

Wright Patman: The Last Populist

Text on Screen with Film Title Enlarged, and second sentence smaller: Wright Patman: The Last Populist. From 1928 to 1975 Wright Patman served the Texas First District (Northeast Texas) in the House of Representatives.

Scene 1: Opening Narration

(showing a series of individual pictures to go along with the following text like a story book.)

Narrator: In 1875 what became known as the Populist movement began in north Texas. The populists were farmers who saw their way of life being destroyed by low cotton prices, a lack of cheap credit, and unscrupulous big businesses. In the 1880s and 1890s, Texans like Charles Macune, and Cyclone Davis advocated reforms that would provide aid for cash-poor family farmers. Though the populist movement met a crushing defeat with the Election of William McKinley for President in 1896, populism did not entirely die in Texas. It reemerged in a twentieth-century guise, with the politics of Wright Patman (shows actual picture of Wright Patman). Like earlier populists, the Northeast Texas Congressman looked to government to loosen the money supply and provide special support for family farmers and small businesses. Congressman Wright Patman (Shows picture of our actor as Wright Patman) became a great enemy of high interest rates, tight credit, big banks, chain stores, the Federal Reserve, and Republican leaders from Andrew Mellon to Richard Nixon who, to him, represented the arrogance of privilege. This is his story.

Scene 2: In the Primitive Baptist Church

Text on Screen: Hughes Springs, Texas 1910

(Choir sings “What a Friend we have in Jesus.” The camera focuses on the hard face of Elder John, then on the attuned face of Patman, then on the spiritually euphoric face of Emma.)

John (preaching almost violently, contrasting with the slow motion before it, holding up a dollar bill): The love of money *is* the root of all evil. (let's the dollar fall to the ground) But the World hates the truth—and that's why the path is wide (arms show a widening path) that leads to destruction! Ecclesiastes 8:17 notes "No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun." Without consulting what 1 Corinthians 3 says is the "secret and hidden wisdom of God," without consulting the Bible (upholds the King James Bible, and then shouts) we have only Babel (makes his hand look like a babbling duck). And that is why, brothers and sisters, that is why we Primitive Baptists do not sing with devil's bagpipes, or a piano, why we do not have Sunday School, or mission boards, or seminaries, because none of these things—NONE! (worked up) is even mentioned in Holy Writ! Oh, Oh, brothers and sisters (holding the Bible up), therefore keep your eyes fixed on the author and perfecter of our faith.

Congregation: Amen, Brother!

(Camera takes a look at Wright Patman's face. He is quiet and absorbed with the message. The camera then does a close up of the Bible being held by the Elder and moves onto the fallen dollar bill with the choir finishing out the verse of, "What a Friend we Have in Jesus")

Scene 3: Pauline and Patman by Big Tree: Early Flirtation

Text on Screen: Hughes Springs, Texas 1912

Patman: (Striking an oratorical pose) And so I tell you my fellow classmates of Hughes Springs High School –

Pauline: (interrupting) Why don't you smile more?

(Patman knits his brow)

(Pauline approaches him boldly and tries to knead his face into a smile)

Patman (backing away): Some issues are too serious to be spoken of with a smile, Pauline.

Pauline: (with a kind of liquidy flirtation, rather than lecturing) Yes, but the most *serious* issue of life is being happy.

Patman: Yes, and if you can fake being happy, you can have a girlfriend like Pauline Weaver. Now you are my audience. You cannot keep talking.

Pauline: (sarcastically saluting) Yes, Sir, Mr. Valedictorian! I'm listening.

Patman: My fellow classmates, envy and scorn are the two heads of the same coin, and decadence and poverty are two symptoms of the same disease. We have a mission to change this – to make and give opportunities. We now plunge forward, suspicious of failure and confident of success. For we know that failure is not fate – but folly! Failure is not a lack of power but a lack of aim!

(Patman pauses, letting the dramatic climax settle into the “audience”)

Pauline: (clapping her hands softly) Very good, Mr. Valedictorian.

Patman: Energy is lost... (He pauses, camera gazes at Pauline's admiring face) ...in diffusion.

Scene 4: Outdoor swing, with Pauline, Mr. Weaver (her father), and a barefoot WP

Text on Screen: Hughes Springs, Texas 1912

(Patman is far off but walking vigorously toward the scene)

Mr. Weaver: So that Patman boy is courting you, is he?

Pauline: (swinging) Yes, Father.

Mr. Weaver: You know, Pauline, there's something I've been meaning to say. Your mother and I, we don't want you to be trapped.

Pauline: Trapped? What do you mean, Father?

Mr. Weaver: What I mean is, I don't think you ought to... *trust* a boy who plows barefoot. If his situation is so poor that he can't even afford proper shoes, then you are not to marry him, understand? A poor life is not the life I would have for my daughter. I don't mean to hurt you, but I want you to stop seeing this Patman boy anymore.

(He leaves just as WP arrives. WP looks from the door Mr. Weaver just disappeared behind, to Pauline, who looks very down)

WP: Is something troubling you, Pauline?

Pauline: It's just... (Because she is looking down, she notices his bare feet and frowns, lifting her gaze to him) Where are your shoes, Wright?

WP (suddenly embarrassed): Well, they're... Uh.

Pauline: You work in your bare feet?

WP: Yes, well, it's just that our spread last year was not very good (blushing, but trying hard to cover it up) what with the weevils and... and...

Pauline: And your family is very poor, isn't it? (Long pause as she stares him down and he looks away avoiding the question) Wright, how are you going to do anything if you don't have any money? And how... how could you expect me to be with you if you don't have any money? I... I (struggling) can't see you anymore. I'm sorry...

(She leaps from the swing and runs into the house, shutting the door behind her)

Scene 5: Mother and Son: 1914 in dilapidated room

Text on Screen: 1914 Hughes Springs

Patman: Things have always been hard, but now I just don't see how I am going to have tuition for Cumberland Law School.

Emma (optimistically): Well, those four bales of cotton you've saved up are going to fetch a good price. You wait and see.

Patman: Yes, but only if I can even trust that warehouse man in Galveston.

Emma: Even if he does shave a little off the top, the price is only going to go up because those crazy Europeans are getting themselves in a Big War and...

(Emma holds the hand of her son)

Emma: And while they do that, you *are* going to Cumberland!

Scene 6: WP by Shack, Encountered by Clay

Text on Screen: Cumberland School of Law, Lebanon, Tennessee, 1915

Clay: Hey, Wright!

WP (coming out) Clay, you have come to my humble abode.

Clay (glances around at his shanty): It's humble, all right. I never realized you were... so far from the college."

WP: Oh, you've brought me the book. Thanks!

(Clay gives WP the volume)

Clay (still eying the place): It looks like you might need more than just Blackstone's Commentaries.

WP: Yes, well, that's a long story. I had saved up a few cotton bales to pay my way; however, they were damaged in a Galveston storm. I only got \$52 for all of them. More than that, my suitcases were stolen in the train station in Texarkana.

Clay: That's poor luck, my friend. Looks like you're now plumbing the depths of the poverty line.

WP: I know I will make it, Clay. I just have to stay focused (directs his attention to Clay's book). I have not had, and do not intend to have, even one cold drink. I have promised myself I will not smoke one cigar, spend one dime, or give any of my time to a young lady!"

(Clay stares at WP for a moment before a smile breaks across his face)

Clay: With that kind of focus, I don't doubt you *will* make it, my friend.

Scene 7: Law Office scene with WP and Emma and potted flower

Text on Screen: Linden, Texas, 1919

Emma: (euphoric) My son is a lawyer, I knew the day would come! See here? I brought a flower for your desk!

WP (impatiently): Thank you, Mother, but what I really need now is a customer.

