

CHANGE AGENT

by Craig Lucas

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CHARACTERS

Mary, age 15 to 43

Jack, age 17 to 46

Cicely, age 17 to 46

Cord, age 25 to 44 (also incidental voices, coat check attendant, Abe Lincoln)

Jackie, age 17 to 35

NOTE: These characters, based on historical figures, all of whom were white and from inherited wealth, meet again as souls in the afterlife. They have had previous lives and hope for future ones. Therefore, the actors portraying them do not all want to resemble their historical antecedents. They want to represent a breadth of humanity.

SETTING & PRODUCTION

America from 1936 to 1964, viewed from outside of time through Mary's perspective.

Dialogue, though metric, is naturalistic and conversational. We are never meant to be made aware of the scansion¹. Pauses, beats, ellipses can be very brief.

During the action, all five figures onstage facilitate costume and scene changes, bringing and clearing whatever objects are needed for Mary to present her story. Costumes often change in front of us once the new scene has already begun. They are witness and accomplice to one another.

Times and locations (**in bold**) are projected.

Change Agent is a work of the imagination based on historical record—first- and second-hand accounts, unpublished memoirs, diaries, letters, recorded phone calls (outside the public record), White House logs, testimony gathered by numerous individuals, including the author. Narrative elements that diverge from the historical record are noted in the Appendix.

Change Agent is for F.

¹ The first unstressed syllable in a line sometimes appears at the end of the previous line. Jack's Boston accent can render certain single-syllable words as two syllables.

ONE

(1. Prologue.) *In the dark, the sound of meditation bowl being struck.*

Mary, backlit, appears, moving toward us. She lifts a hurricane lantern, illuminating her face. Beat.

MARY. No, you don't know me. I'm a hidden figure from our hist'ry. Let's bring everything to light. You ready? Set? It starts like this. *(inhales, a deep breath)*

Is that a heartbeat?

MARY. You turn and see someone—*(turns her head, causing)*

Silhouette of Jack to materialize.

MARY. —and something in you rings, "Oh! There you are ... Again. Oh yes. Where did we meet? What did we do? What did we look like then? I'd know you anywhere despite the new face, costume, here we go again, thank god, I'm home—again—"

Looks up. A mirror ball answers her gaze above and begins to spin, scattering bits of light, which reveal:

Three other silhouetted figures appearing at the periphery, music faintly heard.

MARY. We're all here at the masquerade, all home—once more—It's nineteen thirty-six, I'm fifteen, he is two years older. I am blonde in this new spin around the dancefloor, both born white and wealthy in this go round, here we go ... *(a breath as she steps into)*

*

(2.) **Choate Hall boarding school. February 1936.**

Evening. An orchestra plays. Jack approaches Mary.

JACK. You're Mary Pinchot.

MARY. And you're John Fitzgerald
Kennedy.

JACK. Uh, may I?

They dance.

MARY. Bill, my date,
has gone to get a lozenge.

JACK. Not too promis-
ing.

They dance.

JACK. I think we both had Arthur Murray
for our teacher, but the lessons seemed
to stick with you and not so much with, uh,
yours truly.

MARY. Fishing for a compliment?

JACK. I'm not!

MARY. Your reputation long precedes
you, Jack.

JACK. What's that?

MARY. So, let's see. Oh, yes, what
about that litany of girls you've laid?

JACK. Says who, uh, hold on now, / uh—

MARY. And how you use
that little tick, that Boston “uh, uh,” very
charming, meant to disarm all suspicions—
Let’s be clear, I won’t succumb.

JACK. Uh—

MARY. There
you go again.

JACK. You’re how old?

MARY. Why not say
we stick to being friends? Fifteen.

JACK. You’re funny,
but too soon to make that pact.

MARY. Uhn-uhn,
we’re too alike. I like to win.

JACK. Me too.

MARY. My point exactly, and you’ll never win
with me.

JACK. Uh—

MARY. Might as well concede.

JACK. May I
say something?

MARY. Sure.

JACK. Why don’t we, uh—?

MARY. I’ll never
be your conquest.

— *CHANGE AGENT* —

JACK. I am trying, / uh—

MARY. Yes,
but don't.

JACK. Hey—

MARY. Hay's for horses.

JACK. Would you / [please]—?

MARY. Why?

JACK. —just stop a sec, uh—

MARY. Why?

JACK. I'm talking.

MARY. Me
too.

JACK. In the int'rest of conversing, uh—

MARY. That's how it works, first you then me.

JACK. But you
keep jumping in.

MARY. Like tennis.

JACK. Right, but, / uh—

MARY. Jack,
you're all worked up.

JACK. I'm not.

MARY. Unravel some.

JACK. / Un—?

MARY. I also think you might be just a little
too accustomed to assuming you
can do the talking, I'll just smile, but you
can smile and I'll talk too.

JACK. Agreed.

MARY. Good, now
we're talking.

JACK. Meet me outside.

MARY. I don't smoke.

JACK. I disagree.

MARY. It wouldn't fly.

JACK. As friends—

MARY. I know myself.

JACK. And you could know me too.

MARY. Oh, so jejune.

JACK. It's part of life.

MARY. You're Cath'lic.

JACK. So?

MARY. I'm younger. Plus you're off to Princeton.

JACK. Anything you don't know?

MARY. Antecedents
famine Irish, dad's a bootlegger.

JACK. Not true. I wouldn't lie.

MARY. Oh, all men lie.
I may be fifteen but I'm not that unschooled.

JACK. Okay, (*laughs*) well, if you should change your mind ...

MARY. Thanks for the chat.

JACK. Is that what we were doing?

MARY. Well, you couldn't call that dancing, could you?

JACK. Ouch.

MARY. I'll be your friend. I'll tell you straight whenever you're a boor—that's two 'o's—or don't stand for what is right.

JACK. And what is that?

MARY. For me? I ... don't know yet. But ... it has got to ... I want, well, to do something that's meaningful.

JACK. Me too.

MARY. You will.

JACK. No, you. I want that for you.

MARY. You're just saying that—

JACK. I'm not.

MARY. Well, stand up straight inside and not down there, and everything will fall in place. You'll see.

*

(3.) *The quad at Vassar College. September 1941. Afternoon.*
Cicely has been examining Mary's watercolors, Mary
awaiting feedback.

CICELY. Too easy, sorry. These don't look like you
at all.

MARY. They don't?

CICELY. No! You're original—
exploding, shedding light, a comet—

MARY. Stop.

CICELY. No. These (*the art*) are well and good, but ... Look, I'm not
a painter or your teacher, but ... the ways
you feel about the world, my god, it's got
to go (*the sketchpad*) here. Listen for the future you,
and what that is, the you you can't quite see
yet ... find ... here?

MARY. Thank you.

CICELY. That's just my two cents.

Cicely has spotted Jack approaching; hair is mussed,
he is tucking in his shirt.

CICELY. Christ. (*begins moving off*)

MARY. What?

CICELY. Steer clear in life and art of lying
stuck-up users! (*disappears*)

JACK. (*approaching Mary*) There she is!

MARY. *(calling after her)* I'm very grateful Cicely!

JACK. Oh. You know, uh ...

MARY. Is Vassar going co-ed?

JACK. Uh—

MARY. Your buttons are all off ...

JACK. Oh.

MARY. *(rebuttoning his shirt,)* So I guess you're practicing on student bodies 'til you get to vanquish Germans in a real war?

JACK. Uhhh, well—

MARY. No one needs another world war, stop it, please.

JACK. I just woke up—

MARY. And is it also true you're telling all my girlfriends how your recent diagnosis of leukemia precludes the time for foreplay?!

JACK. True, they thought I had it.

MARY. Bunk.

JACK. You haven't changed, I've missed you.

MARY. ... I miss you too.

JACK. Did I, uh, mishear?
Wind?

MARY. I'm late, look, would there be this crisis
if our fam'lies, let's be honest, hadn't
all invested in Herr Hitler's rise,
and now he's rattling sabers, they intend
to profit off his downfall, too, you know
it!

JACK. When did you become a red?

MARY. It's Vassar.
Did you know in hurricanes all natural
enemies—iguanas, snakes—will crawl
into the same hole and abide until
the storm has passed?

JACK. A storm is com/ing.

MARY. We're ca-
pable of making peace, we are!

JACK. Uh, you're
mistaken if you think this Hitler storm
will pass us by. He'll reach into the deepest
nooks and crannies, find us—

MARY. No, you're twisting
all the thinking back around to jus-
tify not thinking.

JACK. I don't know what quite
to make of that / but—?

MARY. Do not enlist, you hear
me! *(moving away from him and toward her class)*

JACK. Skip the class and let's go somewhere private!

MARY. Anyone who hasn't got the time
for foreplay hasn't got the time for me.

JACK. I'd make the time!

MARY. You hear me, don't you dare
sign up!

JACK. What's your part in the deal?

MARY. I mean
it!

JACK. I do too! I won't give up!

MARY. Do not
die!

JACK. I will not!

MARY. You promise?

JACK. Yes.

*She is gone. Jack stares after her. Then he turns to
look out at us.*

JACK. But eighty
million will. Each one a missing uni-
verse. My oldest brother Joe. My sister's
husband ... Lots of promises unkept.

*

*(4.) Hotel Bellevue, San Francisco. United Nations
Charter Conference. June 1945. Afternoon. Mary, in
new attire, is helping Cord pin on his name tag, then
he heads for the bar, passing Jack.*

MARY. Jack! Over here! You walked right by my husband!

JACK. Damn, I waited too long.

MARY. Look at you! (*clasps him*)
Thank god. (*beaming at him*) Oh. Sit. Please join us. I want you
to know each other, we've all lost so much.
How will we find the courage if not here
in this, our final chance to put an end
to war for all time, one world government—
unthinkable before this, now it's real,
I think. It is. Don't you?

JACK. I ... Listen to
you, not ten seconds here, you bring the life
back into ev'ry single part of me—
it never fails. (*leans in*) Why don't you meet me when
he's gone to bed?

MARY. Shhh—

Cord is approaching with drinks.

MARY. Cord, come meet my friend.
Jack Kennedy—Cord Meyer.

JACK. Oh, I saw
your piece in The Atlantic.

MARY. Yes!

JACK. It's excel-
lent.

CORD. I saw the one on you in ... (*looks to Mary*)

MARY. The
New Yorker! My two heroes!

JACK. Beat me to
it, Officer, smart move.

MARY. Who says I didn't
make the moves?

JACK. Indeed. Well then ...

CORD. What brings
you here, Jack?

JACK. Writing, uh, dispatches for
the Hearsts.

MARY. I'm here with UPI!

JACK. Ah. Oh,
no longer painting?

MARY. No, that too.

JACK. Good. Good.
Well ... aren't you (*Cord*) assisting the, uh, U.S.
delegate—

MARY. Yes.

JACK. —to this ...

MARY. Yes. / He is.

JACK. ... whole cocka-
mamie thing.

CORD. Why cockamamie?

MARY. Why
assume it won't succeed?

JACK. You're right, of course,
I'm being flip.

CORD. Don't.

JACK. No, I ... don't suppose
you'd ask your boss to grant an interview
to this poor lowly—

MARY. Course he would.

CORD. We can't risk this
not working.

JACK. No. You're absolutely right.

MARY. We've seen how easy it is starting wars,
but ending them ...

CORD. We read what you went through—

MARY. You both did.

CORD. Dragged your men through miles of darkened
sea—

MARY. At night. With nothing / but your teeth.

CORD. —with your teeth.

JACK. You're careful readers. Yes, / but ...

CORD. The South Pacific
took its toll; I lost this eye to a grenade and woke, my mouth a salty
swill of stones ... my teeth. Each generation
seems to blank on what just happened to
the last.

JACK. / Yes.

MARY. Forgetting is a luxury
we can't afford now.

JACK. No. / It's—

CORD. We'll go on deeding
our atrocities upon the next.

JACK. It's true.

MARY. The whole world needs one government.

JACK. Well—

CORD. Yes.
It does.

MARY. Yes, "Them" and "Us" is what makes war[s].
If all humanity belongs to one
united nation, war becomes a relic,
obsolete for good.

JACK. We had one govern-
ment in eighteen-sixty when the Civil
War broke out.

MARY. Don't be a cynic.

JACK. I'd
prefer, uh, "Realist."

CORD. Well, here is something
real: When we march off to slaughter other
human beings, is that sacrifice
or gaining fame and popularity ...
/ and—

JACK. I, yes, I see your point, if we survive,
that is.

MARY. What story will we tell our kids
from out of all this horror?

CORD. Did you catch
Paul Robeson as Othello?

JACK. No, I wish
I had.

MARY. My god.

CORD. The stature of the man.

JACK. I've heard.

MARY. He risks his whole career—

CORD. The greatest
star we have.

MARY. —by speaking out against
injustice, inequality—

JACK. Yes, [I—]

CORD. Much
less cheering when we fight for peace or equal
rights.

JACK. You're right. You both. You're ... thinking as
a team. You've chosen wisely.

MARY. What will we
give up now? Even though we've lost so much,
we're fortune-favored: wealth ... and—

CORD. White.

MARY. So much.

JACK. I ... well, I'd say ... I fear ... war may be
around a while longer than we might
hope.

CORD. What, though? Let's say we could end it.

MARY. My
brave zealot here.

JACK. I see that. What? Would I ... ?

CORD. Give up.
Right now.

MARY. *(sensing something, to Cord)* We're all friends, darling.

JACK. I ... Well, cer-
tainly my time. My sweat. My dad says, "Your
good fortune means you help the less well-fortuned."

