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Darkest Hour

By Anthony McCarten

On BLACK SCREEN:

MAY 9TH 1940:

DENMARK, AND NORWAY. HE IS NOW POISED TO CONQUER THE REST OF EUROPE.

IN BRITAIN, PARLIAMENT HAS LOST FAITH IN ITS LEADER, NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

THE SEARCH FOR A REPLACEMENT HAS ALREADY BEGUN..

FADE IN....

INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER - DAY

...is in an uproar. The PRIME MINISTER, NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN (71), sits with the MAJORITY, RULING CONSERVATIVE PARTY on one side of the house...

...whilst the LEADER of the MINORITY, OPPOSITION LABOUR PARTY, CLEMENT ATTLEE (57) sits with the OPPOSITION PARTIES on the other side.

They face each other like two warring armies. Shouting. Accusations. Wild gesturing. Paper darts thrown. Mayhem.

CAPTION:

ATLEE rises to his feet, amid jeers and heckles, to denounce CHAMBERLAIN, directly opposite him across the aisle

ATLEE :

Mr Speaker! Mr Speaker!

SPEAKER :

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Clement Attlee!

ATLEE :

Mr Speaker--Mr Speaker--it seems I have not been clear enough. Then let me leave no doubt regarding my feelings about Mr Chamberlain's future as Prime Minister.

(over boos and applause)

Owing to his years of inactivity and incompetence -

(cheers and boos)

(MORE)

2.

ATLEE (CONT'D)

-we find him personally responsible, personally responsible for leaving our nation ruinously unprepared to face the present Nazi peril. We are at war, Mr

Speaker.

At war. And leaving aside whether he is fit to be a leader in peacetime he has proven himself incapable of leading us in wartime.

Cries of support to this -

Looking down from the LORDS GALLERY is - VISCOUNT HALIFAX(59), appalled by what he is seeing. He exchanges a look with the bereft CHAMBERLAIN.

ATTLEE (CONT'D)

Therefore, in the national interest, we the Opposition, are willing to enter into a Grand Coalition--with the "ruling"

Conservative Party, so-called!...

An OPPOSITION MP stands and starts singing "Rule Britannia".

Others soon begin to join in.

SPEAKER :

Order! Order!

ATTLEE :

...but not, and I stress this, never, under the leadership of Mr Chamberlain...

(angle on CHAMBERLAIN)

...who has lost the confidence of this House!

A REBEL CONSERVATIVE MEMBER rises and crosses the floor to stand with the OPPOSITION MPs, betraying Chamberlain.

ATTLEE (CONT'D)

(directly to CHAMBERLAIN)

In the country's interest man, resign! Step down! And let us find a new leader!

UPROAR, and many cry "HEAR-HEAR!" and "GO!"

SPEAKER :

I said, ORDER!

The camera passes along the CONSERVATIVE benches to find ANTHONY EDEN (43), behind him sits KINGSLEY WOOD (59).

KINGSLEY WOOD:

(into EDEN's ear)

Where's Winston?

3.

On the bench beside EDEN, as if to reserve a space, is an old Royal Naval Yacht Club CAP.

EDEN :

Ensuring his fingerprints are not on the murder weapon.
The singing of "Rule Britannia" continues over -
INT. DINING ROOM/ SIR JOHN SIMON'S COUNTRY HOUSE - NIGHT
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN addresses the other CONSERVATIVE guests gathered around
a circular dining table.

CHAMBERLAIN :

Accordingly--tomorrow--I will
resign as Prime Minister.

GREAT FEAR in the faces of the NOBLES. CUT BETWEEN their
FACES, during the following -

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)

(suppressing emotion)

As the Opposition refuse to join a government headed by me, we must select my
successor.

(beat)

I will step down tomorrow but I wanted my own party, the gentlemen I most
respect, to know first.

LORD LONDONDERRY.

Halifax. There's no question!

Our Foreign Secretary -

SIR JOHN SIMON :

No contest! HALIFAX

HALIFAX :

I appreciate your confidence but my time has yet to come. However,
on whomever the task may fall, he shall be charged with the security of these
islands and of our Empire,
and shall be required to explore all avenues.

CHAMBERLAIN :

Including that of Diplomatic talks.

HALIFAX :

Indeed, towards the restoration of
peace in Europe.

ALL :

Hear Hear!!!

4.

CHAMBERLAIN :

Gentlemen, I'm afraid there is only one candidate. Only, one man that the

Opposition will accept?

ALL :

Oh no.

SIR JOHN SIMON :

Surely not...

INT. CHARTWELL/ COUNTRY HOUSE OF WINSTON & CLEMENTINECHURCHILL DAY

CAPTION:

A plate of BACON & EGGS is set on a BREAKFAST TRAY. Then...a glass of WHITE WINE is poured by WINSTON'S VALET, SAWYERS, and set beside the plate. A glass of SCOTCH and SODA is also prepared and set beside these on the tray. For Breakfast?

SAWYERS carries the TRAY through servants quarters towardsthe ENTRANCE HALL of the house, where -

-the TRAY passes by - WINSTON'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, JOHNEVANS (35), as he schools the NEW YOUNG SECRETARY, ELIZABETHLAYTON. Evans, an immaculately-groomed rake, snobbishlythinks himself infinitely superior to the Elizabeth Laytonsof the world.

JOHN EVANS:

(to ELIZABETH)

...and if he stretches out his hand and says, "Gimme", you need to anticipate what he wants -black pen, red pen, paper, or "Clop", that's his hole punch.

EVANS and LAYTON walk past -

-SAWYERS-with-TRAY, as he waits for the COOK to iron a NEWSPAPER (DAILY EXPRESS)and as the SCULLERY MAIDS, over hershoulder, ANXIOUSLY read the headline:
"CHAMBERLAIN TO RESIGN"

SAWYERS :

Don't smudge the ink.

MAID :

How selfish to resign, time likethis.

COOK :

D'you think they'll take me to Downing Street?

5.

SAWYERS :

Not after the Spotted Dick you served last week.
The COOK then sets the PAPER on the TRAY, whereupon SAWYERS carries the TRAY up the stairs.

CUT TO:

EVANS and LAYTON approach a BEDROOM DOORWAY.

JOHN EVANS :

...He mumbles, so it's almost impossible to catch everything.
And be prepared to type fast - short bursts - and double-spaced, he hates single-spaced--hates it!
Good luck.

EVANS knocks on the door, opens it and then pushes the now-quaking ELIZABETH LAYTON inside, closing the door again.

INT. BEDROOM/ CHARTWELL - DAY

Her POV of the dimly-lit room. And then, a MATCH is struck, a CIGAR lit. We can just make out a MAN in bed, as - SAWYERS tugs open the CURTAINS, revealing - WINSTON CHURCHILL (65), in BED, with the BREAKFAST TRAY on his lap, in a pink silk dressing-gown (naked beneath). His dispatch box, piled high with telegrams, stands open by his bed. His marmalade cat, TANGO, sits at the end of the bed, as WINSTON reads a dispatch and dictates...

WINSTON :

To the French Ambassador. Come on - WINSTON looks up at ELIZABETH, to see if she is writing this down. She's not -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

-telegram!

ELIZABETH realises, to her horror, that the dictation has already begun, and she hurries to the TYPE-WRITER, which has already been loaded with a sheet...She begins to type FAST, in short bursts -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

(dictating)

With German forces crossing into Holland...Holland alone...request reassurance...that French forces will now move--move at once--to protect Belgium. Stop. Read!

6.

ELIZABETH:

(nervously)

"To--to the French Ambassador.

With German forces crossing into Holland...Holland alone...

request reassurance that -

WINSTON :

-immediate reassurance -

ELIZABETH adjusts the typewriter's carriage and pats and types the word "IMMEDIATE" above the previous text...

ELIZABETH :

"-immediate - reassurance - "

WINSTON :

" - that -" Go on - "- that "

SAWYERS enters, as ELIZABETH struggles to re-set the carriage.

ELIZABETH:

" - that - "

The BEDROOM TELEPHONE rings -

SAWYERS :

French Ambassador sir -

WINSTON :

Monsieur Ambassador!

(pause)

Ah. They've already invaded Belgium.

(pause)

I will convey your plea to the Prime Minister at once. Yes, the situation is still very confused.

Goodbye.

WINSTON hangs up. A concerned pause, and then -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Holland and Belgium.

ELIZABETH types this - tap,tap,tap,tap -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

No, no, no.

ELIZABETH:

(confused)

Sir?

WINSTON :

Scrap that. New telegram.

7.

In a fluster, she pulls out the old PAGE from the TYPEWRITERCARRIAGE and quickly inserts a new page, as

WINSTON (CONT'D)

To General Ismay...

WINSTON grabs his WHISKEY and SODA, as - the PHONE ringsagain. SAWYERS re-appears.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Dammit Sawyers! What is it now?!

SAWYERS :

Your son.

WINSTON, his concentration broken, goes to the PHONE.

WINSTON:

(into Phone)

Randolph, quickly -

(listens)

Last night they said I may be madePrime Minister today. But that wasyesterday. Let's see what Nevilledoes today. Thank--thank you my boy. Keep buggering on!

Puts down the phone. Turns to look at ELIZABETH.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Now...

Sips his SCOTCH. This calms him.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

General Ismay...

Moving to the end of the bed

WINSTON :

Ah, General Ismay.

(to Sawyers)

Sawyers - get rid of this will you?

Winston gestures to Sawyers to move his tray away and thenswings his legs - indecorously! -out of bed. ELIZABETH

quickly turns her face away! WINSTON then begins to pace -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

In the light of today's events, thetime is ripe for many preparationsto be made...

(beat)

Are you striking those typewriterkeys in a normal fashion? It'sawfully loud, I can't think!

(beat)

Read it back.

8.

ELIZABETH :

Ahh--To General Ismay. In the light of today's events, the time isright for many prep -

WINSTON :

RIPE! Not RIGHT! God's teeth girl!

I said ripe, ripe, ripe - P-P-P!

The last sentence...

ELIZABETH LAYTON

(shaken)

The--the time is ripe...

WINSTON :

For! FOR!

ELIZABETH LAYTON

(her nerve broken)

...many...many...many...

WINSTON :

How many "many"s did you write?!

One many!

(sighs)

"For...for MANY preparations-to be made..."

He walks up to her and looks over her chair, and is horrified to see -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Single-spaced? What are you doing?!

What are you doing?!

ELIZABETH :

Someone set it on single-spacedand before I realised -

WINSTON :

Then why did you persist?!

ELIZABETH :

I -

As she starts to rush out -

WINSTON :

Tell Evans to send me someone who
can do it right the first time!

RIGHT! T-T-T-T!

INT. HALLWAY/ CHARTWELL - DAY

ELIZABETH comes down the stairs, and stops, her face tear-
stained.

9.

CLEMENTINE CHURCHILL - WINSTON'S WIFE, 55 YEARS OLD -

beautiful, elegant, highly-strung, is at that moment crossing the hall, with
a HANDFUL of BROWN ENVELOPES. She sees

ELIZABETH.

CLEMMIE :

Ah. He shouted at you. Did he shout at you?

ELIZABETH :

Yes, but I....

CLEMMIE :

He can be an awful brute.

ELIZABETH :

No! I made too many mistakes.

CLEMMIE :

I think you were nervous. And he has a knack for drawing out the very worst
in those trying to help him the most.

ELIZABETH :

Oh it's not him. It's me. He's -
he's -

CLEMMIE :

He's just a man, like any other.

Wait here.

CLEMMIE climbs the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM/ CHARTWELL - DAY

CLEMMIE enters - WINSTON (on his knees) is looking for Tango the cat under
his bed.

CLEMMIE :

My Darling?

WINSTON :

The War Cabinet has been called.

The bloody cat is under the bedagain.

CLEMMIE indicates that SAWYERS should go and moves aroundWINSTON tucking his shirt in.

CLEMMIE :

Can I tell you something that I feel you ought to know?

He looks at her -

10.

CLEMMIE (CONT'D)

I've noticed a recent deterioration

in your manner. You're not so kind as you used to be. You've become rough, sarcastic, over-bearing and rude.

WINSTON :

Is this about the new girl?

CLEMMIE :

If the King asks you to become Prime Minister -

WINSTON :

We don't know that -

CLEMMIE :

I don't want you to be disliked.

WINSTON :

More than I already am?

CLEMMIE :

Darling, you may be on the brink,
the brink--of having tremendous
power, surpassed only by the King.

With such power you really must try to be more kind and, if possible,
calm. I want others to love and
respect you as I do.

Clemmie falls back in the bed, shortly joined by Winston--
they share a moment of fondness.

EXT. CHARTWELL - DAY

WIDE SHOT of Chartwell bathed in sunshine. ELIZABETH LAYTON,
with hat and coat now on, is attempting to make a discreet escape from the

house but is stopped by a MOTORCYCLE COURIER with a telegram to deliver. We do not hear what is said.

CLOSE-UP on the telegram turning in ELIZABETH'S hands as the COURIER rides away. ELIZABETH looks back to the house, makes her decision and re-enters the lair.

INT. STAIRS / CHARTWELL - DAY

ELIZABETH climbs the stairs holding a telegram, braced to once more enter the Lion's Den. She enters -

INT. BEDROOM/ CHARTWELL - DAY

- and finds WINSTON, CLEMMIE, JOHN EVANS, SAWYERS and a MAID - all listening with rapt attention to a RADIO BROADCAST.

11.

BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER

"This is BBC Home Service. Here is a short news bulletin. The German army invaded Holland and Belgium early this morning, by land, and land parachutes-

ELIZABETH :

There's a telegram.

JOHN EVANS :

Sssshhh!

BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER

..."The Armies of the Low Countries are resisting. An appeal for help has been made to the Allied governments and Brussels says the Allied troops are moving to their support..."

ELIZABETH :

It's from the Palace.

All eyes turn to look at her, as if an elephant has entered the room. A silent beat in which no-one breathes.

WINSTON :

Thank you, Miss...?

ELIZABETH :

Layton.

INT. STUDY/HALLWAY, CHARTWELL - DAY

CLEMMIE hands WINSTON his watch, glasses, cigar case, matches and a sugar

cube.

CLEMMIE :

You're shaking.

WINSTON :

So are you!

It's true CLEMMIE is just as nervous -

CLEMMIE:

You from excitement--I from terror.

You have been wanting this your
entire adult life.

WINSTON :

No--since the nursery.

CLEMMIE laughs.

12.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

But do the public want me?

CLEMMIE :

It's your own Party to whom you'll have to prove yourself.

WINSTON :

I'm getting the job only because the ship is sinking. It's not a gift, it's
revenge.

CLEMMIE :

Let them see your true qualities.

Your courage...

WINSTON :

...My poor judgement.

