

O P P E N H E I M E R

by
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based on the book AMERICAN PROMETHEUS
THE TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY OF J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER
by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin

O P P E N H E I M E R

1 A VAST SPHERE OF FIRE, the fire of a thousand suns, slowly 1
EATS the nighttime desert. A line of black type appears:

"Prometheus stole fire from the Gods and gave it to man."

And the sound of DOZENS OF FEET STAMPING RHYTHMICALLY...

"For this he was chained to a rock and tortured for eternity."

ROILING PLASMA expands, the sound of STAMPING GROWS
OPPRESSIVE, the STAMPING FASTER and FASTER over-

2 A FACE. Gaunt, tense. EYES TIGHTLY SHUT. The face SHUDDERS- 2
the sound CEASES as my EYES OPEN, STARING INTO CAMERA:

Peer into my soul- J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER, aged 50, close
cropped greying hair. The gentle sounds of bureaucracy...

Super title: " 1. FISSION "

VOICE (O.S.)

Dr.Oppenheimer, as we begin, I believe
you have a statement to read into
the record?

I glance down at my notes.

OPPENHEIMER

Yes, Your Honour-

SECOND VOICE (O.S.)

We're not judges, Doctor.

OPPENHEIMER

No. Of course.

(I start reading)

Members of the Security Board, the
so-called derogatory information in
your indictment of me cannot be fairly
understood except in the context of
my life and my work. This answer is
a summary of relevant aspects of my
life in more or less chronological
order...

SENATE AIDE (V.O.)

How long did he testify?

CUT TO:

3 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (BLACK AND WHITE SEQUENCE) 3

Close on a prosperous 63-year old man, LEWIS STRAUSS, as he takes a cup of coffee from a SENATE AIDE...

Super title: " 2. FUSION "

STRAUSS

I forget. Three days, or so. The whole hearing took a month.

SENATE AIDE

An ordeal.

STRAUSS

I've only read the transcript, but who'd want to justify their whole life?

SENATE AIDE

You weren't there?

STRAUSS

As Chairman, I wasn't allowed to be. Are they really going to ask about it? It was years ago.

SENATE AIDE

Four years ago. Oppenheimer still divides America- the Committee will want to know where you stood.

(checks his watch)

Ready?

4 INT. CORRIDOR, SENATE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER (B&W) 4

The Senate Aide leads Strauss along the corridor.

SENATE AIDE

Senator Thurmond asked me to say not to feel you're on trial.

STRAUSS

I didn't, till you said that.

SENATE AIDE

Really, Mr Strauss-

STRAUSS

Admiral.

SENATE AIDE

Admiral Strauss, this is a formality.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

SENATE AIDE (CONT'D)
President Eisenhower's asked you to
be in his Cabinet, the Senate really
has no choice but to confirm you.

They arrive at the door.

STRAUSS
And if they bring up Oppenheimer?

SENATE AIDE
When they bring up Oppenheimer, answer
honestly and no Senator can deny
that you did your duty. It'll be
uncomfortable...
(smiles)
who wants to justify their whole
life?

The door to the VAST committee room opens- they enter,
FLASHBULBS POPPING as PRESS and PUBLIC see Strauss.

ROBB (V.O.)
Why did you leave the United States?

CUT TO:

5 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

5

The room is SMALL, SHABBY. Surprised, I look up from my
statement at the prosecutor, Roger ROBB. Then turn to the
THREE BOARD MEMBERS (GRAY, EVANS, MORGAN).

OPPENHEIMER
I wanted to learn the new physics.

GRAY
Was there nowhere here? I thought
Berkeley had the leading theoretical
physics department-

OPPENHEIMER
Sure. Once I built it. First I had
to go to Europe. I went to Cambridge
to work under Patrick Blackett.

ROBB
Were you happier there than in
America?

INSERT CUTS: A YOUNG ME(21) LIES IN BED STARING UP, CRYING...
PARTICLES WITH THE VASTNESS OF STARS MOVE LIKE FIREFLIES...

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

OPPENHEIMER
No. I was homesick. Emotionally
immature..., troubled by visions of
a hidden universe...

6 INT. LABORATORY, CAMBRIDGE - DAY

6

The YOUNG ME, frazzled demeanor, STRUGGLES with equipment.

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)
...useless in the lab.

I drop a beaker, it SHATTERS. PATRICK BLACKETT looks over,
FROWNING. He picks up an APPLE and takes a LARGE BITE.

BLACKETT
(through apple)
Christ, Oppenheimer, have you had
any sleep? Start again.

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER
I need to go to the lecture.

BLACKETT
Why?

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER
(pleading)
It's Niels Bohr.

Blackett check his watch- starts packing up-

BLACKETT
Damn, *completely* forgot. Let's go.

I start to pack up with the other students.

BLACKETT (CONT'D)
Not you. Finish coating those plates.

I clean up as Blackett and the other students leave- one
leaves an APPLE for Blackett- GREEN WITH STEM AND TINY LEAF.

I pause at a bottle: **Potassium Cyanide**... CLUMSY HANDS
SHAKING, I draw CYANIDE into a syringe. I INJECT the apple...

7 EXT. QUADRANGLE, CAMBRIDGE - EVENING

7

I HURRY across the quad. A lonely figure.

BOHR (V.O.)
Quantum physics isn't a step forward,

8 INT. LECTURE HALL, CAMBRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

8

I sneak into the back of the auditorium. Standing, SPELLBOUND, as NIELS BOHR, a charismatic Dane, lectures.

BOHR

It's a new way to understand reality. Einstein's opened a door, now we're peering through, seeing a world *inside* our world... a world of energy and paradox that not everyone can accept...

I RAISE my hand to ask a question...

CUT TO:

9 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (BLACK AND WHITE)

9

Strauss sits facing the committee, COUNSEL beside him, PRESS, CAMERAS and PUBLIC behind...

SENATOR MCGEE

Admiral Strauss, I'm interested in your relationship with Dr. J Robert Oppenheimer. You met in 1947?

STRAUSS

Correct.

SENATOR MCGEE

You were a commissioner of the Atomic Energy Commission?

STRAUSS

I was, but I met Robert in my capacity as board member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. After the war he was world renowned- the great man of physics...

10 EXT. INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY, PRINCETON - DAY (B&W)

10

Strauss, younger, 51, bustles out of the Institute-

STRAUSS (V.O.)

...I was determined to get him to run the institute.

-to welcome the rail-thin figure of Oppenheimer(43), emerging from a TAXI in HAT and coat, PIPE in mouth. ICONIC.

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Dr. Oppenheimer, an honor.

OPPENHEIMER

Mr. Strauss.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

STRAUSS

It's pronounced 'straws'.

OPPENHEIMER

*'Oh-ppenheimer', 'aw-ppenheimer'-
any way you say it they know I'm
Jewish.*

STRAUSS

*I'm a proud member of Temple Emmanuel-
'Straws' is the Southern
pronunciation. Welcome to the
Institute. I think you could be
very happy here.*

OPPENHEIMER

Oh?

STRAUSS

*Well, you'll love the commute- the
position comes with that house for
you and your wife.*

Strauss points along an avenue of trees to Olden Manor...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

And your two children...

Oppenheimer nods as he follows Strauss into the Institute.

11 INT. INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY, PRINCETON - CONTINUOUS (B&W) 11
Strauss leads Oppenheimer through the Institute.

STRAUSS
I'm a great admirer of your work.

OPPENHEIMER
You're a physicist by training,
Mr. Strauss?

STRAUSS
No, I'm not trained in Physics, or
anything else. I'm a self-made man.

OPPENHEIMER
I can relate to that...

STRAUSS
Really?

OPPENHEIMER
(dry)
My father was one.

12 INT. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY - 12
MOMENTS LATER (B&W)

Strauss shows Oppenheimer into the well-appointed office.

STRAUSS
This would be your office.

Oppenheimer drifts to the windows- a LAWN rolls down to a
POND. He spots a FIGURE- long grey hair poking from under
his hat-

STRAUSS (CONT'D)
I'm told he's there most afternoons.

The Figure gently tosses a stone into the water.

12 CONTINUED:

12

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

*I've always wondered why you didn't
involve him in the Manhattan Project.*

Oppenheimer turns to Strauss, interested...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

*The greatest scientific mind of our
time?*

OPPENHEIMER

*Of his time. Einstein published his
theory of Relativity more than 40
years ago, but never embraced the
quantum world it revealed.*

STRAUSS

'God doesn't play dice'.

OPPENHEIMER

*Precisely. You never thought of
studying physics formally?*

STRAUSS

*I had offers. But I chose to sell
shoes.*

OPPENHEIMER

*Lewis Strauss was once a lowly shoe
salesman?*

STRAUSS

*No. Just a shoe salesman.
(opens the door)
I'll introduce you-*

OPPENHEIMER

No need. I've known him for years.

Strauss, awkward, stays in the doorway and WATCHES...

*From afar: as Oppenheimer approaches, Einstein's HAT BLOWS
off his head, unleashing a MESS OF GREY HAIR, hat rolling
across the grass to where Oppenheimer SCOOPS it up, and we...*

CUT TO-

13 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

13

I flip a page. Continue reading my statement.

OPPENHEIMER

*I struggled badly trying to visualize
this new world...*

14 INT. ROOMS AT CAMBRIDGE - DAY 14

The Young Me lies on the floor, STARING UP...

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)
*...you had to retool your mind to
 see things hovering just out of sight,*

INSERT CUT: POINTS OF LIGHT MOVE LIKE SPARKS, BUT IN A WAVE.

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Then you could unlock forces never
 before imagined...*

I wipe TEARS from my eyes.

INSERT CUT: STARS. SPARKS FROM A CAMPFIRE. I PAT THE NOSE
 OF A HORSE IN THE DARKNESS AS I FEED IT AN APPLE.

I grow calm, my eyelids lowering...

INSERT CUT: AN APPLE- GREEN WITH A STEM AND A TINY LEAF...

I OPEN my eyes- JUMP out of bed- SCRAMBLE to dress-

15 EXT. QUADRANGLE, CAMBRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER 15

I RUN, DESPERATE, AGAINST the crowd-

16 INT. LABORATORY, CAMBRIDGE - DAY 16

I BURST in- Blackett LOOKS UP. ANOTHER MAN has his back to
 me. Between them on the work bench- the POISONED APPLE...

BLACKETT
 You alright?

I nod, awkward, trying to control my BREATHING...

BLACKETT (CONT'D)
 Niels, meet J. Robert Oppenheimer.

The other man TURNS, offers his hand- Niels Bohr.

BOHR
 What does the 'J' stand for?

BLACKETT
 Nothing, apparently.

Bohr takes me in- this strange, BREATHLESS young man...

BOHR
 You were at my lecture. You asked
 the only good question.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

BLACKETT

Nobody's denying his insight. It's his laboratory skills that leave a little to be desired.

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

I heard you give the same lecture-

BOHR

At Harvard. And you asked the same question. Why ask again?

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

I hadn't liked your answer.

BOHR

Did you like it better yesterday?

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

A lot.

BOHR

You can lift the rock without being ready for the snake that's revealed. Now, it seems, you're ready.

Bohr picks up the POISONED APPLE from Blackett's desk...

BOHR (CONT'D)

You don't enjoy the lab?

I shake my head. Bohr GESTICULATES with the apple as he talks- I watch it bob around- a kitten following a ball of string...

BOHR (CONT'D)

Get out of Cambridge, with its beakers and potions. Go somewhere they'll let you think...
(assesses me)
Gottingen.