(WP looks deeply thoughtful)

Emma: (approaching the subject tentatively) You know, my son, folks in Linden would probably feel a lot more comfortable hiring you if you were in more of a... family way.”

WP: Mother, please, not again. I simply don't have the money to settle down.”

Emma: (arms on hips) “Stop your dismal croaking. First, even if you only have apple boxes for shelves and cotton sacks for sheets, a good wife will turn your house into a home *and* save you money. Second, You are a war veteran, a young lawyer, and a tee-totaling Baptist. You are the most eligible bachelor the town of Linden has ever seen!”

WP (smiles): Well, Mother, I have to give you credit for trying.

Scene 8: Parlor Scene, WP and Merle

Sound: Choir sings “Drink to me only with Thine Eyes”)

Text on Screen: Winnsboro, Texas 1919

(WP knocks on the front door and Merle lets him in)

Merle (half teasing, half not): So you have at last come to ask for my hand in marriage, insuring that a number of other young men, who just happen to be coming home from war in Europe now, won't ask me first.

WP: (smiles goodheartedly) Stooping to threats, my dear? Why, that's not like you at all.

Merle: (smiles playfully) Of course it's not. Threats are so indiscrete for a woman... and so unnecessary. I only jest. But tell me: why have you come here, if not to propose?

WP: I have simply come to see your beautiful face on such a fair day. There is no other reason.

Merle: (blushing, but shrugging his words off as if they meant nothing to her) With such a reply, you must think you are very charming.

WP: (noticeably flustered) On the contrary, I'm sure that charm is very far from me... But I am not without confidence, for though I may not have charm, I do have something those other young men you mentioned before do not have.

Merle: (looking at him more intently now) Oh? And what is that?

WP: A mission.

Merle: A mission? A mission to do what, exactly?

WP: To help the less fortunate.

(Merle stares into his eyes as though she discovered something in him she had never known was there before, but then crosses her arms)

Merle: (teasing him) Oh, so you think I'm less fortunate?

WP: (Flustered again, he stutters) No, I don't think your less fortunate... I think (taking her left hand firmly in his, he smiles) I think I'm fortunate to have you. That is, if you would first have me.

(Merle flushes and turns away, her hand still in his)

Merle: So you at last confess that you *were* going to propose. (WP reaches into his pocket and pulls out a ring) Imagine the time we could have saved if you would have just been so forward in the first place. But worse still, it's Valentines Day and you have brought no present –

(Merle stops short, for WP slips the ring on her finger and releases her hand. Merle first gazes upon the ring in surprise, then smiles warmly)

WP: Will you marry me, Merle Connor?

Merle: (flushed and smiling, but still facing away from him) You certainly ask difficult questions...

WP: But the answer is simple.

(Merle then turns around and embraces WP, and he catches her)

WP: Is that a yes?

Scene 9: Wright, Merle, and Emma at a Restaurant

Text on Screen: Mount Pleasant, Texas, 1921

Emma (looking at the two newlyweds): Your wedding was beautiful. And your house – how could I have known that anyplace would be so pleasant? Now you have some more news for me?

WP: Merle is expecting!

Emma (embracing Merle): Oh, how wonderful!

Merle: It would be even more wonderful if your son wasn't running for a seat in the Texas House of Representatives. Just when I am going to have a baby, he abandons me.

WP: I can do so much more for our people by changing the laws in Austin than I can by coping with those same laws here. Besides, the recognition will increase my practice!

Emma (ignoring her son): So what will you be naming the child?

Merle: Well, if it's a boy – (emphatically) Connor.

Emma: (surprised in a kind of unpleasant way) Oh, after your last name . . .
(trying to take this in)

Scene 10: Legislative Hall, WP and Opponent.

Text on Screen: House of Representatives, Austin, Texas, 1921.

WP: Mr. Speaker, our committee is proposing a resolution today that proscribes the Texas Ku Klux Klan as an impertinence and instructs their national leader, William Joseph Simmons, to stay out of the great state of Texas.

Opponent: So we have a leader who tries to bring back some fundamental decency into our nation and you want to treat him like an anarchist?

WP: Mr. Williams, the Klan is an un-American plague, whose sores of hatred and discord are breaking out in every town in Texas. The Klan divides the poor and flogs innocent people without trial. They are making their own law, rather than looking to our government to make the laws.

Scene 11: At the Patman Household.

Text on Screen: Linden, Texas 1921

Merle: And another, thing. Connor knows when you are not home. He wakes up all hours of the night, and I am the one who –

(A knock on the door cuts her off)

Merle (Very suspiciously and forlornly): Who could that be?

WP: (answers the door)

(Two men with Ku Klux Klan regalia appear)

(Merle screams and WP steps in front of her)

First Klan man (motioning with his hands): Don't be upset, Mrs. Patman. We are not here to hurt you.

Patman: (outraged) Then why are you here? Have you no respect for the family at all?

Second Klan man: Listen Patman (pushes him by the shoulder). We are here to warn you: Stop making your tirades against the Klan.

Patman: I will do that the moment you stop whipping innocent people.

First Klan man: If you want to join the drunks and adulterers who oppose our great order, you will soon lose your seat and your practice. (looking down his nose) You have no idea how popular we are in Texas.

Patman: If I lose my seat and my practice, then so be it. I will not stop opposing you and your ways, for they are wrong. Just look at what you are doing here – frightening my wife and child in the name of your so-called Klan virtue.

First Klan man: Mark, my words Patman. If you keep opposing the rights of our brothers, you are going to become a nobody. We are going to put you out of business here in Cass County.

Scene 12: Texarkana Office

Text on Screen: Texarkana 1927

Chamber of Commerce President (on the phone): So how was the Texarakana Chamber of Commerce Meeting last night? ...Yes, I believe I know the one you mean. Patman, right? ...Yeah, the man who campaigned against the Ku Klux Klan in Austin and also face a Klan opponent in the election in Cass County, beating him. He was also in the Texas House, right? ...What???. ...You must be joking. ...He shut the whole place down just because of alcohol? He can't do that! I don't care if he is the new District Attorney, he can't do that! ...Do you think he realizes that he just grievously offended some of the wealthiest residents of our city???. ...So you do... Well, I knew he was shutting down cathouses, but I never would have thought he would try something like this!

Scene 13: Bootlegger's office with Henchman:

Text on Screen : Texarkana, Texas 1927.

Italian Bootlegger (with a Godfather Accent, and moustache): The new District Attorney, Patman, has caused quite a stir in this town. I, for one, feel that he has frustrated my affairs long enough. That being said, I have ten grand and a train ticket to Mexico for the man who manages to... still him.

Henchman: In a city like Texarkana with only four Italians I trust, this will certainly be no easy task.

Italian Bootlegger: Hence the high pay. But, if you don't feel confident, find me someone who does and I'll give him the job.

Henchman: (smiles)

Scene 14: President of Chamber of Commerce to Black-Hatted Gunslinger

Chamber of Commerce President: It must be tough being in so much debt.

Gunslinger: The sentence I got for defending myself hurt my affairs like sin. The lawmen in this town are as crooked as ever.

CC President: Yes, the lawmen... And what happened to you can happen to anyone else because of them, can't it? If you could only provoke a certain someone to draw on you... By the way, did you know the District Attorney, Wright Patman, carries around a Smith and Wesson? That man... He certainly knows how to cause trouble for people like you and I, doesn't he? I would give ten grand to see that trouble disappear. I would give ten grand to see Patman disappear.

Scene 15: Patman Home in Texarkana.

Text on Screen: Patman Home, Texarkana, Texas, 1927.