MARY. Yes.

CORD. Noblesse oblige. And if your public service
leads to some well-hidden private servicing
you wouldn't mind?

MARY. Love ...

CORD. Would you give
up, oh, say coveting my wife or is
that not the kind of piece you want?

MARY. Cord—

CORD. Get
your own damn interview, your daddy can
arrange it / all.

MARY. Oh no, sweetie.

JACK. All right, you
two, take care / now—

MARY. No—Jack, please
/ don't go—

JACK. No, I, I, I should catch some shuteye.

MARY. / Ohhhh—

JACK. Good
to meet you. (*disappears*)

MARY. Sweetheart ... I don't / think ...

CORD. I've still got
one eye. You think I didn't see what passed
between you both?

MARY. You don't have anything
to fear with him.

CORD. I saw the way your face
lit up.

MARY. He's [just] a friend, no more.

CORD. A cardboard
cut-out ... You've been duped by all that charm,
there's no one in there, can't you see that?

MARY. I,
yes, maybe you are right, but—

CORD. Tell me what
you like about him. Now. I'm calm.

MARY. I ...

CORD. Please?

MARY. He reads, devours books, he listens, learns.
Must all our friends be perfect? Why else are
we here if not for just this? Love. How will
we ever make a better world if we
mistake our friends for enemies?

CORD. You're right.
I'm so[rry] ...

MARY. I'll make a pledge in front
of all these strangers.

CORD. Shhh, please.

MARY. I will stand
with you. We'll sort it through as champions
of peace together. You and me ... We're one
now. Yes? I promise. One united nation.

CORD. Sorry, I'm / so—

MARY. Shhh.

They cling to each other.

*

(5.) Hiroshima. August 6, 1945.

The foundations of the theater quake.

Jackie enters with a drink cart.

JACKIE. When they split the atom
all mankind was split in two ... I think
one half believed that power would protect
them from the flames ...

Nagasaki. August 9, 1945.

JACKIE. The other half believed
that love would heal and join us into one
once more. The jury's still out on that.

Siberia. August 29, 1949.

JACKIE. Russia
then got their bomb ... You can't know if you
weren't there; a human being, pausing to
inhale a breath of summer, turned to ash,
an imprint on the ground where they just stood ...
one quarter of a million gone in less
than half a second.

*

*(6.) Hickory Hill, the **Kennedy Home in McLean, Virginia. September 1955.** Afternoon. Jack is using crutches.*

JACK. Mary, Cord? Meet Jacqueline ...

JACKIE. Please call me Jackie. Daiquiris?

CORD. You bet.

MARY. Sure.

JACKIE. Jack?

JACK. Why not?

JACKIE. So, Cord, you're with
the State Department?

CORD. Yes.

JACKIE. Come help me, I'm
so curious, forgive my ignorance ... *(moving toward drink cart)*

MARY. *(indicates crutches)* What happened?

JACK. Just a sprain. So how are you
both?

MARY. I have no idea.

JACK. What do you, uh ... ?

MARY. How does someone change so much? Do you think, Jack ... ?

JACK. Think ...?

MARY. People switch sides when they realize they can't win?

JACK. Uh ...

MARY. The failure of the U.N. broke his heart. We all were so naïve—well, not you—but to think the U.S. would share power once we had the bomb? Cord won't discuss his work. He's locked up like a vault, his days, nights, weekends, spent with Allen Dulles and Jim Angleton, you know them?

JACK. CIA.

MARY. Oh, you remember Cicely from Vassar?

JACK. (*"Unfortunately I do."*) Mmm ...

MARY. She's married now to Jim. He's Cord's best friend and godfather to our three boys, but ... something's wrong; they drink like sinkholes first of all.

JACK. Your boys? ...

MARY. I fear he's doing something terrible, the way he knocks them back and acts. Could you find out?

He won't suspect you since you stood so firm
with Joe McCarthy, all those anti-commie
ravings, Jack!

JACK. He's Irish Cath'lic, my
constituents in Boston love him.

MARY. So
it doesn't matter what he does?

JACK. Are you, uh,
asking for a favor or, uh—

MARY. Can't
I still give you a hard time?

JACK. Wish you would.

MARY. I— ... Honestly?

JACK. Why stop now?

MARY. I'd ... have not
predicted this.

JACK. What?—Oh, my marriage? Had
to. There were rumors I was queer.

MARY. Oh,
that's rich.

CORD. *(returns with drinks)* And here you go.

MARY. Thanks, darling.

JACKIE. Let
me show you 'round the garden, Mary.

MARY. Please.

Mary and Jackie move off.

JACK. So catch me up on—

CORD. How's the Senate treating
you, old boy?

JACK. Not bad. I don't get on
committees I might like, but ... I hear you
are doing well.

CORD. Oh?

JACK. Got through those attempts
to tar you red. (*Beat.*) But Allen Dulles stood
up for you. (*Beat.*) Must be doing a great job.
You work with Angleton, I hear.

CORD. Mary
put you up to this?

JACK. ' course not.

MARY. And this?

JACKIE. Baronne Prevost.

MARY. You have the loveliest
of accents.

JACKIE. Oh my gracious. Is it pos-
sible ... ?

MARY. What?

JACKIE. Do you think your husband isn't
quite so happy in his job?

MARY. What did
he say?

JACKIE. It isn't that so much as what
he didn't. Why they all refuse to bleed
in front of us.

MARY. I've thought that, too.

JACKIE. You've never
slept with Jack, he says.

MARY. I—No.

JACKIE. That puts
you in a club of one. Oh, we've arranged
to tell each other what we do, and also
whom, but oh he hates it when I do
what he does. Rose, his mother? stressed her Moral
Lessons, never touched those children, made
herself a martyr from Jack's father Joe's
affairs, like Jack's conducted without shame,
both men get up in front of us, slink off
with whom they like, come back and sit down at
the table, doesn't matter who sees, no one
says a thing. Rose then slips off to church
six times a day, and if I spend a single
second more with her I'll blow my brains
out with a cannon. This is Gruss an Aachen,
smell.

MARY. *(inhales)* Mmm.

JACKIE. All the Kennedys believe
in God. I mean, does anyone?

JACK. *(to Cord)* What's Dulles
like?

CORD. I liked your book on World War Two.

JACK. You read it.

CORD. You're my wife's friend.

JACK. ... Dulles, though—

CORD. You're writing something new?

JACK. I—as it happens,
but I haven't mentioned it / to [anyone]—

CORD. A refill?

JACK. Thanks, no.

MARY. (*showing snapshots*) This is Mikey. He's my fav'rite.
Sh.

JACKIE. Ohhh.

MARY. When our dog was killed by someone
speeding down along that curve—

JACKIE. Oh yes,
be careful.

MARY. I found Mikey comforting
his brothers. "They did not intend to do
it, and we don't believe in enemies."

JACKIE. He's how old?

MARY. Nine. I swear I'd spend my days
ensuring he gets ev'rything he dreams.

JACKIE. That's how I used to feel about my sister.

MARY. But [not anymore] ...?

JACKIE. She wants to fuck Jack.

MARY. You are not
what I imagined.

JACKIE. *(returning snapshots)* Jack and I are trying
too, but ... I miscarried in the spring.
Three months ...

MARY. I'm sorry.

JACKIE. Jack can't handle "failure,"
so— ...

JACK. *(to Cord)* So what's the job exactly?

CORD. Bureau-
cratic nonsense.

Cord holds up the pitcher: "More?" Jack declines.

JACKIE. I was going to leave
him, but then Papa Joe—Oh that's what they
call Stalin, isn't it?—pulls me aside
and says, "You stay with Jack until he's in
the White House for his second term." My god,
I think, and then he—Mary, you can't quote
a word—

MARY. No.

JACKIE. Joe says, "Here's one million dollars
in the bank in your name for the time
when you and Jack are free to go your sep'rate
[ways]—" *(to Cord who has drifted toward them)*
Give us one more minute, Cord. *(to Mary)* To which
I said, "You'll make it twenty if Jack brings
home v.d. from one of his sluts." "If there
are children," he adds, "then we'll make it more,"
and puts it all in writing ... So we're trying
once again.

JACK. What kind of bureaucratic
nonsense is / it?

CORD. My wife will drive for miles
to watch a barn burn down, d'dja know that?

JACK. Uh ...

JACKIE. You have a trust fund, don't you?

MARY. Yes.

JACKIE. That's good.
You'll never need to whore yourself.

MARY. Don't say that.

JACKIE. Jack, I'm sure, said nothing, but he almost
died; they didn't want to do this sur-
gery, his kidneys, all his ailments, but
"I'd rather die than live with all this pain,"
he nearly got his wish; they gave him Last
Rites; he was in a coma; Joe wept in
my arms, and when Jack finally pulled through,
I spoonfed him for weeks, so ... he is always
acting. Always. Me, too. We appre-
ciate that in each other. You must really
love him if you've managed all this time
to not ... Well, I could use a friend as well
as Jack. If you'd consider ...

MARY. Oh, I'd, yes,
be honored.

JACKIE. Good. Next time we'll go off on
our own and never speak of them.

MARY. I'd love
that.

JACKIE. Jack, I love your friend, she's fabulous
and so discreet! I'm leaving you for her.

JACK. All right.

JACKIE. Jack says you paint too, let me see.

MARY. I will.

*Jack shoots Mary a surreptitious glance, shaking his
head slightly: "Nothing. Sorry."*

*

*(7.) The **Meyer Home** next door to Hickory Hill. Later
that same evening. Sunset. The voices of their three
sons playing outside the house. Mary silently begins
to pick up the clothes left scattered around the
house by the boys. Cord pours himself a drink.*

CORD. You wish you'd married him? ... No comment?
Right next door they've moved. Hm.

MARY. Mikey asked
me why you don't remember things the next day.

CORD. No, he didn't. How do you think I
feel when I see you and your Senator
off by yourself?

MARY. The way I do when I
see you and Jim and Allen Dulles plotting
/ like the witches on the heath?

CORD. Here we go again—GODDAMMIT!

MARY. Shh,
they're right out/side.

CORD. So?!? Christ, why won't you assume
I'm doing something brave, heroic, huge
instead of leaping to the worst conclusion.

MARY. Brave, heroic acts don't need a lake
of booze to / drown in.

CORD. Will you ever let up on me?

Silence but for the boys' voices; they are racing now.

CORD. I could lose my job.

MARY. I'm strong enough
to carry what is eating at you.

CORD. You are.

MARY. No.

CORD. Don't tell me what I am.

MARY. You tell me then.

CORD. What's wrong with you?

MARY. What are you? Look at me.
Or can't you?

The boys' voices outside move farther off.

MARY. Tell me what you do.

CORD. Why can't you ... ?

MARY. Trust you?

CORD. Yes.

MARY. You ask do I wish I
were married to our neighbor. Our three boys
are frightened of you.

CORD. No, they're / not.

MARY. Ask them, look
into their eyes. (*Beat.*) You fly off, destinations
unknown, come home tight-lipped, I obey
our code of silence; but I can't stop friends
from calling, "Cord was at the Post in Phil
Graham's office—"

CORD. What friends?

MARY. "I saw Cord at Warner
Brothers having lunch with—"

CORD. / Who?

MARY. "—some director."
Should I say, "Don't tell me, it's top secret,"
not to them.

CORD. What friends?

MARY. It doesn't feel
so great now.

CORD. Tell me / who—

MARY. You first.

CORD. Don't play games.

MARY. What are you doing, you and Jim and Dulles?
People who police the rest of us
make jails and wind up in/side.

CORD. What are you doing
right now but—

MARY. Demanding that my husband
prove he's / still—

CORD. Prove?

MARY. (*continuous*)—my prince of peace. Yes.

CORD. What
do you do, saint of mine?

MARY. I raise three boys,
I get them fed, dressed, off to school and into
bed on schedule, work to be a better
artist while you skulk in, out at any
hour, drink and meet with who knows who
and doing who knows what or to / what [ends] ...

CORD. You seem
to think you / do.

MARY. Why does Dulles hire Nazis?

CORD. Who the hell told you / that?

MARY. Do we excuse
ourselves for—

CORD. / WHO?!?

MARY. (*continuous*) —doing what the “Enemy”
is doing? Why?

CORD. You want to live in Stalin's
world?

MARY. What happened to no “Them” and “Us.”

CORD. Grow up.

Silence. Then the boys' voices, farther off.

CORD. You think it's ... power, only power
I'm pursuing?

MARY. Tell me what it is then. *(looking out the window)*

CORD. I will tell you what he told me. Dulles.

*This gets Mary's attention. She turns away from the
window as boys' voices drift further off.*

CORD. When we first met. If you say one word— ... Swear.

MARY. I swear.

CORD. On Mikey's life.

MARY. I swear.

CORD. Say [the words]—

MARY. I swear
on Mikey's life.

CORD. Be proud of me, / please.

MARY. I want
to be.

CORD. He said, "We all were just as disap-
pointed by the failure of the U.N.
But we have to live in this world. How
do we know what the other side will do?
Because we know ourselves. What we did, Hiro-
shima. All the evil stalking us
is in us, we're the enemy, if we
don't tell a story as a nation, to

ourselves, a story constituting what
democracy is for and who we aim
to be ... We know deterrence works because
we know ourselves. We know we'll never use
these bombs, we can't, but they must never use
theirs either. We will see that our resolve,
our faith in who we are is written ev'ry-
where, in all the books, in ev'ry newscast,
in the movies, TV shows, we'll let
the story write us, who we are, and you're
in charge of this, Cord, you. Alone. I'm trusting
you." So I am working, Mary, through
the night, each day, each weekend, I am care-
fully and wisely overseeing how
the story's told.