BLACKETT

Born?

BOHR

Born. Get to Germany. Study under Max Born. Learn the ways of theory. I'll send word.

Bohr raises the apple to take a bite- I GRAB it-

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

Wormhole.

-DROP it into the wastebasket. Blackett peers at it, curious.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

BOHR

How's your mathematics?

BLACKETT

Not good enough for the physicist he wants to be.

BOHR

Algebra's like sheet music. The important thing isn't can you read music, it's can you hear it. Can you hear the music, Robert?

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

I can.

SPARKS explode in WAVES, WAVES of FIRE CRASHING on a SHORE of GLASS, FLYING OVER the MEDIEVAL SPIRES of Gottingen, I watch BORN and BOHR and DIRAC, GALAXIES of PARTICLES DISPERSE and REFORM, a CUBIST PAINTING transfixes the Young Me, an ORCHESTRA plays STRAVINSKY, I read THE WASTELAND, I WRITE FURIOUSLY at a desk, I WRITE FURIOUSLY on a chalk board, I SMASH a glass, and ANOTHER, and ANOTHER, WATCHING the SHARDS skid across the floor, CATCHING and REFRACTING LIGHT, I watch RAINDROPS scintillate a PUDDLE, STREAM down a window pane, I disturb the surface of a sink full of WATER, watching RIPPLES propagate and INTERFERE, I BOUNCE a ball against a corner of my room, studying its trajectory...

CUT TO-

17 EXT. INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY, PRINCETON - DAY (B&W) 17

Strauss watches Oppenheimer hand the HAT to Einstein. Strauss checks his watch, then starts down the hill towards them. As he approaches, Einstein TURNS, walking towards Strauss with a GRIM EXPRESSION...

STRAUSS

(friendly)

Albert...

Einstein PASSES without acknowledging Strauss. Strauss reaches Oppenheimer-

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

What did you say to him?

OPPENHEIMER

He's fine. Mr. Strauss, there are things in my past you need to be aware of.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

STRAUSS

As Chairman of the AEC I have access to your security file. I've read it. The job's yours.

OPPENHEIMER

You're not worried?

STRAUSS

After all you've done for your country?

OPPENHEIMER

Times change, Mr. Strauss.

STRAUSS

The purpose of this institute is to provide a haven for independent minds. You're the man for the job.

OPPENHEIMER

Then I'll consider it. And I'll see you at the AEC meeting tomorrow.

Oppenheimer turns, heads back up the hill.

STRAUSS

(taken aback)

This is one of the most prestigious appointments in the country...

Oppenheimer looks back at Strauss, GRINS-

OPPENHEIMER

With a great commute. That's why I'm considering it.

Strauss watches him go, shaking his head.

SENATOR MCGEE (V.O.)

So, Dr. Oppenheimer brought your attention to his past associations before you appointed him?

18 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

18

STRAUSS

Yes.

SENATOR MCGEE

And they didn't concern you?

STRAUSS

Just then I was more concerned about what he'd said to Einstein to sour him on me.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 18

A few CHUCKLES from the room.

SENATOR MCGEE

But later?

STRAUSS

Well, we all know what happened later.

CUT TO-

19 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR) 19

The Board Members listen as I continue reading...

OPPENHEIMER

*After Gottingen I moved on to Leiden
in Holland...*

20 INT. LECTURE HALL, LEIDEN - DAY 20

A packed hall. The Young Me nervously checks my notes.

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)

...where I first met Isidor Rabi...

A stocky young man, ISIDOR RABI (30), plonks down next to a DUTCH STUDENT who reluctantly shifts, giving him room.

RABI

*A Yank lecturing on the new physics?
This I have to hear- I'm an American
myself.*

DUTCH STUDENT

How surprising.

RABI

*Let me know if you need any help
with the English.*

I start lecturing... IN DUTCH. Rabi, confused, leans in-

RABI (CONT'D)

Wait, what's he saying?

21 INT. TRAIN, LEIDEN TO ZURICH - NIGHT 21

I stare out the window at dark trees, steam and shadows. Rabi dumps his bags down, slumps opposite, sizes me up. Offers me an orange-

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

No, thank you.

RABI

*It's a long way to Zurich.
(MORE)*

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

RABI (CONT'D)

You get any skinnier we might lose you between the seat cushions. I'm Rabi.

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

Oppenheimer.

Rabi starts peeling his orange.

RABI

I caught your lecture on molecules. Caught *some* of it- we're a couple of New York Jews- how do you know Dutch?

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

I thought I'd better learn it when I got here this semester.

Rabi STOPS peeling his orange to STARE at me-

RABI

You learned enough Dutch in *six weeks* to give a lecture on quantum mechanics?

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

I wanted to challenge myself.

RABI

Quantum physics isn't challenging enough? Shvitzer.

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

Shvitzer?

RABI

'Show off'. Dutch in six weeks but you never learned yiddish?

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

(smile)

They don't speak it so much my side of the Park.

RABI

Screw you. Homesick?

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER

You know it.

Rabi peels his orange. He turns serious...

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

RABI
Ever get the feeling our kind isn't
entirely welcome here?

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER
Physicists?

RABI
Funny.

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER
Sometimes. Not in the department.

RABI
They're all Jewish, too.

Rabi tosses me a slice of orange.

RABI (CONT'D)
Eat.

I take the orange, 'sipping' at it.

RABI (CONT'D)
In Zurich there's a German you *have*
to seek out-

YOUNG OPPENHEIMER
Heisenberg.

22 INT. LECTURE HALL, ZURICH - DAY

22

A tall man of 26 turns from the blackboard- HEISENBERG. I
study his every move. Rabi NUDGES me 'see?'...

23 INT. SAME - LATER

23

Rabi introduces me to Heisenberg.

HEISENBERG
Oppenheimer, yes. I liked your paper
on molecules.

OPPENHEIMER
Probably because you inspired it.

HEISENBERG
If I inspire anything else, let me
know. We could publish together.

OPPENHEIMER
I have to get back to America.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

HEISENBERG

Why? There's no one there taking quantum mechanics seriously.

OPPENHEIMER

That's *exactly* why.

RABI

He's pining for the canyons of Manhattan.

OPPENHEIMER

The canyons of New Mexico.

HEISENBERG

You're from New Mexico?

OPPENHEIMER

New York, but my brother and I have a ranch outside Santa Fe. That's the America I miss right now.

HEISENBERG

Then you best get home, cowboys.

RABI

That's *his* thing- me and horses? I don't think so.

GRAY (V.O.)

Did you ever encounter Heisenberg again?

24 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

24

I smile to myself.

OPPENHEIMER

Not in person. But you might say our paths crossed.

ROBB

Doctor, during your time in Europe, you seem to have met a wide range of other countries' physicists...

(consulting notes)

Born, Bohr, Pauli, Dirac, Einstein, Heisenberg..?

OPPENHEIMER

That's right.

Robb looks up at me...

ROBB

Any Russians?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

OPPENHEIMER
Magnificent.

LAWRENCE
Would you like to help?

OPPENHEIMER
Build it? No. But I'm working on theories I'd like to test with it.

LAWRENCE
When do you start teaching?

OPPENHEIMER
I've got my first in an hour.

LAWRENCE
Seminar?

OPPENHEIMER
Pupil.

LAWRENCE
One student? That's it?

OPPENHEIMER
I'm teaching something no one here's dreamt of. But once people start hearing what you can do with it...

LAWRENCE
(grins)
There's no going back.

30 INT. CLASSROOM, BERKELEY - LATER

30

I stand there, expectant. A student opens the door, looks around embarrassed-

STUDENT
I'm sorry, I must have missed-

OPPENHEIMER
No, this is it. Mr.Lomanitz, right?

LOMANITZ(21) nods, takes a seat.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
What do you know about quantum mechanics?

LOMANITZ
I have a grasp on the basics-

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

OPPENHEIMER
 Then you're doing it wrong.
 (rapid fire)
 Is light made up of particles or
 waves?

Lomanitz opens his mouth to speak- too slow-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 Quantum mechanics says it's both-
 how can it be both?

LOMANITZ
 It can't.

OPPENHEIMER
 It can't. But it is. It's
 paradoxical and yet... it works.

Lomanitz is hooked. I turn to the board, chalk out an equation... when I turn back-

There are now FIVE students (including SERBER and SNYDER) listening intently... I move to Lomanitz to hand him his paper. I pat his shoulder.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 You're gonna be okay.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 A PACKED CLASSROOM, hanging on my every word as I, now 32, slim, well-dressed, confident, teach in the round. Lawrence listens at the edge, fascinated.

31

OPPENHEIMER
 Consider a star... a vast furnace
 burning in outer space...

INSERT CUT: A STAR. A SUN. BURNING, ROILING.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 Fire pushing outwards against its
 own gravity- balanced. But if its
 furnace cools, gravity starts winning.
 It contracts...

I look around. Make eye contact with Hartland SNYDER...

SNYDER
 Density increases...

OPPENHEIMER
 Increasing gravity...

INSERT CUT: THE SUN IS SHRINKING, MORE AND MORE RAPIDLY...

31 CONTINUED:

31

SNYDER

Increasing density. A vicious cycle.
Until... what's the limit here?

OPPENHEIMER

I don't know. See where the math
takes us. I guarantee it's somewhere
no one's been before.

SNYDER

Me?

OPPENHEIMER

Your math's better than mine.

32 EXT. BERKELEY - DAY

32

Energetic, dashing, I STRIDE across campus, a group of
students, including Snyder and Lomanitz, following me, hanging
on my every word...

OPPENHEIMER

Einstein can't accept the Copenhagen
interpretation-

LOMANITZ

'God doesn't play dice'.

OPPENHEIMER

Except he does. Bohr showed us how...

33 INT. CLASSROOM, BERKELEY - DAY

33

I mark up a paper. Lawrence comes in, frowns at the board.

LAWRENCE

You shouldn't let them bring their
politics into the classroom...

I follow his look: '**SATURDAY 2:00pm, RALLY FOR LOYALIST SPAIN**'

OPPENHEIMER

I wrote that. Lawrence, you embrace
the revolution in physics, can't you
see it everywhere else? Picasso,
Stravinsky, Freud, Marx...

LAWRENCE

This is America, Oppie. We had our
revolution. Seriously, keep it out
of the lab.

OPPENHEIMER

Well, *out of the lab*, my landlady's
having a discussion group tonight.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

LAWRENCE

I've sampled the Berkeley political scene- it's all philosophy post-grads and Communists talking integration.

OPPENHEIMER

You don't care about integration?

LAWRENCE

I want to vote for it, not talk about it. Let's get dinner.

OPPENHEIMER

I'm meeting my brother there.

SENATOR BARTLETT (V.O.)

Dr.Oppenheimer's file contained details of F.B.I. surveillance on his activities at Berkeley...

CUT TO:

34 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

34

Strauss looks at the Senator, cautious...

STRAUSS

Yes, as I recall.

SENATOR BARTLETT

Why would they have started a file on Dr.Oppenheimer before the war?

STRAUSS

You'd have to ask Mr.Hoover.

SENATOR BARTLETT

*I'm asking **you**, Admiral Strauss.*

STRAUSS

My assumption is that it was connected to his left-wing political activities.

SENATOR BARTLETT

How would these activities have come to the attention of the F.B.I.?

STRAUSS

Well, if I remember correctly...