(Patman, secretly checking his pistol, tries not to show Merle)

Merle: Wright, I never wanted to be a discouragement to you and as your wife, I will always stand by you... but I'm scared. I'm scared for your sake as well as for the sake of our children. I don't want to be folding your laundry one day and have some stranger come and tell me that my husband's been murdered and his children are fatherless. If that ever happens... (shaking her head as if she cannot finish the thought)

WP: My dear Merle, that will never happen. (He catches her hand and smiles as if everything is well) Tonight, I will go to the meeting and see what I can do to

help. The Mayor and Chief of Police want to run down some of the threats we have been receiving from bootleggers, so I have to be there. But don't worry. Everything will be fine.

Merle: People only say that when the exact opposite is true. I'm really worried about you, Wright. Why do you risk so much?

WP: Nothing great is ever accomplished without risk. You know this. And you know that our people are never going to get anywhere if they are drunk. Merle, we live in the very same city as our nation's esteemed father of prohibition, Morris Sheppard. We are part of a generation that is remaking the world.

Merle: (frowning with worry) Yes, but...

WP: (speaking quickly) Do you remember when I asked you to marry me?

Merle: (She is slightly taken aback by the question, then smiles wanly) Of course. I said yes. But what does that have to do –

WP: I told you I had a mission that day – a mission to help the less fortunate. Do you remember what you said to me when I told you this? You said that my mission was your mission. Don't lose faith in our mission now, Merle. Don't lose faith in *me* now. I must go, but I will be back before long.

(WP leaves, looking furtively about)

Scene 16: Night Scene as WP is stalked

(Henchman sees Patman leave, runs up behind him with pistol, getting ready to take a shot)

Gunslinger (appears in front of Patman and confronts him): Good evening, District Attorney.

(WP is taken by surprise)

WP (suspiciously): A good evening to you, as well.

Gunslinger: Strange running into you like this –

WP (interrupting): Is it?

Gunslinger (continuing where he left off): But since you're here, there is something I have been curious about. I wonder why there is more crime in Texarkana now than ever before, and why law abiding citizens like myself have to wear a gun belt to stay alive?

WP: Now listen, sir, I know why you're here, but I advise against doing anything hasty now. You see, even if you kill me, there are people behind me who will be very happy to use the incident against you. You will regret it.

Gunslinger (sees Italian assassin behind him): All I'm trying to do is defend myself in the town I live in. It's not right to feel unsafe in your own town...

(Henchman draws gun at Patman and Gunslinger shoots Henchman down)

WP (realizing he has not been shot, he turns around, sees the henchmen, and rushes to him breathlessly): "Good shot, Cowboy! You saved my life and bagged Tony Massioli, a prominent bootlegger."

Scene 17: Home of Patman

Text on Screen: Texarkana 1927

Merle: (meticulously folding clothes)

Emma: "I'm glad to be here, so thank you for having me. I just can't seem to find a way to talk directly with Wright these days."

Merle: His time is precious. And if he doesn't cultivate strong ties with the right people, something very bad could happen... (Brightening) But guess what?

Emma: What?

Merle: "He has decided to run for congress against Eugene Black."

Emma: Congress! My boy... (in a mixture of pride and semi-anguish) Merle, tell me more.

Merle: He has already told me that he's prepared to spend our \$3,000 nest egg on the campaign so that he can battle for the people's rights... I only wish he would battle a little more for our own rights.

Emma: (blushing with a hint of poverty) I wish I could help dear.

Merle: Don't even think that way. Wright is just glad that he was able to buy the house and its land for you when he did.

Emma: Oh, Wright is such an ambitious man. I still cannot believe that the Cass County land he received in payment for his legal help had oil (pauses. Merle is starting to ignore her) (musically) One thing does concern me, Merle. Are you going ahead and joining the First Baptist Church?

Merle: Yes we are. We are both getting baptized.

Emma: That is a good thing, but why First Baptist?

Merle (angrily): And why not?

Emma: So many things are done in these big-city Baptist churches that are not in the Bible. I'm concerned for you.

Merle: (defiantly) I don't know why you should be so concerned. Besides, there is another reason why Wright is not going to be a Primitive Baptist any longer.

Emma: (jumping on her) What's that?

Merle: He has joined the Freemasons.

Emma: (becoming upset) What?! Taking oaths, fingering so-called holy books that are not the Bible, calling God idolatrous names?

Merle: Mother, he –

Emma: No, don't explain... I know Wright. He wants to help the common people and he would do whatever it takes to do so. Even if it's something that's... wrong. (Picks up her shawl to go)

Scene 18: Encounter with Cyclone Davis, Populist Leader and member of the House of Representatives (1915-17).

Text on Screen: Sulphur Springs, Texas Office of Hon. Cyclone Davis, 1928.

WP (entering office)

Davis: Well if it isn't the District Attorney.

WP: (Shaking hands). I am pleased to meet the great Texas leader of the Populist Party.

Davis (piercing through the flattery): I'm sure. (Suspiciously) Patman, why have you come here? (Motions for WP to sit down)

WP: Mr. Davis, I have decided to run against Eugene Black for Texas's First District to Congress and I would so treasure your consideration in this.

Davis: Running against Eugene Black, eh? Good . . . Good. That devil's been snorting like a Stallion and treading the grain like a heifer ever since he made it to Congress. He's done nothing but trample the McNary Haugen Farm bill. (lightens up sarcastically while mimicking a sissy's voice) Says its OK if the farmers in his own district have to live off hazelnuts. And they can go on getting nothing for their cotton when all the world needs it.

WP: (tries to sneak in a comment but is cut off) I agree and –

Davis: (speeds up, emphatically) You can take that liar out to the woodshed on that. (angry) People in our district are getting so frustrated they're leaving! (Pause, philosophically) It just no longer makes sense to be a farmer in Northeast Texas these days.

WP: Better prices and easier credit are two things I have been working toward, Mr. Davis.

Davis: (Pause, sits back in seat) Well, I wouldn't be too starry-eyed yet. Did you hear that the oil companies just laid-off 16 Senators? (Overdrawn, old-fashioned laugh). The federal government is so crooked they couldn't talk straight even if they wanted to.

WP: Mr. Davis, do I have your support?

Davis: That depends... Do you support McNary Haugen?

WP: With all my heart.

Davis: Why?

WP: I will do whatever it takes to make our cotton and cottonseed fetch better prices.

Davis: What about money?

WP: I deplore high interest rates.

Davis: Well, you're certainly singing on key... (Suspiciously) I'll have to have a better look at the big picture, but until I learn more, here (handing WP a cigar) You're my man. You're the first person in this race that has come for my consideration.

Scene 19: Second Narrator Part, and return to picture-book style

Wright Patman waged one of the toughest campaigns of his life in 1928. His opponent had been Eugene Black, a former supporter of Patman's career, who had also attended Cumberland Law School. Patman charged that Black had the support of the conservative presidential candidate, Herbert Hoover, and opposed the McNary Haugen bill that could bring prosperity to the farms of Northeast Texas. In a major upset, Patman, sticking to the economic issues affecting tenant farmers and small business owners, won the election.

Scene 20: Lavish Meal at the Mellon's

Text on Screen: Washington D.C. 1929

Sycophant: I propose a toast – to prohibition! (Snickers)

Andrew Mellon: Oh, come now. It's no sin to drink alcohol, especially when you have my foresight.

Sycophant: Foresight?

Suzy: Yes, try 10,000 bottles of good wine and another 10,000 bottles of Guinness Ale purchased ahead of time. This should last Andrew and I as long as any silly prohibition lasts. (Giggles, and looks at Mellon) ...you think of everything.

Sycophant: But Mr. Mellon, how did you get all that English ale?

Andrew Mellon: My former father-in-law owned the Guinness Brewery.

Suzy: Andrew could arrange for just about anything. Isn't it true, Dear, that after John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford, you are the third wealthiest man in America?

Mellon (melancholy): That's what they say.

Suzy (feigning interest to liven Mellon's mood): So tell us then: What do you really think about Herbert Hoover's election?