MARY. Go on, please.

CORD. Ev'ry single
editor at ev'ry paper, ev'ry
studio, and station, radio,
they all make sure that I approve of how
the tale is told, who are we, what do we
believe in as a constitutional
democracy. What will the world become
if we don't lead it? ...

MARY. Go on, please.

CORD. *(pours another drink)* I know
you like him. Jack. I know for fact that Jack
knows nothing of the things he thinks he does,
the "Common Good," or fed'ral health care now
for seniors. If we give up all our choice
as individuals, we'll live like ants
and be manipulated. Many thousands
of our assets work for me and answer
to me, and my job is saving what
is good in human life [itself], if you knew what
goes on in gulags, you would not be so

sure “Power is the enemy of love”
as you so often tell me, what do you
think makes things run, dreams? Wishes? Hopes and lol-
lipops? It’s power engines run on, sunlight
powers ev’rything on earth, without
it there’s no life, the power in
our government sits now with Allen Dulles
and J. Edgar Hoover. Eisenhower
had no clue about the coups in Gua-
temala or Iran, until they’d happened,
you want change, that’s all you speak of, that
is where it burns, in Allen Dulles and
in Hoover! I fight—FIGHT AND GO ON FIGHTING
to ensure the studios place in
their crowd scenes, prominently, blacks
so all the world can see we’re inte-
grating! I do that.

*Sudden squeal of tires. Children screaming. Mary
rushes outside. Cord cannot move.*

CORD. I ...

He doesn’t move. Finally:

CORD. We found Mikey
where our dog had died a year before ...
Exactly in the same spot. *(Holds a beat.)* Let me tell
you what my wife did then in front of our
two boys ... she took the man who killed our son
in both her arms and said, “You mustn’t let
this ruin your life. We’re the ones
who should have put a stop sign. You must live.”
That’s who I married.

He stares at us. And stares.

*

(8.) *Cicely's Backyard. July 1956. Late afternoon.*
Mary is sketching; Cicely, in a chaise, applies sun-
screen. Laughter, splashing, voices from the pool.

CICELY. So I said what again?

MARY. To listen for
the future. Back at school. And you were right.
It calls out, but it's not faint. That may be
why we don't hear it. It's there screaming in
our ears ... Are we complicit in our husbands'
evils?

CICELY. Evils!?

MARY. By refusing to
stand up and shout, "They're violating law."

CICELY. Did Cord say something?

Headshake.

CICELY. Someone feeding you
these ... ?

MARY. What would we do, any of us, if
we knew for certain we could get away
with it. (*calls out*) Mark! Quenty, watch your brother. (*to Cicely*) There's
no telling what I'd do.

CICELY. That's why there is
no telling. I think I know who it is
who's planting these ideas—

MARY. No, it's not
one person.

CICELY. Course not. (*Beat.*) Did he write Profiles
in Courage? I heard he did not, in fact,
but no one says that—nor his whereabouts

when Jackie had this latest stillbirth. *(Beat.)* Riviera yacht. *(Beat.)* And Jack was not the father. *(Beat.)* William Holden.

MARY. Who are you, J. Edgar Hoover?

CICELY. *(a pause before)* I picked up the phone once ... *(calls out)* Truffy, dry off, that's enough. You'll go back in—
Yes! Peter would you hand her—? Thank you. *(to Mary)* And I heard what Jim and Cord and Dulles were discussing. I should not have listened and I did ... And what I heard ... *(Beat.)* made me consider leaving Jim. The malice in what Dulles was relating ... the delight he took in someone else's suffering made me relieved our husbands tell us nothing ... He is like a person waiting for the mouse to sniff the cheese ... He's living for that instant when the unsuspecting creature's neck will snap. Like we learned Hitler did when they would bring him footage of the people being tortured, killed, to masturbate to. That's their boss. But not them. I do not believe they're like that. Nor do you. *(Silence.)* When you are tempted with those thoughts, remember that they're stopping Stalin.

MARY. Stalin died.

CICELY. And Khrushchev said he'd bury us.

MARY. ... And who said "Turn the other cheek?"

CICELY. I truly mean this when I say I've always loved you. I remember, yes, I said, at school, to find the best you. And I hope you never stop pursuing that. But let me also point out if I may that saints do not get prizes on some game show. They

are burned alive, sliced up, their breasts lopped off,
we've seen those holy relics. Yes, their names
may well live on but I would rather have
a pool. And so would you.

MARY. Which we could buy
ourselves.

CICELY. Well, children need a father.

MARY. What
if what they need is truth?

CICELY. Is that what they
get in that school you've put them in?

MARY. They love
it. Why? Because it's integrated?

CICELY. No.
But take that same determination you
applied to place them in there and determine
to let Cord know what is best for him,
and you decide, as I have, not to think
about what neither of us can control.
I'm following your inspiration by
the way, with—What's your painting teacher's name?

MARY. Ken Noland.

CICELY. I am going back to get
my Masters in medieval hist'ry. He's
a looker, Noland. Have some fun. And tell
me all about it, leave their world behind you.

CORD. (*appears, calling*) Time to go! Mark! Quentin! Grab your things.

MARY. I—Thank you. You helped.

CICELY. How?

MARY. I'm leaving him.
Will you forgive me? ...

CICELY. No.

MARY. Please?

CICELY. You're still grieving.
No. I won't. It's lonely loving these
men, now it's lonelier, you know so much
about their secrets, you're a threat to all
of us, go live with black and white together,
grey like Russia.

CORD. *(approaching them)* Coming?

CICELY. *(moving past him)* Nice to see you.

CORD. You too.

CICELY. *(calls)* Jim! Let's find a dark place we
can take the kids for dinner, I've had too
much light, I'd like to see a little less,
please. *(exiting toward the pool)*

CORD. ... What was that?

MARY. We all have our own ways
of living with what we can't bear.

CORD. Something happen?
... What?

MARY. I can't stand either of us. You
or me. So I must start with me. There's no
one else. I promise.

CORD. Are you saying ... ?

MARY. Yes.
I'll tell the boys, but ... I cannot spend one
more minute in this storm. I'm sorry.

*Beat. A very loud clap of thunder, close up and bone-
shaking. Everything is plunged into darkness for:*

*

*(9.) Provincetown cabin. August 1959. Night. One by
one, Mary lights hurricane lanterns. A storm rages
outside. We hear the surf breaking nearby. Her
paintings fill the room. A knock. She opens the door
on Jack, drenched.*

MARY. Power's
out. You're dripping.

JACK. *(looks down)* Oh.

MARY. *(retrieving a towel)* Here. I don't care
about the floor.

JACK. You've always said I'm all
wet. Where is Ken?

MARY. He's with his kids and ex-wife.
They can have him. Tell me what you wouldn't
say when we were on the phone.

JACK. Oh, I, uh,
mean to ... run for president.

MARY. *(beat; turning away from him)* What's Jackie
think?

JACK. She ... Jackie cares about three things.
And those are: Culture.

Mary gives him a blanket.

JACK. Thank you. Horses. Children.
She has gone with Caroline to visit
Dad in Palm Beach. Your thoughts are?

MARY. I think
it's wrong exposing kids to segregated
water fountains.

JACK. Florida, I see.

MARY. If you become the president, our friendship's
gone.

JACK. I can't accept that. No.

MARY. I saw
what power did to Cord.

JACK. I'm not him.

MARY. Neither
was he 'til he had it.

JACK. I don't want
it for itself. I—Look at Roosevelt
or Lincoln.

MARY. We both know that you'll say any-
thing to bed a woman, won't you?

JACK. Would
you stop?! You love to wind me up.

MARY. I love ...
Jack, we're more alike than you can know. I ... (*fighting something*) Well—
(*waves it off*)

JACK. What's wrong?

MARY. *(shakes her head)* You want a drink?

JACK. I think I've had
enough, uh, moisture for a bit. These paintings
are all Noland's?

MARY. These are Mary Meyers.

JACK. *(a silent "Ah" then staring at the paintings in silence)*
... I, uh, have to say I like these.

MARY. No
you don't.

JACK. I don't? Uh ...

MARY. Have to say.

JACK. Oh. No,
but ... I ... You've found a way to ... I don't think
I've ever seen a painting show what things
look like when nearly all the light has died.

MARY. Love, no one else has seen it!

JACK. It's right there.

MARY. Well ... I ...

JACK. Maybe I'm not ... quite as super-
ficial as they say. My wife is hellbent
on another child ... and yet I think
she hates me.

MARY. So you want your cake and eat
it too. You run for president, I'll be
your mistress. Give up something, Jack. Like all
the rest of us. Feel what you can't have [and]—join
the human race for once. I know: you hate

the brutal truth of feelings, but I'm going to tell you something else:

JACK. Oh boy.

MARY. There's no achieving anything worth having if you don't have what belongs to you alone. And nothing else, not being president, not fucking eighty million women, none of that will take its place. You can't divorce your wife and be the president. I'll never get my son back. Jackie can't have what you don't know how to give. There.

JACK. I just wish you wouldn't mince words.

MARY. Jack? Putting on a brave face isn't bravery ...

JACK. Agreed.

MARY. If I've learned one thing it's that I can only change me.

JACK. How'd you do it?

MARY. You won't like the answer.

JACK. Try me.

MARY. I've had ... ev'ry kind of help—they worked the muscles—rages roaring out of me ... Then out in L.A. someone gave us L.S.D. You've heard?

JACK. A [bit] ... maybe.

MARY. Comes from mold that grows on rye. You pick a place that's beautiful and safe and ... ask a question of the ... I don't know ... and: all the things you think you are, your money, language, ego ... well, they're things, they fall away. You're stripped ... like actors when the audience goes home. (*looks out at us*) You see your—not your wig and make-up or the role you played that night—but who you are ... forever.

JACK. In the mirror.

MARY. ("Yes.") And:
it's not the drug. That's just a tool, it's how you use it. It's ...

JACK. An agent.

MARY. Yes. For change.

JACK. Like you.

MARY. Like certain kinds of light allow you, if we're willing—that's the key—to see what's really there.

JACK. Like in these paintings.

MARY. Tell
me what you'll do if you are president.

JACK. Then I can stay the night?

MARY. You couldn't bear
the abstinence.

JACK. Could I, uh, be the one
/ to—

MARY. Let's not tempt fate. (*Silence.*) Jack? ...

JACK. I'm all ears.

MARY. Don't
keep Dulles. If you do win. I sat and listened
patiently for decades ... All the wives did.
And I realized ... the evildoers
in the world, lagos—those manip-
ulating others seldom make it center
stage, or even into light.

JACK. You mean ...

MARY. The Dulleses and Angletons and Meyers.
Kochs.

JACK. Go on.

MARY. In ... forty-seven, Truman
signed the charter for the CIA—

JACK. Yes.

MARY. —inadvertently creating an
entire fourth unregulated branch
of government.

JACK. I ... If you say so.

MARY. Allen
Dulles and his brother ran a firm,
investments. Now, however, as the head
of all intelligence, his wealthy clients
have direct means for controlling pol-
icy. The news is censored by my ex
who'd drink and tell me things and then forget.

JACK. Perhaps he wanted you to think he had
more power than, uh—

MARY. “Good” Iago shows
all signs of loyalty, civility.
You want to keep a secret, you must keep
it secret that you have one.

JACK. Good point.

MARY. These
men want a war at all times somewhere. Doesn’t
matter who wins, they do, always. Jack,
they don’t care if democracy survives,
they only want to win, I promise you.

JACK. You’re sure they’re not behind the common cold
and jock itch, too? *(pause)* I wish you’d married me.

MARY. You don’t believe me.

JACK. How am I supposed
to think when you’re so ... damn alive.

MARY. You think
he made it all up?

JACK. Cord? I don’t know what
to think.

MARY. His one condition for divorce
was taking full control of our boys’ edu-
cation; took them out of where they were
and stuck them in an all-white boarding school,
his faith in civil rights extending only
up to seeing plays. If you would sit
there in that big White House, what will you do
to open up the doors to ev’ryone?

JACK. I’ll show you. Let me spend the night. Please?

Pause. A sudden downpour heard on the rooftop.

MARY. ... I ...
can hold you but no one can ever know
and only that.

JACK. You want me in your arms
but not ...

MARY. Inside me. And if that's not good
for you ...

JACK. I'll take it, no.

MARY. Then try to sleep.

JACK. If sleep's the aim.

*He gets down on his knees, prays, a practiced habit,
then removes all but his underwear and the
complicated corset with ties, clips, all manner of
rigging—a significant piece of hardware.*

JACK. Uh ... this is how I stand
up straight.

MARY. Let's put these out—*(one by one she blows
out all but one of the lanterns)*—so we don't burn
the house down.

JACK. Cord said you enjoy that.

MARY. Yes.
I love that change, what rushes in to fill
what's ...

JACK. Gone.

MARY. But let's not burn our friendship or
your marriage down. There's too much wreckage in
the world, so ... you can sleep beside me but
no nonsense.

JACK. That's the only thing I don't think qualifies as nonsense.

MARY. Well, it's not for you and me.

Jack folds himself into her, facing out. She looks down at him. He closes his eyes. Tears roll down his cheeks. She wipes away his tears. Then surreptitiously she licks her fingers.

*

(10.) Langham Golf Course. August 1960. Day. Jackie, visibly pregnant, and Mary change clothes. Jackie is acutely aware of the possibility of being overheard by unseen eavesdroppers.