CLEMMIE :

...Your lack of vanity.

WINSTON :

...My iron will.

CLEMMIE:

(in playful rebuke)

...Your sense of humour.

WINSTON :

Ho Ho Ho!

CLEMMIE :

Now go.

WINSTON :

Go?

CLEMMIE :

Be.

WINSTON :

Be?

She touches his face tenderly -

CLEMMIE :

Yourself.

WINSTON :

Which self?

CLEMMIE walks away. WINSTON turns to a wall on which are hung many HATS - (Royal Naval Yacht Club Cap, Admiral's hat with plume, aviator helmet with goggles, riding hat, pithhelmet, French WW1 helmet, fez, Homburg, top hat, etc) all on display like HUNTING TROPHIES.

13.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Which self should I be today?

WINSTON surveys the collection, then plucks the TOP HAT from its hook -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

One should have had power when a young man. When wits were sharp, sinews strong. Oh well.

He returns to her -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Lead on Macduff-When

youth departs--

may wisdom prove enough.

They kiss, and she gives him a silver BOX OF MATCHES, embossed with loving message from his children.

EXT/INT. PRINCES STREET/ WINSTON'S CAR - DAY

WINSTON, in the back seat, (with JOHN EVANS in front) looks out the window

at the human traffic - seems like he's in a gold-fish bowl, disconnected. He watches as -MEN IN BOWLER HATS and YOUNG WOMEN in SUMMER DRESSES walk to work.

JOHN EVANS :

Hardly seems like there's a war on at all.
THREE DELIVERY BOYS ride by on bicycles, notice him and wave excitedly.

WINSTON :

How odd it is.

JOHN EVANS :

Sir?
They stop, waiting behind a BUS.

WINSTON :

You know--I have never ridden a bus. Never queued for bread. I believe I can boil an egg but only because I saw it done once.

EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

WINSTON's car approaches the Palace gates, which are open.
The CAR drives up to the PALACE. WINSTON gets out and he and EVANS enter the PALACE -

14.

INT. PALACE ENTRANCE - DAY

A grand hall.

Winston removing his hat and coat, hands his cane and gloves, then hat to a LIVERIED DOORMAN whilst a LIVERIED STAFF MEMBER waits nearby.

WINSTON :

The only time I tried to ride the Underground was during the General Strike. Clemmie dropped me at South Kensington station. I went down-but I got lost and came straight back up. Awful!
(girding himself)
Well, "Here we go"...

EVANS :

Good luck sir.

WINSTON strides away, following the EQUERRY.

INT. STATE CHAMBERS/ BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

KING GEORGE VI (agitated, troubled) speaks with the ill, weak, outgoing PRIME-MINISTER NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

CHAMBERLAIN watches the KING.

GEORGE VI :

Why not Halifax? I favour Halifax.

CHAMBERLAIN :

I wanted Halifax. The Lords wanted Halifax. Halifax wanted Halifax.

GEORGE VI :

Then--then why have I been forced to send for Churchill?

CHAMBERLAIN :

Because he's the only member of our party who has the support of the Opposition.

GEORGE VI :

His record is a litany of catastrophe. Gallipoli, 25,000 dead. The India Policy. Russian Civil War. The Gold Standard. The the the Abdication. And now this Norway 'adventure'. What, eighteen hundred men?
15.

CHAMBERLAIN :

One aircraft carrier, two cruisers, seven destroyers and a submarine.

GEORGE VI :

Winston lacks judgement.

CHAMBERLAIN :

He was right about Hitler.

GEORGE VI :

Even a stopped clock is right twice a day.
EQUERRY enters.

EQUERRY :

First Lord of the Admiralty,
Mr Winston Churchill!

GEORGE VI :

Early.

CHAMBERLAIN :

Keen.

GEORGE VI :

I accept your resignation--but I want you to know--how--cruelly I think you've been treated.

CHAMBERLAIN :

Thank you Your Majesty.
He and GEORGE shake hands.

EQUERRY :

This way, my Lord.
The KING waits - SIGHS deeply, until...
We hear footsteps approaching. WINSTON enters.

WINSTON :

Your Majesty.

GEORGE VI :

Mr Churchill.
GEORGE VI (CONT'D)
I believe you know why I--II have asked you here today.

WINSTON :

Sir, I simply can't imagine why.
16.

GEORGE VI :

It is my duty to-to-to invite you to take up - the position of of Prime Minister of this United Kingdom. Will you form a government?

WINSTON :

I will.

GEORGE VI :

Very well.
WINSTON bows, and when the KING offers his hand, WINSTON kisses it. WINSTON rises.
GEORGE VI (CONT'D)
That was--quite easy.

WINSTON :

Yes.

They stare at each other in uneasy silence.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I believe we are to meet regularly.

GEORGE VI :

Once a week, I'm afraid. How are you on--on--on Mondays?

WINSTON :

I shall endeavour to be available on Mondays.

GEORGE VI :

Four o'clock?

WINSTON:

(resolutely)

I nap at 4.

GEORGE VI :

Is that--permissible?

WINSTON :

No. But necessary. I work late.

GEORGE VI :

Then perhaps lunch?

WINSTON :

Lunch! Mondays.

(WINSTON bows)

Your majesty.

GEORGE VI :

Prime Minister.

17.

When WINSTON backs out of the room, the KING anxiously lights a cigarette, and broods.

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON pulls up in his PRIVATE CAR, alights, (followed by EVANS) waves at the PRESS, an effortless SELF-PUBLICIST, at total ease in the spotlight.

Ever the showman - taps the NUMBER 10 on the famous front door with his walking stick for the amusement of the PHOTOGRAPHERS -

PHOTOGRAPHER :

Prime Minister? First order of business, sir?

WINSTON :

A glass of Pol Roger!
He enters the building, and -
INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY
-is greeted by EDEN.

EDEN :

Prime Minister!

WINSTON :

Anthony.

EDEN :

How was the K-k-king?

WINSTON :

Anxious. Never forgiven me for supporting his brother's marriage to Wallis Simpson.
WINSTON and EDEN step into his office, with WINSTON closing the door on EVANS in the hallway.
INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - CONTINUOUS

EDEN :

You only have to meet him once a week.

WINSTON :

That's like saying you only have to have your tooth pulled once a week.
EDEN takes out a pen, opens a notebook -
18.

EDEN :

Composition of your War Cabinet.
Who should sit on it?

WINSTON :

Chamberlain. And the Reverend "HolyFox" -

EDEN:

(writes)

Halifax. Keeping your enemies close?

WINSTON :

More than that, without them the party will get rid of me.

(beat)

And that sheep in sheep's clothing, Attlee.

MARY, CHURCHILL's 18 year old daughter, appears in the doorway.

MARY CHURCHILL :

Come on Daddy--everyone's waiting.

WINSTON :

Be there in a jiffy, my love.

MARY exits.

EDEN :

I heard that before you were asked, they offered it to Lord Halifax.

WINSTON:

(shakes head)

I doubt that. Halifax would never turn it down. He's the fourth son of an Earl. Fourth sons turn nothing down.

EDEN :

I only wish the position had come your way in better times, sir. You have an enormous task ahead of you.

WINSTON :

I hope it's not too late. I am very much afraid it is. But we can only do our best.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

CLEMMIE and the CHURCHILL CHILDREN wear GAS-MASKS as they shout -
19.

CHURCHILL CHILDREN

HURRAY!

RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

Hip Hip

CHURCHILL CHILDREN

HURRAY!

WINSTON enters - and stops, aghast, and stares at his family -

WINSTON :

Good lord, what a frightful sight!

CLEMMIE, SARAH CHURCHILL (26), DIANA CHURCHILL(31), RANDOLPHCHURCHILL (29) and his WIFE PAMELA (pregnant), and MARYCHURCHILL (18) all pull off their GAS MASKS, grab theirglasses of CHAMPAGNE, then converge on him and kiss him.

He stares at them, a SMILE FORMING AT LAST, deeply touched, actually. He is presented with a glass of champagne.

CHURCHILL :

Thank you. Thank you.

PAMELA raises her glass -

PAMELA :

A toast! Come on!

DIANA :

Yes!

Mary makes her way to sit on a cushion on the floor next toWinston.

She looks proudly at WINSTON -

CLEMMIE :

My darling husband--Something you

all might not know is that on theeve of our marriage I got "coldfeet"--but as I'd already calledoff two engagements by the age of21 I was in danger of gaining areputation for being a 'bolter'-and it would've been poor form to call off a third!

LAUGHTER. WINSTON smiles.

RANDOLPH :

Hear hear.

DIANA :

Lucky for Daddy.

20.

CLEMMIE:

But the real reason for my wintry feet was because I knew, even then,

that his priority would be public life. It worried a young girl greatly--this wretched thought of coming second, eternally. But so it has proven to be. And in due course (Mary takes Winstons hand) our children would also have to make their own peace with this samefact. (directly to Winston)

We all did, you see, in our ownways. And now, today, we allreceive our reward--proof that our small sacrifice was for a far, far greater good. I give you, yourfather, my beloved husband - thePrime Minister.

ALL :

Prime Minister!

They raise their GLASSES in a toast -

CHURCHILL:

Here's to--(thinks) not bugging it up.

FAMILY :

Not bugging it up!

EXT. BIG BEN / LONDON - DAY

BIG BEN starts the WESTMINSTER CHIME -

CAPTION:

INT. WESTMINSTER HALL/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON approaches EDEN in the ancient hall and together theyclimb the steps beneath the great gothic WINDOW.

WINSTON:

Belgium was a ploy. They just punched through the Ardennes into France and crossed the Meuse in under 24 hours!

EDEN:

No-one can cross the Meuse River in 24 hours.

WINSTON :

Apparently the Germans can.

21.

INT. CLOCK TOWER - DAY

BIG BEN strikes the hour - 3 PM.

INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

To the sound of the distant BELLS, WINSTON enters, with EDEN, and small knuckle-knocking on woodwork, mainly from the LABOUR benches.

WINSTON looks around, not actually surprised at the contemptuous reception.

WINSTON:

(to EDEN)

Contempt. Well, you have to start somewhere.

In the LORDS GALLERY, above, HALIFAX enters and looks down at proceedings, and on -

WINSTON, looking at his FOB-WATCH.

The HUBBUB dies down and WINSTON puts on his GLASSES.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

(whispered, to SIMON)

Here we go.

WINSTON reaches into his waistcoat for his TYPED SPEECH, then delivers his MAIDEN SPEECH as PRIME MINISTER...

WINSTON :

Mr Speaker. On Friday evening last-I received His Majesty's commission to form a new administration...

ANGLE ON:

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...It was the evident wish and will of Parliament, and the Nation, that this should be conceived on the broadest possible basis, and that it should include all parties.

INT. BEDROOM / 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

CLOSE ON:

a TYPEWRITER CARRIAGE (to a LOUD explosive ratchet-whirr)!!!

CUT TO:

WINSTON (O.S.)

A War Cabinet has been convened...

22.

CLOSE ON:

convened" -

WIDE:

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Correction - "has been formed" -

ELIZABETH adjusts the PATEN, then types -"formed" above
"convened" -

INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON :

- has been formed--of five members -

INT. BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON :

...representing, with theOpposition parties, the unity ofthe Nation.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON:

by ELIZABETH's hand. The stationary bears the PrimeMinister's monogram, and we see typed TEXT plus severalphrases struck out (between parentheses). The CAMERA moves in on the paragraph that reads...

"The three party Leaders have agreed to serve, either inthe War Cabinet, or in (positions of authority*) highexecutive office." (* denotes struck through phrase)

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

The three party Leaders have agreedto serve, either in the War Cabinet-
INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

ELIZABETH (O.S.)WINSTON

- or in high executive - or in high executiveoffice. office.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

The three fighting Services havebeen filled.

INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

OUTSIDE the BATHROOM DOOR - ELIZABETH LAYTON waits, with a PAD and PAPER, taking down his dictation...

23.

WINSTON :

Sawyers is she there?

ELIZABETH :

Yes she is.. I mean, I am

WINSTON (O.S.)

Don't come in!

SOUNDS of him taking a BATH, the SPONGE being squeezed over his head...She starts to move away, but is arrested by -

WINSTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Don't go away!

ELIZABETH LAYTON

No, no--I'm still here.

WINSTON (O.S.)

"With this agreement, I now invite the House -
(water sounds)

-by the resolution which stands in my name, to record its approval,
and to declare its confidence in
the new government."

Sound of WINSTON getting out of the BATH.

WINSTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Miss? I'm coming out in a state of nature!

ELIZABETH LAYTON flees, as the DOOR opens and as WINSTON (naked) looks up
and down the HALLWAY to see where his TYPIST has gone.

INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON :

I now invite the House by a resolution to declare its
confidence in the new government.

ANGLE on the CONSERVATIVE PARTY - unimpressed.

KINGSLEY-WOOD advises A JUNIOR CONSERVATIVE, ERNLE HASTINGS.

KINGSLEY WOOD :

Look to Chamberlain's handkerchief.

If he waves it at the end of

Churchill's speech, we show approval, if not, keep quiet.

ERNLE HASTINGS looks over at CHAMBERLAIN.

24.

CHAMBERLAIN, still on the front bench but not in the PM's
chair, draws a WHITE HANDKERCHIEF out of his BREAST POCKET
and folds it in his LAP.

ERNLE HASTINGS nods - understanding.

WINSTON :

It must be remembered that we are
in the preliminary stage of one of
the greatest battles in history...

INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

CLOSE ON:

worked-over, annotated, altered - with WINSTON'S HAND just then adding the latest change in the margins...we see his HAND write (in his tiny cursive scrawl) -

and that many (arrangements*) preparations have to be made here at home.
WINSTON (O.S.)

...and that many preparations have
to be made here at home.

WIDE:

the speech, meticulous, obsessive, a perfectionist.

WINSTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Sir, I take up my task with buoyancy and hope -

INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

CLOSE ON:

DRAFT of the speech, on SMALLER SHEETS of PAPER, the TEXT now set out like
BLANK VERSE in a POEM, or in the BIBLE, each
phrase spaced apart from the next -

and say to the House, as I said to those who have joined the government -

WINSTON (O.S.)

-and say to the House, as I said to those who have joined the
government INT/

EXT. WINSTON'S CAR, PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON'S car is stationary in the internal courtyard at Parliament. WINSTON,
in the back seat (with ELIZABETH LAYTON in the front, her TYPE-WRITER on her
knee, typing away)

dictates.

25.

WINSTON:

-I have nothing to offer but blood, toil--tears--and sweat.

EXTREME CLOSE ON: her keys typing: "sweat!"

CLOSE ON:

WINSTON alights the car, and ELIZABETH passes the PAGES of the SPEECH, which
he grabs, then hurries away.

INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

ANGLE ON:

waiting for the HANDKERCHIEF to be waved.

ANGLE ON WINSTON: readying himself for the final assault!

WINSTON :

We have before us an ordeal of the

most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I say it is to wage war by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength God can give us--to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime.

ANGLE ON:

CHAMBERLAIN.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. Victory - victory at all costs, victory in spite of terror, victory however long and hard the road may be. For without victory, there is no survival.

WINSTON feels he must have won them over, but his confident smile fades as he realises he stands alone.

Small KNUCKLE-KNOCKING begins - but it is MUTED.

SIMON and HOARE and the other CONSERVATIVE PLOTTERS all look to CHAMBERLAIN, as he -

-puts his WHITE HANDKERCHIEF back in his BREAST POCKET!!!

The TORIES sit back - NONE APPLAUD.

26.

EXT - ROSE GARDEN/ DOWNING STREET - DAY

CHAMBERLAIN, attempting to catch his breath, sits on a bench looking across the rose in bloom so ripe they're almost rotten.

HALIFAX sees, then approaches CHAMBERLAIN.

HALIFAX:

"Our policy is to wage war--At all costs--No survival". Winston is incapable of pronouncing the word peace, let alone engaging in peace talks.

He sits next to CHAMBERLAIN.

CHAMBERLAIN:

Awful, the thought that I shall never see my country at peace again.

HALIFAX :

Neville?

CHAMBERLAIN turns and faces HALIFAX - ashen faced.

CHAMBERLAIN :

I have cancer.

HALIFAX :

Oh Neville.

CHAMBERLAIN:

Winston must be removed from office.

HALIFAX :

How?

CHAMBERLAIN :

A vote of "no confidence".

HALIFAX:

If we can get him to declare that he refuses to consider a negotiated peace with Germany then perhaps you and I will have grounds to resign. The party wont stand for that, you're still the chairman for heavens sake, that will force a vote of "no confidence" in his leadership and he'll be finished.

CHAMBERLAIN:

And would you agree to be Prime Minister?
27.

HALIFAX :

With Winston out of the way ... whocan say, but the important thing, Neville, is that your policies, ofpeace and the protection of thisnation, would be back on the table.

CHAMBERLAIN :

On record.

HALIFAX :

Pardon?

CHAMBERLAIN :

He must declare on record his refusal to engage in peace talks, we must have it in writing.

HALIFAX's eyes glisten with renewed purpose.

EXT. HM TREASURY - LONDON - DAY

ELIZABETH LAYTON makes her way to work, but today it's a new location - the grand TREASURY BUILDING in WHITEHALL, crossing, through traffic, Horse Guards Road and entering through the pillared main doors...

INT. TREASURY - CONTINUOUS

ECU - Elizabeth's hand signs the Official Secrets Act which is duly stamped.

An elderly CIVIL SERVANT hands her a security pass.

JOHN EVANS meets ELIZABETH in the lobby and leads her down to an INCONSPICUOUS DOOR where a SOLDIER checks her security pass.

INT. WAR ROOMS/ UNDERGROUND BUNKER - DAY

EVANS leads ELIZABETH down a narrow staircase that leads to the SECRET WAR-ROOMS, the underground nerve centre of BRITISH HIGH COMMAND. But the place is very humble, low ceiling and narrow hallways, the rooms small. No hint of luxury here. Austerity Britain.

JOHN EVANS :

Follow me.

ELIZABETH :

What goes on down here?

28.

JOHN EVANS :

That's a need to know. And you don't.

JOHN EVANS keeps walking at a brisk pace through the telephonists room.

ELIZABETH, clocking her surroundings, notices a door with a dial lock that reads "VACANT".

ELIZABETH :

The lavatory?

EVANS :

For the PM's use only.

EVANS leads her down the corridor, through a narrow room of bunk beds... John Evans gestures towards them.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Sleeping quarters, for when you miss the last train.

They pass the MAP ROOM -

JOHN EVANS :

That's the Map Room. No women allowed.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

What department is this?

JOHN EVANS :

Indiscretion in conversation, or

any other form, within or without these rooms regarding what happens here is a statutory offense and punishable by up to two years imprisonment with hard labour.

Clear?

ELIZABETH :

Crystal.

JOHN EVANS :

Good.

Elizabeth follows Evans as they stop at the War Cabinet Room.

JOHN EVANS (CONT'D)

That's the War Cabinet room--never!

Don't mean to be rough on you but that's the rules.

They arrive at the TYPISTS POOL ROOM, full of NINE bust TYPISTS.

29.

JOHN EVANS (CONT'D)

This is the typists room, you are allowed in here.

TYPISTS :

(In Unison)

Good Morning Sir.

And then indicates another Room - the door is ajar, its no bigger than a shoe-box!

JOHN EVANS :

And here's you.

ELIZABETH enters the tiny, windowless room not much bigger than a cupboard, containing only a desk and a chair.

CUT TO:

She arranges her effects - a BLACK PEN, a RED PEN and a HOLEPUNCH on her desk, and then sets carefully a PHOTOGRAPH of a HANDSOME SOLDIER.

INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

The CHIEFS OF STAFF brief WINSTON: IRONSIDE for the ARMY, DOWDING (a New Zealander) for the AIR FORCE, and a NAVALADMIRAL (DUDLEY POUND).

CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX are also present - as other OFFICERS all crowd in and look up at -

THREE LARGE OPERATIONS MAPS of EUROPE hang on three different walls, each full of pins and strings to show positions - ONE for the ARMY, ONE for the NAVY, ONE for the AIR-WAR.

Down the centre of the room runs a long table bearing MULTIPLE TELEPHONES of different colors which are always RINGING...and being answered by OFFICERS of the three services.

The BRIEFING begins in front of - the ARMY MAP - showing (with pins and colored string) how far WESTWARD the GERMAN LINE has advanced.

GENERAL IRONSIDE

Belgium and Holland may fall any hour.

WINSTON :

The French?

30.

GENERAL IRONSIDE

The entire French ninth army--some two hundred thousand men--have capitulated.

HALIFAX :

All of them?!

GENERAL IRONSIDE

Capitulated. Surrendered. Deserted. It was a rout. All our land forces, roughly 300,000 men, are now in full retreat.

WINSTON:

(to DOWDING)

Air-cover? For our troops?

AIR MARSHALL DOWDING

The Luftwaffe control the skies. We simply don't have enough planes to challenge them. In fact, I strongly recommend we stop sending our precious fighter-planes to be wasted in France--save them for

our own defence.

WINSTON moves to the NAVAL MAP, showing WARSHIPDEPLOYMENTS...

WINSTON:

And our navy--sits idle,
neutralized, useless.

NAVAL ADMIRAL POUND

Our fleets no sooner come within
their range than we come under
blistering air attack.

WINSTON :

Their speed is devastating.

WINSTON returns to the ARMY MAP

GENERAL IRONSIDE

Panzer tanks. Plunging rapidly
westward, through the centre.

WINSTON:

But they will have to pause for
fuel supplies.

IRONSIDE looks at GENERAL ISMAY.

GENERAL IRONSIDE

Ismay?

31.

ISMAY :

This is not the last war, Sir.

Their tanks can stop for fuel at a petrol station.

WINSTON :

Petrol station?

GENERAL IRONSIDE

The road to Paris now lies open.

7 million refugees are on the move.

Collectively we are looking at the collapse of Western Europe in a few days.

ISMAY :

Should the public be told?

WINSTON :

Not yet. First, we must rouse our old friends to a heroic
resistance. France must be saved.

CAMERA moves in on the MAP...

Over this, we start to dissolve in -
- footage of a FLAMINGO PASSENGER PLANE in flight -
-as the MAP itself dissolves into -
-a real rural LANDSCAPE, as seen from above...

EXT. AERIAL/ SKIES OVER FRANCE - DAY

WINSTON's FLAMINGO PASSENGER PLANE flies over FRENCH FIELDS.

The PLANE is soon joined by two SPITFIRE FIGHTER ESCORTS, one on each wing.

INT. FLAMINGO/ CIVILIAN PASSENGER PLANE - DAY

We see pilots in the cockpit looks down, a drink is poured and is taken to Winston as he looks down - His face goes grey as he sees - for the first time - CIVILIAN REFUGEES,

long meandering columns of desperate humanity.

On BOARD with WINSTON - ISMAY, DOWDING and IRONSIDE.

The SHOCK of this plays on his face.

WINSTON's POV of: the vast tragedy. Amongst straggling vagabonds and columns of refugees. Signs of the GERMAN conquest - abandoned TANKS and ARTILLERY stand in flames.

32.

CLOSE ON:

PLANE. He holds his left hand up to his left eye to look at the plane.

UP WITH CAPTION:

WINSTON :

This can't go on. Must not.

INT/EXT. FRENCH AIRCRAFT HANGER - DAY

A LARGE DELEGATION of CIVILIANS and MILITARY await WINSTON, as WINSTON alights the PLANE and approaches down a long RED CARPET. PRIME MINISTER REYNAUD steps forward and shakes WINSTON's hand.

WINSTON:

(to REYNAUD)

Brace yourselves, I am about to add to your terrible suffering - by speaking French.

They sit at a long table in the hangar.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

(in bad FRENCH)

Bien que notre situation soit très grave ce n'est pas la première fois que nous faisons face à une crise, ensemble.

Subtitles:

Although our plight is grave,

this was not the first time we
has been in a crisis together.

REYNAUD :

Perhaps in English, Prime Minister.

WINSTON:

(after a moment's offence)

We have--we have survived crises
before, and I am confident we will
survive this one. Tell me how you plan to counter-attack.

REYNAUD :

There is no plan.

Silence - then...

WINSTON:

(in FRENCH)

You must counter-attack. Premier,
you must!

(MORE)

33.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

(in ENGLISH)

You must counter-attack!

Vous devez contrattaquer! Il le
faut! Gentlemen--I do not believe
this Panzer breakthrough is a real
invasion.

REYNAUD :

Not a real invasion?

Stupefied looks from the FRENCH and ISMAY alike.

DALADIER:

(in FRENCH)

Tell this to the families of the
dead perhaps.

REYNAUD :

We sincerely appreciate your efforts and optimism, but--we have
lost.

WINSTON seems unable/unwilling to process this -

WINSTON :

As long as--as their tanks are not supported by infantry units they are merely little flags, stuck on the map, because the tank crews are unable to support themselves. No, I refuse to see in this spectacular raid of the German tanks a real invasion.

Silence to this. Is WINSTON losing his mind?

EXT. FRENCH-AIRFIELD - DAY

WINSTON'S FLAMINGO takes off.

INT. FRENCH STAFF-CAR/ FRENCH AIRFIELD - DAY

REYNAUD and DALADIER, side by side in the car, watch WINSTON'S FLAMINGO climbing into the sky

REYNAUD:

(in FRENCH, with SUBTITLES)

Il Devine! Delusional! (He's delusional)

DALADIER :

C'est Anglais (He's English.)

34.

INT. PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY - DAY

SIR JOHN SIMON and LORD LONDONDERRY walk and talk along the library gallery

SIR JOHN SIMON :

He's an actor. In love with the sound of his own voice.

LONDONDERRY :

Oh I love to listen to him--but we must never take his advice. Has a hundred ideas a day. Four are good, the other 96 downright dangerous.

SIR JOHN SIMON :

His father was a great orator but...

LONDONDERRY :

Until he lost his mind to syphilis

SIR JOHN SIMON :

How nations suffer for the sins of their fathers.

Across the AISLE, STANHOPE is also talking about CHURCHILL with SIR SAMUEL

HOARE

STANHOPE :

My opinion? At this critical juncture for the empire, we have a drunkard at the wheel.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

Wakes with a scotch, bottle of champagne at lunch, another at dinner, brandy and port till the wee hours...I wouldn't let him borrow my bicycle!

INT. TREASURY TOILETS - DAY

KINGSLEY WOOD is talking to a COLLEAGUE -

KINGSLEY WOOD :

He's a Conservative, who defects to the Liberals--lobbs grenades at us for 10 years--then flops Conservative again, as it bloody suits him! Sorry, but--he stands

for one thing:

35.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

HALIFAX is sitting with KING GEORGE VI.

HALIFAX :

We might have to replace him, Bertie.

KING GEORGE VI :

Replace him?!

HALIFAX :

We must strive for peace--for every son and daughter of this land so that we may emerge from this crisis with something recognisable as 'home.'

KING GEORGE VI :

Spoken like a true Prime Minister.

INT. KITCHEN/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

YELLOW POWDERED EGGS are being MIXED with WATER, then fried then slopped onto a plate as SCRAMBLED EGGS. On a BREAKFAST TRAY (once more) are set - (in rapid cuts) BACON and POWDERED EGGS, SCOTCH and SODA, a GLASS of WINE...

CAPTION:

INT. DRESSING ROOM/BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY
JOHN EVANS stands outside the LOO (whose door is closed),
with a note-pad and pen, ready to record WINSTON's instructions.

JOHN EVANS :

Sir, you need to reply to the Lord Privy Seal.

INT. LOO/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON sits on the TOILET, reading a French newspaper whose front page shows a picture of FRENCH SOLDIER with his arm around his FRENCH SWEETHEART, holding up his fingers in a VFOR-VICTORY gesture (palm-outward). The headline is "V POUR LA VICTOIRE". Winston is sitting on the toilet.

WINSTON :

The Privy Seal?

JOHN EVANS :

Yes sir?

36.

WINSTON:

(reading)

"V for Victory"

WINSTON closes the newspaper, stands -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Tell the Lord Privy Seal

INT. DRESSING ROOM/BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON (O.S.)

-tell him I'm sealed in the

Privy We

hear a flush and then WINSTON appears, wearing his pink silk dressing-gown.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

-and I can only deal with one shit at a time!

He goes into the bedroom, followed by EVANS, where we find -

ELIZABETH LAYTON, typing at the nearby desk, and

ANTHONY EDEN, seated in a chair beside the bed, reading WINSTON'S TYPED SPEECH...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Don't spare me, Anthony--be frank.

EDEN :

Mmmmm.

As EDEN reads, WINSTON stares at him, awaiting his reaction.

WINSTON:

(to EDEN)

I think it's rather good. The ending especially.

When EDEN says nothing the wait becomes agonizing. EDEN

finishes reading the speech, turns over the last page to see if there is more on the back. There isn't.

WINSTON waits for the verdict. EDEN takes off his glasses slowly and looks up at a hopeful WINSTON -

EDEN :

I don't think so.

WINSTON :

You don't think so, what?

37.

EDEN :

You're suggesting we're--somehow-winning.

(beat)

We're not.