Sycophant: That Republicans wanted Hoover more than Mr. Mellon for the presidency shows again how little Americans understand economics. Hoover's only saving grace as president was that he at least had the good sense to re-appoint you, Mr. Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury.

Suzy: Everyone is saying now that Andrew is the greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton!"

Sycophant: "On the contrary. Mr. Mellon is the greatest Secretary of the Treasury of all times. Unlike Hamilton, Mr. Mellon has served under, not one, but three presidents. He has also cut the federal deficit by 50 percent, more than Hamilton ever did.

Mellon: What worries me about the election is that Hoover wears his heart on his sleeve. He's the savior of Europe. I just hope he doesn't shred the moral fiber of Americans.

Sycophant: On another note, what do you think about the Congressional Elections?

Mellon: That worries me, too. The McNary Haugen bill, which would set up artificial prices for farmers, is the most insane piece of economic tomfoolery to

have ever been seriously considered. And do you know there is one Congressman, from Texas who has made McNary Haugen the center of his campaign?

Sycophant: Wright Patman, you mean.

Suzy: Oh, *that* fool. (Testing the name) Wright Patman. (Laughs demurely) His name should be Wrong Patman. Don't you agree, Andrew?

Mellon: This Congressman is becoming a Generalissimo of a Gimme Boy campaign. He just opens up his mouth and out comes the nonsense of everything I have opposed. He wants to play Robin Hood, robbing the treasury to give to the poor.

Sycophant: But this is not a fairy tale and he is not truly Robin Hood. He may seem troublesome at the moment, but I'm sure that will fade. I must take my leave, now. Thank you for the invitation. It was a pleasure, Mr. Mellon.

(Sycophant disappears and the other two are now alone at the table, wine glasses in their hands)

Suzy (running a finger slowly around the lip of the glass): So where do you think Nora is tonight?

Mellon: Nora? She is in the middle of divorcing her latest beau, a British antiques dealer who was 14 years younger than her. According to my son, Paul, she even wants to use my name again.

Suzy: (suddenly intense) Don't let her!

Mellon: What can I do?

Suzy: (lays her hand on his, looking starry-eyed) Well, if you gave your name to another woman, one who truly loves you, then she couldn't take it back, could she?

Scene 21: Wright Patman in Congress/ Mellon in Conference:

Text on Screen: Washington D.C. 1929-32

Patman: “Big Business has failed to recognize that every time a worker is fired, a customer is fired.

Mellon: Our critics fail to recognize how difficulty in succeeding can inspire workers, and high prices ennoble consumers.

Patman: I call on government to intervene and save the American people from predatory big businesses.

Mellon: I call on every American to respect the rights of the great businesses that have made America great.

Patman: “Each year, the cottonseed oil trust alone is defrauding farmers out of 25 million dollars.”

Mellon: Our big businesses will produce wealth that will trickle down with unrelenting force of gravity to the lower classes.

Patman: “Good government is the constable that keeps the great businesses and banks from cannibalizing themselves.

Mellon: Unchecked government is a demon seeking to rob enterprise of its virtue.

Patman: “The veterans of our nation deserve their bonus now. Our nation is plunging into recession and we need more spending.

Mellon: “Shame on those who want to desecrate the contracts of the United States, those who want to pay our veterans an early bonus.

Text on Screen: Washington D.C. Hearings 1932

Patman: The recent recession is out of control. One quarter of the American workforce is unemployed. Do you know why the hinterlands smell like popcorn? The farmers are burning their corn. They can't afford coal and they can't afford to sell their corn! I call on government to aid the people in this crisis.

Mellon: As Secretary of the Treasury in this crisis, I urge that we as a nation liquidate labor, liquidate stocks, liquidate farmers, and liquidate real estate... this will purge the rottenness out of the system. With high costs of living, high living

will come down. People will work harder, live a more moral life. Values will be adjusted, and enterprising people will pick up from less competent people.

Patman: The simple words of a now popular jingle tell all Americans what has happened to our country:

Mellon has pulled the whistle
Hoover has rung the bell
Wall Street has given the signal
And the country has gone to hell.

Scene 22: Washington DC. Party:

Text on Screen: Washington D.C. Party, 1932.

Sycophant: (laughing uncontrollably) You were a member of the fishing club whose dam broke and caused the Johnstown Flood?! That was one of the greatest disasters of all time!

Mellon (imperious, pride-filled, standoffish): Yes, I was a member of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club – I, along with others who had a little money at the time, such as Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick.

Sycophant: The survivors of Johnstown must have gone after you with a pack of lawyers.

Mellon (nonchalant): No, (pause) the flood was an act of God.

Suzy: Oh, but I'm sure no one bothers you about the incident today, do they Andrew?

Mellon (now speaking rapidly and assertively): The only one who really bothers me now is that demagogue from the Texas Cotton Patch, Wright Patman.

Sycophant: How could a novice Congressman bother the most notable Treasury Secretary in our history, the man who has served three Presidents?

Mellon: He's calling for my impeachment.

Suzy: What?! (As if insulted herself) How dare he!

Mellon: (smiles) But President Hoover has assured me that Patman's finest days are past.

Sycophant: Oh, look. Here is our dear Mr. Patman now.

(They make their way toward the door, where WP and Merle are being greeted)

Host: Come in Mr. and Mrs. Patman. It is so nice to have you in Washington, Mrs. Patman. Here, you know Andrew Mellon, don't you? And this is –

Suzy: So nice to meet you Mrs. Patman, and all this time I thought your husband was the most eligible bachelor in town!

Merle: (scowls)

Mellon: (trying to pour on the charm) Mr. Patman, what a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted.

Patman: I'm not sure how happy I am to meet the man who's Gulf Oil Company is using illicit government contacts to circumvent Texas oil by drilling in South America.

Mellon: You know, as I've always told Suzy here (he hugs her), you have quite an imagination.

Waiter (comes with caviar, serves Merle and WP)

Merle (tasting some and speaking to Patman): In such an affluent place, you might think their blackberry jam would taste better. This is awful.

Suzy (breaks into raucous laughter and to Mellon): She thinks the caviar is blackberry jam!

Patman (overhearing): You know, there are a lot Americans who are suffering from pellagra and lucky to have dandelion heads for supper tonight.

Suzy: Oh, how dreadful!

Merle: Wright dear, you should tell them that the people of Northeast Texas do not eat dandelion heads, as they have land and know how to store corn and beans.

Mellon: By the way, Mr. Patman, where did you study economics?

Patman: I studied as the son of a tenant farmer by watching the citizens in my district fetch quail eggs and Jerusalem oak to pay their doctor bills. I studied life in a shack while studying for my law degree.

Sycophant: I'm impressed that your study of quail eggs is helping you understand inflation.

Suzy (dancing around WP): You know, if ignorance is your education, you can't really help any of the people you say you'll help.

Merle (touching WP's arm): Wright, let's leave.

Patman: No, wait. I want you Eastern moneychangers to know that your reign is over. You, Mr. Mellon – you and all the income tax-evading plutocrats here have swindled our folks in the south and west long enough!

Scene 23: Patman in Congress

Text on Screen: House of Representatives, Washington D.C. 1932.

(Voice from elsewhere): The Speaker of the House recognizes the Honorable Wright Patman:

Patman: Thank you Mr. Speaker. When I came to Washington, our country was rolling in clover. But today, we're knee-deep in brambles. Our president, with false advice from his Treasury Secretary has used the army to drive veteran lobbyists from Washington. I suggest he use the army to drive out the international banking lobby (a lone laugh in the audience). But because of the responsibility as a member of the House, I call for the impeachment of the man behind all the suffering that this administration has caused, Andrew W. Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, for high crimes and misdemeanors."