JACKIE. We thought you didn't like us anymore.

MARY. What?

JACKIE. Both of us did.

MARY. No!

JACKIE. I have a favor. He will listen to you ... *(glancing around)* Our friend. If you'll make him see he can't continue, now he's got the *(whispered)* nomination ... from that party, their big fling they threw for him? And now that he's attained that, he can't possibly pursue his former sport. They'd crucify him, never mind what it would do—*(to someone near)* Would you please pay attention to your own game? *(to Mary)* Fucking Washington. *(resuming her sentence)*
—to me,
he is about to have a second child,
so would you speak to him?

MARY. Yes.

JACKIE. Thank you.

MARY. But
I've learned that people only change when they
are either motivated or they're forced.

JACKIE. Oh absolutely. So, we'll motivate
or force, I don't care which. How's Ken?

MARY. We've separated.

JACKIE. Oh. There['s] someone else?

MARY. No. Well
("Yes"), but you don't know him. And he isn't free.

JACKIE. So you agree with me.

MARY. About?

JACKIE. Fidel-
ity. No?

MARY. I don't think we own each other,
and there's nothing wrong with seeking pleasure.
But I think we do owe kindness always.

JACKIE. That's my creed. You know my father's debts
shamed my whole fam'ly, I won't put my daughter
through that or this one, if—Well ... You under-
stand, I know.

MARY. Yes. Please don't let our friend
get into bed with all those southern racist
senators.

JACKIE. Oh, no. I worry more
about those Russian escorts. And, well, also
Doctor King.

MARY. Why?

JACKIE. Ev'ry time he gets
arrested (*glancing around*) our friend has to call up Mrs.
King. (*softly*) He needs both votes, the Blacks and segre-
gationists, you try to figure that
one out. You know that I applaud you, Mary,
all the things you want we want, and none
will happen if he loses.

MARY. Ask him—I
just feel we have to fight for what's right—always—

JACKIE. Yes.

MARY. —at least to stop, please, all this talk
of building more bombs.

JACKIE. (*Beat.*) ... I would never deign
to disagree with Jack on politics.

MARY. I see.

JACKIE. (*looking around*) Oh, look here what they planted—
(*drawing Mary aside until they can't be overheard*) I'm not sure
that he can even govern. Since his spinal
surgery?, how many times would you
believe he's been admitted to the hos-
pital?

MARY. I ...

JACKIE. (*sotto voce*) Forty-four. (*mouthed*) Sh. He gets shots
of god-knows-what from Doctor Feelgood. I
do too. We're dancing on the edge of something
awful—

STARTER'S VOICE. Bouvier?

JACKIE. Oh, thank god. I—Mary,
we have both lost, well, it's not the same,
but we have. Both of us.

MARY. I know.

Jackie stops, overcoming with gratitude, embracing Mary, then continuing on toward the first hole as if Mary were still beside her. But Mary has remained where she stood.

JACKIE. I'm glad
you didn't ex-communicate us, I was worried.

On her final word, a sudden explosion of applause and music from the next scene:

*

*(11.) The **Inaugural gala** at the National Guard Armory. **January 19, 1961**. Evening. From the stage we hear the voice of a celebrity launching into a song with a punchy aggression that undermines any tenderness in the lyric. At the same time: Mary moves to the coat check, hands over her ticket to the unseen Attendant, and, after a moment, receives her coat, leaving a tip.*

Having seen her come this way, Jack, in white tie and tails, has appeared from the direction of the great hall where the music resounds.

JACK. Don't you sneak off.

MARY. I'm not. Congratulations,
Mister President.

JACK. Stay?

— CHANGE AGENT —

MARY. Thank you for
including me.

JACK. A little? Please? This isn't
going to change a thing.

MARY. Ha.

JACK. No. You know
me.

MARY. Yes. I do. And everything will change.
And I'll be here.

*A suspended moment, as if outside of time, as they
hold one another's face.*

JACK. You're Mary Pinchot.

MARY. And
you're John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

JACK. Uh, may I?

*A moment. Jack lifts his arms, and Mary, holding for
a tiny beat, steps into them. They dance.*

*Mary slowly starts to draw Jack closer to her. He
puts his head against her. Gently, she lifts her hand
to hold the back of his head protectively. She looks
out at us over his shoulder.*

Lights fade as they continue to dance.

End of Act One.

TWO

(12.) Mary speaks directly to us.

MARY. A physicist once told me at a party:
light is either particle or wave;
and when it leaves a distant star, it takes
someone observing to determine which.
So when it reaches us, what it was when
it first departed back a billion years
ago is only then decided. (*“Don’t believe me?”*) This
man won the Nobel Prize. (*“The conclusion?”*) We shape the past
now in the present. And the future shapes
us.

Jack appears beside her and we are in:

***White House. Spring 1961. Afternoon. Mary and
Jack are in a corner outside the Diplomatic Reception
Room of the White House reception where, at this
moment, Russian soprano, Galina Vishnevskaya,
sings to the piano accompaniment of her husband,
Mstislav Rostropovich.***

JACK. All I think of is our night in Province-
/town—

MARY. Shhhh.

JACK. There’s never been another like
you.

MARY. Nor you. Jack?

JACK. Yes?

MARY. Why are all the Secret
Service agents white?

JACK. Well ... *(thrown by her sharp turn in thinking)*

MARY. You can put
an end to segregation with your pen.

JACK. *(pulling away)* When I appoint you to my cabi/net—

JACKIE. *(entering)* There
you are, my god, Jack. Mary, you look lovely.

MARY. Oh, and you.

JACKIE. Jack? At this moment? In
the next room? Alexander Schneider, Mieczys-
law Horszowski and the great Pablo
Casals are making music just for you.

JACK. Uh, well, it's, yes, I—

JACKIE. History is calling,
Bunny.

JACK. Can't they leave a message?

JACKIE. Good
to see you, Mary.

MARY. You too.

JACKIE. *(whispered)* Thank you.

A buzzer sounds—from the next scene:

*

(13.) *Mary's Georgetown Home. Summer 1961.*
Night. Mary quickly slips into her robe and opens the door on Cord.

MARY. Oh.

CORD. I saw your light.

MARY. What's wrong?

CORD. I've come to ask a favor.

MARY. Would you like
a drink?

CORD. I thought you didn't—

MARY. Love, you're here.

CORD. I'll have a gin if it's no ...

MARY. Something wrong
with Mark / or ... Quenty?

CORD. No, they're fine. (*looks around*) These paintings are
all Noland's?

MARY. Mine.

CORD. They're ...

Pause.

CORD. ... very ...

Pause.

CORD. ... They ...

Pause.

CORD. ... are ...

Pause.

MARY. Doesn't
matter.

CORD. They're unusual. I ... *(takes drink)* Thank you.
You know I met with your old friend Jack?

MARY. Oh?

CORD. No? *(pause)* Today. *(pause)* He didn't tell you?

MARY. Why?

CORD. He seems to think the world of you. Said you
suggested hiring someone for the Secret
Service.

MARY. Oh?

CORD. A Black man.

MARY. Did he?

CORD. You
suggested it.

MARY. I did?

CORD. I don't know why
he'd say that if— ... And that poor man has been
subjected to ... all manner of abuse.

MARY. Oh, Jack is strong.

CORD. Not Jack, the man he brought in.

MARY. Oh.

CORD. And stuck right in the middle of—
We weren't prepared for what's entailed in inte-
grating, and I'm not suggesting prej-

udices from White House staff should justify—

MARY. Oh, you want me to ask for more
Black men / to—

CORD. No.

MARY. —be employed so he won't be
the only—

CORD. No!

MARY. No? What's the favor then?

CORD. I ... Well, I hear you're at the White House often
now.

MARY. From?

CORD. Cicely.

MARY. She told you that?

CORD. Jim.

MARY. Ah.

CORD. They're married.

MARY. Yes. Amazing.

CORD. Why?

MARY. Well ...

CORD. Say.

MARY. I [shouldn't] ...Well, I'm sure she tells you.

CORD. What?

MARY. It's not my place.

CORD. If you know [something] ...

MARY. No.

Silence. Without having to articulate anything, Mary has made her position clear on Cord's inference, gossip and innuendo.

CORD. I see.

A lengthening pause as Cord contemplates what's being withheld from him.

CORD. Well ... Could I ... ? *(holds out his empty glass)*

MARY. Tell me you're not driving.

CORD. I'm
not driving.

MARY. Where's your car?

CORD. All right, I drove.
You always could see through me. Jack, I felt,
had wanted help in getting rid of ... *(softly)* My boss.
This I don't think's private knowledge. I
suspect Jack's sorry he kept ... *(hesitates)*

MARY. Kept?

CORD. Him.

MARY. Who?

CORD. Who I just ...

MARY. Dulles. Allen—

CORD. / Yes.

MARY. —Dulles. Is—?
You think he's in the bathroom?

CORD. ... You, I'm sure,
have heard, or read, the—well, what happened after
the invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

MARY. Jack called you?

CORD. Not exactly.

MARY. But ... [???

CORD. Yes, he
asked me, no, intimated he could use
my help.

MARY. So you were summoned.

CORD. No, I ... I
thought you might put in a good word.

MARY. Good [word] ... ?

CORD. For
me. I asked him would he consider giving
me a diplomatic post—

MARY. Oh, you
suggested it.

CORD. What?

MARY. Meeting.

CORD. I—yes.

MARY. So.
A diplomatic—

CORD. —post in—Thank you—Guate—

MARY. Watch
your / shirt.

CORD. Am I spilling? Sorry.

MARY. It's all right,
go on.

CORD. I didn't eat, I should ... (*drinks, pause*)

MARY. (*prompting him*) In Guate-
/mala.

CORD. Guatemala, did he call you?

MARY. You
just said—

CORD. Oh, right. (*laughs; beat*) I'd give my one remaining
eye to get out of this job; there's things
I can't get into ... He said, your friend, looking
through me like I was some window at
a car wash, waiting for the dirt to wash off ...

MARY. (*prompting*) Said?

CORD. I don't know, that man ...

MARY. What did he—?

CORD. He asked would I know if the agency
raised private funds from outside government.

MARY. And do they?

CORD. I assumed you told him.

MARY. He's
the President. We're not that kind of friends.

CORD. You're not? Well, maybe then—(*musters courage*) I'm asking if
you'd make a special point of asking him
to do this for me.

MARY. Yes.

CORD. You will.

MARY. I will.

CORD. You ... I think that's ...

MARY. What?

CORD. Your way of politely
saying no.

MARY. I don't know how to re-
assure you.

CORD. You will ask him then.

MARY. I will.

CORD. I see. (*stares at her*)

MARY. Cord ...

CORD. I do know you quite well. Still.

MARY. Then you've made up your mind I'll let you down.
So ... (*Pause.*)

CORD. So?

Her face: "What else can I do?" Beat.

CORD. I told him I had made a hash
of our life ... you and me. Our marriage. I
am asking ... to be freed from ...

MARY. I learned this
from you, love, and I'm grateful ev'ry single
day. For you. When I decide I have an en-
emy, I'm on the road already to
becoming them.

CORD. I see—Okay, well, / I—

MARY. Watch
the painting.

CORD. Sorry. Did I hurt it? / Shit—

MARY. Let
me call a taxi.

CORD. I'll replace it.

MARY. How?
Repaint it?

CORD. Oh, I—Right. Where is my coat?

MARY. You didn't have a coat.

CORD. I—yes, I did,
oh shit, I must have left it in the Oval
Office ...

MARY. Call them.

CORD. I don't think he likes
me. He won't do this, can I ... (*freezes*) Could I ... [stay the night]?

Cord's unasked question hangs in the air.

CORD. Never
mind.

MARY. Oh—Careful.

CORD. I am fine. I promise. *(disappears into the dark)*

MARY. Watch the steps.

CORD'S VOICE. I am!

A crash of trash cans, tops rolling away.

CORD'S VOICE. Oh! Guess I wasn't
watching right—Forget I said—Ow! Fuck it!
There's another suit pant ripped ... I can't
hold on to anything.

*

14.) *Jack's **Private Presidential Bedroom, White House. January 22, 1962.** Late night. Jack and Mary have finished a meal and she is singing² and dancing to Jack's sheer delight.*

JACK. Once more! Yes! One more time! Come on!

MARY. "Mm-mmmm,
oh, what's that, honey? ... Pick you up at eight?
And don't be late? ... But baby! I don't got
no money! Honey, oh, all right, mmm, honey,
you know what I like!"

JACK. I never thought
I could have this much fun.

² "Chantilly Lace" by Jiles Perry "J.P. Richardson, Jr.

MARY. You have fun most
nights, time for me to go. (*gathering her things*)

JACK. Nooooo! ... You were right,
you know. I fired Dulles. They were planning
to eliminate Fidel without
my knowledge, so ... as you foretold, I have
a—we, our country, has a bigger problem
than we, I, uh, realized.

MARY. You noticed
I stopped telling you what I think when
it comes to policy.

JACK. Please don't.

MARY. You like
your women cultured, educated and
devoted to creating perfect cheeseballs.

JACK. I deserve that.

MARY. I accept you as
you are.

JACK. Please don't. My wife's informed me she
won't stay here at the White House any more
than's necessary—

MARY. Can you blame her?

JACK. Dad's,
I think, providing some incentive for
her. (*Beat.*) I saw how you licked my tears that night ...

They look at one another.

MARY. Jack? ... Please ... ? ... (*struggles as to whether she can ask this*)

JACK. Yes?

MARY. Please ... (again pausing)

JACK. I heard that part.