WINSTON :

No but...it will inspire them.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

You don't understand -

EDEN :

Winston, I know -

WINSTON :

(stubbornly)

-no, no, no. I am going to imbue

them, Anthony, with a spirit of feeling they don't yet know they have!

Silence. Stalemate. EDEN looks gravely concerned.

EDEN :

You asked my opinion. I caution against it.

WINSTON stares at his trusted ally, his hopes fading, until -

he snaps his finger, pointing at EDEN -

WINSTON :

Cicero!

He's on the move again - heading out of the bedroom, with EVANS and LAYTON,

and finally EDEN, forced to follow...
INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON :

"Live as", "Live as brave men" -
da,da,da - "and if fortune is
adverse, something, something,
something

He then enters the -

INT. LIBRARY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON:

(shouting)

CLEMMIE!!! CAT!!! CLEMMIE!!!

As he looks for his book in the library he findsCLEMMIE...STRESSED,
struggling to cope, busily writing
CHEQUES.

38.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Cat--my copy of Cicero. Did you
shelve it?

CLEMMIE :

Did you hear what I said?!

WINSTON :

What's that?

CLEMMIE :

We're broke.

WINSTON :

Everybody out! Get out!

He shoos JOHN EVANS, ELIZABETH and EDEN from the room as if
they were cats.

CLEMMIE :

I dare not write another cheque.

WINSTON :

I'll economise - only four cigarsa day!

CLEMMIE :

You're insufferable!

(beat)

Was there something else? Anything?

WINSTON :

Yes, my love for you.

CLEMMIE :

How much have you had to drink this morning?

He goes to her, drawing up a chair, close -

WINSTON :

I see you now as I first saw you in nineteen hundred and four across a crowded dance-floor. I simply stood-speechless.

CLEMMIE :

I must have been very beautiful to have achieved that miraculous effect.

WINSTON :

Four years till we saw each other again.

CLEMMIE :

They went by in an absolute flash.
39.

WINSTON :

You didn't lack for admirers. Your fidèle serviteur in Sidney Peel.

CLEMMIE :

Brilliant man.

WINSTON :

Lionel Earle.

CLEMMIE :

Wonderful dancer.

WINSTON :

And then--at Lady St Hellier's dinner party--who should show up?

CLEMMIE :

Pig. (little snort)

WINSTON :

The same.

They look at each other, their faces very close.

CLEMMIE :

Are we terribly old?

WINSTON :

Yes. I'm afraid you are.

She LAUGHS and pushes him away. Winston takes her hand.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Will you hear me read my speech for tonight's broadcast?

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET / TREASURY - DAY

WINSTON emerges and is accosted by... the PRESS.

TERENCE BIRKEMP

Prime Minister - the situation

in France - Is it true we're

in full retreat? Is France lost?

He fires the REPORTER a steely look of rebuke and then spins,

faces their CAMERAS, takes his CIGAR out of his mouth with

INDEX and SECOND finger and makes, for the CAMERAS, his first-
ever V-FOR-VICTORY SIGN (but PALM-INWARD, the RUDE VERSION).

WINSTON crosses the road, practising a tongue-twister as he enters the
TREASURY.

40.

INT. WINSTON'S OFFICE/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

WINSTON sitting on his bed, is AGITATED, UNEASY, UNSURE now about the speech
he is to deliver on RADIO.

ELIZABETH LAYTON sits at a desk in the corner holding files and paperwork.

Two MICROPHONES sit on a table. An ACTOR also stands by. The Producer guides
Winston to his desk.

BBC PRODUCER :

So--if you will sit here - at your
desk

WINSTON :

Mmmmm.

WINSTON sits, studying with CONCERN the SPEECH lying on the table in front
of him, and taking out his PEN.

BBC PRODUCER:

-and speak slowly and clearly.

Into the microphone.

WINSTON starts to jot last-minute CHANGES to the SPEECH.

Increasingly PRESSURISED, he CROSSES OUT the CHANGES he justmade, and tries to write alternatives. He's clearly in a state.

BBC PRODUCER (CONT'D)

So--if you are ready--on the stroke

of 9 the light will go red, and weshall go live to the nation. Nine OClock.

Red light. You begin. Yes?

But WINSTON isn't ready. He's too busy trying to rewrite hisspeech

The SWEEP SECOND HAND on the WALL CLOCK approaches 12.

The PRODUCER, and ELIZABETH, become very concerned now as thelast seconds vanish -

BBC PRODUCER (CONT'D)

Prime Minister? Are we ready?

WINSTON:

(to himself)

One moment, one moment -

BBC PRODUCER :

We are going live. Prime -

WINSTON:

(exploding)

I SAID ONE MOMENT, DAMN YOU!

41.

This eruption stuns the PRODUCER and ELIZABETH.

WINSTON's hand, holding the PEN, shakes now with indecisionas he fails to think of the right words in time -

BBC PRODUCER :

Four--three--two--one...

On the stroke of 9 pm, the light goes RED, bathing him in red light. They are LIVE.

SILENCE. TOTAL SILENCE. The PRODUCER is now in a panic.

WINSTON seems frozen for a second, until -

WINSTON takes a breath and begins...

WINSTON :

"I speak to you for the first timeas Prime Minister in a solemn hour for the life of our country, of ourEmpire, of our allies, and, aboveall, of the cause of Freedom. A

tremendous battle is raging in France and Flanders."

ELIZABETH sighs relief, then follows on her carbon copy, mouthing the words, many of which she knows by heart.

CAMERA follows the WIRES that lead out of the office, down the corridor, and into the TRANSMITTER ROOM. Reveal BBC Radio Recorder men.

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON:

PULL BACK to reveal: The KING, looking up from the PAPER, as he listens to WINSTON's speech on the radio, and studies his FRAMED FAMILY PHOTOS of his CHILDREN... Princesses ELIZABETH and MARGARET.

WINSTON (O.S.)

"The Germans... by a remarkable combination of air bombing and heavily armored tanks, have broken through the French defenses north of the Maginot Line, and strong columns of their armored vehicles are ravaging the open country..."

CLOSE ON:

IN CONTROL, SAY FRENCH Despite Nazi Raid 42.

INT. FOREIGN OFFICE - NIGHT

HALIFAX sits at the table, a minister standing behind him as they listen to Winston's radio address

WINSTON (O.S.)

"...which for the first day or two was without defenders... But!... I have invincible confidence in the French Army and its leaders. Only a very small part of that splendid Army has yet been heavily engaged; and only a very small part of France has yet been invaded... Side by side, the British and French peoples-- have advanced..."

HALIFAX is disgusted by this DISTORTION of the facts.

HALIFAX :

"Advanced"?! How bloody dare he!

EXT. FRENCH BATTLEFIELD - EVENING

AERIAL SHOT OF:

leaving behind SMOKING TRUCKS and ABANDONED ARTILLERY. TRACKING OVER this ravaged landscape, we see-

CUT TO:

-the abstracted landscape of a human CORPSE...

WINSTON (O.S.)

"...the British and French peoples-have advanced--to rescue not only Europe, but mankind from the foulest and most soul-destroying tyranny which has ever darkened and stained the pages of history.

...until an EYE is revealed in CLOSE-UP, staring into CAMERA.

INT. WINSTON'S OFFICE/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP ON:

WINSTON:

"But now one bond unites us all - to wage war until victory is won, and never to surrender ourselves to servitude and shame, whatever the cost and the agony may be...Conquer we must, as conquer we shall."

CLOSE-UP ON:

43.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

Well done, sir.

WINSTON sits back - UNHAPPY.

CLOSE-UP ON:

INT. LIBRARY/ NUMBER 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

CLEMMIE turns off the RADIO, concerned.

INT. CORRIDORS - WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

WINSTON, UNHAPPY, walks up to a DOOR, enters it -

INT. TUNNEL/ BENEATH 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

-then walks down the long tunnel (connecting the WAR ROOMS with DOWNING STREET) until, at its end, he enters an ELEVATOR

INT. ELEVATOR/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

- WINSTON rides the ELEVATOR upward -

INT. MAIN HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

- WINSTON exits the ELEVATOR, and begins to climb the stairs

INT. LIVING ROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

CLEMMIE :

You did marvelously.

WINSTON :

For the last ten years I was the only one who told them the truth.

Until tonight. There's no advance.
It's a shambles. We're in full
retreat.

CLEMMIE :

Would you be serving them tonight by denying them sleep, terrifying their
children?

WINSTON :

Even if the terror is coming?!

CLEMMIE :

Because it's coming! There is time enough for truth.

44.

He nods, accepting this. He walks off, still anxious. She watches him go,
worried.

INT. KITCHEN/ WAR ROOM - DAY

The front page of a newspaper: a PHOTO of WINSTON doing his V FOR VICTORY
SIGN (palm inward).

ELIZABETH LAYTON, leaning by the door, reading the paper.

At her side stands another typist, SYBIL, reading another copy of the same
PAPER -

ELIZABETH is giggling -

WINSTON passes the doorway in the corridor, then re-appears -

WINSTON :

What's so funny?

ELIZABETH :

Prime Minister sir -

WINSTON :

Go on. What is it?

INT. CORRIDORS - WAR ROOMS - DAY

ELIZABETH steps out into the corridor so they can have some privacy -

ELIZABETH :

Not sure if you know this but-the
way you are doing your
V For Victory sign--well, in
the poorer quarters that gesture
means--something else.

WINSTON :

What does it mean?

ELIZABETH :

Wouldn't like to say sir.

WINSTON :

I was captured by the Boer. I spent time in a South African prison.

ELIZABETH :

Up yer' bum. Sir.

WINSTON :

Up yer' bum?

WINSTON roars with LAUGHTER - which sets ELIZABETH laughing -
45.

ELIZABETH :

The way you do it, sir. Yes sir.

(demonstrates)

But if you turn it around -

(palm out)

-that's fine.

WINSTON :

I see.

ELIZABETH :

Wouldn't like millions of people to take it the wrong way.

WINSTON steps away, still chuckling -

WINSTON :

Up yer' bum!

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE / WINSTON'S OFFICE, WAR ROOMS - DAY

KING GEORGE speaks into the TELEPHONE -

KING GEORGE VI :

Don't wish to take too much of your time.

(pause)

I heard you--on the--wireless.

WINSTON :

Was I comprehensible?

KING GEORGE VI :

The public need to be led, not misled--not left to work it out for them-themselves.

WINSTON :

Right. Will that be all, your majesty?

KING GEORGE VI :

Yes. Good day Prime Minister.

(click)

WINSTON puts down the PHONE and turns to EVANS.

WINSTON :

I believe I've just received a royal rap on the knuckles.

INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

CAPTION:

WAR CABINET MEETING 1

46.

PRESENT:

(CHAMBERLAIN, HALIFAX, GREENWOOD, ATLEE) and the FOLLOWING (ALEXANDER, SINCLAIR, COOPER, CADOGAN, ANDERSON, POUND, DOWDING, IRONSIDE, BRIDGES, ISMAY, NICHOLL, WILKINSON)

CABINET SECRETARY BRIDGES is helping to seat everyone as they move around the table looking for their placement card.

CABINET SECRETARY BRIDGES

(indicating to HALIFAX's seat)

Foreign Minister?

A NEW MAP shows the NEW POSITIONS of BRITISH TROOPS. SURROUNDED at DUNKIRK.

Finally, WINSTON enters, shakes the hands of IRONSIDE and ISMAY first, but has less enthusiasm for ATLEE and GREENWOOD, and nothing for CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX, who do not expect to have their hands shaken.

WINSTON :

Tiny, good to see you.

(to ISMAY)

Pug. Welcome to the War Cabinet, such as we are.

(to ALL)

Please, sit.

He sits.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

War is usually a catalogue of blunders, and this one is proving no exception.
(beat)

General - it's all yours.

IRONSIDE :

You have this morning's report in front of you -

WINSTON :

Yes. General -

IRONSIDE :

- if you turn to page 3 -

Ummm - so on page 3 - are we all

Looking at page 3? - no, the other document - second paragraph down -

WINSTON, agitated, reeling from the royal reprimand, taps his wedding ring
finger on the side of his chair impatiently -

GREENWOOD :

Second?

47.

IRONSIDE :

Yes, the second--no, page -

WINSTON can stand it no longer -

WINSTON:

(his patience snapping)

Edmund!--why don't you just tell us--

please--in your own words-- what

kind of mess we are looking at here. What's going on?

IRONSIDE:

Right. (beat) As of 2200 hours last

night--the Germans have encircled

sixty British, Belgian and French

divisions. On our part all our

forces under Lord Gort have now

withdrawn, or are trying to

withdraw, to the French coast, to

Dunkirk, where we cannot reach them.

Ships sunk by the Nazis block the

harbour entrance and the Luftwaffe

control the skies above.

CHAMBERLAIN :

How many of our men are trapped?

IRONSIDE :

All of them.

(pause)

Our nation's entire professional soldiery. And...

(pause)

...we can see no clear way to
rescue them.

Silence -

WINSTON:

General--are you telling
me that we shall have lost the
British army by the next few days?

IRONSIDE :

That's correct.

ATTLEE :

What are the French doing?

IRONSIDE:

Premiere Raynaud sent a radio
message. He expects the defence of
Paris will soon fail.

48.

WINSTON :

We must counter-attack. Anyone?

(silence)

Surely

IRONSIDE :

The German forces are superior in every regard and are only fifty miles from
the coast. They are pushing us into the sea.

ATTLEE :

Fifty miles! Good God!

GREENWOOD :

For a German tank, two days.

WINSTON :

They must not reach the sea! Not before we evacuate our men! General Ismay? What have you got for us? Everyone looks at ISMAY.

ISMAY :

As it stands--I cannot see that we have much hope of getting any of our forces out in time. A gasp in the cabinet. WINSTON takes this news badly.

WINSTON :

Not a man? We cannot be so totally at their mercy! REACTION HALIFAX: Only just holding his tongue. He looks at CHAMBERLAIN, who does not maintain the look.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

General. What is our next step?

IRONSIDE :

I'm not sure, sir, that we have one. Silence. A pall settles. ISMAY looks at IRONSIDE, who says nothing. CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX also exchange a look.

WINSTON :

So? So where are we to look for salvation?
(silence)
Anyone? Come on! Speak!

IRONSIDE :

We still have a Garrison at Calais.
25 miles to the west.
49.

WINSTON:

Well why didn't you say so?! How many men do we have there?

IRONSIDE :

4,000. More or less.

WINSTON:

Then have them go east--engage with the German columns moving on Dunkirk. Buy us some time. Draw the Nazi focus away from Dunkirk whilst we execute a maritime evacuation of our forces. Ironside--is that possible?

IRONSIDE :

It would mean a huge sacrifice.

ATTLEE :

Four thousand young men!

WINSTON :

To save 300,000!

(pause)

Under whose command is the Calais Garrison?