CUT TO:

35 EXT. HOUSE PARTY, SHASTA ROAD, BERKELEY - NIGHT (COLOUR) 35

STRAUSS (V.O.)
*The F.B.I. was taking license plates
outside suspected Communist gatherings
and his name popped up.*

As I get out of my car, I spot TWO MEN checking the license plates of cars on the street... I am GRABBED-

FRANK (O.S.)
Gotcha!

My younger brother FRANK(25) and his date, JACKIE.

36 INT. LIVING ROOM, HOUSE PARTY, SHASTA ROAD, BERKELEY - NIGHT 36

We ENTER the bustling room- I spot a beguiling young woman-

VOICE (O.S.)
Robert! Come meet Chevalier.

Mary WASHBURN grabs my tie and leads us to Haakon CHEVALIER.

WASHBURN
Dr.Haakon Chevalier, Dr.Robert
Oppenheimer, and vice versa.

OPPENHEIMER
This is my little brother, Frank.
Oh, and... uh...

JACKIE
Still Jackie.

CHEVALIER
Hello, Still Jackie.

OPPENHEIMER
Chevalier. You're in languages.

CHEVALIER
And your reputation precedes you.

OPPENHEIMER
I'm blushing- what've you heard?

CHEVALIER
You're teaching a radical new approach
to physics that I have no chance of
understanding. But I hadn't heard
you were a party member-

OPPENHEIMER
I'm not.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

FRANK

Not yet.

JACKIE

Frank and I are thinking of joining-

OPPENHEIMER

(ignoring Jackie)

I support a range of causes.

Jackie, put out, leads Frank away.

CHEVALIER

The Spanish Civil War?

OPPENHEIMER

A democratic republic being overthrown
by fascist thugs? Who wouldn't?

CHEVALIER

Our government- they think socialism's
a bigger threat than fascism.

OPPENHEIMER

Not for long- look at what the Nazis
are doing to the Jews. I send funds
to colleagues in Germany to emigrate.
I have to do something. My own work
is so... abstract.

CHEVALIER

What're you working on?

OPPENHEIMER

What happens to stars when they die.

CHEVALIER

Do stars die?

OPPENHEIMER

If they do they'd cool, then collapse.
And the bigger the star, the more
violent its demise. Their gravity
gets so concentrated...

*INSERT CUT: THE SUN SHRINKS. THE LIGHT OF THE DISTANT STARS
BEHIND IS TUGGED TOWARDS THE DYING STAR, BENDING, STRETCHING.*

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

It swallows everything. Even light.

CHEVALIER

Good God. Can that really happen?

OPPENHEIMER

The math says it can.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

If we can get published, maybe one day an astronomer finds one. But all I have is theory. Which can't impact people's lives.

CHEVALIER

If you're sending money to Spain, do it through the Communist Party- they can get it to the front lines.

The beguiling young woman is there with a tray of martinis. This is Jean TATLOCK...

TATLOCK

Mary sent me with these. I'm Jean.

OPPENHEIMER

Robert.

CHEVALIER

Haakon Chevalier. The union meeting at Serber's last month?

Tatlock nods. I take a glass.

CHEVALIER (CONT'D)

Robert here says he's not a communist.

TATLOCK

Then he doesn't know enough about it.

OPPENHEIMER

I've read 'Das Kapital'. All three volumes. Does that count?

CHEVALIER

That would make you better read than most party members.

OPPENHEIMER

It's turgid stuff, but there's some thinking... 'Ownership is theft'.

TATLOCK

'Property', not 'Ownership'.

OPPENHEIMER

Sorry, I read it in the original German.

Chevalier laughs, delighted, as he leaves us alone.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (3)

36

TATLOCK

It's not about the book, it's about the ideas. You sound uncommitted.

OPPENHEIMER

I'm committed to thinking freely about how to improve our world. Why limit yourself to one dogma?

TATLOCK

You're a physicist- do you pick and choose rules? Or do you use the discipline to channel your energies into progress?

OPPENHEIMER

I like a little wiggle room. Do you always toe the party line?

Tatlock considers this. Sizes me up.

TATLOCK

I like my wiggle room, too.

37 INT. BEDROOM - LATER

37

We are FUCKING. Hot, sweaty, a little brutal. Tatlock GIVES UP, climbs off me-

OPPENHEIMER

Wait, wait-

I catch my breath, watching her STUDY my shelves.

TATLOCK

Unexpected.

OPPENHEIMER

What?

TATLOCK

For a Physicist.

OPPENHEIMER

You've only got a shelf full of Freud?

TATLOCK

Actually my background's more-

OPPENHEIMER

Jungian.

TATLOCK

You know analysis.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

OPPENHEIMER

When I was a post-grad at Cambridge
I had some trouble.

She turns to me.

TATLOCK

I'll bite.

OPPENHEIMER

I tried to poison my tutor.

TATLOCK

Did you hate him?

OPPENHEIMER

I liked him very much.

Tatlock turns back to the books.

TATLOCK

You just needed to get laid.

OPPENHEIMER

Wow. Took my analysts two years,
and I'm not sure they ever put it
that succinctly.

TATLOCK

You had them convinced you're more
complicated than you really are.

OPPENHEIMER

We're all simple souls, I guess.

TATLOCK

Not me.

She pulls a book from the shelf: THE BHAGAVAD-GITA. She
opens the book to find INCOMPREHENSIBLE CHARACTERS.

TATLOCK (CONT'D)

What's this?

OPPENHEIMER

Sanskrit.

TATLOCK

You can read this?

OPPENHEIMER

I'm learning-

She climbs on top of me, opens the book in my face.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

TATLOCK

Go on, then.

I study the page as Tatlock starts to move.

OPPENHEIMER

In this part, Vishnu reveals his
multi-armed self-

TATLOCK

Read the words.

She points to each word as I translate...

OPPENHEIMER

"And now I am become Death...

She nods, impressed, starts moving again...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Destroyer of worlds."

38 EXT. NEW MEXICO - DAY

38

Moving over the VAST landscape to find three tiny figures.
I lead Lawrence and Frank on horseback up a mountain trail.

39 EXT. CAMP SITE - EVENING

39

THUNDER. Lawrence climbs off his horse. The wind WHIPS as
we set up our tent...

OPPENHEIMER

It'll break before dawn. The air
cools overnight. Just before dawn,
the storm dies.

40 INT./EXT TENT - NIGHT

40

Lawrence, Frank and I huddle in the BUFFETING TENT, trying
to keep a fire going in the WIND and RAIN outside the tent.

FRANK

I'm getting married.

LAWRENCE

Congratulations, Frank.

I look at Frank, sardonic with drink.

OPPENHEIMER

To Jackie?

Frank stares at me... the tent stops buffeting...

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

FRANK

Yeah, to Jackie. The waitress.

LAWRENCE

(sensing tension)

Oppie, you're right- it's letting up. I'll see if there's any stars.

Frank watches Lawrence go, then pounces-

FRANK

All your talk about the common man but Jackie's not good enough? We join the Party- you can't hide your disapproval- why? Because that's supposed to be *your* thing-?

OPPENHEIMER

I haven't joined the party, Frank. And I don't think she should've convinced you to, either-

FRANK

Half the faculty's Communist-

OPPENHEIMER

Not that half.

I point in the direction Lawrence wandered off.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

I'm your brother, and I want you to be cautious.

FRANK

And I want to wring your neck.

I giggle at this. Frank shakes his head, then starts laughing, too. I grab Frank's shoulder. Frank looks up...

FRANK (CONT'D)

Robert, I won't live my life afraid to make a mistake.

I hold up my hands in defeat-

OPPENHEIMER

You're happy, I'm happy.

FRANK

Then I'm happy you're happy.

41 EXT. PERRO CALIENTE - MOMENTS LATER

41

I approach Lawrence, who stares up at the stars.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

LAWRENCE

It's so clear I feel like I could see one of those dark stars you're working on...

OPPENHEIMER

You can't, that's the whole point.

INSERT CUT: AN EXPANDING DARKNESS EATS THE STARS...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Their gravity swallows light. It's like a kind of... hole in space.

LAWRENCE

Is Frank okay?

OPPENHEIMER

Yeah. He just has a shitty brother.

Lawrence smiles at this. Looks around them.

LAWRENCE

It's special here.

OPPENHEIMER

As a kid I thought if I could find a way to combine physics and New Mexico, my life would be perfect.

LAWRENCE

It's a little remote for that.

OPPENHEIMER

Let's get some sleep.

I turn, heading to the tent. Lawrence follows.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

That mesa we saw today? One of my favorite places in the world. Tomorrow we'll climb it.

LAWRENCE

What's it called?

My response is so soft it is almost swallowed by the dark...

OPPENHEIMER

Los Alamos.

42 EXT. STREET, BERKELEY - DAY

42

Tatlock and I walk down the sidewalk. I try to take her hand- she folds her arms.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

TATLOCK

I wasn't expecting to see you.

OPPENHEIMER

I have to make an appointment?

Across the street a Young Man BURSTS out of the BARBER SHOP, towel across chest, NEWSPAPER in hand... the Barber runs out- the Young Man rips off the towel, TOSSES it to him and RUNS-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Alvarez!

I leave Tatlock on the sidewalk, take off after Alvarez-

43 EXT. BERKELEY CAMPUS - DAY

43

Alvarez SPRINTS, newspaper in hand- I follow-

44 INT. CLASSROOM, BERKELEY - CONTINUOUS

44

I BURST in- Lawrence is trying to calm Alvarez-

ALVAREZ

(breathless)

They've done it! Hahn and Strassmann
in Germany...

Alvarez tosses the paper at me-

ALVAREZ (CONT'D)

They split the uranium nucleus.

LAWRENCE

How?

OPPENHEIMER

(reading)

Bombarded it with neutrons.

ALVAREZ

Lawrence, it's fission. *Nuclear*
fission. They've split the atom...

OPPENHEIMER

It's not possible.

I put down the paper, take up my chalk like it's a weapon, move to the board. Alvarez grabs the paper-

ALVAREZ

I'm going to try to reproduce it.

Alvarez and Lawrence leave. I write and write...

45 INT. CLASSROOM, BERKELEY - LATER 45

Lawrence enters. I turn. Point at the board.

OPPENHEIMER
See. It can't be done.

LAWRENCE
Very elegant. Quite clear. Just one problem...

OPPENHEIMER
Where?

LAWRENCE
Next door. Alvarez did it.

46 INT. RAD LAB, BERKELEY - MOMENTS LATER 46

I peer at Alvarez's oscilloscope...

LAWRENCE
Theory will take you only so far.

I stand, moving away... thinking...

OPPENHEIMER
During the process extra neutrons boil off. Which could be used to split other uranium atoms...

LAWRENCE
A chain reaction. You're thinking what I'm thinking.

OPPENHEIMER
You, me and every physicist around the world who's seen the news.

ALVAREZ
What? What're we all thinking?

OPPENHEIMER
A bomb, Alvarez. A bomb.

47 EXT. TATLOCK HOUSE, BERKELEY - NIGHT 47

Tatlock GRABS a bouquet out of my hands-

TATLOCK
I told you, Robert, no more fucking flowers.

She dumps them in the trash. I just stare.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

OPPENHEIMER

I don't understand what you want from me-

TATLOCK

I don't want *anything* from you.

I pause. Then, gently...

OPPENHEIMER

You say that. Then you call.

Tatlock kicks at the dirt.

TATLOCK

Don't answer.

OPPENHEIMER

I'll always answer.

She looks up at me.

TATLOCK

Fine. But no more flowers.

She goes inside-

OPPENHEIMER

Aren't you coming?

Slams the door shut behind her. I stand there.

CHEVALIER (O.S.)