MARY. ... for once ...
... take Doctor King's advice.

JACK. I have to find
the right time.

MARY. Love, you told the world it's time
to put a man up on the moon ... but not
a black one in the voting booth?

JACK. You'd ... (stops himself)

MARY. Yes?

JACK. Well ... you'd ...

MARY. I heard that part ...

JACK. ... uh, well ... be hard
to live with.

*She looks at him. Nods. They look at one another.
Then, pulling her things together, Mary moves as if
to leave, reaches for one last forgotten item close to
Jack. And, for the first time Mary impulsively moves
to kiss him. Startled, Jack pulls back reflexively,
exposing something he works tirelessly to mask.*

MARY. Breathe.

JACK. You too.

They breathe.

MARY. Let's not pretend
this won't have consequences.

JACK. Let's stop talking.

They are unbuttoning one another's clothing.

JACK. Are you doing this because you want
to get your way?

MARY. Because I love you.

JACK. I,
well, good—

MARY. And you love me, and we both love
the world.

JACK. I—... Yes.

MARY. Yes.

They are on the bed, disappearing into one another.

JACK. Yes.

MARY. Yes.

JACK. All right.

MARY. Shhhhh.

JACK. I'm not the one who's / talking.

MARY. Shhh, you're spoiling it.

JACK. You ...

MARY. You ...

JACK. You won't leave if it's not all / you [hope] ...

MARY. Never ... Ever.

Time jump. Jack is asleep holding Mary.

Jackie enters, from the next scene; she stops and stares into the empty air, then lights a cigarette and sits on the edge of the bed, looking out at us.

JACKIE. After all I've done to show up, say
my lines, the White House tour, research the fur-
niture and paintings, be the jewel for
the crown he wanted, not me ... *(puff)* My reward?
Jack tosses me in with his other worthless
bangles, and I still come back for more. *(sip)*

*

*(15.) East Room, White House. Spring 1962. Day.
Mary sits up beside Jackie, putting her hair in order,
as Jack slips out of the bed and disappears.
As Jack is exiting, we hear applause from the
assembled (unseen) dignitaries and guests (as if he is
making an entrance toward them), and Jackie joins
in, Mary too. Someone can be heard tapping their
glass and saying a word or two under:*

JACKIE. *(to Mary)* I didn't hear a word of that. Did you?

*Jack can be heard extemporizing, making a joke,
followed by genuine laughter. Same time, to Mary:*

JACKIE. There's someone
in his bed when I'm away. Well, he
is welcome to her, they'll see where that road leads—
as if they could stand up together; they'd
be burned alive to cheering.

More applause for something Jack has said.

JACKIE. *(rising, applauding)* Stand up.

Mary does.

JACKIE. He
expects us all to cheer. We should.

MARY. Yes.

JACKIE. *(sitting again)* I
think I know who it is too. Don't think I
don't.

They are both seated once more.

JACKIE. We both failed to change his mind.

MARY. I'm sorry.

JACKIE. Maybe what is happening will help
us both.

MARY. I hope so.

JACKIE. That would be nice.

Cicely has entered and approaches them.

CICELY. Jim
was button-holed by Jack. *(to Jackie)* Hello.

JACKIE. If you
would please excuse me. *(moving off towards Jack; same time, over)*

CICELY. Sure. Of course, I—Yeah,
I ... *(to Mary)* They both seem to love you.

Mary puts her head down into Cicely's lap.

CICELY. In this crowd,
they'll take that for a sign of something.

MARY. Let
them.

CICELY. They both play the press as if it's one more night on some grand tour, and they're the stars, and we're the audience applauding. Are they close to Phil Graham at the Post? Joe Alsop, too? And, well, your sister's married to Ben Bradlee, one big happy fam'ly. The entire press corps seems to keep all presidential peccadilloes under wraps. *(Hold.)* You too. *(surveys crowd)* Cord's ... well, quite disappointed that he wasn't offered something in the diplomatic corps. *(Hold.)* And he and Jim know all the press as well, of course. Especially your ex. *(Hold.)* It wouldn't help to further any hoped-for legislation, policy, if anything were somehow to emerge ... Remember how they used to say, "Loose lips sink ships?"

MARY. I do indeed.

CICELY. They do. In deed and inf'rence. *(sees)* Who the hell invited Dulles? Did nobody tell him he's—?

Jack has begun working his way toward them.

CICELY. Uh! Two o'clock off starboard. Jack, you lousy goddamn son of / a—

JACK. Stop right there. *(to Mary)* / Did you [see]—?

CICELY. Never did let women finish.

JACK. *(laughs good-naturedly)* Yes, well, good to be reminded of one's ...

CICELY. Shortcomings.

JACK. *(Beat; to Mary)* Well, did
you see who's here? Attwood.

MARY. Bill?

JACK. The very
one.

MARY. *(to Cicely)* My date the night we met.

CICELY. ... If I
were a comedienne I'd use that for
my set-up, but I'll leave you both as *(to Jack)* you
left me: without a climax. *(pings glass?)* Jim? *(moves off)*

JACK. Uh ...

*They laugh. Mary performs a nod of mere acquaint-
ance for Jack who returns the protocol.*

MARY. By
the way, I told my sister you're attracted
to her, so ... just play the part and she
and Ben won't ... [suspect].

JACK. Right then.

MARY. Wasn't married to
a *(completely silent)* spy *(voiced)* for nothing.

JACK. Good to see you.

MARY. You
as well.

*Perfunctory nods, then both move away from each
other only then to circle back toward:*

*

(16.) *Jack's Private Presidential Bedroom, White House. Summer 1962. Night. Jack and Mary climb into bed. They begin to make love. After a few moments:*

MARY. I'd like to understand why you're
resuming testing weapons in the South
Pacific.

JACK. Is this foreplay?

MARY. After all
you suffered in those waters? Jack.

JACK. It's ... *(Pause.)* ... one
way to appease the Joint Chiefs, get them off
my back; and I don't trouble you with— ... All
right, since you've proved beyond all doubt the most
discrete and ... *(debates within before)* Last July the Chiefs proposed
that I approve, uh, sinking one of our
own ships. And killing some of our own cit-
izens ... *(lets that sink in)* and make it seem the Cubans were
to blame.

MARY. *("Of course")* Invade and take the country back,
return it to the Mafia.

JACK. You are ... *(Always one step ahead)* There's
no missile gap. They had me and the whole
world fooled. We're way ahead, more bombs, more ev-
'rything. And now they want ... propose I launch
a unilateral assault on Moscow.
In the first three minutes some three hundred
million thirty thousand people would
be killed. There isn't one of these men doesn't
stand behind this strategy. They want
to out-do Hitler. *(Beat.)* So ... approving tests
is my, uh ... gambit, I can offer that
without the genocide they'd much prefer.
You told me: That is who they are. And our

time here (*you and me*) is about the only respite I
get from, uh, their ...

MARY. ... Yes ...

*They might resume what they were doing, then
Mary stops:*

MARY. But surely there
is some way you could speak as one man to
another.

JACK. To the Chiefs?

MARY. Nikita Khrushchev.
He must be as frightened as we are
of—more.

JACK. Uh—

MARY. We're the—(*stops*) No.

JACK. Go on.

MARY. ... the only ones
to ever use the bomb. And he must have
his own men pressing him to fire first.
He has kids.

JACK. Four.

MARY. If you reached in private
to connect as fathers, couldn't you
together broker, even if it's tem-
porary—Castro, too. If you reached out
through private channels ... Human beings—

JACK. They'd
find out. I wouldn't put it past them then
to—

Stops himself. Hold.

MARY. ... What?

Silence.

MARY. What?

He refuses to say the words. She studies his face.

From the next scene, loud phone rings.

*

*(17.) **Mary's Georgetown Home.** Sunset. **October 16, 1962.** Mary is hurriedly getting dressed—
earrings, lipstick—as the phone rings. And rings.*

MARY. Hello?

Light up on:

CORD. Maybe
all those men that you dismissed with your
tremendous insight knew a thing or two
about the consequences of allowing Russian
puppets to persist directly off
our shores.

MARY. I don't know what you're—

CORD. Oh, you have no TV.

MARY. I do, but
I'm meeting someone—

CORD. Heading to the White House?

MARY. As it happens, yes, love—

CORD. Better turn
it on, then you can tell our sons—

*Mary switches on her TV, a newscaster introducing
an emergency broadcast under:*

CORD. —how they
best cope with having no more life to live.
The rights of Communist guerillas had
to be respected, so ... Too bad, kids. (*hangs up*)

*Mary turns up the sound on Jack's voice now,
speaking in a taut manner.*

JACK'S VOICE³. This government, as promised, has maintained
the closest surveillance of the Soviet Military build-up
on the island of Cuba. Within the past week
unmistakable evidence has established
the fact that a series of offensive missile sites
is now in preparation on that imprisoned
island. The purpose of these bases can
be none other than to provide a nuclear strike
capability against the Western hemisphere.
Each of these missiles is capable of striking Washington
D.C., the Panama Canal, Cape Canav—

*Time jump—Jack's voice overlapping itself further
into the speech—Mary has sunk down into a seated
position, the light shifting around her.*

JACK'S VOICE. The nineteen thirties taught us a clear lesson
that aggressive conduct, if allowed
to go unchecked and unchallenged ultimately
leads to war. This nation is opposed
to war. We are also true to our word—

*Another time jump—Jack's voice overlapping itself
once again, further into the address; Mary has sunk
down to the floor, the light again having shifted.*

³ NOTE: This text, based on the televised broadcast from the time, does not adhere to the scansion.

JACK'S VOICE. —I want to say a few words to the captive people of Cuba.

Mary no longer looks at the TV screen but into some place far away.

JACK'S VOICE. Your leaders are no longer Cuban leaders inspired by Cuban ideals. They are puppets and agents of an international conspiracy which has turned Cuba against your friends and neighbors in the Americas—

Abruptly, Mary switches off the TV, removes her earrings, dials her phone, waits.

MARY. *(into phone)* Bill, I'm canceling, I—Find another date, I don't—Yes ... Yes, I watched, just—No, find someone else. I don't care to get into it—or be a part of anything tonight. No, tell them nothing, please. Goodnight.

Hangs up. Mary stands for one moment, then takes out an empty canvas.

She begins to paint.

The light changes around her as Mary continues painting. It is now:

*

(18.) Mary's Georgetown Home, the next morning. Mary still paints. Phone rings.

MARY. Hello?

A solitary light up on:

JACK. Did you not receive our invitation last night—?

But Mary has hung up on him, plunging him back into darkness.

Mary paints. Light changes to:

*

(19.) **October 28, 1962.** *Late afternoon. A new day.
Mary is on the phone.*

MARY. I know, I know, it's wonderful!
I told you they would not allow the worst
to happen, trust, my [darling]—... Oh ... Well, that's his way ...
Well, you tell him they helped us to find a peace ...
Okay, look he's your dad ...

Knock on the door.

MARY. Just—Someone's at
the door, two seconds—Oh ... (*opens the door on Jack and
turns her back on him; into phone*) I love you, you're
the best, okay. Muah. (*hangs up, turns away from Jack
and resumes painting*)

JACK. That my competition?

MARY. Yes, my son.

She paints. He holds still.

MARY. (*no enthusiasm whatsoever*) Congratulations.

JACK. Why
did you ignore me? Did you get my tel-
egrams?

MARY. The whole world got your messages.

JACK. I see.

MARY. Your swelling build-up: “Ooooo, we’ve got much bigger ones than you, contaminating skies in Asia as if Hiroshima weren’t enough for you!

JACK. You’re angry.

MARY. Oh, you think, so how’d ya do it, Jack, escaped to make the world less safe than it already was.

JACK. Dumb luck, I / guess.

MARY. *(exploding)* OH! I promised I would not spend one more second trying to change men’s minds and yet HERE! We ARE! ... Your spine is injured, yes, that doesn’t mean you can’t show backbone. Somehow, when, Jack, after Armageddon? Throw some crumbs to Doctor King, but don’t stand up and pass a Civil Rights Bill. You’re a ‘realist?!’ Reality is shaped by people dreaming, brave enough to say WHAT’S TRUE! ... *(Now it hits her.)* I can’t start turning you into a “Them” or ... I’ll become as small as you and that is so small.

Now, for the first time, Mary and Jack inhabit the same terrible place in the vastness of human possibilities: how to achieve what seems truly, inescapably and permanently beyond our reach. Very quietly:

JACK. I, uh ... spoke to Khrushchev. One to one. As human beings desp’rate not ... to ruin what it’s taken eons to create. And we both made concessions. *(Silence.)* How could you? ...I couldn’t—Not without you, don’t you know? *(Pause.)* They’ll never let me off the hook now.

MARY. (*“Don’t be an idiot.”*) You’re more popular than Pepsodent.

JACK. The Chiefs assured me all those warheads aren’t op’rative but Khrushchev said they are.

MARY. ... You frightened little ...

JACK. Please
don’t, uh, emasculate me right now.

MARY. (*holding him, looks out to us*) Two non-military men, this one and Khrushchev, stood alone against the best advice and followed their own counsel. Two men ... (*allows this to sink in*) kindly saved the world for people sitting in the dark somehow to take another breath and watch a play and walk together home and wake and steep in tiny worries. And yes I did what I promised I would not. I fell for power. (*inhales*)

JACK. ... How does anyone begin to change?

MARY. The hardest thing.

JACK. ... But how?

MARY. You want to know?

He nods.

MARY. You trust me?

JACK. Yes.

Pause.