ISMAY :

Brigadier Nicholson.

Silence. The burden falls on Winston...

WINSTON :

Very well--tell...

A hint of UNCERTAINTY here, as WINSTON taps his SIGNET RING on the wooden arm of his chair.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...tell--Nicholson--that it is of the greatest importance to this island that his garrison draw the enemy's tanks and artillery and bombers away from Dunkirk--invite their wrath--and to--to fight on if needs be until--until the destruction of his command.

A PALL settles over the room. Almost a GASP.

ATTLEE :

It's suicide.

HALIFAX, emotions rising, can stay silent no longer.

50.

HALIFAX :

Prime Minister! I have reservations...

WINSTON :

Who is free of reservations?

HALIFAX :

...about such a fateful course when we have the option of a peace offer.

WINSTON :

What peace offer?!

HALIFAX :

The Italians have offered to mediate between ourselves and Germany. And I indicated that provided our liberty and independence were assured, we would consider any proposal.

WINSTON :

With Hitler holding the whip hand do you really think he would honour our liberty and independence?

HALIFAX :

It would be in his interest to do so. He -

WINSTON :

The only thing to do is to show that maniac that he cannot conquer this country, and for that we need an army. General, tell Brigadier Nicholson, "The Germans must not reach the sea! Not before we get our boys off that bloody beach!"
(pause)
I take full responsibility.

HALIFAX :

Really?

WINSTON:

(temper exploding)
REALLY! YES! It is the reason I sit in this chair!

HALIFAX :

Surely--before we send 4,000 men to
their graves, we must explore -

WINSTON:

(frustrated)
What is this?!
51.

HALIFAX :

What is your mind on the principle of peace talks? Do we take it for example,
that you preclude yourself from even considering engaging in such
negotiations?
A TENSE SILENCE.

ANGLE ON:

WINSTON's reply.
WINSTON, aware that history is listening, senses a TRAP -

WINSTON :

I should like to speak to Viscount Halifax and Mr Chamberlain alone.
(to IRONSIDE)
Issue the order to the Calais
Garrison. Confirm it has been done.
(to BRIDGES)
Bridges! You too! Out! Hop it!
BRIDGES puts down his pencil. Consternation from those departing at this
breach of protocol.
INT. CORRIDOR - WAR ROOMS - DAY
At the end of the line of unneeded WAR CABINET members filing out, comes the
disgruntled BRIDGES with his TWO SECRETARIES.
INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY
WINSTON lights his CIGAR, and takes his time, slowly approaching the HALIFAX
seated at the back of the room.

HALIFAX :

Winston. We are facing certain defeat on land--the annihilation of
our army--and imminent invasion!
We must be rational!

WINSTON :

We are a sea-going nation. Have been since the Bronze Age. The Channel is
ours--our moat--our

battlement and the German doesn't
recognise an expanse of water greater than a bloody lake! They have first to
reach this island -
52.

HALIFAX:

-which will be full of terrified
men, women and children, whom we
have failed, despicably, in our duty of protection. Germany has won -
we are entirely defenceless -

WINSTON :

And who's fault is that ?!
CHAMBERLAIN averts his face.

HALIFAX:

-facing the largest army the world has seen. Furthermore, once France
falls, Germany can concentrate on aircraft production and they will then have
the French fleet as well!

What is to stop Hitler then? Words?

Words, Winston? Words alone?

(beat)

If you will not permit any talk of peace then I will be forced -
CHAMBERLAIN steps in, to stop Halifax from resigning.

CHAMBERLAIN :

Might we not allow Edward simply to meet the Italian ambassador,
Bastianini--discuss their possible
role as mediators between us and
Germany, and find out their price?

WINSTON is calmed by CHAMBERLAIN's manner -

WINSTON :

Bastianini? Ha! A man about whom
we might say there is less to him
than meets the eye.

WINSTON looks at HALIFAX, and sighs -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I remain opposed to any negotiations -

CHAMBERLAIN :

- of course -

WINSTON:

-which might lead to a derogation of our rights and power.

HALIFAX :

AS DO WE ALL! There is no question that our sovereignty is nonnegotiable!
53.

CHAMBERLAIN :

Winston?

With nowhere left to turn - WINSTON gives a slow inclination of the head,
and then - NODS.

CHAMBERLAIN (CONT'D)

Good. Thank you.

WINSTON :

...but! No-one outside this room
must ever know.

CHAMBERLAIN :

Of course.

INT. CORRIDOR - WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

WINSTON walks through the corridors - then approaches and opens a SMALL
LAVATORY DOOR. As he enters -

CLOSE ON:

"ENGAGED".

INT. TRANS-ATLANTIC TELEPHONE ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

Inside, it's no LAVATORY. It is actually -a secret PRIVATE
TELEPHONE SYSTEM, linking WINSTON with the ROOSEVELT WHITEHOUSE.

WINSTON, seated, holding the receiver, takes a few moments before he lifts
the phone to his ear -

WINSTON :

Mr President?

ROOSEVELT :

Winston!

WINSTON :

How are you Franklin?

ROOSEVELT :

Fine. Fine. How are you Prime Minister?

WINSTON :

I am phoning about--about your Navy ships. If you were to loan us just 50 of your older Destroyers I feel sure -

ROOSEVELT :

Ah! Yes!

54.

WINSTON ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

- even 40 would -Well I -

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

-I did ask around, but just not possible I'm afraid. The Neutrality Act we signed last year has tied my hands. Just can't swing it. I tried.

WINSTON :

Then--can I--do I have your permission to send an aircraft carrier to pick up the P-40 fighter planes we purchased? Mr President.

ROOSEVELT:

(wincing, hating not being able to help)

You got me there again. New law--

preventing trans-shipment of military equipment.

WINSTON :

But we've paid for them--with the money we borrowed from you!

ROOSEVELT:

(anguished)

So sorry, Winston.

WINSTON :

I need not impress upon you the trouble faced by the Western Hemisphere. Without your support, in some fashion... Silence. A tense moment...

ROOSEVELT :

I know. I know. You are on my mind day and night.

(pause)

Look. We could--possibly...

But words fail the hampered ROOSEVELT and his voice trails off.

WINSTON :

Mr President--we are facing the gravest odds!

55.

ROOSEVELT :

...we could take your planes to about a mile from the Canadian border--and then if you send across a team of horses from Canada--nothing motorized--then you could pull 'em over the border yourself. How does that sound?

WINSTON :

Horses? You said "a team of horses"?

ROOSEVELT :

I guess you could push 'em yourself. The damn things have wheels. Up to you. WINSTON is speechless -

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

We could do that.

(silence)

Prime Minister?

WINSTON covers the PHONE, bunches his fist, swallows his RAGE, and then speaks again, as calmly as he can--

WINSTON :

Anything you can do at this time would be welcome.

ROOSEVELT :

Goodnight to you Winston.

(feeling WINSTON's pain)

It must be late there?

WINSTON :

In more ways than you could possibly know.

He puts down the phone and sits back in his chair - stunned, fuming. But as he stewes, he slowly - slowly - conceives an idea, a new IDEA!

INT. MAP ROOM / WAR ROOMS -NIGHT

WINSTON enters and strides past the staff, making for the LARGE MAP of EUROPE. He puts his finger on the FRENCH COAST,

at DUNKIRK, encircled by RED THREAD. And then looks at ENGLAND, the COAST, and then taps DOVER on the map.

He turns, sees the DOZEN colorful TELEPHONES and addresses a

NAVAL MAP-ROOM OFFICER

56.

WINSTON:

Get me Vice-Admiral Ramsay on one of these.

EXT. DOVER CASTLE -PRE-SUNRISE (5 AM)

HIGH AERIAL of the CASTLE atop the famous WHITE-CLIFFS.

INT. ADMIRAL RAMSAY'S BEDROOM/ TUNNELS/ BENEATH DOVER CASTLE
-NIGHT

ADMIRAL RAMSAY is woken by a STAFFER.

STAFFER :

Admiral Ramsay?

RAMSAY :

Huh?

STAFFER :

It's the Prime Minister.

INT. DYNAMO ROOM/ TUNNELS/ BENEATH DOVER CASTLE - NIGHT

RAMSAY, on the PHONE with WINSTON.

WINSTON (O.S.)

Bertie? I hope I didn't wake you.

RAMSAY:

Of course not. I was just reading the Bible.

(INTERCUT, as necessary with -)

INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

WINSTON, on a PHONE, studies the COAST of ENGLAND.

WINSTON :

Exodus?

(smiles)

We need to evacuate our boys,

Bertie. The Navy is saying that

with one cruiser and six

destroyers, and with the Luftwaffecontrolling the skies above, we'llbe lucky to get 10% out. I want you to order an assembly of boats.

RAMSAY :

Boats?

57.

WINSTON :

Yes. Civilian boats, as many as you can get your hands on.
Country's full of boats--let's put
'em to use. Bertie? You there?

RAMSAY:

(sceptical)
Rrrr-ight.

WINSTON:

-anyone with a pleasure craft bigger than 30 foot that can get to France.
Longley's clipper,
Fearnley's gin palace, any half-
rotten fishing boat that'll float.

RAMSAY :

Mmmm-hmmm.
WINSTON senses BERTIE's reticence...and makes a different
appeal...

WINSTON :

Help me stage this thing, Bertie.
We must at least try to bring some of our boys home.
After a pause -

RAMSAY :

I will have the BBC issue the
order.
WINSTON starts to put the phone down, and then remembers something -

WINSTON :

Oh-- Bertie--still there?

RAMSAY :

Sir?

WINSTON :

We need a name--for this Operation.
RAMSAY looks around him - a blazon on a generator says "DYNAMO".
INT. CORRIDOR/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

CAPTION:

WINSTON walks with EDEN, but then they pass an OFFICER'S OFFICE, whose DOOR

is open - and it's then that he hears, to his fury, the sound of a RADIO playing a SPEECH BY HITLER!

WINSTON PULLS THE DOOR SHUT, silencing the dictator.

58.

WINSTON and EDEN look at each other, then walk on, and stop before entering the WAR CABINET ROOM, (as if before taking the stage). WINSTON takes a deep breath and tries to shake off his worries. Only then does he enter, followed by EDEN -

INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

WAR CABINET MEETING 2.

PRESENT:

CHAMBERLAIN, HALIFAX, GREENWOOD, ATLEE) and the FOLLOWING (EDEN, ALEXANDER, SINCLAIR, CADOGAN, ANDERSON, POUND,

DOWDING, IRONSIDE, BRIDGES, ISMAY, NICHOLL, WILKINSON)

A tense atmosphere - faces riven with doubt. The CABINET is standing, conferring anxiously with each other.....but then fall silent when WINSTON and ANTHONY EDEN enter.

WINSTON :

Good day. I've asked the Minister for War to join us.

HALIFAX and CHAMBERLAIN share a look - this doesn't bode well.

All sit. WINSTON looks around the table - sees the fear and doubt and nervousness in his CABINET right away.

WINSTON starts to tap his SIGNET RING on his right hand on the wooden arm of his chair, until -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Obviously--we are in a dangerous situation. But - I am assured by the French Premiere that while some German tank units have reached the sea, the situation generally seems to be well in hand. No-one looks at all convinced by this -

CLOSE ON:

worn away from three weeks of such anxious tapping.

GREENWOOD :

Prime Minister. You don't believe that.

ATLEE :

France will fall.

GREENWOOD :

Yes.

ATTLEE :

And invasion of this island will follow.

59.

WINSTON changes the subject -

WINSTON :

What news from Calais?

ATTLEE :

What?

IRONSIDE :

The Garrison attacked, but was forced back and is now surrounded on all sides. They are being shelled and bombed mercilessly. Casualties are at sixty percent.

The CABINET all shake their heads - all look to have lost FAITH in WINSTON.

CHAMBERLAIN nods at HALIFAX -

HALIFAX :

On the question of peace talks

WINSTON:

-We must hold our nerve. Signal only that we are going to fight it out to the end. A peace offer telegraphs our weakness.

CHURCHILL looks to EDEN for support -

EDEN :

Agreed.

WINSTON :

And even if we were beaten--we should be no worse off than we should be if we were now to abandon the struggle.

Let us therefore avoid being dragged down the slippery slope with talk of a negotiated peace.

HALIFAX :

Slippery slope? The only

WINSTON HALIFAX (CONT'D)

-I suspect Germany and Italy --the only slippery slope -

WINSTON :

-want to get us so deeply involved

in negotiations that we should beunable to turn back!

HALIFAX :

Oh nonsense! Bastianini informed me-

60.

WINSTON :

The approach -

HALIFAX :

- The only slippery slope -

WINSTON:

WILL YOU STOP INTERRUPTING ME

WHILE I AM INTERRUPTING YOU!?

When I chose my War Cabinet I took
great care to surround myself with
old rivals. I may have overdone it.

Only GREENWOOD and ATTLEE and EDEN smile. HALIFAX andCHAMBERLAIN look
exasperated.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Viscount Halifax--the approach you
proposed is not only futile, but
involves us in a deadly danger.

HALIFAX:

THE DEADLY DANGER HERE IS THIS
ROMANTIC FANTASY OF FIGHTING TO THE
END!!! What is "the end" if not
the destruction of all?

There is nothing heroic in going
down fighting if it can be avoided.
Nothing even remotely patriotic in
death or glory if the odds are on
the former; nothing inglorious in
trying to shorten a war that we are
clearly losing.

WINSTON cannot bear this talk -

WINSTON HALIFAX (CONT'D)

Europe is still -Europe is lost!

HALIFAX (CONT'D)

And before our forces are wiped out completely this is the time to negotiate, in order to obtain the best conditions possible. It would not be in Hitler's interests to insist on outrageous terms. He will know his own weaknesses. He will be reasonable.

WINSTON cannot bear this talk -

61.

WINSTON :

When will the lesson be learned?

How many more dictators must bewoed, appeased--Good God, given immense privileges, before we learn!--that you can't reason with a tiger when your head is in its mouth!

WINSTON rises and walks out. HALIFAX, escaping CHAMBERLAIN's grip on his forearm, alone chases WINSTON...into -

INT. SMALL CORRIDOR TO TUNNEL/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

HALIFAX pursues WINSTON into the vestibule-

HALIFAX :

PRIME MINISTER -

WINSTON turns back to him - they are now enclosed in the vestibule.

HALIFAX (CONT'D)

Winston! Yesterday you gave permission for -

WINSTON :

What permission?

HALIFAX :

- for me to meet

HALIFAX (CONT'D) WINSTON

-with Bastianini -- I sanctioned -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

-the theoretical ex-

WINSTON (CONT'D)

-ploration -

HALIFAX :

-theoretical?! -

WINSTON:

- of what price Italy would ask. Nomore. I did not sanction-

HALIFAX :

If you will not allow any furtherexploration of a peace agreement, then--you will have my resignation.

