Hayes.

Teller opens another certificate.

TELLER (cont'd)

Um - Florida again, Four votes for
Tilden.

SENATOR FERRY

Are there any objections to the
certificates from Florida?

CONGRESSMAN FIELD

I object to the first and third set
of certificates from Florida.

SENATOR SARGENT

I object to the second set from
Florida.

SENATOR KASSON

I object to the first and third
set.

Senator Ferry scans the room with his eyes.

SENATOR FERRY

Are there any further objections?

Senator Ferry waits for a response and there is none.

SENATOR FERRY

(loud)

There being none, the certificates
will be sent to the Electoral
Commission for review.

An audible chatter fills the room.

PUBLIC GALLERY

John Reid and Zach Chandler smirk.

SUPERED: More objections are voiced for the states of Louisiana, South Carolina, and Oregon and the certificates are turned over to the Electoral Commission which will decide which are valid and to be counted.

NARRATOR (VO)

Earlier in that year of 1876, before the election, the Senate had voted to eliminate the Twenty Second Joint rule. If that rule had still been in place, then the states that submitted the duplicate and triplicate returns would have been tossed out and the states' votes would not have counted. In that case, Tilden would have won the Presidency without dispute. Tilden had received 184 Electoral votes and Hayes 165. In order to steal the Presidency away from Tilden, who had already beaten Hayes by two hundred fifty four thousand, two hundred thirty five (254,235) popular votes, the Republicans needed all of the twenty disputed votes to give Hayes a majority of one. The two Vice Presidential candidates, Republican Wheeler from New York and Democrat Hendricks from Indiana, were just as anxious for the outcome. They both wanted to know if they were Vice President or not.

CAPITOL CONFERENCE ROOM

SUPERED: February 2, 1877 - Electoral Commission meets on the following day, inside a conference room at the Capitol Building. The Special Commission is made up of: five Senators, five Congressmen and five Supreme Court Justices.

The fifteen men are seated around a long table in a small cramped room with hardly any space for spectators. In the corner of the room, there is a large cuspidor (Spittoon) which stands out like a sore thumb.

HALLWAY

After quietly exiting the Special Commission room, Randall and Hewitt are just a few feet away from the door.

SAMUEL RANDALL

Justice Bradley has a reputation of fairness and honesty amongst his peers, but he is a Republican and loyal to his party. This arrangement will end with one person deciding the Presidency.

Hewitt looks around to see if anybody is listening.

ABRAM HEWITT

Yes and it will most likely be Bradley. I was told by Taylor and Gibson that they spoke with him at his home. He assured them he was going to give the Florida Electors to Tilden.

SAMUEL RANDALL

And you trust them? These people tried to steal Drew's Governor's election as well. If he hadn't sued for a re-count he would be holding his hat in his hand as well.

ABRAM HEWITT

I heard Bradley can't be bought.

SAMUEL RANDALL

And I heard two-hundred thousand is the going price these days for a change of heart...It's a huge incentive...just saying.

CONFERENCE ROOM

SUPERED: Justice Bradley looks back to the documents placed before him. He tries to concentrate on the papers, but, feeling the heavy burden placed on his shoulders, his mind wanders. Still looking at the papers, but not really seeing them, he thinks back to what happened a few nights before.

EXT. JUSTICE BRADLEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPERED: Justice Bradley's home.

DIRECTORS NOTE: CREATE A SILENT SCENE FROM DIALOG OF ACTION.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Democrats Taylor and Gibson arrived at Bradley's house in the early evening hours. He has a brief talk with the two men, and all three men seemed in agreement. They shake hands and the two Democrats depart. After Taylor and Gibson go, they are convinced Justice Bradley will write his opinion in favor of counting the Florida votes for the Democrats.

A moment later, two unknown men waiting in a carriage out of sight of Taylor and Gibson, drive their carriage toward Bradley's home. Still standing outside, Bradley sees and waits for the men as they climb down and walk toward him.

He shakes hands with one of the men and the other hands him a large envelope and pats him on the shoulder. Bradley, not amused by the gift, tries to give the envelope back but the men refuse to take it. The two men then turn and walk away from him and climb back into their carriage wave as they drive off. Bradley seems disgusted when he rips open the envelope and pulls out a large stack of cash.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - HOUSE FLOOR - DAY

SUPERED: March 2, 1877 - The House of Representatives meets before the Special Commission announces their decision.

SAMUEL RANDALL

(Loud)

By a vote of 137 to 88, the House of Representatives adopts a series of preambles introductory to the following resolution:

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the United States.