You have to know when you're beaten, Robert.

I turn. Chevalier and his wife, BARBARA, wait in the car.

OPPENHEIMER

It's not that simple, Haakon.

48 INT. MEETING HALL, BERKELEY - NIGHT

48

Chevalier and Barbara lead me into the crowded hall. A BANNER-
'**FEDERATION OF ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, CHEMISTS AND TECHNICIANS**'

A man with a British accent greets us. This is ELTENTON.

ELTENTON

Chevalier, good to see you. And the illustrious Dr. Oppenheimer. I'm Eltenton. Might you say a word about organized labour on campuses?

OPPENHEIMER

I'll try to think of something.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

Eltenton guides me towards the stage...

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

48

ELTENTON

I work at Shell, we've signed up chemists *and* engineers...

OPPENHEIMER

That's excellent.

I spot Lomanitz, who grins and waves...

ELTENTON

So why not scientists in academia?

OPPENHEIMER

Sure. When do we-

Eltenton pushes me onto the stage. People start APPLAUDING at the very sight of me. I can't quite not smile about this.

49 INT. RAD LAB, BERKELEY - DAY

49

I watch Lawrence examine his cyclotron.

OPPENHEIMER

Teachers are unionized, Lawrence. Why not professors?

LAWRENCE

Don't you have somewhere to be?

OPPENHEIMER

Academics have rights, too-

LAWRENCE

It's not that. I have a group coming.

OPPENHEIMER

I'll sit in.

LAWRENCE

Not this one.

The door opens. Richard TOLMAN and Vannevar BUSH enter-

OPPENHEIMER

Richard. Dr. Bush. What brings you two up north?

They exchange glances with Lawrence. Awkward SILENCE. I rise, letting them off the hook-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Richard, tell Ruth I'll be down to Pasadena Thursday.

50 INT. CLASSROOM, BERKELEY - CONTINUOUS 50

As I enter, a magazine FLAPS into my hands from across the room. Students are all reading copies...

SERBER

Your paper on black holes- it's in!

I open the magazine as I turn to a STUDENT-

OPPENHEIMER

Get Hartland.

LOMANITZ

September 1st, 1939- the world's gonna remember this day...

Snyder comes in with a newspaper. Glum.

OPPENHEIMER

Hartland, our paper, it's in print!

SNYDER

We've been upstaged.

He holds up the paper: '**HITLER INVADES POLAND**'

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)

During the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain...

51 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 51

Robb looks on intently as I turn the page on my statement...

OPPENHEIMER

...I found myself increasingly out of sympathy with the policy of neutrality that Communists advocated.

ROBB

And after Hitler invaded Russia, did these Communist sympathies return?

OPPENHEIMER

No. If you'll just allow me to-

GRAY

Mr.Robb, you'll have ample opportunity to cross-examine.

OPPENHEIMER

I need to make clear that my changing opinion of Russia did not mean a
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
sharp break with those who held
different views. For a year or two
during a previous marriage my wife,
Kitty, had been a Communist Party
member.

Behind me, on a couch, is KITTY(46), listening intently...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
But when I first met her, in Pasadena
in 1939, she had already disengaged
from politics...

52 INT. HOUSE PARTY, TOLMAN HOUSE, PASADENA - NIGHT

52

Kitty(31) watches as I EXPERTLY open the liquor cabinet-

OPPENHEIMER
This is where I keep the good stuff.

KITTY
I thought this was the Tolmans' house.

OPPENHEIMER
I live with them when I'm at Caltech.

RUTH (O.S.)
You two need anything?

I turn to see RUTH TOLMAN(45) looking at me, mischievous.

OPPENHEIMER
We're fine, Ruthie.
(to Kitty)
You're a biologist?

KITTY
Somehow I graduated to housewife.
Can you explain quantum mechanics to
me? It seems baffling.

OPPENHEIMER
It is. This glass-

I thump a glass onto the cabinet- pour a drink-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
This drink-

I hand her the glass- fingers touching...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
Our bodies...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
are mostly empty space- groupings of
tiny energy waves bound together.

KITTY
By what?

OPPENHEIMER
Forces of attraction strong enough
to convince us that matter is solid...

I push the palm of my hand up against hers.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
And stop my body passing through
yours.

Kitty pushes her fingers through mine, interlacing our hands.
I look at a GREY-HAIRED MAN in conversation with Tolman...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
You're married to Dr.Harrison.

KITTY
Not very.

OPPENHEIMER
Well, there's someone that I...

KITTY
Does she feel the same way?

OPPENHEIMER
Sometimes. Not often enough.

As Ruth looks our way I let Kitty's hand go.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
I'm going to New Mexico, to my ranch.
With friends. You should come.

Kitty looks meaningfully over her glass at me.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
I meant with your husband.

KITTY
Yes, you did. Because you know it
won't make a bit of difference.

53 EXT. PERRO CALIENTE - DAY

53

Kitty and I THUNDER along on horseback, climbing a ridge. I
shout ahead to Kitty-

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

OPPENHEIMER
Why did you marry him?!

Kitty pulls up. I come alongside.

KITTY
I was lost. He was kind.

OPPENHEIMER
Lost?

KITTY
My previous husband died. At 28 I
wasn't ready to be a widow.

Kitty DISMOUNTS. I follow.

OPPENHEIMER
Who was your first husband?

KITTY
Nobody. But my *second* husband was
Joe Dallet. From money, like me,
but he was a union organizer in
Youngstown, Ohio. I fell hard.

OPPENHEIMER
How hard?

KITTY
Hard enough to spend four years living
off beans and pancakes, handing out
the Daily Worker at factory gates.

Kitty takes out a hip flask. SWIGS.

KITTY (CONT'D)
By '36 I told Joe I couldn't take it
anymore, quit the party and joined
my parents swanning around Europe.
A year later I said I wanted him
back. Him, not the Daily Worker.
He said 'swell, I'll meet you on my
way to Spain'.

She hands me the flask. I take a drink.

OPPENHEIMER
He went to fight for the Loyalists?

KITTY
On his way we reconciled. One
beautiful week in Paris. Then he
went to the brigades and I waited.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (2)

53

KITTY (CONT'D)

One day Steve Nelson turns up in the lobby of the hotel to tell me Joe got himself killed first time he popped out of his trench.

OPPENHEIMER

Who's Steve Nelson?

KITTY

Head of the Communist Party in San Francisco. You don't know him?

OPPENHEIMER

I'm not a Communist.

KITTY

You seem to know a lot of 'em.

OPPENHEIMER

Including you.

KITTY

(shakes head)

Ideology got Joe killed. For nothing.

OPPENHEIMER

The Spanish Republic isn't nothing.

KITTY

My husband offered both our futures to stop one fascist bullet embedding itself in a mud bank. That's the *definition* of nothing.

OPPENHEIMER

That seems a little reductive-

KITTY

Pragmatic. Steve and his wife brought me home with them to Chicago, then set me up with husband number three. Now here I am...

She looks around at the wilderness...

KITTY (CONT'D)

Wherever the *hell* this is-

I grab her. Kiss her, hard.

54 INT. TATLOCK'S BEDROOM - DAY

54

Tatlock and I sit on the floor, backs to the bed like kids. Tatlock has been crying.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

OPPENHEIMER

I didn't want you to hear it from someone else.

TATLOCK

You didn't bring flowers. That's something.

I reach into my pocket- she GRABS the small posy from me, TOSSING it aside.

OPPENHEIMER

Jean, we both know I'm not what you want.

TATLOCK

Yeah. But it's a door closing.

OPPENHEIMER

Not as far as I'm concerned.

Tatlock looks at me. Appreciating the sentiment.

TATLOCK

You knocked her up. Fast work.

OPPENHEIMER

Can't keep a good man down.

TATLOCK

I meant *her*. She knew what she wanted. What about the husband?

OPPENHEIMER

We spoke. He's divorcing her so we can get married before she's showing.

TATLOCK

How civilized, you idiot. This is your community- you think rules don't apply to the golden boy?

OPPENHEIMER

Brilliance makes up for a lot.

TATLOCK

Don't alienate the only people in the world who understand what you do. One day you might need them.

55 INT. RAD LAB, BERKELEY - DAY

55

I write '**F.A.E.C.T.**' on the board, Lomanitz hands out FLIERS. Lawrence enters, GRABBING a flier from the nearest Student-
'**UNIONIZE THE RADIATION LAB**'

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

LAWRENCE
Lomanitz? What do you make a month?

LOMANITZ
(sheepish)
150 dollars.

Lawrence turns to another Student-

LAWRENCE
How are the working conditions?

OPPENHEIMER
That's not the point, Lawrence.

LAWRENCE
What do you have in common with dock
workers and farm laborers?

LOMANITZ
Plenty-

LAWRENCE
Right. Everybody out. Now!
(to me)
Not you.

The Students file out. Lawrence SLAMS the door- turns on me-

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
What're you doing?!

OPPENHEIMER
It's a trade union-

LAWRENCE
Full of Communists!

OPPENHEIMER
So? I haven't joined the party-

LAWRENCE
They won't let me bring you onto the
project because of this shit! They
won't even let me tell you what the
project *is*-

OPPENHEIMER
I know what the fucking project is,
Lawrence! We all heard about Einstein
and Szilard's letter to Roosevelt.
Warning him the Germans could make a
bomb. And *I* know what it means for
the Nazis to have a bomb.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (2)

55

LAWRENCE

I don't?

OPPENHEIMER

It's not your people they're herding
into camps! It's mine!

LAWRENCE

You think *I* tell them about your
politics? Next time you're coming
home from a meeting, take a look in
the rear-view mirror. Listen for
sounds on your phone line. And stop
being so goddamn naive.

I'm taken aback by this...

OPPENHEIMER

Why would they care what I do?

LAWRENCE

Because you're not just self-
important, you're *actually* important.

I see the reality. Shift gears-

OPPENHEIMER

I get it. You don't have to worry.
I get it.

LAWRENCE

You just need to be more-

OPPENHEIMER

Pragmatic. It's done, Lawrence.
I'll talk to Lomanitz and the others.
You don't have to worry.

Lawrence looks at me. Sees this is real.

LAWRENCE

Then welcome to the war.

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)

*I filled out my first security
questionnaire...*

56 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

56

I glance up from my notes.

OPPENHEIMER

...and was informed that my
involvement in left-wing groups would
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
not prove a bar to my work on the
atomic program.

SENATOR PASTORE (V.O.)
*Why were his Communist associations
not seen as a security risk during
the war?*

CUT TO:

57 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

57

Strauss suppresses his irritation at the line of questioning.

STRAUSS
*Senator, I can't possibly answer for
a security clearance granted years
before I even met the man.*

SENATOR PASTORE
Fine. What about after?

STRAUSS
*After the war, Dr. Oppenheimer was
the most respected scientific voice
in the world. That's why I asked
him to run the Institute, that's why
he advised the Atomic Energy
Commission. Simple as that.*

58 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

58

Strauss paces-

STRAUSS
What are they accusing me of?

SENATE AIDE
*I think they just want to know what
happened between 1947 and 1954 to
change your mind on Oppenheimer's
security clearance.*

STRAUSS
*I didn't. I was the AEC Chairman,
but it wasn't me who brought the
charges against Robert.*

SENATE AIDE
Who did?

STRAUSS
*Some former staff member of the Joint
Congressional Committee-*

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

INSERT CUT: A YOUNG MAN LEAFS THROUGH A FILE, COLLECTING HIS THOUGHTS... THIS IS WILLIAM BORDEN... HE STARTS TYPING...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

A rabid anti-Communist named Borden. He wrote to the FBI demanding they take action.