*

(20.) **Georgetown Home of Joseph Alsop. Spring 1963.** *Afternoon. Mary carefully prepares what's needed for Jack to experience what he's requested. They are on the floor, having removed their shoes. Mary places two small pillows for each of their heads, then arranges two tea cups on saucers, pours a small amount of liquid into each. Jack observes as, from an eyedropper, Mary puts a single drop into each cup. They lift their cups and drink all that's inside.*

MARY. So. Clear
your mind of all distraction. Formulate
your question for the future. In this place
of ... possibility and beauty—

JACK. You
don't think Joe knows we're ...

MARY. All I told him was
you needed time away from ev'rybody.
Being queer I think he understands
the need for full discretion. No one saw
us come and no one will see when we leave ...

JACK. I trust him.

MARY. I do too.

She lifts a meditation bowl or yoga bells, taps gently, allows the sound to hover and die out. She takes a deep inhalation, Jack follows suit. Mary lies back on the floor. Jack does the same. They both breathe.

JACK. How did you learn
to do this?

MARY. There's a protocol.

JACK. But how?

MARY. I went to Harvard, asked Professor Leary.

JACK. Oh, uh, Timothy? You knew him?

MARY. Not
before I traveled up to meet him.

JACK. Did
he ask who you intended doing this
with?

MARY. I would never say.

They both close their eyes again.

JACK. I'm like a little
kid at camp when I'm with you.

MARY. You have
your question?

JACK. Yes.

MARY. Well, think of that.

JACK. My question?

MARY. You don't have to tell me.

JACK. It's:
"God? What the fuck are we both doing?" ...

They laugh. They quiet down. They breathe.

JACK. Want
to know whose voice I / [hear]?

MARY. Try to—

JACK. This'll be
the last thing.

MARY. Promise?

JACK. See if you can guess
my Myst'ry Guest up here (*his head*) God knows why he's
[living in my head], who offered me this nugget: "Tyrants harm
themselves as much as others."

MARY. Socrates?

JACK. Boy, no one gets a leg up with you. Then
he invoked Ghandi: "You can wake a man
who sleeps but not a man pretending sleep."
Then: "Leaders lead."

MARY. Too easy.

JACK. Who?

MARY. He bugs
you, Jack, he's blunt.

JACK. Who?

MARY. King. If you'd stop fighting
him up here your head would quiet.

She lies back. He does the same.

MARY. What ... if ... [you]—

JACK. Thought we weren't—

MARY. This will be the last thing.

JACK. Promise?

MARY. What if you announced, “We’re honoring what Lincoln put in writing?” That won’t kill you.

JACK. That’s what Lincoln thought. Hey, that was funny.

They put their heads back down. Pause. Which extends as:

JACK. How uh long’s it been?

MARY. Sh, patience ...

JACK. I don’t think it worked.

Hold. Then, almost imperceptibly, Jack’s teacup begins to move imperceptibly away from him. He looks to see the distance between the cup and the patch of sunlight, but that too begins to move.

JACK. I may have spoken too soon.

The walls have begun to ever-so-slowly undulate. Jack now finds himself floating in a liminal, fluid, uncertain world where the familiar sounds and sights are not behaving properly. As the room grows brighter, brighter still—almost too bright—Jack blinks to see if he can adjust his eyes—when everything snaps, light plummeting away but for the back wall, gripped by tremors to an electric crackle as if something has shorted out, and—

A backlit figure approaches from darkness upstage. The figure carries a hurricane lantern not quite like the others we have seen.

We hear a scratching sound emanating from—where? Jack feels as if it’s coming from one

direction. No, another. Is it whispers or a quill pen or a quill pen whispering?

The figure lifts the lamp as if to illuminate the face, but the face remains entirely in shadow. Jack cranes his head to try to make out what is happening. Mary sees the change in Jack's expression.

MARY. What?

JACK. *(reaches for the word) ... face ...*

No, wait, there is light from the lamp, but it only shines downward onto:

The figure's outstretched hand, holding something. But what?

JACK. *(straining to see)* I can't ... make it [out] ... uh ...

Is this a voice or is it something Jack isn't quite understanding?

FACE. Your ticket.

JACK. ... My ... ?

A stovetop hat appears about the figure's head as a beard appears floating just below his chin.

FACE. ... The play ...

JACK. The ... ?

FACE. Farce ...

JACK. The ... ?

Jack turns toward the darkened house of the theater, causing Lincoln to dissipate. Jack strains to make out

*what could possibly be out there, feeling us but
unable to see anything.*

JACK. Do
you feel that?

MARY. What?

JACK. Sh! Listen.

*Moving toward us, Jack's face begins to glow,
throwing a shadow behind him.*

JACK. Hear ... ?

MARY. What?

JACK. That.

MARY. Someone at the door?

JACK. No, breathing ... Hear? ... People ...

*Jack's shadow grows, colors and shapes beginning to
pour up and out of it, racing away as he is putting
together the vision he has just had, or is having now.*

JACK. I thought we
were up on stage in front of ... (*grasps for word*) strangers in
the dark, a kind of floating light box where
we went when we had ... (*spine stiffens*) Never mind.

MARY. When we had?

JACK. Died. We had to tell ... the throng (*peers out at us*) assembled
what we learned by living as we did.

MARY. What would you tell them?

JACK. I don't know the answers
yet.

MARY. We're still alive.

Jack shakes his head "No."

MARY. Yes.

JACK. I don't think so.

MARY. Jack ... come back to life. You are not dead
yet. We're at Joe's.

Jack's eyes widen like a child.

MARY. Joe / Alsop's.

JACK. Alsop!

*When Jack at last turns toward Mary again, the
shadow vanishes, and Mary sits in the now-darkened
room, lightning rumbling and crackling outside as it
did when they were first alone together in
Provincetown.*

MARY. Yes. The spring
of nineteen sixty-three. It's Mary.

JACK. *(clasps her)* Mary!
Still alive!

MARY. It isn't over. *(she is levitating up and down)*

JACK. Oh.

*Jack's "Oh" triggers a waterfall—a a dam breaking
over the back wall, spilling down the back wall and
starting to fill the room.*

JACK. Oh ... water ... coming [up!] ... we won't ... there won't be
[air] ... we'll drown ...

MARY. No.

JACK. I can't—

MARY. Dive. It's just a feeling,
swim through, you have done it, you can / do it—

JACK. There's
no, uh, no love in ... *(searches for the word)* death.

MARY. No, that's before,
keep breathing ... This is now ...

JACK. We're ... under water ...

MARY. You can do it.

He clings to her, certain he is going to die.

MARY. Breathe. Jack. In.

JACK. *(surprised to learn he can still breathe despite the tide
being above and around them)* ... Yes ... How
is ... ? Yes!

MARY. You can ...

JACK. Like ...

MARY. Swimming.

JACK. You're ... *(doesn't have the
words to convey the awe he feels)*

MARY. You know how.

Jack clings to Mary as she breathes in, then out, Jack mimicking her, both chests heaving to grab enough oxygen to remain alive as:

The waters dissipate and there is a sudden clearing, the negative ions and liquid blue overhead, stars emerging, or a dawn bringing the very first cries of seabirds as:

Jack, astonished, inexplicably refreshed, laughs, falls back.

JACK. Oh ...

The room restores, but with a glow. Jack is desperate to recapture what he witnessed, all the pieces, out of order—the words inadequate to the task of assembling, assigning meaning or coherence to what threatens to race away from him.

JACK. I saw a flame ... a monument ... my ... your? ... a name ... I saw the eyes of future generations. King is right. A leader leads. It isn't having votes, it's winning them and standing up for all the things you stand for—*(stands, unsteady)*

MARY. Careful.

JACK. I can do it, thank you ... There's no time to wait for time to ripen ... Shake the branches, fruit will fall ... It has to ...
He takes Mary's face in his hands, and for the first time we've seen, he kisses her on the mouth. Stands up, but he needs her mouth again.

JACK. More ... Our insides rhyme ... You hear it—[?]

MARY. You and—

JACK. Yes. (*putting this together as it reveals itself, each phrase bringing the next*) The past and future face to face (*looks into our eyes*) and staring in a mirror at their altered—

MARY. (*quietly*) / Yes.

JACK. —states, like ice and water, two identical materials, one living, one not, yet united through this looking glass, the watchers both observing and observed: a ritual where what is passed on from the dead moves through the living hands toward the unborn. That's our purpose—to enact our part in passing of the flame. What's worth our dying for, I'm willing, thanks to you.

MARY. ... I knew it when I first set eyes on you in nineteen thirty-six.

*

(21.) *Along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.*
Autumn 1963. Midday. Mary and Cicely are there.
Birds. Bicycle bells, laughter of passersby.

CICELY. (*entering*) I've never seen you so serene.

MARY. My fav'rite place on earth.

CICELY. It [this?] hardly feels like ...

MARY. No.

CICELY. ... November.
Are you ... taking ... tranquillizers?

Headshake.

CICELY. Are
you sure?

MARY. I think I'd know.

CICELY. You seem ... Don't take
this [the wrong way] ... You have yet to say what needs repairing
or ...

MARY. Oh.

CICELY. Transcendental meditation?

Headshake.

CICELY. Sex?

MARY. Not lately.

CICELY. Jackie being back
from her Greek idyll ... with Onassis?

MARY. Jack
is happy she's campaigning with him.

CICELY. Right,
but ... What's your secret?

MARY. Do we each get maybe
one day when the things we hope for all
seem ... ?

CICELY. Possible? What things?

MARY. Since June? when Jack
gave his address? On Peace? On finding common
ground with Russia, and he passed the test
ban treaty, called on Congress for a Civil
Rights bill, indicated he would bring
all U.S. military back from Viet-
nam, that isn't public, sh, he's also
right this moment sent a mediator
down to meet with Castro to begin
a rapprochement. (*finger to her lips*) He also told the Joint
Chiefs and Defense they're not allowed to share
the atom bomb with Israel. Or any-
one. (*looks out*) The ... world feels ... (*big breath in*)

CICELY. And you got some good
reviews for ...

MARY. Yes, my paintings.

CICELY. ... Back in Jan-
uary I did not pick up the phone
to call you when Phil Graham got up in front
of ev'ryone at the Associated
Press convention—

MARY. Oh, that.

CICELY. Told the world
the President was sleeping with his mistress,
Mary Meyer, in the White House.

MARY. Poor Phil.

CICELY. Yes, poor Phil. (*Beat.*) Then ...

MARY. I know.

CICELY. ... blew his brains
out. Though ...

Pause. Sounds from around them.

MARY. They almost tore this whole place up
to make another highway, but ... they didn't,
look. It's blissful. Isn't it?

CICELY. I heard
you told Jack he should do this.

MARY. Oh. You did?

CICELY. You're cagey, little lady.

MARY. Ohhh. I walk
here ev'ry day along the water ... It's ...
We're blessed ... to be alive right now and ...

CICELY. I
heard rumors Phil had soured on the a-
gency and didn't want to take his orders
anymore on op-eds, cov'rage ... and
I thought of something I once overheard
when Jim and Dulles didn't know I was
around the corner? ... "Anybody can
commit a murder, but ... it takes an artist
to commit a suicide."

MARY. Oh. Phil?
Well ... He and, I guess, all the journalists
we know, have made their own decisions, we
can't ... / [judge].

CICELY. Who the hell are you?

MARY. I know, I know ...
I can't account for it, except ...

CICELY. Jack's change
of heart? Do you feel you had some hand in
it?

MARY. Oh, no, he's his own man. I'm just there
to ... be a friend and ...

CICELY. Beam.

MARY. I guess.

Pause.

CICELY. Did you
see in the Times this article? By someone ...
Krock? He says if there's a coup against
the government it will come from the C.
I.A. and not the Pentagon.

MARY. You sound
like me now.

CICELY. I don't know, you start
to think and ...

MARY. Can you try and take this in?
This beauty ... this one moment ... ?

CICELY. I want, well,
whatever it is they have got you on ...

MARY. I don't know ... I don't know ... I don't know ...

CICELY. Well,
I don't know either—but ... I hesitate
to ... Dulles still comes by most days.

Mary turns to look at Cicely.

CICELY. I don't
know why they'd still be meeting, Cord comes too,
the three of them continue going ev'ry-
where as if they're still, I know he was
replaced, but ... is it possible they wanted

ev'ryone to think he left, but ... could
he still be running things? Is that ... ? I wish
I didn't ...

Voices rising from across the canal.

CICELY. I don't know, but ... What are they—?
What's wrong? (*shouts*) WHAT?!? Can you hear / [them]?

LONE VOICE. The President's
been shot!

CICELY. (*beat; to us*) If I am honest, I knew this
would happen. We all knew exactly what
had taken place, the nation, then we all
made up our minds to not know, tell ourselves
another story. I'd been doing it
forever, so, it wasn't hard.

The sky darkens, carrying us into:

*

(22.) **Georgetown. December 1963. Night.** Mary is at
a payphone.

MARY.⁴ Yes, Doctor
Leary, please? Oh, Tim, yes—Yes, look, I'll
go straight to what I've called for, could I come
and stay with you if I had to? You could hide
me? Things aren't good. The country's in the shitter,
ev'rybody senses, we all know
what's happened, but—I—Drunk? No! No. Well, yes,
but that's not why I'm like this, Tim, the Pres-
ident was changing much too fast and pushing
for—He ... Oh, I'm deeper in than I
might like, there's clicks when I pick up the phone ...
You too? I came back from one of my walks
down by the water, and I think I caught

⁴ NOTE: The scansion is intentionally broken and the rhythms off here.

someone, the back door was wide open, I
would never leave it like that, they must have
had to run out, and I'm worried, I
can't have my boys come visit if—I don't
know what to do. Do you think I am being
paranoid? No, tell me ... *(trying to repeat it)* "Paranoia" ...
say it once more? "The innate abil-
ity to perceive meaning." I can prob-
ably embrace that. Wait—I might be *(rummaging
through her things for more coins)*—Oh,
my time's about to run out, I—Shit—

Coins drop inside the phone, abruptly ending the call.