That it is the duty of the House to declare, and this House does solemnly declare that Samuel J. Tilden, of the State of New York, received 196 electors votes for the office of the President of the United States, all of which votes were cast and lists thereof signed, certified, and transmitted to the seat of the government, directed to the President of the Senate, in conformity with the Constitution and laws of the United States, by

electors legally eligible and qualified as such electors, each of whom has been duly appointed and elected in the manner directed by the Legislature of the State in and for which he cast his vote aforesaid: and that said Samuel J. Tilden having thus received the votes of the majority of the electors appointed aforesaid, he is thereby duly elected President of the United States of America for the term of four years commencing on the 4th day of March, A.D. 1877; and this House further declares that Thomas A.

Hendricks, having received the same number of electoral votes for the office of Vice President of the United States that were cast for Samuel J. Tilden for President as aforesaid, and at the same time and in the same manner, it is the opinion of this House that the said Thomas A. Hendricks, of the State of Indiana, is duly elected Vice President of the United States for the term of four years commencing on the 4th day of March, A.D. 1877.

INT. TILDEN MANSION - READING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPERED: March 2, 1877 - Electoral Commission Decision at 4:10 A.M.

At the Tilden estate in New York, Mary, William Pelton, Samuel and John Bigelow play a game of cards. Samuel is calm, relaxed and all seem to enjoy each others company.

JOHN BIGELOW

There are four disputed states and you only need one Electoral vote to end this charade.

SAMUEL

The cards are stacked against me John with Bradley. He's a Republican and I have a strong sense he will vote strictly along party lines.

George Smith walks into the room and places a telegram into Samuel hands. Samuel reads it and places it on a nearby table without saying a word. Samuel watches in silence as Mary

leans over and picks up the telegram and reads it silently at first, then clears her throat.

MARY

By a party line vote they have
decided 8 to 7. Hayes is elected.

Mary crumples the telegram in her hand.

MARY (cont'd)

Seems to me William was much more
bent on going to Washington than
you were.

SAMUEL

(sarcastic)

Maybe so, but it's over now.

Samuel stands and calls out to George Smith.

SAMUEL

Mr. Smith, I need to send a wire.

INT. CAPITOL - HOUSE FLOOR - NIGHT

SUPERED: March 2, 1877 - 5 a.m. Representatives, Hewitt and Randall argue in the House that the Special Electoral Commission is unconstitutional. The Congressmen and Senators are arguing fiercely with each other, with accusations flying back and from across the room.

SPECTATORS AREA

John Reid and Zach Chandler listen to their boisterous exchanges. Then Chandler smiles and puts his arm around Reid's shoulder and grips him tightly.

ZACH CHANDLER

Well done Mr. Reid - well done.

HOUSE FLOOR

At the front of the room, Speaker Randall stands with Senator Ferry at his side. Ferry bangs the gavel to stop the men from arguing. Hewitt and the others ignore Ferry. Ferry continues to bang his gavel.

SENATOR FERRY

Gentlemen we must have order... we
must have order!

As the men continue to bicker, a TELLER enters the chamber and walks directly to Speaker Samuel Randall. Without a word, in the midst of the chaos, he hands Randall a telegram and

walks away. Randall reads the telegram, and then hands it to Senator Ferry. After reading the telegram, Ferry steps down off the center podium and Randall steps up. He takes the gavel and bangs it.

SAMUEL RANDALL

(loud)

GENTLEMEN - I HAVE JUST RECEIVED A
WIRE FROM SAMUEL TILDEN!

His announcement gets everyone's attention and the men stop arguing and turn to listen.

SAMUEL RANDALL

Governor Tilden is willing to let
the count be concluded.

There is a pause of brief silence and the men begin to fight again. Senator Ferry steps back up to the podium.

SENATOR FERRY

(loud)

HAYES AND WHEELER ARE HEREBY DULY
ELECTED!

Hewitt, after hearing the announcement, collapses to the floor and several Representatives run over to help him up and escort him out of the House Chambers.

SPECTATORS AREA

Reid and Zach Chandler, along with some other Republicans, break out in smiles and quietly pat each other on the back for their win. William Chandler enters the area.

WILLIAM CHANDLER

(to Reid)

If it wasn't for you --

JOHN REID

Damn those Dirty Democrats -
justice has been served. They are
not fit to run this country.

EXT. HARRISBURG, PA - TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

SUPERED: March 3, 1877 Midnight. The train Rutherford Hayes is a passenger on, along with his wife Lucy, stops at the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania train station. On this day, he is silent to any others about his feelings and how humiliated he feels by the actions taking place in Congress on his behalf. He considers himself to be an honorable man and realizes that

the Republicans have commandeered the Oval Office using dirty tricks.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NEWSPAPER ROW - DAY

INSERT: NEWSPAPERS ROLLING OFF THE PRESS. HEADLINE: "HAYES IS ELECTED!"