SENATE AIDE

The F.B.I? Why not come to the AEC direct?

STRAUSS

Why get caught holding the knife yourself?

SENATE AIDE

What did Borden have against Oppenheimer?

STRAUSS

This was the McCarthy era- people hounded out of jobs for any hint of red... reading Oppenheimer's security file- his Communist brother, sister-in-law, fiancée, best friend, wife... that's before you even get to the Chevalier incident.

SENATE AIDE

But how would Borden have access to Oppenheimer's security file?

STRAUSS

Someone gave it to him. Someone who wanted Oppenheimer silenced.

SENATE AIDE

Who?

STRAUSS

Who knows? Robert didn't take care not to upset the power brokers in Washington. His opinions on the atom became definitive and he wasn't always patient with us mere mortals. I came in for plenty of harsh treatment. There was an AEC vote on the export of isotopes to Norway...

59 INT. CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

59

Oppenheimer sits at the witness table with Joe VOLPE, the AEC lawyer. Strauss is in the audience.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

STRAUSS (V.O.)

*They drafted in Robert to make me
look a fool...*

CONGRESSMAN

*But, Dr. Oppenheimer, one member of
the AEC board thinks these isotopes
could be useful to our enemies in
the production of atomic weapons.*

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (2)

59

OPPENHEIMER

Congressman, you could use a shovel in making atomic weapons, in fact, you do. You could use a bottle of beer in making atomic weapons. In fact, you do.

LAUGHTER. *Strauss squirms, embarrassed.*

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Isotopes aren't as useful as electronic components, but more useful than a sandwich. I'd put them somewhere in between.

Volpe looks at Strauss, who SMILES, GOOD-HUMORED...

STRAUSS (V.O.)

Genius is no guarantee of wisdom. How could this man who saw so much be so blind?

CUT TO:

60 INT. OPPENHEIMER HOUSE, BERKELEY - NIGHT (COLOUR)

60

I come in. The lights are off. A BABY'S CRIES echo...

OPPENHEIMER

Kitty?

She is in the dining room, in the dark, drink in hand.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Kitty, the project- I'm in.

She sips. SLIDES her drink down the table at me-

KITTY

Let's celebrate.

As the baby CRIES, Kitty comes to me, pulling at my clothes-

OPPENHEIMER

Don't you need to go to him?

KITTY

I've been going to him all fucking day...

She moves to kiss my neck- I look upstairs- she PUSHES me away- GRABS her drink...

61 EXT./INT. CHEVALIER HOUSE - NIGHT 61
I carry the crying infant, PETER, to the front door. Knock.
Barbara opens it- sees my distraught face and takes Peter.

62 INT. LIVING ROOM, CHEVALIER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 62
Chevalier hands me a drink. I stare into the liquid.

OPPENHEIMER
I'm ashamed to ask.

CHEVALIER
Anything.

OPPENHEIMER
Take Peter.

CHEVALIER
Sure.

OPPENHEIMER
No, for a while, Hoke. *A while.*

CHEVALIER
Does Kitty know you're here?

OPPENHEIMER
(I laugh)
Of course she fucking knows! We're
awful. Selfish, awful people...
(I down drink)
Forget I asked-

Chevalier puts out a hand to stop me rising...

CHEVALIER
Robert, you see *beyond* the world we
live in. There's a price to be paid
for that. Of course we'll help.

63 EXT. NEW MEXICO - EVENING 63
Kitty and I GALLOP through the trees, EMERGING into the
twilight overlooking a valley. Kitty turns to the wind.

KITTY
Everything's changing, Robert.

OPPENHEIMER
Having a child was always-

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

KITTY

(impatient)

The world is pivoting in some new direction... reforming... this is your moment.

OPPENHEIMER

We're putting together a group to study feasibility-

KITTY

'We' shouldn't be doing anything. You should. Lawrence won't get this done. Or Tolman, or Rabi. You will.

64 INT. PRESIDENT'S DINING HALL, BERKELEY - DAY

64

A crowded and lavish lunch. I notice a large man in ARMY UNIFORM, Colonel GROVES, sitting next to another Soldier (NICHOLS) with Bush and Tolman. I sidle up to Lawrence at the buffet.

OPPENHEIMER

Who's the uniform?

The husky GROVES spills sauce on his tunic, wipes at it.

LAWRENCE

I thought you might know.

65 INT. CLASSROOM, BERKELEY - AFTERNOON

65

I am working. Groves and Lieutenant Colonel NICHOLS enter.

GROVES

Dr. Oppenheimer. I'm Colonel Groves, this is Lieutenant Colonel Nichols.

Groves pulls off his uniform jacket, TOSSES it to Nichols.

GROVES (CONT'D)

Get that dry-cleaned.

I watch Nichols leave.

OPPENHEIMER

If that's how you treat a Lieutenant Colonel, I'd hate to see how you treat a humble physicist.

GROVES

If I ever meet one I'll let you know.

OPPENHEIMER

Ouch.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

GROVES

Theaters of combat all over the world-
but I have to stay in Washington.

OPPENHEIMER

Why?

GROVES

I built the Pentagon. The brass
likes it so much they made me take
over the Manhattan Engineer District.

OPPENHEIMER

Which is?

GROVES

Don't be a smart-ass. You know damn
well what it is- you and half of
every physics department across
America. That's problem number one.

OPPENHEIMER

I thought problem number one would
be securing enough Uranium ore.

GROVES

Twelve hundred tons. Bought the day
I took charge.

OPPENHEIMER

Processing?

GROVES

Just broke ground at Oak Ridge,
Tennessee. Now I'm looking for a
project director.

OPPENHEIMER

And my name came up.

GROVES

Nope. Even though you brought quantum
physics to America. That made me
curious.

OPPENHEIMER

What have you found out?

GROVES

You're a dilettante, womanizer,
suspected Communist-

OPPENHEIMER

I'm a New Deal Democrat-

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (2)

65

GROVES

I said 'suspected'. Unstable, theatrical, egotistical, neurotic.

OPPENHEIMER

Nothing good? Not even 'he's brilliant, but...'?

GROVES

Brilliance is taken for granted in your circles. So, no. Only one person said anything good- Richard Tolman. He thinks you've got integrity. But Tolman strikes me as someone who knows science better than people.

OPPENHEIMER

Yet here you are. You don't take much on trust.

GROVES

I don't take anything on trust. Why don't you have a Nobel prize?

OPPENHEIMER

Why aren't you a general?

GROVES

They're making me one for this.

OPPENHEIMER

Maybe I'll have the same luck.

GROVES

A Nobel prize for making a bomb?

OPPENHEIMER

Alfred Nobel invented dynamite.

GROVES

So how would you proceed?

OPPENHEIMER

You're talking about turning theory into a practical weapons system faster than the Nazis.

GROVES

Who have an 12-month head start.

OPPENHEIMER

18.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (3)

65

GROVES

How could you possibly know that?

OPPENHEIMER

Our fast neutron research took six months- the man they've undoubtedly put in charge will have made that leap instantly.

GROVES

Who do you think they put in charge?

OPPENHEIMER

Werner Heisenberg. He has the most intuitive understanding of atomic structure I've ever seen.

GROVES

You know his work?

OPPENHEIMER

I know *him*. Just like I know Walther Bothe. Von Weizsacker. Diebner. In a straight race, the Germans win. We've got one hope.

GROVES

Which is?

OPPENHEIMER

Anti-semitism.

GROVES

What?

OPPENHEIMER

Hitler called quantum physics 'Jewish science'. Said it right to Einstein's face. Our one hope is that Hitler's so blinded by hate he's denied Heisenberg proper resources. Because it'll take vast resources. Our nation's best scientists, working together- right now they're scattered.

GROVES

Which gives us compartmentalization.

OPPENHEIMER

All minds have to see the whole task to contribute efficiently. Poor security *may* cost us the race, inefficiency *will*. The Germans know more than us, anyway.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (4)

65

GROVES

The Russians don't.

OPPENHEIMER

Remind me- who are we at war with?

GROVES

Someone with your past doesn't want to be seen downplaying the importance of security from our Communist allies.

OPPENHEIMER

Point taken. But no.

GROVES

You don't get to say 'no' to me-

OPPENHEIMER

It's my job to say no to you when you're wrong-

GROVES

So you've got the job, now?

OPPENHEIMER

I'm considering it.

GROVES

I'm starting to see how you got your reputation. My favorite response? 'Oppenheimer couldn't run a hamburger stand'.

OPPENHEIMER

I couldn't. But I can run the Manhattan Project.

I turn to the blackboard. Take up my chalk.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

There's a way to balance these things...

(I draw)

Leave the Rad Lab here at Berkeley under Lawrence, Met Lab in Chicago under Szilard, large scale refining- where'd you say? Tennessee..., all America's industrial might and scientific innovation, connected by rail... focused on one goal, one point in space and time, coming together... *here*.

I have drawn a cross at the centre of the diagram.

GROVES

And where's that?

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (5)

65

INSERT CUT: A BARBED WIRE FENCE IS STRUNG OUT...

OPPENHEIMER

A secret laboratory. In the middle
of nowhere. Self-sufficient. Secure.
Equipment, housing, the works. We
keep everyone there till it's done.

INSERT CUT: A SCHOOL HOUSE IS ERECTED. A CHURCH. A STORE...

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*It'll need a school, stores, a
church...*

66 INT. TRAIN, BERKELEY TO WASHINGTON DC - DAY

66

I talk to Groves as Nichols looks on...

GROVES

Why?

OPPENHEIMER

If we don't let scientists bring
their families, we'll never get the
best. You want security? Build a
town, and build it fast.

GROVES

Where?

67 EXT. CAR, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS

67

Groves emerges, squinting into the brightness, taking in the
stark beauty. I greet him, arms spread wide.

OPPENHEIMER

Welcome to Los Alamos. There's a
boys' school we'll have to commandeer,
and the local Indians come up here
for burial rites. Other than that,
nothing for forty miles any direction.
And Southeast, hundreds of miles of
desert. Enough to find the perfect
spot.

GROVES

For?

OPPENHEIMER

Success.

Groves scans the horizon. Sniffs the air... turns to Nichols.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: 67

GROVES
Build him a town. Fast.
(to Oppenheimer)
Let's go recruit some scientists.

68 INT. TRAIN, SANTA FE TO BOSTON - NIGHT 68

I watch Groves go over a file.

OPPENHEIMER
How much can I tell them?

GROVES
(without looking up)
As much as you like, till you feel
my boot on your balls.

69 INT. LECTURE HALL, HARVARD - DAY 69

Groves and I sit talking to BAINBRIDGE and DONALD.

BAINBRIDGE
I'm not a soldier, Oppie.

OPPENHEIMER
Soldier? He's a General-
(jab my thumb at Groves)
I got all the soldier I need. Maybe
too much. I'm here because you know
isotopes, and you-
(to Donald)
know explosives better than anyone.

DONALD
But you can't tell us what you're
doing?

I glance at Groves. Then CROSS my legs.

OPPENHEIMER
It's about unleashing the strong
force before the Nazis do.

BAINBRIDGE
Oh my God.

70 INT. CORRIDOR, MIT - DAY 70

Groves and I walk with CONDON.

CONDON
Why? Why would I leave my family?

OPPENHEIMER
I told you, bring your family.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

CONDON

Why would we go to the middle of
nowhere for who knows how long?

OPPENHEIMER

A year or two. Or three.

CONDON

Why would you think I'd do that?