WINSTON :

Don't be absurd. I need youEdward. You know I do!

62.

HALIFAX :

I will not stand by to watchanother generation of young men dieat the bloody altar of your hubris!

WINSTON :

And you would have us die as lambs!

HALIFAX :

Was Gallipoli not enough for you?!

WINSTON:

(angry)

How dare you?! Our troops werechewing barbed wire in Flanders! I saw it! Opening a second front, outflanking the Turks, was aserious military idea - and itcould've damn-well worked if - the

Admirals and First Sea Lord hadn't

dithered away our element ofsurprise!

Silence. WINSTON realises he's gone too far. Totally lost hispoise. He calms himself. But too late. HALIFAX, undaunted, fixes WINSTON with a cold judicial eye -

HALIFAX :

The choice is yours. You have 24hours to enter into peace talks, orI resign.

HALIFAX walks back into the war rooms. WINSTON, regretful forhis display of temper.

INT. HALLWAY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

WINSTON emerges from the ELEVATOR, to find -

-the YOUNG CONSERVATIVE MP, ERNLE HASTINGS, waiting for him at the bottom of the stairs.

ERNLE HASTINGS :

Prime Minister. I wonder if we might schedule you to address the Outer Cabinet?
WINSTON climbs the stairs, without saying a word.

INT. TREASURY TOILETS - DAY

HALIFAX, energized, and CHAMBERLAIN, looking unwell, confers. CHAMBERLAIN dampens a handkerchief and dabs his head with cold water...

63.

HALIFAX :

I told him. It shook him.

CHAMBERLAIN :

Imagine it did.

HALIFAX:

Gave him 24 hours--I don't expect him to agree, so I will resign first. You then join me. That's critical if we are to trigger a revolt in the chamber. I'll announce it. The King will back us.

HALIFAX nods. CHAMBERLAIN now mentors him, paternally -

CHAMBERLAIN:

Be sure of your motives, Edward. Country first! Country First always. Career third, fourth-after family, and church - and, in your case (small smile) - fox hunting. Come.

CHAMBERLAIN bravely leads an emotional HALIFAX out of the BATHROOM.

EXT. WESTMINSTER/ LONDON - NIGHT

HIGH-ANGLE WIDE-SHOT of LONDON - then PAN to reveal RADIO AERIALS, as we hear -

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

"Today, the Admiralty have made an Order requesting all owners of self-propelled pleasure craft, between 30' and 100' in length, to send all particulars to the Admiralty,

immediately -

INT. LIBRARY/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

WINSTON listens to the RADIO BROADCAST:

RADIO ANNOUNCER:

"- if they have not already been offered or requisitioned."

WINSTON turns off the RADIO, turns to face ELIZABETH LAYTON who sits at her type-writer, waiting. They look at each other.

CHURCHILL:

(dictating)

To Brigadier Nicholson, 30th Infantry Brigade. Calais.

(MORE)

64.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

Every hour you continue to exist is of the greatest help to our forces at Dunkirk. Have the greatest possible admiration for your splendid stand.

Your evacuation however--your evacuation will not, repeat not, take place.

Signed...

ELIZABETH LAYTON, has stopped typing.

CHURCHILL, looks up and sees tears in her eyes. He goes to her, offering a handkerchief.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

Here.

(softening)

What is it?

ELIZABETH LAYTON

May I be excused?

CHURCHILL :

You may not. Tell me what this is about.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

No-one tells us anything. It's all classified and--we hear scraps and it's worse than knowing nothing.

CHURCHILL :

What would you like to know?

She stares into his eyes -

ELIZABETH LAYTON

How many men will survive?

He stares at her - it's the great PUBLIC QUESTION. It deserves an answer.

CHURCHILL :

Come with me. Come on.

INT. TUNNEL/ BENEATH 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

WINSTON leads ELIZABETH down the long tunnel -

INT. CORRIDOR/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

-ELIZABETH follows WINSTON to the MAP-ROOM.

CHURCHILL :

Come in.

65.

ELIZABETH :

No. I'm not allowed in the MapRoom.

CHURCHILL :

You are now.

INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR-ROOMS - NIGHT

She enters the MAP ROOM, which is manned with MALE personnel who look askance at ELIZABETH. WINSTON shows her the ARMY MAP of WESTERN EUROPE. The BRITISH FORCES are represented, surrounded by GERMAN troops at the seaside town of DUNKIRK.

WINSTON :

The German army now controlsevery French port except Dunkirk, here--and Calais, here to the west, where a garrison is drawing fireand delaying the German advance onDunkirk. She nods.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

At both points our troops areencircled. We're still trying toclear Dunkirk harbour of wrecked ships so we can then land the boatswe need to get our boys off thosebeaches, but enemy planes areattacking us constantly. Our onlyhope in Dunkirk is thick cloudcover to thwart these attacks, but-the skies remain clear. Even then I am told we will need a miracle to get even 10% of our men out.

She is shocked -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Courage, Miss Layton--courage.

ELIZABETH :

How long have they got if we don'trescue them?

WINSTON :

One, maybe two days.

ISMAY enters -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

General?

66.

ISMAY :

News from Calais, the 30th

Infantry, sir. They've retreated to the town's citadel...

As a last and probably hopeless stand - the order "Everyman for himself" has been given.

WINSTON :

(As he exits)

Good.

EXT. CALAIS - NIGHT

The CITADEL rises, ancient and proud above the town, as -

- a GERMAN RECONNAISSANCE PLANE flies a circle over the CITADEL and lays a CIRCLE OF WHITE SMOKE.

ISMAY (O.S.)

... as a last, and probably

hopeless, stand. The order, 'everyman for himself' has been given.

INT. CITADEL/ CALAIS - NIGHT

BRIGADIER NICHOLSON, surrounded by the DEAD and WOUNDED,

reads the dispatch from CHURCHILL - grim reading. He lowers his head, stricken, afraid, as he hears... the DRONE of 50 GERMAN

BOMBERS rising... coming closer... closer... He looks up into the dark skies...

EXT. GERMAN BOMBER - NIGHT

From the POV of a GERMAN bomber, at high altitude -

- the CIRCLE OF SMOKE comes beneath it, and in the middle of the circle, perfectly targeted far below, the CITADEL.

Into the CIRCLE of SMOKE the BOMBER drops its PAYLOAD.

INT. MAP ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

ECU on:

is witness to this defeat...

EXT. CALAIS - NIGHT

The BOMBS fall on the town, and at last the CITADEL itself takes a DIRECT HIT. It crumbles, and falls...

67.

INT. WINSTON'S STUDY / 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

ECU ON:

CALAIS FALLEN. NUMBERS OF DEAD OR CAPTURED UNCERTAIN.

GENERAL GORT.

Across the room, WINSTON is at his desk, immobile, nursing a glass of whiskey and soda, as, -

-CLEMMIE enters - and looks at him, with concern.

CLEMMIE:

(worried)

Go to bed, Pig.

He gives no reply

CLEMMIE (CONT'D)

You must sleep.

WINSTON :

Leave me, Clemmie.

CLEMMIE :

The opportunity for doing so passed a long time ago.

She gets an idea, and exits urgently, leaving him alone.

INT. OFFICE/ 10 DOWNING STREET - MORNING

WINSTON, in his SILK ROBE, still sits at his desk. The curtains are drawn. It's MORNING. He walks to a TELEPHONE and dials - ADMIRAL RAMSAY.

WINSTON :

Bertie--what's been the response?

EXT. BATTLEMENTS/ DOVER CASTLE - DAY

ANGLE ON:

a fishing boat, a skiff...

ANGLE ON:

DOVER CASTLE.

ADMIRAL RAMSAY :

It will take time. It's too soon to judge.

WINSTON :

How many boats so far?

ADMIRAL RAMSAY :

It will take time.

68.

WINSTON :

The request for civilian boats
was not a request, Bertie.

It was an order!

In frustration, WINSTON slams down the PHONE, as -
-SAWYERS, the VALET, enters and draws the curtains. As LIGHT
floods the room-CAPTION:

MONDAY, MAY 27, 1940

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

A CROWD of ON-LOOKERS are gathered there, as -
-WINSTON, emerges to get into a GOVERNMENT CAR. He is angst-
ridden now, gives the (POLITE) V-FOR-VICTORY SIGN, (PALM-OUT)
but his heart isn't in it. Hunch-backed, his eyes downcast,
he gets in his GOVERNMENT CAR.

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

WINSTON and the KING at lunch at a DINING TABLE. WINSTON eats
heartily. The KING, with little appetite, smokes, watches WINSTON wash down
the food with hearty gulp of champagne.

GEORGE VI :

(pours drinks)

How do you manage drinking during the day?

WINSTON :

Practice.

After another silence -

GEORGE VI :

I have been asked--if plans should
be drawn--to evacuate my f-family and I--to Canada. I wish to know
the opinion of our prime minister.

WINSTON :

My opinion? My opinion would be that you must do what you feel is right for
yourself, your family,
and for the country. Your survival is paramount. Prime Ministers--we seem to
come and go at an astonishing rate.

GEORGE VI :

Your--p-position in parliament,
I hear, is not strong.

69.

WINSTON :

My party resents how Chamberlain was pushed aside. And many others doubt me. I was not a popular choice.

The KING nods - he himself resented WINSTON - and he turns away briefly, in embarrassment.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

They want Halifax still. But why get rid of the organ grinder and replace him with the monkey.

GEORGE VI :

Lord Halifax is a close personal friend of mine!

WINSTON :

I am unwanted. I've never been trusted since the Gallipoli campaign. Unwanted.

GEORGE VI :

Perhaps--it is because--you scare people.

WINSTON :

Who?!

GEORGE VI :

You scare me.

WINSTON:

(scarily)

What?! What nonsense!

What could be scary about me?

GEORGE VI :

One never knows what is going to come out of your mouth next. Something that will flatter-or wound.

WINSTON :

My emotions are unbridled.

WINSTON drops some meat into the mouth of a CORGIE waiting at WINSTON's feet for food.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

A wildness. In the blood. I share it with my father.

(beat)

Mother also. We lack the gift of-temperance.
70.

GEORGE VI :

Were you close--to your parents?

WINSTON :

My mother was glamorous--butperhaps too widely loved.
This draws an eye-brow rise from the King.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

My father--to me was like God-busy
elsewhere.

The KING smiles. He cannot help but like this man.

INT. CORRIDOR/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

WINSTON walks through the MEN and WOMEN en route to his OFFICE.

He stops before ELIZABETH LAYTON - looks into her eyes. She cansee the
DOUBT, the SADNESS, the PAIN.

WINSTON :

Miss Layton.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

Sir.

WINSTON :

Reach--I need to reach--speak to...

ELIZABETH LAYTON

To?

WINSTON :

3pm.

ELIZABETH LAYTON

3pm, sir?

WINSTON :

Ask Bridges to summon the--the uh-the
War Cabinet for 3pm. Thank you.

She watches him walk away -

- only for WINSTON to be stopped by JOHN EVANS with aCOMMUNIQUE.

JOHN EVANS :

Sir!

WINSTON :

What is it?

JOHN EVANS :

Sir-from Lord Gort, in France.

71.

WINSTON reads the message -- his EYES WIDEN.

WINSTON :

Belgium has fallen. They willsurrender at midnight. Francewill soon follow suit.

REACTION WINSTON: Shock.

INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

WAR CABINET MEETING 3.

PRESENT:

CHAMBERLAIN, HALIFAX, GREENWOOD, ATLEE) and the FOLLOWING(EDEN, CADOGAN, IRONSIDE, BRIDGES.)

A FILM REEL is projected onto a SCREEN. We see images ofGERMAN SPEEDBOATS.

We see the NAZI leadership, holding maps,

pointing out to sea toward Britain...We see a giant LONGRANGE

SUPER CANNON being revealed by GERMAN soldiers. Over

this, we hear -

IRONSIDE :

We have received reports that themost probable method of attack, which Germany might employ againstthis country, is a large fleet offast motor boats, possibly up to200, carrying 100 men apiece tocarry out a seaborne raid on alarge scale. By this means aconsiderable force of the enemycould be landed at many points onthe coast simultaneously with airborne

raids inland. We do not feel

that by naval or air action wecould prevent such a landing.

HALIFAX :

Could you repeat that?

HALIFAX turns to look hard at WINSTON.

IRONSIDE :

We must prepare for the imminentinvasion of our island.

The shock registers on all the faces. Hold on ANTHONY EDEN, ashe lowers his HEAD.

BRIDGES opens a BOTTLE of WHISKEY and starts to pour intotumblers for the non-military personnel.

Silence, as IRONSIDE sits.

72.

Silence. Lost looks. General state of high anxiety. They look to WINSTON for leadership - and he appears to be about to say something in response to this black news - BUT NO WORDS COME.

After this awkward silence - HALIFAX looks directly at WINSTON -

HALIFAX :

Let the record state--that I have received word from the Italian Embassy in London that Italy is prepared to mediate a resolution between Britain, its Allies, and Germany.

The CABINET SECRETARY, records this statement for history.

WINSTON fumes that this has been put on the record and stares with anger at HALIFAX.

WINSTON has been totally put on the spot!

WINSTON:

(sunk by the news)

Perhaps--then-

The CABINET waits on the final INEVITABLE words -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

--the time for such an offer from

us is -

HALIFAX nods at CHAMBERLAIN - success, surely! But WINSTON still can't speak the words they ache to hear.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

-is when Germany has made an unsuccessful attempt to invade this country.

HALIFAX throws his GLASSES on the table in DISBELIEF!

CHAMBERLAIN :

Unsuccessful?!

HALIFAX :

Then you leave me no other option -

CHAMBERLAIN:

(cutting him off)

Winston--you are refusing to grasp the realities of how precarious our position is! Our entire army is about to be wiped out! Terms!

Must! Be struck!

Silence. WINSTON has no room left in which to move. ALL FACES examine his.

73.

WINSTON looks finally to ANTHONY EDEN - his staunchest supporter.

WINSTON :

Anthony?

EDEN's face is pained - as he retains a MEANINGFUL SILENCE. CHURCHILL looks to each MAN around the room, and their faces proclaim their support of HALIFAX's view.

UTTERLY ISOLATED - WINSTON has no choice now.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Then...

(pause)

Then it seems...

(pause)

...we have no choice but to at least consider the path of negotiation.

CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX share an astonished look!

WINSTON (CONT'D)

If Hitler's peace terms are--

overlordship of Central Europe and return of certain German colonies

(pause)

-and if he will leave us our

independence, then - then I would be thankful to get out of our present difficulties. It's quite unlikely that he will make any such offer, but...

