

11 Baxter, Whitaker, Waitress

SCENE THIRTEEN - CAMPAIGNS, INC. - NOVEMBER 1934

Lights up on a small café table. WHITAKER sits alone, nervous, with a cup of coffee. After a moment, BAXTER enters:

BAXTER
Sorry, I'm late.

WHITAKER
Don't worry about it.

BAXTER sits. There's a moment of silence. Then they both speak at the same time:

BAXTER
Clem, I-

WHITAKER
I saw the-

BAXTER
Sorry. Go ahead.

WHITAKER
Oh, okay. I...uh...I saw one of the newsreels.

BAXTER
You did?

WHITAKER
It looked just like them. I couldn't believe it. I knew you were the brains behind that one.

BAXTER
L.B. really pulled out all the stops.

WHITAKER
Unions?

BAXTER
Unions.

WHITAKER
Must have been expensive to pull those off. How did you pay for all that?

BAXTER
You don't want to know.

WHITAKER can't help but smile. A WAITRESS approaches.

WAITRESS

Can I get ya something, hon?

BAXTER

No, thank you. I'm fine.

WAITRESS

You sure? He's makin' em extra strong tonight.

WHITAKER

What's the occasion?

WAITRESS

You don't know? With the election coming up we all need a stiff one these days.

WHITAKER

Nervous about Merriam losing?

WAITRESS

Ha! Listen to this guy! Merriam cares as much about common folk as I care about cigarette butts layin' on the sidewalk there.

WHITAKER

Is that so?

WAITRESS

Sure is. Heck, if Sinclair wins, I might even be able to ditch this gin joint and get a real, nice-payin' gig for once.

WHITAKER

You think he can win?

WAITRESS

Everyone I know is votin' for him. And there's a lot more of us at the bottom than people think.

BAXTER

Well, who's to say things wouldn't be better if Merriam wins?

The WAITRESS cracks up.

WAITRESS

That's rich! Why don't I bring ya something special to whet that whistle? Back in a jiff.

The WAITRESS exits.

BAXTER

What the hell just happened...?

WHITAKER

What did you want to talk about?

BAXTER

I need you to come back, Clem.

WHITAKER

No, you don't, Baxter.

BAXTER

Yes, I do.

WHITAKER

You seem to be doing fine without me. The newsreels-

BAXTER

I am doing fine without you. I am.

WHITAKER

Well, there you go.

BAXTER

But, in two very important ways, I am not.

WHITAKER

And those would be...

BAXTER

Merriam will fire me if you don't come back.

WHITAKER

That's ridiculous.

BAXTER

Remember how I told you this was going to be harder for me because I'm a woman? It's just pathetic how scared they are of a woman leading the way.