Groves SNAPS like a bulldog-

GROVES

Why? Why? How about because this
is the most important fucking thing
that's ever happened in the history
of the world? How about that?

I look at Groves, then SHRUG at Condon.

71 INT. OFFICE, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN - NIGHT

71

Groves and I sit across the desk from a CONCERNED SCIENTIST.

CONCERNED SCIENTIST

Robert, I hear you. I hear you.

Concerned Scientist GLANCES at Groves then DROPS his gaze.

OPPENHEIMER

General, could you give us a minute?

Groves looks at me. Gets up and goes.

CONCERNED SCIENTIST

They're not gonna let someone like
me onto this project. And failing a
security check isn't gonna be good
for a career even after the war.

OPPENHEIMER

So you're a fellow traveler, so what?
This is a national emergency. I've
got some skeletons, and they've put
me in charge. They need us.

CONCERNED SCIENTIST

Until they don't.

72 INT. QUADRANGLE, PRINCETON - DAY

72

Groves and I flank FEYNMAN as he hurries across the quad-

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

72

OPPENHEIMER
Heisenberg, Diebner, Bothe, Bohr...
what do these men have in common?

FEYNMAN
The greatest minds on atomic theory.

OPPENHEIMER
And?

FEYNMAN
I don't know...

OPPENHEIMER
The Nazis have them.

FEYNMAN
Niels Bohr is in Copenhagen.

OPPENHEIMER
Under Nazi occupation. Did they
stop printing newspapers in Princeton?

FEYNMAN
Niels won't work for the Nazis.

OPPENHEIMER
No. Never. But while they have
him, we don't. So I need you.

73 INT. TRAIN, PRINCETON TO SANTA FE - NIGHT

73

Groves is napping. I just start talking.

OPPENHEIMER
Is there any chance of getting Bohr
out of Denmark?

GROVES
No dice. I checked with the British.
Until we get Allied boots back onto
the continent there's no way. Is he
that important?

INSERT CUT: BOHR GESTICULATES WITH THE POISONED APPLE.

OPPENHEIMER
How many people do you know who've
proven Einstein wrong?

The train BUMPS. I look out the window, impatient.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
It'd be quicker to take a plane.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

GROVES

We can't risk a plane. America needs
us.

74 EXT. LOS ALAMOS UNDER CONSTRUCTION - DAY

74

Dressed in ARMY UNIFORM, I show Rabi and Condon the CHAOTIC SNOWY and MUDDY mesa. CONSTRUCTION CREWS at work. Feynman approaches-

FEYNMAN

The Harvard guys say the building's too small for their cyclotron.

OPPENHEIMER

(to Condon)

Get 'em together with the architects.

Condon hurries off with Feynman. Rabi turns to me.

RABI

When's this place supposed to open?

OPPENHEIMER

Two months.

RABI

(shakes head)

Robert, you're the great improviser, but *this* you can't do in your head...

75 INT. CONSTRUCTION CABIN, LOS ALAMOS - MOMENTS LATER

75

I draw on the board.

OPPENHEIMER

Four divisions- Experimental, Theoretical, Metallurgical, Ordnance.

RABI

Who's running Theoretical?

OPPENHEIMER

I am.

RABI

That's what I was afraid of. You're spread too thin.

OPPENHEIMER

So *you* take Theoretical.

RABI

I'm not coming here, Robert.

OPPENHEIMER

Why not?

Rabi, seldom at a loss for words, is lost for words...

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

RABI

You drop a bomb and it falls on the just and the unjust. I don't wish the culmination of three centuries of physics to be a weapon of mass destruction.

OPPENHEIMER

Izzy, I don't know if we can be trusted with such a weapon, but I know the Nazis can't. We have no choice.

RABI

Well, the second thing you have to do is appoint Hans Bethe to head the Theoretical division.

OPPENHEIMER

Wait, what was the first?

RABI

Take off that ridiculous uniform- you're a Scientist.

OPPENHEIMER

General Groves is insisting we join.

RABI

Tell Groves to shit in his hat. They need us for who we are. So be yourself, only... better.

76 INT. OPPENHEIMER'S OFFICE, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

76

I pull on a jacket. Run a hand through newly-shorn close-cropped dark hair. Put on a PORK PIE HAT. Pick up my pipe...

77 EXT. LOS ALAMOS UNDER CONSTRUCTION - MOMENTS LATER

77

I walk the main drag like a SHERIFF, nodding at construction workers as I pass... THE ICONIC J.ROBERT OPPENHEIMER.

78 INT. RAD LAB, BERKELEY - DAY

78

I look down onto the bustle of students. Lomanitz looks up and waves- then is ERASED by WHITEWASH as workers COVER the windows... Serber hands me a key.

SERBER

This is the only key. Teller's here already. Shall I show him in?

OPPENHEIMER

No, wait for the others-

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

The door BURSTS OPEN and a stooped, slightly heavy young man shuffles in. This is EDWARD TELLER.

TELLER

Let's get started.

OPPENHEIMER

Hello, Edward.

79 INT. SAME - DAY

79

I sit at the front, one long leg tucked under my ass. The scientists include Lawrence, Serber, Teller, BETHE, Condon, Tolman, Feynman, Donald, Bainbridge, NEDDERMEYER and Alvarez.

OPPENHEIMER

We'll work here until the t-section at Los Alamos is finished-

I see Teller waving a piece of paper-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Edward, can I get through my summary?

TELLER

This is more important.

Teller's paper is passed around the room, scientists PALING...

TELLER (CONT'D)

Calculating chain reactions... I found a rather troubling possibility.

Hans Bethe hands me the paper, turns to Teller.

BETHE

That can't be right. Show me how you did your calculations.

TELLER

Of course.

I look up from the paper, grave. Teller watches the ruckus he's caused with evident satisfaction. Bethe approaches.

BETHE

Oppie, this is fantasy. Teller's calculations cannot be right.

OPPENHEIMER

Do them yourself while I go to Princeton.

BETHE

What for?

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

79

OPPENHEIMER
To talk to Einstein.

BETHE
There's not much common ground between
you two.

OPPENHEIMER
That's why I should get his view.

80 EXT. WOODS, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY - DAY

80

I walk through the trees, gaining on two figures. The two
men turn. One them is Einstein.

EINSTEIN
Dr. Oppenheimer. Have you met Kurt
Godel? We walk here most days.

GODEL
Trees are the most inspiring
structures.

OPPENHEIMER
Albert, might I have a word?

Einstein senses the gravity. Nods. They leave Godel staring
up at the bare trees.

EINSTEIN
Some days Kurt refuses to eat. Even
in Princeton, he's convinced the
Nazis can poison his food.

81 EXT. LAKE, INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

81

Einstein and I emerge from the trees, I pull a piece of paper
from my breast pocket. Einstein takes it.

EINSTEIN
Who's work is this?

OPPENHEIMER
Teller.

EINSTEIN
And what do you take it to mean?

OPPENHEIMER
Neutron smashes into nucleus releasing
neutrons to smash into other nuclei...

*INSERT CUT: DARKNESS SPLIT BY GLOWING PARTICLES FIRING INTO
EACH OTHER IN AN INCREASINGLY VIOLENT DISPLAY...*

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
Criticality- the point of no return-
massive explosive force... but the
chain reaction *doesn't stop*...

Einstein studies the paper... he nods.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (2)

81

EINSTEIN

It would ignite the atmosphere.

The air around us CATCHES FIRE... THE PLANET EARTH, LONELY
IN VAST DARKNESS, IS SUDDENLY ENGULFED IN FIRE.

OPPENHEIMER

When we detonate an atomic device,
we might start a chain reaction that
destroys the world.

EINSTEIN

And here we are, lost in your quantum
world of probabilities, but needing
certainty.

OPPENHEIMER

Can you run the calculations yourself?

EINSTEIN

About the only thing you and I share
is a disdain for mathematics. Who's
working on it at Berkeley?

OPPENHEIMER

Hans Bethe.

EINSTEIN

He'll get to the truth.

OPPENHEIMER

And if the truth is catastrophic?

EINSTEIN

Then you stop. And share your
findings with the Nazis, so neither
side destroys the world.

I turn to leave.

EINSTEIN (CONT'D)

Robert?

(holding out paper)

This is yours. Not mine.

82 INT. CORRIDOR, BERKELEY - DAY

82

I come past the secretaries. Bethe is there, excited.

BETHE

Teller's wrong-

I gesture SILENCE as I unlock the rad lab-

83 INT. RAD LAB, BERKELEY - CONTINUOUS

83

Bethe runs to the cabinet- takes out some papers- hands them to me, excited. I start to scan them, GRINNING-

BETHE

When you narrow Teller's critical assumptions the real picture emerges-

OPPENHEIMER

Bottom line?

BETHE

The chances of an uncontrolled nuclear reaction are near zero.

OPPENHEIMER

Near zero?

BETHE

Oppie, this is good news-

OPPENHEIMER

Can you run more calculations?

BETHE

You'll get the same answer. Until we actually detonate one of these things, the best assurance you're going to get is this-

(jabs paper)

Near zero.

OPPENHEIMER

Theory will take you only so far.

84 INT. OPPENHEIMER HOUSE, BERKELEY - NIGHT

84

Kitty opens the door to the Chevaliers, finger to her lips- I am holding the sleeping Peter.

BARBARA

(whispering)

So beautiful. We miss him.

KITTY

Want to adopt?

OPPENHEIMER

She's kidding.

Kitty shakes her head 'not kidding'. Barbara takes Peter. I lead Chevalier to the kitchen...

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

We wanted to see you before we left.

CHEVALIER

For parts unknown...

85 INT. KITCHEN, OPPENHEIMER HOUSE, BERKELEY - CONTINUOUS

85

I mix a tray of martinis. Chevalier watches, distracted.

CHEVALIER

You know who I ran into the other day? Eltenton.

OPPENHEIMER

The chemist from Shell? Union guy?

CHEVALIER

Yeah. He was moaning about the way we're handling the war.

OPPENHEIMER

How so?

CHEVALIER

Lack of cooperation with our allies. Apparently, our government isn't sharing any research with the Russians. He said a lot of scientists think the policy's stupid.

My hands SLOW...

OPPENHEIMER

Oh, yeah?

CHEVALIER

Yeah. He mentioned that if anyone had information they wanted to pass on, going around official channels, he could help...

I look up at Chevalier. Grave.

OPPENHEIMER

That would be treason.

CHEVALIER

Yes, of course. I just thought you should know.

We STARE at each other... BANG- Kitty barges in.

KITTY

Brat's down- where are the martinis?

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED: 85

She sees us having a moment...

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)
The discussion ended there.

I pick up the tray.

86 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 86

OPPENHEIMER
Nothing in our long-standing
friendship would have led me to
believe that Chevalier was actually
seeking information; and I was certain
he had no idea of the work on which
I was engaged.

I steal a glance at Robb, then look directly at the Board-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
It has long been clear to me that I
should have reported this incident
at once.

SENATOR MCGEE (V.O.)
*The Oppenheimer situation highlights
the tension between scientists and
the security apparatus...*

CUT TO:

87 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (BLACK AND WHITE) 87

Strauss is at the witness table facing the senate committee.

SENATOR MCGEE
*In hopes of learning how the nominee
handled such issues during his time
at the AEC, we'll have a scientist
appearing before the committee.*

STRAUSS (private)
Who're they bringing in?

COUNSEL (private)
They haven't said.