WINSTON looks at the CABINET SECRETARY who records for posterity his every word

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...if I were told what the German

terms were, then--I would be--

prepared---to--to consider them.

The SECRETARY notes down this historic concession, and

WINSTON observes this.

HALIFAX :

Thank you. Prime Minister.

CHAMBERLAIN nods at HALIFAX. They have prevailed.

HALIFAX (CONT'D)

(triumphant)

I shall prepare a draft memorandum at once.

Finally, WINSTON nods. CHAMBERLAIN and HALIFAX look at each other again - victory!

74.

EXT. TREASURY DRUM - DAY

HIGH WIDE-SHOT as WINSTON walks through the TREASURY DRUM toward DOWNING STREET.

MILES ALDRIDGE, a lone photographer calls out -

MILES ALDRIDGE :

Mr. Churchill! One picture, one picture, come on sir, one picture!
How about a smile, Prime Minister?

WINSTON steps toward him, and then DELIBERATELY gives the RUDE VERSION of the V-FOR-VICTORY sign (PALM-INWARD). Winston walks on.

INT. BATHROOM/ TREASURY - DAY

CHAMBERLAIN, alone, steadies himself against a wall - his health is fading. He takes out his bottle of MORPHINE and drinks.

INT/EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - NIGHT

KING GEORGE walks out on to a BALCONY and looks down the MALL in BLACKOUT, as his EQUERRY joins him...

GEORGE VI :

I was--ju--just imagining never standing--here again. Perhaps because I am no longer alive, or-or because the palace itself-- is gone.

EQUERRY :

Canada. You must decide, sir. You could rule in exile.

GEORGE VI :

Truly? Is that my fate?

(pause)

You know what? I feel angry. In this moment I'm aware of feeling-bloody angry.

The EQUERRY studies him, as he studies the MALL.

INT. ELIZABETH'S "SHOE-BOX" ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - NIGHT

ELIZABETH LAYTON waits, her fingers at the ready. She sneaks a glance at the CLOCK on her DESK - it is 1.30!

WINSTON is in a BLACK MOOD. He struggles to DICTATE a SPEECH...

75.

WINSTON :

I have...come to...to wonder...in... recent days...whether it was...my duty...

ECU of:

WINSTON (CONT'D)

-to consider...

EVANS enters, carrying a TRAY holding a glass and a bottle.

Elizabeth yawns.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...consider...entering...

EVANS is standing there staring at WINSTON, waiting to knockoff for the night. WINSTON notices -

JOHN EVANS :

Will that be all for tonight, sir?

WINSTON ignores him.

WINSTON :

...entering into negotiations
with...

(unable to speak the dreaded name)

...that...corporal...no...

EVANS departs without an answer, as - WINSTON pours himself a SCOTCH and mumbles to himself -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...gangster--no--tyrant...

...monster of wickedness, no...

WINSTON, wanting more inspiration, turns over a NEWSPAPER and on the COVER is - a LARGE PHOTO of ADOLPH HITLER. WINSTON looks at HITLER'S FACE with LOATHING -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...butcher--no good--monstrous savage?--bloodthirsty
guttersnipe!-housepainter...

(throws newspaper on the ground)

HOUSEPAINTER!

(his head clears)

Where were we? Where - ?

WINSTON, hearing no sound of typing, turns - and sees ELIZABETH LAYTON staring at her TYPEWRITER, frozen -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Well?

76.

ELIZABETH:

(softly)

I didn't understand you, sir.

He doesn't reply. She finally adds -

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

You were -

WINSTON :

Were?

ELIZABETH :

You were - mumbling.

WINSTON :

Mumbling.

ELIZABETH :

Yes sir.

WINSTON, crosses to the other side of her and sits down -he picks up a FRAMED PHOTO of A HANDSOME YOUNG SOLDIER from herdesk.

WINSTON :

Your beau?

ELIZABETH maintains her composure with true grit during thefollowing exchange -

ELIZABETH :

My brother.

WINSTON :

Where is he now?

ELIZABETH :

He was falling back on Dunkirk buthe never made it.

This rocks WINSTON to the core. He studies ELIZABETH, stirred by the beauty of her sad face.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

What?

His eyes moisten - at all she represents, innocence and lossand courage and purity.

WINSTON :

I'm just looking at you.

She turns back to her TYPE-WRITER and sits there waiting, until - feeling awkward - she offers

ELIZABETH :

Shall I read back what we have?

77.

WINSTON :

Please.

ELIZABETH :

"I have come to wonder in recent days whether it was my duty to consider entering into negotiations-with..."

WINSTON ponders his next line - but again, NO WORDS COME.

WINSTON :

With...

EXT. ROOF TOP/ DEFENCE MINISTRY - NIGHT

WINSTON emerges on to the ROOFTOP of the building, and proceeds to LIGHT UP a CIGAR as he takes in the CLEAR NIGHTSKY above him.

WINSTON (O.S.)

...with...

He then hears a DRONE... it is a SINGLE SPITFIRE on NIGHT PATROL. It comes into view, slowly crossing the sky.

WINSTON watches this GHOSTLY SIGHT come and go. The little plane looks very small in such a big expanse of sky...

His eyes are WET with TEARS, as he ANGRILY GRINDS OUT his CIGAR.

The CAMERA rises up - up - into an AERIAL SHOT of -

-WINSTON on the ROOF until - WINSTON is no bigger than a TOY LEAD SOLDIER.

INT. SPARE ROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

CLEMMIE enters and sees -WINSTON, sitting on a large boat-shaped bed in the dark staring into space, amid UNPACKED BOXES. He's at a very low ebb.

CLEMMIE :

Darling, Winston, Darling?

No answer. She goes to him. He's clearly in trouble -

WINSTON :

I -

CLEMMIE :

Shhh. Shhh. You've the full weight of the world on your shoulders. But these inner battles, darling -
78.

WINSTON :

I can't -

CLEMMIE:

-I know, I know - but they have actually trained you for this moment. You are strong because you are imperfect. You are wise because you have doubts. From this uncertainty the wisest words will come. Now. I will let him in.

WINSTON :

Who?

CLEMMIE :

The King.

WINSTON :

Which King? Our King?

CLEMMIE :

Well if it isn't him, it's a wonderful impersonation.

CLEMMIE closes the door. WINSTON looks DISHEVELLED, his suit RUMPLED. A Mess. He makes a small effort to tuck in a shirt and buttons his waistcoat.

KING GEORGE VI enters - the most 'proper' man in Europe. The height of manners and decorum. Wears an IMPECCABLE SUIT.

KING GEORGE VI :

Mr Churchill--I hope you can for-give the late hour but your wife thought tonight would be a good time.

Winston is standing by the bed.

KING GEORGE VI (CONT'D)

Shall we sit?

The KING sits in an ARMCHAIR. Winston sits on the bed.

WINSTON makes a futile effort to put on his public face...

WINSTON :

Something to drink? Er -

KING GEORGE VI :

No, thank you.

WINSTON remains seated on the edge of the bed.

KING GEORGE VI (CONT'D)

I received a visit...

79.

WINSTON :

From?

KING GEORGE VI :

Viscount Halifax.

(beat)

It appears--the prospect of a peace deal with Hitler--has increased dramatically.

WINSTON :

Later today I will address TheHouse. The war cabinet is drafting a letter to Mussolini, asking him to broker talks with Herr Hitler.

GEORGE VI :

Then Halifax was correct.

WINSTON :

I should like to know your mind.

GEORGE VI :

It would be helpful to know yours first.

WINSTON :

Mine? I should like to know it myself.

(beat)

Nations which go down fighting rise again, but those which surrender tamely are finished.

GEORGE VI :

Belgium?

WINSTON :

Collapsed.

GEORGE VI :

Norway

WINSTON :

Holland. France any hour.

After a hard silence -

GEORGE VI :

And the mood of parliament?

WINSTON :

Fear. Panic.

GEORGE VI :

And are you not afraid? At all?

80.

WINSTON :

I am most terribly.

GEORGE VI scrutinizes him closely -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Our defeat in France is the most crushing in the history of the Empire. Support among my party for a campaign of resistance has collapsed.

Finally - GEORGE has heard what he has wanted to hear, and so makes his pledge - He moves to sit next to Winston on the bed

GEORGE VI :

You have my support.

WINSTON cannot believe his ears.

WINSTON :

Your Majesty?

GEORGE VI :

You have my support.

(pause)

I must confess, I had some reservations about you at-at first.

And while some in this country might have dreaded your appointment, none dreaded it like-

like Adolph Hitler.

WINSTON - speechless.

GEORGE VI (CONT'D)

Whoever can strike fear into that brute heart is worthy of all our trust. We shall work together. You shall have my support. At any hour.

(passionate)

Beat the buggers.

WINSTON :

I fear I may be defeated.

GEORGE VI :

You--you once gave me some advice.
Perhaps I can give you some. Go to
the people. Let them instruct you.
Quite silently, they usually do.
But tell them the truth.
Unvarnished.

WINSTON:

I shall speak to parliament, but
without support in my own party, I
must sue for peace.

81.

GEORGE VI :

You warned us this day was coming.
We failed to listen to you. Lift us up, Mr Churchill.

WINSTON :

On certain matters I have few
people with whom I can talk frankly.

GEORGE VI :

Perhaps now we have each other?

WINSTON :

I no longer scare you?

GEORGE VI :

Only a little. I can cope.

WINSTON :

Yes you can. Your majesty.
They remain sitting there, side by side on the boat-shaped bed, friends
hereafter.

INT. DYNAMO ROOM/ BENEATH DOVER CASTLE - MORNING

CAPTION:

RAMSAY, dressed in UNIFORM, is on the phone to -

INT. WINSTON'S BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - MORNING

-WINSTON, in bed, taking the call.

(INTERCUT, as necessary -)

RAMSAY :

We are ready. More or less.

WINSTON :

More or less what, Bertie?

Give me a number!

INT. DYNAMO ROOM/ BENEATH DOVER CASTLE - MORNING

RAMSAY opens the METAL FRENCH DOORS and steps out onto -

EXT. BALCONY/ DYNAMO ROOM/ BENEATH DOVER CASTLE - MORNING

RAMSAY'S POV OF: over 800 SMALL boats, the "LITTLE SHIPS",
ARRIVING or MOORED. NAVAL officers and VOLUNTEERS board them.
A RAG-TAG ARMADA.

82.

RAMSAY :

In total--860 vessels. The biggest
civilian fleet ever assembled.

WINSTON :

May God watch over them all.

The SHOT PULLS AWAY from RAMSAY on the BALCONY -

RAMSAY :

Operation Dynamo waits upon your command...

-and we reveal - that the BALCONY of his BEDROOM is cut
right into the cliff-face of THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER!

WINSTON :

Admiral--you may initiate Dynamo.

-CAMERA pulls back and back - until we see the ENTIRE ENGLISH COASTLINE,
complete with the "DYNAMO" FLEET.

EXT/INT. PRINCES STREET/ WINSTON'S CAR - DAY

WIDE SHOT of - WINSTON'S CAR, moving slowly through the rainy street.

WINSTON, in the back seat, looks out the window at

the human traffic - seems like he's in a gold-fish bowl,

disconnected. He watches as -MEN IN BOWLER HATS and YOUNG

WOMEN in SUMMER DRESSES walk to work. As they rush through the rain
shielding themselves with umbrellas and newspapers.

WINSTON, with an UNLIT CIGAR in his mouth, searches his
pockets for a MATCH. But he can't find his matches.

When the CAR stops at a RED LIGHT -

-TOM LEONARD hears the car door slam. He turns, looks back,
WINSTON has jumped out of his car. Tom Leonard opens his door and stands
looking around for Winston, as crowds rush past in the pouring rain.

INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

BRIDGES puts down the TELEPHONE and turns to the ASSEMBLED WAR CABINET -

BRIDGES :

We've lost the Prime Minister!

INT. ST JAMES PARK UNDERGROUND - DAY

The CROWD of COMMUTERS parts to reveal -

WINSTON, closely studying the UNDERGROUND MAP, trying to work it out, until
he is RECOGNISED for the FIRST TIME.

83.

A great commotion starts, as people watch respectfully their PRIME MINISTER
trying to work out how to use the TUBE.

ANGLE ON:

-a TEENAGE GIRL stands beside him. She looks at the MAP too.

WINSTON notices her.

WINSTON :

Do you know how to use this thing?

TEENAGE GIRL :

Yes -

(recognising him, her eyes
widen)

-yes sir.

WINSTON :

So--tell me--how do I get to Westminster?

TEENAGE GIRL :

Westminster? Um, the District Line.

East. One stop.

WINSTON :

District Line. East. One stop.

Doesn't sound so hard.

TEENAGE GIRL :

No, sir.

WINSTON stalks off, taking the steps down, down. Now everyone is stopping to

let him go by - PEOPLE are STUNNED SPEECHLESS.

INT. PLATFORM/ DISTRICT LINE EASTBOUND/ ST JAMES PARK TUBE - DAY

WINSTON arrives on the PLATFORM as a TRAIN arrives. The busy CHATTER dies down at once - as everyone recognizes WINSTON.

WINSTON :

So--this is the Underground!

He BOARDS.

INT. DISTRICT LINE TRAIN - DAY

He boards the TRAIN with an UNLIT CIGAR in his mouth. COMMUTERS look up and FALL SILENT at once, all RISING to their feet, as if a Lady has entered a room.

WINSTON tips his HAT to them.

84.

WINSTON :

What are you all staring at? Have you never seen a Prime Minister ride on the Underground before.

When he sits, the COMMUTERS follow suit.

The TRAIN doesn't immediately start going. He waits. Then he looks around him.

EVERYBODY is doing their best to be well mannered and not stare, but all are failing! They immediately avert their eyes from WINSTON. WINSTON remembers his unlit CIGAR -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Does anyone have a match?

Down the CARRIAGE an OLD MAN shakes a box of matches. WINSTON rises and goes to him. The OLD MAN strikes a match on the THIRD STRIKE. With a SHAKING HAND he lights WINSTON's CIGAR.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Thank you.

WINSTON offers his hand...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

What is your name?

OLD MAN :

Oliver Wilson, sir.

WINSTON :

And what do you do Mr Wilson?

OLD MAN :

Brick-layer, sir.

WINSTON :

Good!

(loudly)

We shall have great need of bricklayers soon! Business will be looking up!

The GROUP laughs, as - the TRAIN lurches into MOTION.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Progress!

The mood of REVERENCE lightens now, as WINSTON goes to -
-a WOMAN WITH A BABY, touches its head.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

How old?

85.

WOMAN WITH BABY

Eight months, sir. He looks like you.

WINSTON :

Madam, all babies look like me.

The causes widespread DELIGHT. Another woman steps up to shake his hand -
WOMAN WITH BABY

Mrs Jessie Sutton.