MARY. No
more change. *(hears herself)* There's always more.

Snow begins to fall.

*

***(23.) Along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.
February 1964. Morning. Mary is walking in the
opposite direction of someone hooded, jogging. It is
Jackie. She stops, turns back.***

JACKIE. Oh. Mary?

They fall into one another's arms.

JACKIE. When
I think of all the things that he survived
since childhood: war, so many ailments ... None
could kill him. And I always wish that we
could speak of other things—

MARY. I know.

JACKIE. And now
my life will be this saintly adoration.

Bunny Mellon is designing all
the gardens for his presidential li-
brary, the flame in Arlington. I saw
your show was well received. I'm happy for
you, Mary, you are one good soul ...

MARY. And you.

JACKIE. My god, it isn't real.

MARY. It isn't real ...

JACKIE. Well ...

MARY. If you ever want to ...

JACKIE. Yes.

MARY. I'd like
that.

JACKIE. All right, Mary ...

MARY. Give me one more ... (*embracing her*)

JACKIE. I
don't want to bring my children up in such
a country. Come and visit us.

MARY. I'd love to.

JACKIE. We'll be in ... well, we are thinking the
Aegean.

MARY. Wonderful.

JACKIE. You know that Jack's
the one who had all this turned into nat'l
park.

Mary looks surprised.

JACKIE. They wanted more concrete. But he
said, “Over my—” *(laughs)* I dream he’s still alive
and left me for another woman, that’s
why he’s not in here. *(touching her chest)* He tells me.

MARY. No.

JACKIE. It’s
coming down so hard now. *(heads off)*

*

*(24.) Mary’s Georgetown Home. October 1, 1964.
Night.*

MARY. Oh.

CORD. May I
come in?

MARY. What’s wrong?

CORD. It’s urgent. Please. *(enters)* Now. Listen.
You’re to call up ev’ryone you’ve spoken
to and say you’ve had a change of heart,
you realize it’s all a fantasy
born out of grief, yes, you will give up all
this nonsense about what you think took place,
the findings of the Warren, yes, report.

MARY. I won’t.

CORD. You will. You cannot fight this. You
have children.

MARY. Oh? By sticking Dulles at
the head of finding out the truth of what
he planned?

CORD. Let's step / out in the—

MARY. He never / left.

CORD. —garden.

MARY. Though fired,
he stayed right where he had always been.
That's—

CORD. / Please?

MARY. —why you wanted out—No, you go out[side]—
That's why you asked Jack's help and mine.

CORD. And you
know better than the best / judicial minds—

MARY. Did you know all
the White House detail Secret Service agents
took that day off, they all knew; the men
surrounding Jack's car all step back to give
a clear shot; Lyndon's men all hurl themselves
on him, and ev'ry witness claims to hear
four shots—

CORD. / Okay.

MARY. —and Hoover tells the world an hour
after / Jack's—*(no pause, continuous below)*

CORD. Keep / your voice down.

MARY. —death there is “absolutely
no conspiracy, a lone assassin.”
Jack Ruby's name was Rubenstein; he worked
for Nixon back in forty-seven, Lyndon
recommended him; and Lyndon pushed
so hard for Jack to, *(Lyndon's voice)* “Come to Dallas, they
will love you.” He controls the city. Any

cop will tell you no one who's accused
of killing an elected president
could be approached inside the station?! He's
exactly what he said, a patsy, double
agent, plausible deniability—
and here's a list of who was there
in Dallas on / that day—(*hands him a piece of paper*)

CORD. I asked / you please to [keep it down]—

MARY. (*no pause*)—the whereabouts
of others: Nixon, Gerald Ford, George Herbert
Walker Bush, and I suggest you study
it. Those two reporters down in Dallas
who learned what the cops had done? were killed,
surprise. Now Israel will get their bomb,
and Vietnam will be a bloodbath you
can all go swimming in, Jack's brains flew out
the back, there's no way Oswald did that, he
was up behind, it's all a crock, you / know it.

CORD. Please stop.

MARY. Why?

CORD. I—

MARY. Is my own house bugged? ...

CORD. The time
to ask that's passed.

MARY. You've spent your life distorting
what is true. The press won't say one word
that contradicts your narrative. That's your
life's work.

CORD. ... No matter how detailed or con-
scientious your "analysis," it's in-
correct.

MARY. Did you take part in this? Where is your heart?

CORD. If anything killed Jack it was your interference. Joseph Alsop, your friend, is an asset. You cannot administer a psychedelic to the president.

Beat.

MARY. You can't prove that.

CORD. How's what you're doing any different than the things you always are accusing others [of]—You've become the thing you hate. Your heroes, Gandhi, King, are all transparent. You're a hypocrite and fool. Why don't you plant a target on your forehead? You're the one declaiming what an evil, rotten business we're all in. And yet you act as if they won't—*(stops himself)* ...

MARY. Won't what?

CORD. Just go away and leave me as you left me right in front of all our friends at / Jim's pool.

MARY. Won't what?

CORD. You who don't believe in enemies gave up on me.

MARY. No.

CORD. Made me one.

MARY. You gave up on him first. Then, yes. *(pause)* I did.

CORD. The truth?

MARY. What?

CORD. Are you spying for the Russians?

MARY. This
is me.

CORD. And who is that?

MARY. Won't kill me is
what you were going to say.

CORD. They'll use what you've
said, your own words: "Reach out to Khrushchev, Castro.
Why not, Jack?"

MARY. ... My god.

CORD. I hope He hears
you.

MARY. I could not look our boys in the eyes
if I were you. I will not tell a story
that's untrue. *(rising)* Yes. Yes, Cord, you have made
a hash of your existence. *(moving to open the door)*

CORD. Watch behind
you.

MARY. I am watching. You watch.

CORD. I gave you
and Jack a chance to help me.

MARY. Yes. We failed
you. Now it's your turn. Watch who you are. Show
them. *(indicates us in the audience,*
speaking directly to us) Are you watching? Here's the ending:

*Jack, Cicely and Jackie gently appear at the periphery
to witness:*

*

(25. Coda.) ***Eleven Days Later. Midday. Along the
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.***

MARY.

I

go running one more time along the towpath,
by the water. Someone grabs me, I
don't see their face. The first shot hits me here. (*touches her
heart*) And ev'rything that flashes in my mind
you have just seen. In such a tiny fraction
of eternity is packed a life.
You'll see and feel it all before the second
bullet hits your brain and sends the host
of you into a spray of air. Your life
disperses. And ascends.

JACK.

Yes, that is right.

Two bullets, one here in the shoulder, then
one here that comes out in a spray of you
or what you were up to that moment and
no longer are, not in your body but
in this place on this stage where we remain
assembled, those few whom you see.

MARY.

I think

when we slip out of life, whoever's in
our mind then ...

JACK.

Stripped of innocence, all caught
up here, reliving time and time again
our steps, we pace this lab'rinth—

JACKIE. (*to us*)

Trapped inside

a version of America you all
know only too well, limned by fraudulence
and special int'rests, government surveillance,

blizzards of misinformation, vote suppression, white supremacy and guns proliferating, men controlling women, sound familiar?

All but Cord have come to the edge of the stage.

CICELY. The man accused of killing Mary, Raymond Crump, a Black man who had no connection to the victim, owned no gun, and none was ever found, no money had been stolen, Mary wasn't raped, she bled profusely from the two shots then was dragged across here all the way to right here, and no blood was found on Crump.

CORD. The man
was guilty.

CICELY. I sat in the court throughout the trial where no one seemed to understand why all these men in suits kept showing up for this when no one really even knew this painter who'd been killed; she wasn't in the public eye, much less the man accused of killing her without a motive.

CORD. He
was guilty.

CICELY. They acquitted him and dropped the case.

JACKIE. I wish I'd told you, Mary, when we met last, right here, that Jack's brother Bobby and I sent a message through an attaché to Khrushchev, saying "Dear Premier, Our president of late was not destroyed by who they said. And once time comes for Bobby to be president, he'll find out who

had done it.” Though that won’t bring Jack back, and of course then Bobby, too, was silenced.

MARY. *(to us)* We
were list’ning for you, calling to us from
the future. We were looking out for you.
And we were not found wanting. We were silenced.
Like so many others.

*We can read now the names of Martin Luther King,
Malcolm X, Patrice Lumumba, Rafael Trujillo, Salvador
Allende, Maurice Mpolo, Dag Hammarskjöld, Fred
Hampton, Allison Beth Krause, Jeffrey Glenn Miller,
Sandra Lee Scheuer, William Knox Schroeder, Che
Guevara, Thomas Merton, Reverend George Lee,
Lamar Smith, Carole Denise McNair, Addie Mae
Collins, Cynthia Dionne Wesley, Carole Rosamond
Robertson, Medgar Evers, Robert Kennedy.*

JACK. *(to us)* Scan the air
and try to read the names emblazoned here
of those who, in return for aiming up
t’ward light, were turned to motes of dust, you might
find you as well have lost the air to breathe.

MARY. Now here’s the hard part: blaming someone else
won’t save us now, not *(to us)* you or *(those onstage)* any of
us here, from facing what we must together.
Nothing will be solved by talking *(us)* them [you]
into believing this or that conspir-
acy, we’ve seen where that leads. We would like
to be reborn into a world worth living
in.

JACKIE. Yes, that’s our hope.

CICELY. Yes.

JACK. Yes.

CORD. Yes.

MARY. [...] Let's
accept we've come here, past and future, in
this place of beauty, possibility,
in this rare present moment where we all
can ask as one—

JACKIE. No "Us."

CORD. No "Them."

Cord hands Mary the meditation bowl.

MARY. As you
each will ask someday as you take your final
breath ... What does the future cry out? ... Be
prepared to hear the answer.

She strikes the bowl.

MARY. We see you.
You see us. *(suspended moment)* Breathe.

Everyone breathes.

*The five onstage and those in the audience look at
one another.*

End.

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Every breath, move, moment of this project has been lovingly attended to and made entirely possible by my husband who never wavered in his love and strength.

APPENDIX

The narrative of *Change Agent* adheres or diverges from the historical record in the following ways:

1936 – Jack and Mary met as dramatized; she rebuffed his advances. They both took dance lessons from Arthur Murray. There was a live orchestra playing at this school dance.

1941 – Jack and Mary reconnected at Vassar; Jack had slept with a number of Mary's friends there; Cicely was a classmate and Mary's closest friend, then and later. Jack did tell at least some of these women that his diagnosis of leukemia precluded taking enough time for foreplay. He did support the war effort in opposition to his father's preferred policy of appeasing Hitler (Roosevelt's reason for replacing him as ambassador to England). Mary was skeptical of all wars and of the need for fascism to have arisen at all without enthusiastic financial assistance from prominent American industrialists and financiers such as the Bushes, Dulleses (who backdated records to make it appear they pulled out of their support of Hitler to avoid the appearance of impropriety—See David Talbot's *The Devil's Chessboard*) and the Kochs. (www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/25/usa.second.worldwar, <https://www.npr.org/2016/01/19/463565987/hidden-history-of-koch-brothers-traces-their-childhood-and-political-rise>) See also Jane Meyer's *Dark Money*.)

At this time, Mary continued to refuse Jack's advances.

The unpublished memoirs of Robert Schwartz, who dated Mary for several years in the early 40's, establish countless details in Mary's character, thought, development, circumstances, family, philosophy, and effect on others.

1945 – Mary and Cord, newly married, did attend the UN Charter Conference where they met up with Jack who did request an interview with Harold Stassen, the U.S. delegate to the UN; Cord was working as Stassen's aide; Cord turned Jack down, which Jack never forgot. (It would seem he never forgot anything, a fact maintained by Ted Sorensen, Ken O'Donnell, Dave Powers, Jackie and others). Cord's article in the Atlantic, *Waves of Darkness*, did not appear until January of 1946. Mary sent a hand-written letter (in the author's possession) from the Hotel Bellevue to a childhood friend, detailing her state of mind at the time. On the train traveling north after the San Francisco Conference, Mary and Cord disembarked to buy a newspaper, seeing the news of Hiroshima.

1955 – Cord and Mary were indeed next-door neighbors to Jack and Jackie in McLean Virginia. Their first meeting was, however, in 1954. Mikey's death was in December of 1956. These two events have been merged solely for dramatic impact.

It is indeed the case that Mikey died in the same location along the Meyer property one year to the day after the dog was killed there. But Cord was not home when Mikey died.

To appreciate the ethical about-face Cord executed between 1945 and 1955, one need only read his two published books, *Peace and Anarchy* and *Facing Reality*. In a number of ways it might seem impossible that the same individual wrote both these books.

Carl Bernstein's essay (www.carlbernstein.com/magazine_cia_and_media.php) from 1977 revealed for the first time the extent to which Operation Mockingbird, under the direction of Cord Meyer, curtailed, directed and in many instances authored much of what appeared in all American media domestically and abroad from as early as 1951 through at least 1973. There is still no complete accounting of when or even if the CIA ceased to maintain assets at news outlets, TV and radio stations, film production, publishing, writing programs, universities, student organizations. The author is aware of numerous film and television projects that have been altered in our era as a result of active participation with "consultants" from the agency.