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - TRAIN STATION - DAY

SUPERED: Instead of accepting President Grant's invitation to go directly to the White House, Hayes decides it's best to stay low key for the time being and thinks it's a good idea to accept Senator Sherman's invitation to stay at his home. With all that has gone on, Hayes is not sure, himself, if he and Lucy will be safe. He considered the thought that the Tilden supporters might try to assassinate him before he is sworn into office.

Rutherford B. Hayes train arrives in Washington, Senator Sherman is there to escort him along with a few Federal soldiers on horseback.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - STREET - DAY

Soldiers follow the Hayes' carriage to protect him from the many disenchanted unruly and angry Tilden supporters. Hayes is greeted at the door by President Grant.

SUPERED: March 3, 1877- 5 p.m.- In line with his earlier decision to be low key about the whole event, Hayes requests that there be no large ceremony for his swearing in under the tense circumstances. Grant agrees and swears Hayes into the Presidency, with his wife Lucy at his side.

SUPERED: President Hayes was sworn into office in a more formal ceremony on March 5, 1877. Tilden Supporters carried signs to protest and nicknamed the new President; "Old 7 to 8" "Rutherfraud," "His Fraudulency," and "His Accidency."

SUPERED: The World newspaper reports that Mr. Tilden, under the alleged authority of General Woodford, the United States District Attorney for the Southern District of New York, is about to take the oath of office as President in New York and proclaim himself President of the Untied States. When asked by other reporters if this is true, John Bigelow responds,

with Tilden's approval, by a written letter it is not true, but what the country has lost by the fraud.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MANHATTAN CLUB - DAY

SUPERED: Wednesday June 13, 1877 - Manhattan Club.

The crowd, mostly made up of his supporters, is huge and fills the area with hardly a space left to stand.

SAMUEL

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Manhattan Club. I accepted your invitation under the idea that this was to be a merely social meeting.

Samuel takes a moment to clear his throat. He starts again.

SAMUEL (cont'd)

Everybody knows that, after the recent election, the men who were elected by the people President and Vice President of the United States were "counted out," and men who were not elected were "counted in" and seated."

Immediately, there are some sneers and booing from the crowd. Samuel waits for them to settle down.

SAMUEL (cont'd)

I disclaim any thought of the personal wrong involved in this transaction. Not by any act or word of mine shall that be dwarfed or degraded into a personal grievance, which is, in truth, the greatest wrong that has stained our national annals.

Samuel stops for a moment then continues with a lot of emotion and new found inner-strength.

SAMUEL (cont'd)

If my voice could reach throughout our country and be heard in its remotest hamlet I would say be of good cheer. The Republic will live. The institutions of our fathers are not to expire in shame. The sovereignty of the people shall be rescued from this peril and be re established. Successful wrongs never appears so triumphant as on

the very eve of its fall. Seven years ago a corrupt dynasty culminated in its power over the million of people who live in the city of New York. It has conquered or bribed, or flattered and won almost everybody into acquiescence. It appeared to be invincible. A year or two later its members in Tammany Hall were in the penitentiaries or in exile. History abounds in similar examples. We must believe in the right and in the future. A great and noble nation will not sever its political from its moral life.

A thunderous applause and cheers ring out through crowd.

SUPERED: New York Governor Samuel Tilden, who built his great wealth as a railroad attorney departed during the summer for a cruise to visit his family roots in Europe. During his time away, many of his supporters vowed to get even...Thus, the mood of the country grew darker, as those who had voted for Tilden felt disenfranchised. Samuel Tilden made his great wealth as a Railroad attorney and all in the industry respected him.

SUPERED: President Hayes soon found himself faced with "The Great Railroad Strike of 1877" which began on July 14 in Martinsburg, West Virginia. It lasted some 45 days and was put down by local and state militias and federal troops.

SUPERED: The 1876 Election Deal: Thomas Scott, of the Pennsylvania Railroad, delivered the disputed congressional votes to Hayes in exchange for a federal bailout of failing investments in the Texas and Pacific railroad. While it is not clear if this deal led to Hayes' sending of federal troops to the strike-torn areas, the possibility of a quid pro quo arrangement was tenable.

SUPERED: While no complete accounting of the economic losses caused by this strike exists, it is known that the engineers' and firemen's brotherhoods lost approximately \$600,000 over the forty-five days of the strike, while for the Burlington Railroad the losses were at least \$2,100,000.