(Hooting, applause, and boos)

Scene 24: Mellon's group

Text on Screen: Washington D.C. Home of Andrew Mellon 1932

Suzy: A nation like this doesn't even deserve you, Andrew dear.

Sycophant: Tell us, Andrew: What has the President decided?

Mellon: Brutus has found his mark. Rather than going after our gaudy little congressman, he has decided to step on me. But the president has already made me a firm promise that I will become ambassador to England.

Suzy (getting increasingly excited): Fleet Street, Piccadilly square . . I can hardly wait! (Looks expectantly at Mellon)

Sycophant: I knew Hoover lacked guts. Screwballs like Patman should not be determining the cabinet. Well, anyway. If you will excuse me, Andrew, I have a very important constituent to meet. Good evening to you both.

(Suzy and Andrew are alone)

Mellon: And I have to tell you something, my dear. You can't come with me to England.

Suzy: Perhaps not as I am, but certainly after we go through with your plans to...

Mellon: Plans to what?

Suzy: To marry me, you fool.

Mellon (pauses, fakes that he is thinking): I've changed my mind. I'm sorry. As our nation's ambassador to England, I could never be seen with you.

Suzy: Why you prude, you hypocrite...

Mellon (stares back at her unemotionally)

Suzy: You wretch! (Slaps him across the face)

Scene 25: Third Narrator Scene--with moving pictures:

Wright Patman, the latter-economic populist from Northeast Texas, sent the third wealthiest American of his day into a tailspin. After a short stint as

ambassador to England, Andrew Mellon became a target for investigation during the Presidency of Franklin Roosevelt. The former Secretary of the Treasury was accused of tax evasion and lived under a cloud of investigation until his death in 1937.

Months after Mellon died, despite Wright Patman's accusations that the former Treasury Secretary had committed high crimes and misdemeanors, and despite the hatred of the new president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Andrew Mellon was declared innocent of all charges relating to income tax fraud and the misuse of power.

Scene 26: President Franklin Roosevelt, and his Advisors

Text on Screen: White House, Washington D.C. 1938.

Harry Hopkins: With its oil money and expanding population, Texas is going to become more and more important to the Democratic Party.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Yes, and if we don't watch more closely what is happening there, we are going to lose the state in 1940, just as Al Smith did to Hoover.

Harold Ickes: Mr. President, we still have strong supporters there.

Franklin Roosevelt: True, but our dear Vice President, Cactus Jack Garner, certainly is not one of them. Imagine having the temerity to oppose us on our plan to expand the Supreme Court.

Hopkins: Holding his nose and giving a thumbs-down during the Senate vote was intolerable (mimic what Garner did). I don't care if he is the Yellow Rose of Texas.

Franklin Roosevelt: I have high hopes for this new young man, Lyndon Baines Johnson.

Harold Ickes: The problem with Johnson is that he's stupid and doesn't believe in anything.

Franklin Roosevelt: Yes, but he's folksy, ambitious, and will do anything I ask him (smiles broadly).

Eleanor Roosevelt: Would you boys like some lemonade?

Franklin Roosevelt: (resignedly, seeing that Eleanor wants to crash their intimate circle) No Eleanor, but your input (with a note of sarcasm for the benefit of his friends) would be as refreshing as any drink.

Eleanor: Stop lying Franklin. I don't know why you boys have to talk about politics all the time. There are many more important issues.

Harry Hopkins: (facially apologizing to Eleanor) Well, just let us nail down Texas so that we can move on. Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson are each going to be helpful in their separate ways, but I am sorry to say that the populist from Northeast Texas, Wright Patman, is going to have to be fended off with a twelve-foot pole.

Harold Ickes: Make it a 100-foot pole. The guy is nuts. His tax on chain stores would eliminate every retail store trying to do out-of-state business in the nation. He's still pushing for the payout to veterans, 3 billion dollars we don't have. He's been the force behind some really crank legislation.

Eleanor: Like what (wanting particulars)?

Ickes: Well, take for example the Patman bank bill that will pour currency into the country so that every unemployed steel worker and insurance agent can open their own little restaurant or barbershop, guaranteeing more bankruptcies down the line.

Harry Hopkins: We can't move forward if we don't make economic sense.

Eleanor: Fine. Franklin, tell our friends that Patman is a skunk that they should stay away from. We have to stop obsessing over the populist money issue. We have the soul of the nation in our hands, after all.

Franklin: That's the idea, dear. I was going to say that myself.

Scene 27: On the path with Cyclone Davis

(The two walk down the path that Cyclone, who is now bent over with a cane, is walking down)

Text on Screen: Sulphur Springs, Texas 1938.

Seymour Harris: Hello, Mr. Davis!

Cyclone Davis: Huh? And who might you be?

Harris: My name is Seymour Harris and I'm the advisor to Representative Patman. I understand that he was supposed to be joining you today.

Davis (skeptically): So why have you come in his place? Where is he?

Harris: Mr. Patman is doing some crucial work on the bonus bill that is nearly passed, and he wanted you to be the first to know. He is always working, you see, Mr. Davis, even on the weekends.

Davis: No need to use such formalities, boy. My name is Cyclone. Tell me, then, does Patman work on the Lord's day as well?

Harris: Yes, sir, clear through.

Davis: Does he drink?

Harris: Well, yes, I suppose he does have his shots of Bourbon with the other old bulls of Congress, now.

Davis: Huh. I suppose you really must be Patman's advisor, then.

Harris: Cyclone, sir, Mr. Patman heard that you were unwell and sent me from Washington to give you his personal regards. But there is another reason he sent me. He truly values your opinion and says that you are the only person in the United States who can help him now.

Davis: (Positioning himself by an unhealthy tree) Huh. Well you tell him that ole Cyclone is about as unbiased as they come. He's dying. But regardless: tell me what's troubling Patman.

Harris: Well, God bless you Cyclone, sir... Mr. Patman is worried that he is painting himself in a corner. He feels that the New Deal people are grouping him with inflationists like Father Coughlin or Huey Long. Even though getting

money to the poor is the issue, the leaders are ignoring the obvious. They go off, talking about employment and old age security. They are trying to appease the cities and big interest groups rather than help our folks in the towns and villages.

Davis: (points to a branch, which he pulls down to cover his mouth in order to make a point). The political pimps of Wall Street would like to hush the voice of freedom as offered by those who want to talk frankly about money. (With a voice that is trying to thunder even as it withers) And now the savants in Washington want to join them in disgracing all who plead for the plundered masses against the plundering classes. Tell Patman that he is my hero. Tell him to keep standing tall.”

Scene 28: LBJ Ranch, 1958

Text on Screen: Ranch of Lyndon Baines Johnson near Stonewall, Texas, 1958.

Lady Bird: (bends over and hands LBJ a cold coke)

LBJ (turns away from George Mahon to take the coke and absently comments on Lady Bird’s attire before turning back to Mahon): You look so muley, Bird. Why can’t you look more like Nellie?

(Lady Bird continues to smile as she busily serves everyone else a coke)

Nellie: Lyndon, how can you say such a thing?

(LBJ proceeds to speak to George Mahon, ignoring Nellie’s comment)

Lady Bird (sits down and turns to WP, finding LBJ ignoring him in his conversation to Mahon): So tell me, Wright, how are your own affairs going?

WP: Things have been going very well for me, but you are my gracious hostess; I should not be so rude as to bore you with politics.

Lady Bird: On the contrary, politics and things the like interest me enormously. It would be no bother at all. And I have heard that you are becoming quite the scourge of bankers, aren’t you? So what were you going to say?

WP: In that case, I was going to say that I have always believed that those Easterners in the New Deal never really knew what the poor farmers and businessmen of America needed. They go about their own ways completely oblivious to that need.