1957 – The Angleton's did not have a pool. Wistar Janney was the only CIA agent with a pool; this is where Mary and Cicely would bring their kids to swim.

The most-thoroughly researched and insightful investigation of the work and life of CIA Chief Allen Dulles may be found in David Talbot's book, *The Devil's Chessboard*, which may be complemented by *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War* by Stephen Kinzer. Dulles is not an onstage character in *Change Agent*. However, the attitudes of Mary, Cicely, Cord and Jack toward Dulles are all substantiated and well-documented across a broad spectrum of texts. The famously shy Clover Dulles indeed referred to her husband as The Shark. Their son was brain-damaged and Allen did lose all interest in him; their daughter was bi-polar and his response was similar. He did require his wife to listen to stories of all his copious affairs. In her dreams, recorded at the behest of her analyst, Carl Jung, Clover detailed her own fantasies of disemboweling her husband with imagined, hawk-like talons and watching with orgiastic glee his agonizing death throes.

JFK was credited as sole author of *Profiles in Courage*, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize. Scholars now believe Ted Sorensen was at least a co-author.

As cited JFK's whereabouts at the time of Jackie's miscarriage (1956) are factual.

The painter Kenneth Noland and Mary painted Christmas decorations for the Georgetown Day School in 1956. She began to study seriously with him while she herself was teaching painting. Their affair, though never a matter of deep passion for Mary as much as it was a path toward becoming a better painter and then transitioning away from Cord and, soon after, her two sons once Cord, as a condition for their divorce, demanded their removal from D.C. altogether. Placing both boys in a private, all-white boarding school in New England left Mary without her more active role as parent. The reason Cord gave for this summary decision was the importance of preparing them both for the kinds of academic environments they would find at Yale or Harvard, which he claimed the Georgetown Day School would not.

1959 – Mary's relationship with Kenneth Noland reached a natural falling away at this time, though the two remained friends.

Jack did spend the night with Mary in Provincetown where he told her his marriage was in ruins. Mary insisted there be no sex but they slept together.

1960 – There is no evidence that Jackie and Mary golfed together, though Jackie did golf with Toni, Mary's sister.

It is on record that Jackie visited Mary (with young Caroline in tow) at Mary's Georgetown studio on more than one occasion. (See Nina Burleigh, *A Very Private Woman*.)

Jackie's concerns about the impact of her husband's sexual profligacy was not unfounded. J. Edgar Hoover used his knowledge of JFK's affair with Ellen Rometsch, reputedly a Soviet spy, to let Kennedy know on no uncertain terms how much knowledge he, Hoover, held and who was finally in control of whom. See *Bobby and J. Edgar* by Burton Hersh for corroboration of this.

Jackie's wariness toward Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. is not this author's invention. Though it is certain her thinking on the subject of civil rights evolved in later years, as it did on most significant matters, her attitude leading up to and during JFK's presidency was heavily influenced by what was seen within the

campaign and JFK's closest advisers as a balancing act between doing what was ethically correct in regard to civil rights and doing what was expedient to gain the support of openly racist Senators and Congress persons.

JFK did not phone Mrs. King until a few days before the election.

1961 – In the absence of Mary's complete diary and other records, held at present by her surviving sons, along with most of her paintings, none of which are available to researchers, it is not certain whether Mary attended Jack's inaugural gala. But she was at the White House on many occasions in Jack's years as President; the White House logs, invitations, handwritten notes, testimony from staff, verbal information provided the author by Daniel Ellsberg among others attest to this. The JFK Library in Boston shows some of the many nights Mary stayed overnight with Jack in Jackie's (frequent) absence.

Pablo Casals, Alexander Schneider and Mieczyslaw Horszowski gave their concert at the White House in the autumn of 1961.

JFK was the first US president to integrate the Secret Service. And Abraham Bolden, his first choice, did endure abuse, taunts and slurs from the other Secret Service Members; as a result, he asked to be relieved of the position. After JFK's assassination, Bolden testified as to the Secret Service behavior in Dallas, contradicting the conclusion of the Warren Commission Report, at which point Bolden was pursued, harassed and ultimately prosecuted on trumped-up charges, serving time in prison as his reward for speaking out. His book, *The Echo from Dealey Plaza*, is a testament to his courage and commitment to the vision and actions of President Kennedy.

Cord Meyer did ask JFK to find him a diplomatic post in Guatemala; he did ask Mary to help him secure the job. JFK had no intention of helping Cord, one of the rare people he actively disliked.

JFK gladly accepted Martin Luther King's help in getting elected and then promptly shut him out of public inclusion at the White House. JFK had, in his earlier years in Congress, actively courted the support of civil rights leaders while simultaneously being of the mind that Black Americans had it no worse off than Irish Americans. The tension between these two realities tipped toward the practicality of courting Southern Democrats once JFK's sights were set on the White House. The subsequent events at Ole Miss, in Selma, in Birmingham, and the May 24, 1963 meeting between Robert Kennedy, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, Harry

Belafonte, Edwin C. Berry, Lena Horne, Jerome Smith, Rip Torn, Clarence Benjamin Jones and Jerome Smith had a profound effect on JFK's late-arriving decision to fight for a Civil Rights bill, as did Mary's persistent urgings. Anyone interested in the complicated interactions and changes, frustrations and developments in the relationship between JFK and MLK would be well-served by Steven Levingston's 2017 book, *Kennedy and King, The President, The Pastor, and the Battle Over Civil Rights*.

Between 1959 and 1961, the number of women in the Senate totaled 2. By 1989 it had grown to ... 2. In 1991 it was ... 2.

1962 – The first night Jack and Mary slept together sexually was in January; Jackie, immediately upon completion of her filmed White House tour, took the children to Glen Ora, a Kennedy property in Virginia.

Jack did indeed love to hear Mary perform the song "Chantilly Lace."

It is a matter of historical fact that Jackie was unhappy with her husband's affair with Mary. But how Jackie and Mary related to each other when alone is at this point a matter of conjecture.

Though Mary was frequently at luncheons and dinner events at the White House in 1962, the presence of either the Angletons or Dulles is the author's invention as well as the members of the press corps alluded to by Cicely and what is heard of by unseen speakers in this scene.

JFK gave orders to resume nuclear tests on September 5, 1961.

Anyone interested in what JFK faced from his Joint Chiefs, the CIA, the Executive Committee of the National Security (ExComm) during the major crises of his Presidency from the early Bay of Pigs invasion, the intense pressure on him to invade Laos, the Cuban Missile Crisis, instability in Berlin, to the situation in Vietnam, is encouraged to listen to the available original tape recordings at the JFK Library in Boston. JFK's Oval Office ExComm meetings are held by the University of Virginia Press Rotunda. These prove beyond all doubt that the President stood alone against unanimous pressure to unilaterally launch nuclear attacks on the Soviet Union and Cuba. Robert McNamara has testified that he personally assured JFK the Russian missiles discovered in Cuba were non-operative, which KGB records later definitely proved was *not* the case. JFK's insistence on caution prevented an unimaginable destruction. The groundbreaking efforts of author Sheldon M. Stern

provides all evidence needed to make this claim. Taken together, his *Averting the Final Failure, John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings* and *The Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory: Myths versus Reality* are magisterial in scope.

JFK's secret, private communications with Krushchev are contained in *The Kennedy-Krushchev Letters*, edited by Thomas Fensch.

The evening of JFK's address to the nation announcing the presence of Soviet nuclear warheads in Cuba, Mary had indeed been invited to attend a gathering at the White House in the company of William Walton, Jackie, Lee Radziwell, Benno and Nicole Graziani, and Oleg Cassini. Immediately after the broadcast, Mary canceled her plans and stayed away, refusing to see the President until after the most dire possible consequences of these tense and terrifying days had begun to abate. (One prominent biography of Jackie incorrectly reports that Mary attended that gathering. Perhaps the biographer relied on the White House guest list without taking the trouble to learn that Mary's place was taken by Helen Chavchavadze.)

1963 – In his memoirs, Timothy Leary records his interactions with Mary.

Like much else in *Change Agent*, Peter Janney's extraordinary book *Mary's Mosaic* substantiates and further explicates and contextualizes Leary's claims.

As previously noted, the author is in possession of recordings, unpublished memoirs, and other materials that made it possible to fill in more of the substance of Mary's efforts. (These were, in fact, part of a larger effort by a coterie of Washington socialites attempting collectively to use entheogens to re-direct the aggressive policies of powerful men toward more cooperative possibilities. Some of these women were widely-celebrated for accomplishments far beyond the domestic realm.)

As James K. Galbraith has proven, (See:

<https://whowhatwhy.org/politics/government-integrity/jfk-ordered-full-withdrawal-vietnam-solid-evidence/>) JFK had instituted plans for a full withdrawal of all U.S. troops and personnel from Vietnam at the time of his assassination. Robert McNamara's instructions for achieving this withdrawal of us troops are available here: (<https://www.whowhatwhy.org/files/Musgrove2.pdf>)

An audio recording of JFK at the White House discussing the matter is available here: (<https://www.whowhatwhy.org/files/jfkta5%7Bsound0%7D.wav>)

JFK's National Security Memorandum 263 makes explicit his plans for pulling all troops and personnel. Those historians and academics who continue to put forward the notion that the Kennedy presidency was responsible for the Vietnam War are either will-fully blinding themselves to these facts or, worse, under the encouragement of institutions an ongoing investment in this particular narrative.

The swift progress in JFK's turn from Cold Warrior to peace advocate in the summer and fall of 1963 is, once again, not an invention of this author. Supported by most if not all of the major JFK biographies, *Two Days in June* by Andrew Cohen gives an especially eloquent glimpse of one small part of it. Martin Luther King said, "There were two Kennedy's: the Kennedy of the first two years, and the Kennedy of 1963."

The contents of JFK's Peace Speech at American University in June 10, 1963 can be found here:

<https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/american-university-19630610>

JFK's Civil Rights Address from the following evening can be found here, including video footage and commentary:

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/president-kennedy-civil-rights/>

William Attwood, Mary's date at Choate Hall in 1936, was empowered by JFK to begin an approach to Fidel Castro through Carlos Lechuga, Cuba's UN representative, in hopes of putting an end to all hostilities between the two nations. Another mediator, French editor Jean Daniel, was sitting face to face with Castro, discussing their hope for rapprochement with Kennedy when news of his assassination arrived.

Mary's payphone call to Timothy Leary to ask if he could hide her did indeed take place in early December 1963.

1964 – Jackie and Mary did run into one another on the towpath, discuss Mary's recent exhibition, and discuss getting together again.

Mary did spend time investigating the events in Dallas and did confront Cord about the conclusions of the Warren Report, stating unequivocally her intention of going public with all she knew.

Cord is one of the people Mary spoke to about this, though I have come across no evidence that he came to her to ask her to stop speaking out. All statements Mary makes to Cord in this scene are drawn from published research and multiply-sourced, all verifiable.

The author's father, a special agent in the FBI, told him after witnessing the televised murder of Lee Harvey Oswald on November 24, 1963 that there was no way the murder had not been allowed to happen with the cooperation of police in Dallas, because such an occurrence would otherwise have been impossible, considering that the victim was accused of assassinating the president of the United States two days earlier. Adult citizens alive at the time overwhelmingly agreed with this.

Jackie and Bobby Kennedy *did* send a letter to Krushchev through their friend William B. Walton, sharing their certainty that JFK was not killed by the person who had been blamed; they wrote to assure Krushchev that, once Bobby was elected president, he would find out who had done it. They were concerned for the preservation of the peace process begun between Krushchev and JFK; they did not want to see it subverted or brought to an end by shadowy forces of any kind, including those fomenting wars with Communist countries.

The House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded in 1979 that JFK's and Martin Luther King's assassinations were both most likely the result of conspiracies. Yet to this day most American newspapers continue to insist that a lone gunman was responsible.

In the 1985 case of *Hunt v. Liberty Lobby*, a jury determined that E. Howard Hunt had indeed been in Dallas on November 22, 1963, and had participated in the conspiracy to assassinate the president. The jury's forewoman stated to the media immediately after the decision, "The evidence was clear. The CIA had killed President Kennedy. Hunt had been part of it, and that evidence so painstakingly presented, should now be examined by the relevant institutions of the United States government so that those responsible for the assassination might be brought to justice." Major American newspapers left this story out of their pages entirely.

<http://www.libertylobby.org/articles/2000/20000207cia.html>

In 1999, a jury in the case of *King v. Jowers and Other Unknown Co-Conspirators* found Memphis police officer Lloyd Jowers as well as local, state and federal agencies guilty of conspiring to murder King. The courtroom evidence, which included testimony from 70 witnesses, demonstrates that the FBI, CIA and U.S.

military were involved in the killing. As with so much else in this narrative, you will not read these facts in major American newspapers.

James W. Douglass' *JFK and the Unspeakable* contains a thoroughly annotated, clear-eyed analysis of the hidden forces at work during the Cold War as well as JFK's role in confronting what Eisenhower warned America about in his farewell address. This was essentially the same warning Truman published in his Washington Post op-ed a month after Kennedy's murder.

After JFK's assassination and Mary's murder, supplanted then by a number of other suspicious deaths befalling those opposing the Vietnam War and/or investigating the CIA's actions, all of the Washington DC figures involved in efforts to change powerful men through use of entheogens receded into silence.

Much the same fate befell a number of important civil rights activists after the public executions of Fred Hampton, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

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