SUPERED: In Pittsburgh, it was estimated that property damage reached about five million dollars, with Chicago, Baltimore and other cities facing losses of a similar magnitude.

EXT - SCYTHIA CRUISE LINER - ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT

Samuel stands by the rail looking out at the quiet, serene

ocean and starlit night sky. He turns and smiles when he sees John Bigelow walking toward him with Celeste Stauffer. Something about her is familiar to him.

JOHN BIGELOW

Samuel this young woman has asked for an introduction.

SAMUEL

Have we met before?

Celeste Stauffer extends her hand into his.

CELESTE STAUFFER

In passing Mr. President when I nearly ran your carriage off the road in Central Park. I am Celeste Stauffer from New Orleans, Louisiana.

As the two begin to talk, Bigelow could see that Samuel was smitten by her southern charms. John quietly walks away and leaves the two of them alone on the ship's deck.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - SHIP DOCK - DAY

The Scythia docks in New York Harbor. A huge crowd of Tilden supporters and dignitaries wait to welcome Samuel home. There is a marching band playing loud music and the atmosphere is one of celebration. The people wave signs printed in bold letters; "President Tilden, the Peoples President"

As passengers disembark, Samuel walks down the gangplank with Marie Stauffer on his arm. Marie's mother and John Bigelow follow. Samuel stops mid way and looks across the crowd. The band stops playing.

TILDEN SUPPORTER

You were robbed of the Presidency!

SAMUEL

I did not get robbed...
The people got robbed. Robbed of the dearest rights of American citizens. Young men, we who have guarded the sacred traditions of our free government will soon leave that work to you. Whether our institutions shall be preserved will depend on you. Will you accomplish that duty, and mark the wrongdoers of 1876 with the

indignation of a betrayed, wronged
and sacrificed people?

I swear in the presence of all of
you today and I call upon you to
bear witness to the oath, to watch,
during the remainder of my life,
over the rights of the citizens of
our country with jealous care. Such
usurpation must never occur again.

The crowd roars with thunderous applause and cheers
expressing their admiration for Tilden.

Mary stands near the front of the crowd with her grand
daughter Susan and her son, Colonel William Pelton. Several
dignitaries, including Honest John Kelly cheer with the
crowd. The band begins to play again. Samuel sees his sister
Mary and he waves to her. She waves back. Samuel looks at her
and takes his hand and places it under his suit jacket to his
heart and thumps it. Mary smiles.

SUPERED: In 1880 the Democratic Party wanted desperately for
Samuel Tilden to run for President again...Tilden declined
the nomination because of his poor health...

SUPERED: Samuel Tilden died on August 4, 1886 at his Hudson
River farm estate called, "Graystone" where he spent his
final years consulting top democrats. Samuel Tilden earned
the nicknames: "The Greatest Democrat Ever" "The Greatest
Reformer".

SUPERED: Tilden bequeathed most of his estate to build the
New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street. The
library project was blocked by the powers that be that didn't
want to see Tilden honored this way. Tilden's best friend and
confidant, the Honorable John Bigelow fought several court
battles all the way to the New York Supreme court to keep
Tilden's dream of a free library alive. After the library was
opened John Bigelow passed away peacefully.

SUPERED: On August 8, 2001 - one month before the 9/11 World
Trade Towers attack New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani
signed a bill adding the name "John Bigelow Plaza" to the
intersection of 41st Street and Fifth Avenue, Manhattan,
directly in front of the famous main branch of the New York
Public Library. John Bigelow's estate at Highland Falls, New
York, known as The Squirrels, was listed on the National
Register of Historic Places in 1982.[2

SUPERED: Samuel Tilden's statue and tombstone are engraved:
"I Trust the People" and "I Still Trust the People" Tilden's
Gramercy Park mansion is a historic landmark and currently
owned by the National Arts Club.

SUPERED: Across America people named their children, streets, towns, schools and buildings after Samuel J. Tilden. He and his legacy have all but been forgotten in American history.

SUPERED: John Reid, Editor of the New York Times was ignored by the Republican party after the election and never rewarded him as they promised. His career with the New York Times ended soon after Hayes took office. Every news organization he wrote afterwards for never kept him on. His wife was in Italy when he died alone in his small apartment in New York City.

SUPERED: Samuel Tilden never conceded his Presidency, although many modern Republican writers claim he did when he gave his speech at the Press Club. It angered many that he would not take his rightful place as President. He believed in peace and after a bloody Civil War he didn't want to see any more blood to be shed, especially not in his name.

ROLL CREDITS

FADE TO BLACK