Lady Bird: That is the way of the world, isn't it? Everyone going about their own way – no one stopping to notice others struggling along the same path beside them. But it impresses me that you, Wright, have stood face-to-face and battled with some of the biggest people in the country and, yet, have not lost sight of the poor people around you.

WP: Since I grew up as one of those poor people, I could never lose sight of them. I know so many who dead-ended on the frontier of the American dream and now just need that boost. I say, Lady Bird, that if your husband could switch from a majority leader under a Republican President to a President with a Democratic majority in Congress, we could transform America.

Lady Bird: Do you think so, Wright? Well, I know my husband quite well and I agree entirely.

WP: If he wants it, I believe Lyndon is going to be president in 1960, and we, Texans, will be the first to support him.

Scene 29: LBJ with WP on a path.

Text on Screen: Democratic Fund Raiser, Dallas Ranch 1959

LBJ: Eisenhower is not going to last forever, and Nixon is a shifty-eyed son of a bitch. The people know it. Wright, the country is going our way and I want you to know in earnest that I am a Wright Patman man. (Places a hard hand on his shoulder, and laughing, moves on down the path) When I become President, you are going to get that canal in your district and we are going to strike a blow for the poor of our country such as the world has never seen.

WP: Yes, but Lyndon –

LBJ: (blatantly interrupting) There is not a man I feel closer to in all the world. My Father recalled working with you against the Klan when you were in Austin, and he said there was no one in the world more on the side of people than you.

WP: But on the money question –

LBJ: We need a party that can feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and give homes to the homeless. We need a party that can make America the greatest society the world has ever seen. As this happens, you, Wright, are going to be a key man in Congress and the coming election.

WP: You know I am for you, Lyndon, but –

LBJ: And to show my friendship yet again, Lady Bird and I have something to give you. (Shouts) Bobby, fetch the present now!

WP: (Opens up the package to find cowboy boots) They are nice. Thanks Lyndon.

First Journalist (joins them): Mr. Johnson, could you tell me anything about plans you might have to run for the presidency in 1960?

LBJ: Well, I'm not saying I plan to run, but if I was, I would want this man (he manhandles WP) at my side.

Second Journalist: Why Mr. Patman?

LBJ: Because Wright Patman, who just won his 16th election, never loses. One of his former opponents who lost to him for Texas's First District in Congress was a Harvard man. In the race for state comptroller in Texas, Patman's opponent did not have a degree, but he was a good businessman. This businessman clinched the election after telling the voters that, though he didn't have as much book smarts as he wanted, he had at least enough common sense not to run against Wright Patman!

Scene 30: Wright manning the phones.

Text on Screen: Office of Wright Patman, Washington D.C. February 1960.

WP: John, you have to throw your influence behind Lyndon. We both know in ten years Kennedy never passed a single bill. Lyndon was behind everything. You know this. ...Yeah. ...Thanks John. (Hangs up)

WP (Dials phone): Hi Jack... Yes, a contribution to Lyndon would be very good right now. Do you know how close we are? ...I knew you'd come through for an old friend. I will talk to you another time then. ...Yeah ...Bye.

Scene 31: Wright reading a letter

Text on Screen Office of Wright Patman, Washington D.C. 1962

(WP goes through a whole stack of papers to find a letter from Lady Bird)

(Lady Bird's voiceover is heard as WP reads. Camera focuses on WP and his reactions)

Lady Bird: Dear Wright, we could hardly believe the outcome of the Democratic process in 1960. Robert Kennedy still loathes my husband, but somehow the Democratic candidate, John, seems to realize that Lyndon can make the difference in the South. Sam Rayburn opposed him becoming Vice President, but the position gives us national experience with the press and the American people. Thank you again for helping my husband come so close to securing the nomination two years ago. I know how much you did to find support for him. However, things are no longer going so well. The press is all over us. Lyndon's aide, Bobby Baker, is about to be nailed by the FBI and the Kennedys are keeping my husband in the dark. I think the president is going to give my husband the boot in 1964. It worries me. Lady Bird

WP (speaking aloud after having read the letter): President Kennedy is a hypocrite. He loves the fed, tolerates high interest rates, and does nothing to provide credit for small businesses.

(shakes his head and drops letter on his desk)

Scene 32: LBJ shaving, hearing the news of JFK's Death

Text on Screen: Vice Presidential Bathroom of Lyndon B. Johnson, October 23, 1963.

(LBJ grins as he hears of Kennedy's death being reiterated)

Scene 33: Narrator.

As president and a masterful politician, Lyndon Baines Johnson pushed through Congress a flurry of reforms. The legislation of Johnson's Great Society included food stamps, affirmative action, Civil Rights, aid to education, Medicare, and Medicaid. With his long tenure in the House, Wright Patman was a help to the president in passing these bills. He worked tirelessly to support the president. At the end of Johnson's term, Patman wrote the President and said, (voicing in Patman's voice) "I believe that you have done more for the education, and welfare of Americans than all the previous presidents combined. Lyndon Johnson wrote back to Patman, saying that it had been an honor to receive such support from him. For, Patman, according to Johnson, had been, "the champion of all the "little people: the small businessmen, the struggling family, and the little children." But as this whirlwind of liberal legislation swept through Congress, there remained the question of how Patman's populist agenda would fare.

Scene 34: Patman on the Telephone:

WP (on the phone): Lady Bird? ...It's Wright. ...I hope it's not a bad time, but I heard that the president was sick. How is he? ...I'm sorry. Do you think I could call on him? With Laryngitis, I know he shouldn't talk, but I have a little present that I hope will cheer him up. Do you think he would mind? ...I'm glad. I will be over today, then. ...Yes. ...Always a pleasure, Lady Bird. Bye. (Hangs up)

WP: Julie, get me the President's secretary. ...Hello, this is Wright Patman. ...Yes. I want an appointment with Lyndon Johnson later this afternoon. ...Yes, I am aware that he has Laryngitis. I have already spoken to the First Lady and have her approval. Listen, I'm an old friend and the president promised to give me access. This is the first and only time I plan to use it. ...Yes, that would be fine. (hangs up)

Scene 35: WP tells LBJ to appoint Seymour Harris

Text on Screen: Oval Office of President Lyndon Baines Johnson, 1965.

(WP enters the room to find LBJ with his head hanging low)

WP: Mr. President, I heard you were unwell. I came to give my regards.

LBJ (low): The doctor told me not to speak today, Wright.

WP: Yes, I know. In fact, I do not want my old friend to say another word. First, I have brought you a present to correct the gift deficit that I have with your office.

LBJ (looks in box): Cuff Links, how – (coughs)

WP: They are made from 1864 U.S. silver coins.

(Lyndon) (observes, and smiles).

WP: Lyndon, I don't want you to exert yourself and believe me, I am pleased to have this time. But I have a favor to ask you. You see, there are two things your old friend values highly. One, I believe we need Seymour Harris appointed to the Federal Reserve because he understands that the people need low interest rates. Also, he is not frightened by Wall Street's silly ideas about supply and demand. Second, we need a tough bill on bank mergers. You and I both know that Chase of New York is going to get so big that our country will end up without a Congress, a President, or a Supreme Court."

LBJ: (extended cough or gag)

WP: (patting LBJ on the back) Ah, the lead bull is never sick for long. Mr. President, we have discussed this before. On behalf of the people we both care about, I beg you to support us on these measures.

Scene 36: LBJ making phone calls from the bathroom

Text on Screen: Lyndon Johnson White House, 1965.

