

[REDACTED]

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PALMER
Sorry, I'm late.

WHITAKER
You're actually right on time.

PALMER
Perfect. Governor Merriam. Mr.
Hatfield.

MERRIAM
How do you do? What's he doing
here?

BAXTER
Do you mind, Mr. Palmer?

PALMER
Be my guest.

BAXTER
As you know, Mr. Palmer here is
the political editor of the Los
Angeles Times. He has almost
singlehandedly determined every
election in the state in past
decade by deciding what gets in
his paper and what does not. You
may even know him by his nickname
- "The Little Governor".

MERRIAM

Yes, I'm aware.

HATFIELD

Ha! Little Governor.

BAXTER

Adorable, right? And with other media outlets referring to Governor Merriam as a - what was it Mr. Palmer?

PALMER

I believe it was "A hack politician of the hollowest sort. A completely unelectable snob".

HATFIELD

I just love the Little Governor thing. It's so cute. I'm picturing a tiny little governor sitting at a tiny little-

MERRIAM

Shut the hell up, George.

BAXTER

We thought we might want to get Mr. Palmer here on your side. And lucky for you, his boss is about as anti-Sinclair as they come.

PALMER

He certainly is.

BAXTER

Mr. Palmer here has agreed to run our "Sinclairisms" on the front page of the Times, every single day, until the election.

PALMER

I'm even going to put them in a big black box so they jump right off the page. It will be the first thing everyone sees when they pick up the paper.

HATFIELD

Won't that seem a little obviously one-sided?

PALMER

Gentlemen, I appreciate your concern. But, to be frank, I don't go in for that kind of crap - of being obligated to print both sides. That socialist prick won't get a word into my paper unless it's his concession speech.

BAXTER

Furthermore, Mr. Palmer has agreed to write your speeches from here on out.

WHITAKER

He has an ability with words that we have found you somewhat naturally lack. Sorry.

MERRIAM

You don't think I talk good?

HATFIELD

But what about my speeches-

BAXTER

We're not talking about you right now. This is about Governor Merriam.

HATFIELD

...Right.

This interaction puts a bad taste in HATFIELD'S mouth. WHITAKER notices and jumps in quickly.

WHITAKER

Anything we're missing, Mr. Palmer?

PALMER

That covers it. As long as our - accounts - will be settled without any issue. The free press ain't exactly free, right, gentlemen?

MERRIAM

Oh lord, how much is this going to cost me?

PALMER hands MERRIAM a slip of paper. MERRIAM examines it.

MERRIAM

Holy hell! You want how much!?

WHITAKER

We know it's a lot.

MERRIAM

It's a goddamn fortune. I won't do it. Why would I pay you so much money for something you'd probably do on your own anyway, Kyle?

PALMER

Because I know you need me to do this and I'm not a sucker. I see when there is money to be made.

MERRIAM

I won't do it!

BAXTER

Then you won't win.

MERRIAM

What the hell did you just say to me, toots?

WHITAKER

Governor Merriam. You must understand how valuable Mr. Palmer can be to this campaign. You want this kind of coverage, you gotta pay up.

PALMER

You can't always bank on someone else having a heart attack in order to move up in this world.

HATFIELD

Fine! We'll pay it.

MERRIAM

...fine. But no more of that "Little Governor" bullshit!

[REDACTED]