STRAUSS
*Mr.Chairman, if I may? I'm nominated
for Commerce Secretary. Why seek
the opinion of scientists-*

CHAIRMAN
*This is a Cabinet post, Admiral. We
seek a wide range of opinion.*

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

STRAUSS

I'd like to know the name of the scientist testifying. And I'd like the chance to cross-examine.

CHAIRMAN

(irritated)

This is not a court.

88 INT. SENATE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER (B&W)

88

The Senate Aide shows Strauss and Counsel in.

COUNSEL

Lewis, you're not on trial-

STRAUSS

So everyone keeps saying.

COUNSEL

You act like a defense attorney, the Committee's gonna act like a prosecutor.

STRAUSS

(to Senate Aide)

A formality, huh?

SENATE AIDE

No Presidential Cabinet nominee has failed to be confirmed since 1925. This is just how the game is played.

COUNSEL

It's in the bag, Lewis, so play nice. They bring in a scientist, so what?

Strauss gives a wry smile. Remembers-

*INSERT CUT: STRAUSS APPROACHES EINSTEIN AND OPPENHEIMER-
EINSTEIN BLOWS PAST WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING STRAUSS...*

STRAUSS

You don't know scientists like I do, Counselor. They resent anyone who questions their judgment- especially if you're not one of them...

*INSERT CUT: STRAUSS STARES- THE CROWD AT THE ISOTOPES HEARING
LAUGHS...*

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

I was chair of the AEC- I'm easy to blame for what happened to Robert.

(CONTINUED)

SENATE AIDE

We can't let the Senate think that the scientific community doesn't support you.

STRAUSS

Should we pivot?

SENATE AIDE

To what?

STRAUSS

Embrace it. 'I fought Oppenheimer and the U.S. won.'?

SENATE AIDE

I don't think we need to go there. Isn't there anyone we can call who knows what really happened?

STRAUSS

Teller.

SENATE AIDE

He'll make an impression.

STRAUSS

Can you find out the name of the scientist they've called?

SENATE AIDE

Probably.

STRAUSS

(to Counsel)

We get that name- you call the AEC, find out if he was based in Chicago or Los Alamos during the war.

SENATE AIDE

Why's that matter?

STRAUSS

If he was in Chicago he worked under Szilard and Fermi, not the cult of Oppie at Los Alamos. Robert built that damn place- he was Founder, Mayor, Sheriff all rolled into one...

CUT TO:

I DRIVE Kitty and Peter through the 'town'... Kitty STARES at the newly-built BASIC WOODEN STRUCTURES...

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: 89

KITTY
All it needs is a saloon.

90 INT. OPPENHEIMER HOUSE, LOS ALAMOS - DAY 90

I stand in the hall, holding Peter, NERVOUS, as Kitty inspects the house... she pokes her head back in-

KITTY
Robert. There's no kitchen.

OPPENHEIMER
Really? We'll fix that. Don't worry.

91 EXT. T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY 91

I walk Bethe through the security gate.

BETHE
Barbed wire. Guns, Oppie.

OPPENHEIMER
We're at war, Hans.

92 INT. LECTURE HALL, T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY 92

I step up to join Serber- throw up a slide. Condon, Neddermeyer, Kistiakowsky, Donald, Tolman, Bainbridge and Feynman amongst other SCIENTISTS are in attendance.

OPPENHEIMER
Halifax, 1917. A cargo ship carrying munitions exploded in the harbor...

INSERT CUT: WOOD AND CONCRETE FRAGMENTS AND FLIES...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
A vast and sudden chemical reaction...

A SHOCKWAVE DRIFTS ACROSS THE TOPS OF THE CHOPPY WATER...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
The biggest man-made explosion in history. Let's calculate how much more destructive it would have been with a nuclear, not chemical, reaction. Expressing power in terms of tons of TNT-

BETHE
But it'll be thousands.

OPPENHEIMER
Then, kilotons.

I switch the lights on, step down to let Serber-

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

92

SERBER
Using U-235, the bomb-
(sees me wave)
Sorry- the *gadget* will need a 33-
pound sphere, about this size...

Serber reaches below the table, brings up a GOLDFISH BOWL-

SERBER (CONT'D)
Or using plutonium, a ten pound
sphere...

He puts a large BRANDY GLASS next to the aquarium.

SERBER (CONT'D)
Here's the amount of uranium Oak
Ridge refined all of last month.

Serber drops THREE MARBLES into the bowl. The scientists
stare at the almost-empty goldfish bowl.

SERBER (CONT'D)
The Hanford plant made this much
plutonium...

He drops TWO MARBLES into the brandy glass.

SERBER (CONT'D)
If we can enrich these amounts... we
need a way to detonate them.

Teller is at the back folding a paper plane.

OPPENHEIMER
Are we boring you, Edward?

TELLER
(without looking up)
Yes.

OPPENHEIMER
May I ask why?

TELLER
We came *into* this room knowing a
fission bomb was possible. Let's
leave it with something new.

OPPENHEIMER
Such as?

TELLER
A 'super' atomic bomb. Instead of
uranium, or plutonium we use hydrogen.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: (2)

92

MURMURS of dissent-

TELLER (CONT'D)
(shutting them down)
Heavy hydrogen- deuterium. We compact
the atoms together under great force
and induce a *fusion* reaction. Not
kilotons... *megatons*.

A HUBBUB develops- I process quickly, then-

OPPENHEIMER
Hang on. How do you generate enough
force to fuse hydrogen atoms?

Teller smiles a self-satisfied smile.

TELLER
A small fission bomb.

GROANS all around...

OPPENHEIMER
Well, since you're going to need
one, anyway... can we get back to
the business at hand?

Teller SHRUGS.

CUT TO:

93 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

93

SENATOR BARTLETT
*Mr. Strauss, the isotopes issue wasn't
your most important policy
disagreement with Dr. Oppenheimer.
It was the Hydrogen bomb, wasn't it?*

STRAUSS
*We did disagree about the need for
an H-bomb program.*

SENATOR BARTLETT
Tell us how that came to pass.

As Strauss REMEMBERS we hear a SIREN and we are-

94 EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT (B&W)

94

Strauss is in a car, barreling along behind a POLICE ESCORT-

95 INT. HOTEL, NEW YORK - NIGHT (B&W)

95

Strauss and his ASSISTANT rush down the corridor to a door-

96 INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT (B&W)

96

Strauss enters- a table surrounded by AEC members- Oppenheimer is slouched at the table, pipe blazing, Bush presides... Strauss removes his overcoat, revealing a tuxedo...

STRAUSS

What do we know?

BUSH

One of our B-29's over the north Pacific picked up radiation.

Rabi uses a compass to indicate an area on the map...

STRAUSS

Do you have the filter papers?

OPPENHEIMER

There's no doubt what this is.

STRAUSS

The White House says there's doubt.

Oppenheimer begrudgingly slides them over to Strauss.

BUSH

Wishful thinking, I'm afraid.

OPPENHEIMER

It's an atomic test.

STRAUSS

The Soviets have a bomb? We're supposed to be years ahead of them. What were you guys doing at Los Alamos? Wasn't the security tight?

OPPENHEIMER

Of course it was- you weren't there, Lewis.

NICHOLS (O.S.)

Forgive me, Doctor...

Strauss leans around the FLOWERS in the center of the table to see who is speaking- Nichols, now a civilian.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

But I was there.

CUT TO:

97 EXT. T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY (COLOUR)

97

Condon, Nichols and I watch cars pull up. Groves emerges.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

OPPENHEIMER
Welcome back.

GROVES
Progress?

INSERT CUT: MARBLES DROP INTO THE GOLDFISH BOWL.

OPPENHEIMER
It's nice to see you, too.

GROVES
Meet the British contingent.

SCIENTISTS emerge. A THIN YOUNG MAN offers his hand-

FUCHS (German accent)
Dr.Oppenheimer, Klaus Fuchs.

OPPENHEIMER
How long have you been British?

FUCHS
Since Hitler told me I wasn't German.

98 INT. LECTURE HALL, T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

98

Bethe, Teller, Condon, Kistiakowsky, Donald, Bainbridge, Fuchs and Feynman and other Scientists listen to-

SERBER
I call it 'shooting'- we fire a chunk of fissionable material into the larger sphere with enough force to achieve criticality.

INSERT CUT: A URANIUM 'BULLET' IS FIRED INTO A SPHERE

TOLMAN
I've been thinking about implosion. Explosives around the sphere blast inwards, crushing the material.

INSERT CUT: A SPHERICAL ARRAY OF EXPLOSIVES BLASTS INWARD-

NEDDERMEYER
I'd like to investigate that idea.

OPPENHEIMER
I'll talk to the Ordinance Division- we'll get you blowing things up...

99 EXT. 'MAIN STREET', LOS ALAMOS - DAY

99

Condon, Nichols and I show Groves the GROWING TOWN...

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

OPPENHEIMER
School's up and running. I thought
of a way to reduce support staff...

I open the door to the cabin containing my office-

100 INT. OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

100

Groves notices the YOUNG WOMAN working behind the desk-

101 INT. OPPENHEIMER'S OFFICE, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS

101

I slump into my chair. Groves is perplexed-

GROVES
Is that...?

OPPENHEIMER
Mrs. Serber. I've offered jobs to
all the wives. Admin., librarians,
computation. We cut down on staff
and keep families together.

GROVES
Are these women qualified?

OPPENHEIMER
Don't be absurd. These are some of
the brightest minds in our community.

CONDON
And they're already security cleared.

NICHOLS
I've informed General Groves you've
been holding cross-divisional open
discussions-

GROVES
Shut 'em down. Compartmentalization
is the key to maintaining security-

CONDON
It's only the top men.

NICHOLS
Who, presumably, communicate with
subordinates.

OPPENHEIMER
These men aren't stupid, they can be
discrete.

GROVES
I don't like it.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

101

OPPENHEIMER
You don't like anything enough for
that to be a fair test.

Groves shrugs. Gets up to leave. Nichols rolls his eyes.

GROVES
Once a week. Top men only.

OPPENHEIMER
I'd like to bring my brother here.

GROVES
No.

Groves and Condon leave- I corner Nichols-

OPPENHEIMER
I still haven't heard that my security
clearance has been approved.

NICHOLS
It hasn't.

OPPENHEIMER
We're going to Chicago tomorrow-

NICHOLS
You should wait.

OPPENHEIMER
You're aware that the Nazis have a
two year head start?

NICHOLS
Dr. Oppenheimer, the fact that your
security clearance is proving
difficult to obtain is not my fault.
It's yours.

OPPENHEIMER
It may not be your fault, but it's
your problem. Because I'm going.

CUT TO:

102 INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT (B&W)

102

*Strauss reaches to the center of the table to move the flowers
from between him and Nichols-*

STRAUSS
*How many people were in the open
discussions?*

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

NICHOLS

Too many. Compartmentalization was supposed to be the protocol.

OPPENHEIMER

We were in a race against the Nazis-

STRAUSS

Well, now the race is against the Soviets.

OPPENHEIMER

Only if we start it.

Strauss holds up the filter papers.

STRAUSS

Robert, they just fired the starting gun. What's the nature of the device they detonated?

OPPENHEIMER

The data indicates it may have been a plutonium implosion device.

STRAUSS

Like the one you built at Los Alamos?

Oppenheimer nods reluctantly...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

If the Soviets have a bomb, Truman needs to know what's next.

Bush nods. Oppenheimer looks incredulous-

OPPENHEIMER

What's next? Arms talks. Obviously.

STRAUSS

(to Bush)

What about the Super? Does Truman even know about it?

BUSH

Not specifically.