LBJ (speaking rapidly, disabling conversation): “Hi, John. Look. On the Patman trouble with the fed, try to ignore him ...Oh, he told you that, did he? (Obviously cutting off the caller in mid-sentence) Well there is no way I am even going to bring up the name of Seymour Harris! Yeah. ...I know, I know. Do you know what the opinions of the business leaders are? Yeah, they say he would be a disaster! ...Well good. Believe me John, I am all for you. Okay. (Hangs up)

LBJ (to secretary): Get me the speaker of the House. ...Carl, I apologize like hell for putting you through the meat grinder on the Patman deal. But look, I want you to find a way to shut Patman down and you will have my full support in doing so. ...Yeah, I know Carl, we will definitely meet difficulty with some of his people in Northeast Texas, but I can tell you that we are going to lose the war if we enter this battle. ...And listen, to show how sincere I am, I am going to get you the funds to fix that dam project at Broken Bow. ...Yes, believe me, I don't want Patman to know I am talking to you about this.

Scene 37: Courts Pauline

Text on Screen: Texarkana, Texas 1968

Pauline: Come in, Mr. Congressman. Please, have a seat.

WP: It has been a long time, Pauline.

Pauline: Yes, it has. I am so pleased that you decided to look me up.

WP: I had read of your husband's death in the *Gazette* and thought I would see how you were. I know how terrible these things are, as Merle's death last year was particularly difficult for me to bear.

Pauline: And you have had more than your fair share of death, haven't you, Wright?

WP: Yes. Life has been harsh. First there was my father's death, then my mother's a few years ago, my son's death, Charles, dying from rheumatic fever, and now even Merle is gone.

Pauline: (takes his hand) And there you always were, our hard-working Congressman educating one president after another, all the while bearing such tragedy. Yet, you never lost an election. Wright, you are amazing. My father was so wrong (drops his hands).

WP: Your father?

Pauline: Yes. He told me all those years ago to stop seeing you. He did not want me to marry someone who was so poor he could not even afford proper shoes. He told me never to marry you, a man who was once forced to plow barefoot.

WP: And that's why...

Pauline: Yes, that's the only reason I did not marry you then.

(Dialogue fades as they remember old times together and become closer and closer)

Scene 38: Seymour Harris talks to WP of the challenges with Nixon:

Harris (voice only): Wright I know you enjoyed yourself with the Johnsons, but I have to tell you frankly as your friend. Johnson largely ignored agenda and now we have Nixon to deal with.

(scene goes into hippies demonstrating)

Hippies: Hell no, we won't go! Hell no, we won't go

WP (voice only): As the Democrats still control Congress and as President Nixon is bound to antagonize the people, I think we can make a difference. That is why I need you to help me formulate our policies.

(Nixon is in a car, it stops, Nixon emerges from it)

Harris (voice only): Well, I have to agree with you on one point: Nixon will be good at polarizing the nation.

(Nixon gives his double V raised arm sign of victory)

(Protestors throw things at Nixon while the cameras catch both Nixon and the protestors)

(Nixon and cameramen get back in car)

Nixon Aide: This is an act of genius. Just wait until the average American sees how you are being treated on the nightly news!

Scene 39: Nixon White House. February 1971. He chooses Connolly

Gerald Ford: One of our major obstacles in Congress is Wright Patman. He is becoming ever more powerful and ever more disruptive as Chair of Banking and Currency. The appointment of former Texas Governor, John Connolly – an old opponent of Patman’s – will aid the legislative process considerably. Especially so with Texans.

Nixon: He won’t change Patman, but he’ll have a good impact.

Nixon Aide: I would love to see Wright Patman’s face when we make Connolly’s appointment.

Ford: Of course, if he can’t maul the Treasury Secretary, as he did with Mellon years ago, you know he’ll go after the new Federal Reserve Chairman, Arthur Burns.

Nixon Aide: Patman is impossible.

Scene 40: WP and Pauline in a car backseat

Patman: Of all the friends you could have had in Washington DC., why – why is it Helen Burns, the wife of the Federal Reserve Chairman?

Pauline: Helen is delightful, Wright. *She* doesn’t obsess about money (full of innuendo, as if her husband does).

Patman: The Fed is vicious, Pauline, and Helen’s husband is vicious. (Looks out the window) They are Nixon appointees – the same man who appointed our high interest Secretary of the Treasury, John Connolly, to deal with me. And now, Nixon has even managed to get the wife of his Federal Reserve Chairman to get at *me* through *my* wife.

Pauline: Well maybe if you would spend more time with me, I wouldn't have to rely on so many friends.

Wright: There is a vast cause, a majestic reason for my involvement in helping the people, Pauline. You should not be so selfish.

Pauline: You may think you are helping others, providing all this welfare, but you have only made it so that poor people can have the luxury of sitting in front of their television sets and becoming depraved animals.

Wright (angry): My main goal was never the welfare state, Pauline. My goal was to make credit and money easier to obtain in order to rescue our small towns of Northeast Texas from out-of-town predatory businesses. I am for the perfection of the life we knew together – when we were young, in Hughes Springs.

Pauline: No, I think you have been for the perfection of Lyndon Johnson's programs. Why you even have a picture of him on your desk confounds me! You know Lyndon took you to the cleaners. Helen tells me that the President did everything he could to sidestep your Banking and Currency Committee. He told you he wanted to appoint your protégé, Seymour Harris to the Fed, but he fixed it from the start so that Harris would never be appointed.

WP: (defiant) Pauline, Lyndon and I go way back to the time of his father. I knew Lyndon when he was 10 years old, and I've mentored and watched over him ever since. I don't care what others say, together, we have done much to transform American life.

Scene 41: WP learns of Watergate break-in:

(WP and Pauline watching TV: Incorporate Youtube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsx7TZ-r4b4>)

(Cameras get their faces and the youtube story)

Scene 42: 29 August 1972. Nixon declares they will find the culprit

Nixon: With Regard to the Watergate Break-in, I have ordered the entire staff of the Executive Department and all of my top advisors to cooperate with investigations that are occurring on the federal level. I can assure you tonight that if any of the officers of this administration fail to help this investigation, or are found guilty with regard to the break-in, they will be permanently dismissed from their posts. Let me repeat, I am ordering all the members of the executive department to cooperate fully with this investigation.

Scene 43: 7 September 1982. Banking and Currency Committee Meeting.

Patman (bangs gavel): Let the Meeting of the Congressional Banking and Currency Committee begin. First order of business, we are pleased today to have Federal Reserve Chairman, Arthur Burns, to field some questions about the 89 thousand dollars that was found on the persons of the Watergate burglars. Mr. Burns, We know that the Watergate burglars had tens of thousands of dollars in their possession at the time of the break-in. Can the origins of this money be traced?

Arthur Burns: My office is prepared to cooperate with the investigation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but not with a Congressional Committee that, in our judgment, might release to the public innuendo that could jeopardize the investigation.

Patman (getting angry): This is about the 10th time, Mr. Burns, that you or your agents have stonewalled to our committee over various matters relating to the Federal Reserve. Of course, it's no secret that President Nixon appointed you to this position. You must be concerned that the President will compromise the special powers of your autocratic bank, isn't that right?

Burns: I have no comment on that allegation, Mr. Chairman.

WP: Perhaps you will comment on this: Is it the duty of the Federal Reserve to serve the people of the United States?

Burns: I have no comment on these philosophical questions at this time.

WP (exploding with anger): Mr. Burns, can you give me any reason why you are not in the penitentiary?"

Burns: Congressman Patman, throughout your 50 years of public service, you have treated the Fed as a sort of evil. But we are here to maintain the financial stability of the United States. We do not receive funding from Congress, nor do we receive orders from the President or any other agency in the government.

WP: In other words, you are not responsible to the people! Congress has, constitutionally, the power to coin and regulate the value of money. And you have usurped this right. Please get out of my sight. Leave. I have had enough.

12 September 1972:

WP: I call this Special Meeting of the Banking and Currency Committee to order. We will first listen to an update and summary of this Committee's research on the money involved in the Watergate Break-in.