Everyone has got the hang of this now, and don't need to be spoken to. They step forward in close order -

YOUNG WOMAN:

(shaking WINSTON's hand)

Abigail Walker.

WEST-INDIAN MAN

(shaking WINSTON's hand)

Marcus Peters.

YOUNG IRISH WOMAN

(shaking WINSTON's hand)

Agnes Dillon.

YOUNG MAN:

(shaking WINSTON's hand)

Maurice Baker.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

(shaking WINSTON's hand)

Alice Simpson.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

(shaking WINSTON's hand)

Miss Margaret Jerome.

WINSTON :

My mother was a Jerome--I expect we are closely related!

Laughter.

He now switches into SPEECH MODE, switches on the inner lights -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

And how are you all bearing up?

A great hearty response.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Of good spirits? Just as well!

(laughter)

We will need them!

(MORE)

86.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Now let me ask you all something-which has been weighing on my mind.

Perhaps you can provide me with an answer.

A hushed SILENCE again - they wait. He studies their faces, reading their minute expressions

WINSTON (CONT'D)

The British people. What is their mood? Is it confident?

YOUNG MAN :

Very.

OLD MAN :

Some people say it's a lost cause.

WINSTON:

Lost causes are the only ones worth fighting for. Now let me ask you this--if the worst came to pass, and the enemy were to appear on these streets, what would you do?

YOUNG MAN :

Fight.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

Fight the fascists!

OLD MAN:

Fight them with whatever we can lay
our hands on!

IRISH WOMAN :

Broom handles if we must!

YOUNG WOMAN :

Street by street!

WEST-INDIAN MAN

They'll never take Picadilly!

WINSTON :

Ha!Ha! Never Picadilly indeed!

The public laugh. WINSTON SMILES, proud of these people -
WINSTON (CONT'D)

And what--what if I put it to you
all--that we might - if we ask
nicely -receive very favourable
terms from Mr. Hitler if we enter
into a peace deal with him right
now? What would you say to that?
87.

ALL :

NEVER! NEVER!

A pause, and then -

ALL (CONT'D)

NEVER! NEVER!

When SILENCE returns, one (young) voice chimes in, late -

YOUNG GIRL :

Never!

WINSTON turns to look for the source of the voice and he
sees, and moves toward, one YOUNG GIRL...

WINSTON :

Will you never give up?

YOUNG GIRL :

Never.

Touched, he crosses and sits down opposite the child

WINSTON:

(to YOUNG GIRL)

"Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the gate:
To every man upon this earth Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds - "

WEST INDIAN MAN:

"- for the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his gods."
Everyone is moved. WINSTON, himself, has tears in his eyes.
He wipes his eyes with a handkerchief.

YOUNG GIRL :

Are you crying?

WINSTON :

I blub a lot. You'll have
to get used to it.
The TRAIN stops.
WINSTON (CONT'D)
What stop is this?
MIDDLE AGED WOMAN
Westminster.

WINSTON :

That's my stop.
88.
Before stepping off the TRAIN he stops to look into the faces of the good,
brave, true people. Emboldened by their simple courage, he exits.
INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY
WAR CABINET MEETING 4.

PRESENT:

(WINSTON's CHAIR remains empty): (CHAMBERLAIN, HALIFAX,
GREENWOOD, ATLEE) and the FOLLOWING (EDEN, ALEXANDER,
SINCLAIR, COOPER, CADOGAN, ANDERSON, POUND, DOWDING,
IRONSIDE, BRIDGES, ISMAY, NICHOLL, WILKINSON.)
All are actively discussing the wording of a PEACE OFFER.
HALIFAX, leading the formulation of the offer, looks very pleased with the
current situation.

HALIFAX :

The Memorandum--titled "Suggested
Approaches to Italy"--is as follows...

CADOGAN :

"If Signor Mussolini will cooperate with us in securing a settlement of all European questions which safeguard the independence and security of the allies..."

CAMERA moves in on: WINSTON'S SILVER BOX OF MATCHES.

EXT HOUSE OF COMMONS - DAY

WINSTON comes up from WESTMINSTER TUBE STATION and crosses to PARLIAMENT.

CADOGAN (O.S.)

"...and could be the basis of a just and durable peace for Europe, we will undertake at once to discuss, with the desire to find solutions, the matters in which Signor Mussolini is primarily interested..."

INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS - WESTMINSTER HALL - DAY

Deep in anxious thought, WINSTON stalks in to the House of Commons and walks down a long hallway....

89.

CADOGAN ((O.S.))

.. "We understand that he desires the solution of certain Mediterranean questions: and if he will state in secrecy what these are, France and Great Britain will at once do their best to meet those wishes".

INT. STAIRS AND CORRIDORS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

To the first floor and is met by a relieved JOHN EVANS -

JOHN EVANS :

Sir! The War Cabinet is waiting!

WINSTON :

I am due to address the Outer Cabinet. I haven't spoken to them since the formation of the new government.

Moving up the HALLWAY, WINSTON and EVANS pass huddled groups of YOUNGER MP'S -

WINSTON STOPS, thinks, and then turns back to them.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Good day.

(pause)

I am--about to speak to my Outer

Cabinet in my rooms and--I extend
the invitation to any of you whowould care to join them.
WINSTON forces a SMILE, then departs.
After a moment, the MP's rise, look at each other, murmur,
rise and follow him.

INT. COMMITTEE ROOM/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

The ROOM is now FULL with 40 MEN - CABINET MEMBERS and YOUNG
BACK-BENCHERS.

WINSTON enters, with JOHN EVANS - shakes the hand of YOUNG
CONSERVATIVE MP (ERNLE HASTINGS).

The DOORS are CLOSED.

WINSTON stands in front of the GATHERING.

They wait for him to speak.

At first no words come from WINSTON, and then -
90.

WINSTON:

Later today--I will address the
House on the matter of our nation's
security.

(silence)

At this very moment the War Cabinet is drafting papers that lay out
ourwillingness to enter into peacetalks with Herr Hitler, via his
lacky, Signor Mussolini.

(pause)

I have thought carefully in thelast days--whether

(pause)

-whether it was part of my duty--

to consider entering into negotiations with -

(beat)

-that Man.

He puts on his GLASSES and takes out a MATCH-BOOK - on which is written the
names of the people he met in the Underground.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

But then I spoke--with Oliver

Wilson -

(starts to read names from his matchbook)

-Mrs Jessie Sutton, Mrs Abigail

Walker...

ANGLE ON:

written there...

REACTION:

people are...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...Marcus Peters, Agnes Dillon,
Maurice Baker, Alice Simpson, and
Miss Margaret Jerome--brave, good,
true citizens of this kingdom--and
they argued, strongly, that it was
idle to think that, if we tried to
make peace now, we should get
better terms than if we fought it
out. The Germans, Mr Baker felt,
would demand - in the name of
disarmament - our naval bases, and
much else. And I think he's right.
Jessie Sutton, speaking for many,
believes we should then become a
slave state, though a British
Government - which would be
Hitler's puppet - would be set up -
under Mosley or some such person.
91.

ERNLE HASTINGS :

No!

WINSTON:

And I join with them in asking a
further question, a question I put

to you:

end of all that?

He SURVEYS their silent UNCERTAIN FACES.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

(silence)

Perhaps some might benefit--thepowerful might be able to parlaygood
terms--preserved in their
country redoubts, out of sight ofthe Swastika flying on BuckinghamPalace,
over Windsor, draped onthese very buildings -
BACK-BENCHER 1

Never!

WINSTON:

So I come to you--to learn your
minds in this grave hour.

The FACES of the MP's are RESOLUTE, MOVED, READY TO FIGHT.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

You see, we do still have immense reserves and advantages...

A NOISE begins to build in the room, mumbling, turning into shouts, over which WINSTON must shout -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

...and it was pointed out to me -

(holding up list of names from Underground)

- by my new friends--that you might

even rise up and tear me down were I for one moment to contemplate parley or surrender.

A spontaneous round of emotional applause. It surprises WINSTON. It surprises even those who are applauding.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Were they wrong?

ALL :

NO! NO!

WINSTON :

Then...then...then -

92.

The DIN dies down. When silence returns...

WINSTON (CONT'D)

-then--it appears to be your will

also, that if this long island story of ours is to end at last, then it should only be -

(pause, then powerfully -)

-when each one of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground!

A GIANT HOORAY goes up and the YOUNG MPs RUSH UP to WINSTON, who is soon SWAMPED by MPs shaking his HAND, PATTING HIM on the back - a MASSIVE SIGN OF SUPPORT.

INT. WAR CABINET ROOM/ WAR ROOMS - DAY

WINSTON somberly addresses the WAR CABINET (plus ANTHONY EDEN).

WINSTON :

And when I asked to know their

minds there occurred a

demonstration which, considering

the character of the gathering,

quite surprised me. There is no doubt that if we falter at all in the leading of the nation we should all be hurled out of office.

I am sure now that every Minister on both sides of the house is ready to be

killed quite soon, and have all his family and possessions destroyed, rather than give in. In this they represent almost all the people. It falls to me in these coming days and months to express their sentiments. There shall be no negotiated peace...

(to HALIFAX)

..and you must each do now as you see fit.

(beat)

I must now address parliament, and I'm yet to write a word of my speech.

WINSTON grabs his SILVER BOX OF MATCHES left earlier on the table -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

There's the buggers.

-then walks out, passing the tall IRONSIDE, and clapping him on the shoulder.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

"Tiny".

93.

GENERAL IRONSIDE - having his war at last - smiles.

IRONSIDE:

Sir.

EDEN happily follows his LEADER now.

REACTION:

CHAMBERLAIN avoids HALIFAX's eyes.

ATTLEE and GREENWOOD smile.

INT. CORRIDOR - WAR ROOMS / ELIZABETH'S ROOM - DAY

WINSTON walks toward ELIZABETH LAYTON's "Shoe-Box" room, knocks, opens the door, remains in the doorway -

WINSTON :

Miss Layton?

ELIZABETH looks up from her work -

ELIZABETH :

Sir?

WINSTON :

I'm in need of you.

INT. WAR CABINET ROOM - DAY

HALIFAX detains CHAMBERLAIN as the CABINET leaves the meeting -

HALIFAX :

We must both now resign. Force a vote of no confidence. I have your word?

CHAMBERLAIN :

Let us--let us go to the Commons first. Join our colleagues. And speak after the Prime Minister's address.

CHAMBERLAIN takes his coat and leaves HALIFAX worried.

INT. BEDROOM/ 10 DOWNING STREET - DAY

CLEMMIE is getting dressed, and then turns to look at herself in the mirror, and reveal -

-that she is in UNIFORM (Red Cross).

94.

CLEMMIE:

(to her reflection)

Here lies a woman, who is always tired--for she lived in a world where too much was required.

EXT. PARLIAMENT - DAY

CAMERA moves in on WINSTON'S PARKED CAR, and we gradually hear the sound of - TYPING.

Through the WINDOW of the CAR we finally see -

WINSTON, dictating to ELIZABETH LAYTON, her TYPE-WRITER on her knee going clack, clack, clack. (WINSTON gesticulates as he composes the crucial words.)

INT. COMMONS/ PARLIAMENT - DAY

WINSTON addresses a PACKED HOUSE of COMMONS. A CROWD of some FIVE HUNDRED listen, with more in the GALLERY. Among the GALLERY crowd, JOHN EVANS.

ELIZABETH LAYTON arrives late, and leans over the hand-rail, looking down anxiously at -

WINSTON, as he launches his final assault -

WINSTON :

Turning once again--to the question

of invasion--I would observe that

there has never been a period in all these long centuries of which we boast, when an absolute

guarantee against invasion could have been given to our people.

ANGLE ON:

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I have, myself--full confidence

that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best

arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once more able to defend

our island home, to ride out the

storm of war, and to outlive the

menace of tyranny -

INT. LIVING ROOM/ DOWNING STREET - DAY

CLEMMIE, in her UNIFORM, listens to WINSTON's broadcast on the RADIO, as she has her portrait photographed by CECILBEATON. She is awkward in front of the camera.

95.

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

The KING smokes as he listens to the same broadcast.

INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER - DAY

WINSTON:

-if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do.

That is the resolve of His

Majesty's Government - every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation.

The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will

defend to the death their native

soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength.

ANGLE ON:

already knows by heart -

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail.

We shall go on to the end.

We shall fight in France--we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island - whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; We shall never surrender, and if, which I do not for a moment believe, this

island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old!

96.

The LABOUR BENCHES begin to wave their papers in the air and call their approval, (it is against Parliamentary etiquette to ever clap in the House of Commons).

WINSTON'S children bang their hands on the woodwork.

WINSTON'S CONSERVATIVE colleagues all look to CHAMBERLAIN.

CLOSE ON:

closes his eyes, knowing what is coming next -

-CHAMBERLAIN TAKES OUT HIS WHITE HANDKERCHIEF, and taps his forehead with it. It's enough. The CONSERVATIVE

FACTION, ignited, rises to their feet in THUNDEROUS SUPPORT of WINSTON.

REACTION HALIFAX: Defeat.

WINSTON turns to ANTHONY EDEN, registering surprise at the strength of support, and winks -

EDEN grins and SHAKES his FRIEND'S HAND.

EDEN :

Changed your mind?

WINSTON :

Those who never change their mind never change anything.

The UPROAR in the HOUSE continues, those in the gallery begin to throw their parliamentary papers into the air which then rain down into the chamber.

STANHOPE :

What just happened?

HALIFAX :

He just mobilized the English language--and sent it into battle.

Every man is on his feet waving their parliamentary papers and throwing them into the air, shouting and stamping.

Smiling with due deference WINSTON takes up his things and walks down the central aisle of the house as papers continue to rain down from the gallery like ticker tape or confetti.

As the GREAT DOORS of the COMMONS close behind him - the screen becomes BLACK.

Up with END CAPTIONS:

97.

ALMOST ALL OF THE 300,000 TROOPS AT DUNKIRK
WERE CARRIED HOME BY WINSTON'S CIVILIAN FLEET
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN DIED SIX MONTHS LATER
VISCOUNT HALIFAX WAS SOON REMOVED BY WINSTON
FROM THE WAR CABINET AND SENT TO WASHINGTON
ON MAY 8, FIVE YEARS LATER,
BRITAIN AND ITS ALLIES WOULD DECLARE VICTORY
WITHIN WEEKS OF VICTORY, CHURCHILL AND HIS PARTY WERE
VOTED OUT OF OFFICE BY THE BRITISH PEOPLE.
"SUCCESS IS NOT FINAL, FAILURE IS NOT FATAL: IT IS THE
COURAGE TO CONTINUE THAT COUNTS."

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Roll End Credits.