Seymour Harris: Independent of the Federal Reserve, we have learned that the Watergate Burglars received funds from Banco International in Mexico City. We have a theory that Republic operatives, connected to Gulf Oil, have fed money to this international account. We have information on the plane that is suspected of carrying this money back to the United States.

William Widnall: Has the chairman considered use of the subpoena to follow-through with administrative officials about these questions?

WP: Yes. I have every intention to subpoena: James MacGruder, John Mitchell, and Maurice Stans. Someone in this Republican administration appears to be engaging in the kind of espionage that goes on in third-world countries. Though this is an election year, we have to get to the bottom of this operation. We cannot tolerate the beginnings of totalitarianism in our country.

Scene 44: Nixon tries to get back at Patman:

Text on Screen: White House 1972.

Haldeman: Mr. President, I think Wright Patman is a good opponent to have. He's just a populist. He's been against everything big since he entered Congress in the 1920s. Not even LBJ took him seriously.

Nixon: Yes, but he's persistent to the point of frustration. He won't leave the money issues of the Watergate break-in alone.

Haldeman: We have been looking into ways of throwing him off, but now that I think of it, after 50 years in Congress there must have been some irregularities in fund raising. We could use that against him.

Nixon: (dismissive, shaking his head) No. Patman lives and breathes money. His books are probably balanced down to the last postage stamp. For 50 years he has been attacking the money power in Washington, the Federal Reserve, the big banks... He is not going to err on something like that.

Haldeman: What about women?

Nixon: There was a joke in the 1950s that if Elizabeth Taylor and Patman were alone together on a deserted island, he would lecture her about the Federal Reserve. We need to get him off the Watergate incident.

Gerald Ford: Mr. President, my advisors have suggested that we turn the incident into a Civil Rights issue. A Congressional Investigation may imperil the criminal trial of these defendants and we could even contact the American Civil Liberties Union to protect the rights of the Watergate men.

Nixon (malevolently): The ACLU. Perfect. But I want more than this!

Gerald Ford: In addition to our attempt to discredit Patman, we have looked into ways of getting his Committee to turn against him. For Committeeman, Robert Stephens, we are going to hold up \$200,000 of federal money for a proposed senior citizen's apartment complex in Athens Georgia. For Richard Hanna, the California Democrat, we are going to threaten release of the news that he received campaign contributions from the Korean CIA. For Frank Brasco of New York City, (laughs) we have so much on him, we could swing him from the rafters if he continues to side with Patman.

Scene 45: The Debacle of 3 October 1972.

Patman: Where are the Republicans?

Harris (looking around): Where are the Liberal Democrats?

(All of Patman's opponents march in like an army, late)

WP (bangs gavel): We are about to decide today the outcome of the greatest political espionage case in the history of the United States.

Stephens: (Raises his hand violently)

WP: The Chair recognizes Congressman Stephens from Georgia.

Stephens: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that we proceed with a motion of no confidence in furthering this investigation of Watergate. The public perceives this as an election year gimmick and, frankly, we are not a court to process this case.

WP (coldly): Is there discussion on this motion?

Richard Hanna: I second Committeeman Stephens' objections and add to them that the Chairman has been leading this committee in an autocratic manner. The attempt to subpoena witnesses appears as an open-ended plot to disrupt the government before the election.

WP: Gentlemen, we are looking at an illegal break-in at our own party headquarters. This is not an election-year stunt; this was a crime – an act of high treason against our democratic process. We have evidence linking money found on the burglars through a bank in Mexico with Republican operatives, is it not our duty to proceed?

Frank Brasco (raises his hand)

WP: Congressman Brasco from New York.

Brasco: Congressman Patman, I believe you have been highhanded and autocratic in this investigation and that the Committee, as a whole, is not with you. This should be a criminal – not a Congressional – investigation.

Patman: I cannot believe what I am hearing!

(Voices fade out, the camera stays on Patman's face as he views the assembly)

Patman: I call then for a vote.

(Again, camera focuses on Patman's reaction, as the hands go up against him)

Scene 46: Nixon Press Conference

Nixon: The staff of the House Banking and Currency Committee has again been used by its chairman, Wright Patman, to rescue the sinking campaign of George McGovern.

Patman on Face the Nation. 15 October 1972.

George Herman: This is George Herman, with *Face the Nation*. Congressman Patman, why is this Watergate case so important to the American people?

WP: Because we cannot allow wiretapping, burglary, espionage, and sabotage to become ingrained as an accepted way of politics.

Scene 47: Narrator with Pictures:

Wright Patman had predicted that Nixon would lose the 1972 election because of Watergate. Instead, Wright Patman's investigation ground to a halt and Richard Nixon won by a landslide. Nevertheless, the Patman Banking and Currency Committee pioneered a line of inquiry that would lead to the President's resignation two years later. Newspapers like the *Washington Post* and Sam Ervin's Watergate Committee followed the money trail that connected Nixon's White House with political espionage and the obstruction of Justice.

Scene 48: Nixon resigns

(segment taken from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEOGJJ7UKFM>)

Scene 49: Card game: Seymour Harris, his girlfriend

Text on Screen: Texarkana 1976.

(Helen and Pauline sitting at a table waiting for Harris and Patman to return)

Goldie: So your husband was destroyed by the very process he began with the Watergate investigations?

Pauline: Yes, and the new Democrats that came to Washington as a result of the incident, who he calls the Watergate Babies, saw my husband's chairmanship on the Banking and Currency Committee as arbitrary.

Goldie: So what did they do?

Pauline. The Watergate Babies revolted against Wright and gave the gavel to Henry Reuss of Wisconsin. It was the biggest blow to Wright he had ever seen in his entire career. It's what made him finally decide to resign.

Goldie: And how many years was that in Congress?

Pauline: 47. Only seven Congressmen have stayed longer. Oh, but that's enough talk on that. Look, here our men come.

(Patman and Harris sit at the table, and everyone picks up their cards and resumes the game)

(They play in silence for a time before Patman, going out, throws his cards on the table)

Patman: The World hates the truth—that's why (coughs) the path is wide that leads to destruction!

Pauline: Do we have to wallow in all this political sludge again tonight?
(Collects cards and shuffles them).

Harris: Pauline, look at it this way, your husband took the bull by the horns and was gored.

Pauline: Well he was certainly asking for it...

Harris: But of Sam Rayburn, the mediator (holds out fingers for each one as if counting), Mr. Austerity, George Mahon from Lubbock, Tom Connally in foreign affairs, and Shephard with prohibition, who has been the only real Texas hawk keeping his eye on the prize – money?

Goldie: Money, money, money. Before I tie the knot with Seymour, maybe you can tell me why you two (looking at Patman and Harris) talk about money so much.

Patman: Money, dear, is the seed of democracy and opportunity. When the people have money, they are empowered and enabled.

Goldie: Well, I don't see the problem. We are a fairly rich country as it is, so why the obsession?

Patman: The lust for money is the root of all evil. The wealthy in our country have that lust, and they have found a way to take the issue of money off the table (shoots his arms and knocks something off the table) of our politics.

Pauline: Oh my goodness, he's going to break something. Wright, open your eyes. Can't you see what you have been doing?

Patman (ignoring Pauline): I know in my heart that the poor people of Northeast Texas and elsewhere will never have a chance now. Just look at the church and school towns between the Sabine and Red Rivers. Chain stores are taking over, the Feds are telling our banks how to operate, and the ambitious leave town to become serfs of large corporations in the cities. Northeast Texas has become a colony. I don't see anything that will save our towns now. (Patman is so worked up he begins to cry)

Goldie (patting him on the back): There, there, Wright. It's not so bad.

Harris: Wright, our leaders failed you. But you were a success. You are rich and have outlasted nearly all of your enemies.

WP: Yes, but even so, the only place I have gone is down in defeat – and the very next place I will go is my grave.

Harris: I will rue the day, Wright. For you truly were the last American populist.