OPPENHEIMER

We still don't know if a Hydrogen bomb is technically feasible.

STRAUSS

My understanding is that Teller first proposed it at Los Alamos.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: (2)

102

OPPENHEIMER

His designs have always been wildly impractical. You'd have to deliver by ox-cart not airplane.

STRAUSS

If it could put us ahead again, Truman needs to know about it. And if there's a possibility that the Russians know about it from a spy at Los Alamos... we've gotta get going.

OPPENHEIMER

There's no proof there was a spy at Los Alamos.

Strauss holds up the filter papers, raises his eyebrows...

CUT TO:

103 EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM, CHICAGO - DAY (COLOUR)

103

Condon and I are led across the field by J.Ernest WILKINS...

CONDON

They put it under the football stadium?

WILKINS

The field's not in use, anymore.

OPPENHEIMER

Just as well.

104 INT. ATOMIC PILE, UNDERNEATH THE STADIUM, CHICAGO - DAY

104

Wilkins shows us to SZILARD and FERMI. A Scientist with GLASSES takes notes. The group approaches the atomic pile...

FERMI

I hear you've got a little town.

OPPENHEIMER

Come and see.

SZILARD

Who could think straight in a place like that? Everybody will go crazy.

OPPENHEIMER

Thanks for the vote of confidence, Szilard.

I spot Glasses SCRIBBLING- I GRAB his pen- he FLINCHES-

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

We really need that in the notes?
(to Fermi)

When are you going to try it out?

FERMI

We already did. The first self-
sustaining nuclear chain reaction.
Didn't Groves tell you?

105 EXT. T-SECTION - DAY

105

Condon and I have just passed through-

HORNIG

Dr.Oppenheimer! I tried Personnel.

We turn to see a 23-year-old young woman on the other side of the barrier. This is Lilli HORNIG.

HORNIG (CONT'D)

They asked if I could type.

OPPENHEIMER

Can you?

HORNIG

Harvard forgot to teach that on the graduate chemistry course.

I smile at this. Turn to Condon.

OPPENHEIMER

Put Mrs.Hornig on the plutonium team.

106 INT. CYCLOTRON BUILDING, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS

106

Condon and I peer up at the equipment. Groves STORMS in-

GROVES

What the hell were you doing in Chicago?!

CONDON

Visiting the Met Lab-

GROVES

Why?!

Condon looks at me. I say nothing. He turns to Groves-

CONDON

You can't talk to us like this. We have every right-

GROVES

You have just the rights I give you! No more, no less.

CONDON

This is ridiculous- we're adults, trying to run a project here.

(to me)

Tell him, Robert.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

106

I look steadily at Groves.

OPPENHEIMER

Compartmentalization is the protocol we agreed to.

CONDON

You've got to be kidding me. Enough of this madhouse- nobody can work under these conditions.

(to Groves)

You know what, Generalissimo? I quit.

(to Oppenheimer)

Thanks for nothing.

Condon storms out. Groves turns to me.

GROVES

Better off without him.

OPPENHEIMER

Aren't you more worried about his discretion out there?

GROVES

We'll have him killed.

(off look)

Kidding. He hates me, not America.

OPPENHEIMER

Not everyone has levers like mine to pull.

GROVES

I don't know what you mean.

OPPENHEIMER

You didn't hire me *despite* my left-wing past, you hired me *because* of it. So you could control me.

GROVES

I'm not that subtle. I'm just a humble soldier.

OPPENHEIMER

You're neither humble, nor 'just' a soldier. You studied engineering at M.I.T.

GROVES

Guilty as charged.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED: (2)

106

OPPENHEIMER

Now that we understand each other, perhaps you'll get me my security clearance, so I can perform this miracle for you.

General Groves looks at me. Nods.

GARRISON (V.O.)

General Groves, were you aware of Dr. Oppenheimer's left wing associations when you appointed him?

107 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

107

Groves, in CIVILIAN CLOTHES, testifies. I watch...

GROVES

I was aware that there were suspicions about him... I was aware that he had a very extreme liberal background.

GARRISON

In your opinion, would he ever consciously commit a disloyal act?

GROVES

I would be amazed if he did.

GARRISON

You had complete confidence in his integrity?

GROVES

At Los Alamos, yes, which is where I really knew him.

ROBB

General, did your security officers on the project advise against the clearance of Dr. Oppenheimer?

GROVES

Truer to say they could not and would not clear him. Until I insisted.

ROBB

You became pretty familiar with the security file on Dr. Oppenheimer?

GROVES

I did.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED:

107

ROBB
General, there's really only one
question we need answered here
today...

Groves shifts, knowing what's about to be asked...

ROBB (CONT'D)
In the light of your experience of
security matters and knowledge of
the file...

108 EXT. T-SECTION - DAY

108

I greet Lawrence and Lomanitz as they get out of a car-

ROBB (V.O.)
Would you clear Dr. Oppenheimer today?

LAWRENCE
Physics and New Mexico, huh? But my
God, what a trek.

OPPENHEIMER
That's why you need a liaison.

LAWRENCE
I'm appointing Lomanitz.

I pat Lomanitz on the shoulder.

OPPENHEIMER
You're gonna be okay.

109 INT. LECTURE HALL, T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - LATER

109

As the group assembles, General Groves speaks to Lawrence.

GROVES
I'll remind you what we talked about
in Berkeley, Doctor.

LAWRENCE
Compartmentalization. I understand
completely.

Oppenheimer theatrically drops three marbles into the 1/4
full goldfish bowl, then ADDS TWO MORE- the room APPLAUDS.
Oppenheimer BOWS, steps down. Lawrence BOUNCES up-

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Greetings from Berkeley. I'm here to
update you on our progress and solicit
your input. To do so I will be sharing
many things that General Groves has
told me not to...
(to Groves)
Well, General, I said I 'understood',
not that I agreed. So, to business...

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: 109

Groves looks at me. I shrug. He leaves.

CUT TO:

110 INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT (B&W) 110

Strauss places the filter papers back down on the table...

STRAUSS

There were reports of espionage from Los Alamos-

OPPENHEIMER

Unsubstantiated reports-

STRAUSS

I've heard there were Communists on the project- were any of them involved with discussions of the Super?

OPPENHEIMER

We didn't knowingly employ any Communists.

NICHOLS

I seem to remember you demanding that your brother come to Los Alamos.

OPPENHEIMER

He'd left the party by then.

STRAUSS

And Lomanitz?

OPPENHEIMER

He was never employed at Los Alamos, he was a liaison. Our security was tight, as former Colonel Nichols well knows.

NICHOLS

Our security was the tightest we could make it given the personalities involved. But attempts were made. Doctor, we've all read your file here. Do we need to talk about Jean Tatlock? Or the Chevalier incident?

Strauss watches Oppenheimer glare at Nichols.

CUT TO:

111 INT. OPPENHEIMER'S OFFICE, LOS ALAMOS - DAY (COLOUR) 111

SECRETARY (over intercom)

That's Lomanitz on one...

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: 111

I pick up the phone-

OPPENHEIMER
Lomanitz? Okay, hang on, calm down.

112 INT. COLONEL NICHOLS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 112

I stand at Nichols' desk.

OPPENHEIMER
There's been another screw up-
Lomanitz just got drafted.

NICHOLS
We are at war, Doctor.

OPPENHEIMER
Don't be an asshole, Nichols. We
need this kid. Fix it, will you?

NICHOLS
It wasn't a mistake. Your friend
Lomanitz has been trying to unionize
the Radiation Lab.

OPPENHEIMER
He promised to quit all that.

NICHOLS
Well, he hasn't. The security officer
at Berkeley is concerned about
Communist infiltration through that
union- the... F.A...

OPPENHEIMER
(thinking)
F.A.E.C.T.. I'm there next week,
maybe I'll drop in to see him.

Nichols TOSSES a security pass across the desk.

NICHOLS
Your 'Q' clearance came through.
It's important you not maintain or
renew any questionable associations.

ROBB (V.O.)
*Doctor, did you think social contacts
between a person employed on secret
war work and Communists was dangerous?*

113 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 113

I testify, Kitty behind me...

(CONTINUED)

- 113 CONTINUED: 113
- OPPENHEIMER
My awareness of the danger would be
greater today.
- ROBB
But it's fair to say that during the
war years...
- 114 EXT. HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY 114
- A TAXI pulls up. I get out, carrying a bag.
- ROBB (V.O.)
... you felt that such contacts were
potentially dangerous?
- I enter, without seeing a CAR FOLLOWING. The PASSENGER jumps
out, while the DRIVER checks the time, makes a note.
- 115 INT. HOTEL LOBBY, SAN FRANCISCO - CONTINUOUS 115
- OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)
Were conceivably dangerous.
- I move to the elevators, watched by the Passenger.
- 116 INT. CORRIDOR, HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO - CONTINUOUS 116
- At the door to 805 I reach into my bag...
- ROBB (V.O.)
Really? Known Communists?
- ...and remove a small BUNCH OF FLOWERS. I knock...
- OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)
Look, I've had a lot of secrets in
my head a long time. It doesn't
matter who I associate with...
- The door opens to reveal JEAN TATLOCK.
- 117 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 117
- OPPENHEIMER
I don't talk about those secrets.
- 118 INT. ROOM 805, HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO - CONTINUOUS 118
- Tatlock GRABS the flowers. As I follow her in, she DUMPS
them in the wastebasket...
- 119 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 119
- Robb refers to his papers- Kitty watches...

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: 119

ROBB

You said in your statement you 'had'
to visit Jean Tatlock in 1943...

120 INT. ROOM 805, HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT 120

Tatlock and I sit across the room from each other, naked.

TATLOCK

You left. Not a word. What did you
think that would do to me?

OPPENHEIMER

I wrote.

TATLOCK

Pages of nothing. Where'd you go?

OPPENHEIMER

I can't tell you.

TATLOCK

Why not?

OPPENHEIMER

Because you're a Communist.

ROBB (V.O.)

Why did you have to see her?

121 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 121

I sit at the table, self conscious, testifying...

OPPENHEIMER

She had indicated a great desire to
see me before we left. At that time
I couldn't. But I felt that she had
to see me...

Kitty watches me testify. I am NAKED...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

She was undergoing psychiatric
treatment. She was extremely unhappy.

ROBB

Did you find out why she had to see
you?

OPPENHEIMER

Because she was still in love with
me.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED: 121

Kitty watches Tatlock, also naked, STRADDLE me, head on my shoulder, facing Kitty...

ROBB

You spent the night with her didn't you?

As Tatlock GRINDS on me she locks eyes with Kitty...

OPPENHEIMER

Yes.

122 INT. ROOM 805, HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT 122

Tatlock studies me from across the room.

TATLOCK

You drop in and out of my life and don't have to tell me why. That's power.

OPPENHEIMER

Not that I enjoy. I'd rather be here for you as you need.

TATLOCK

But now you've got other priorities.

OPPENHEIMER

I have a wife and child.

TATLOCK

That's not what either of us is talking about.

OPPENHEIMER

Jean, you asked me to come. And I'm glad I did. But I can't come again.

TATLOCK

What if I need you?

I slowly shake my head.

TATLOCK (CONT'D)

Not a word?

123 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 123

All eyes on me, clothed and alone again...

ROBB

Did you think that consistent with good security?

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

123

Behind me, Kitty's face is stone...

OPPENHEIMER

It was, as a matter of fact. Not a word.

ROBB

When did you see her after that?

INSERT CUT: HOT BATH RUNNING. PILL BOTTLE. DOWNTURNED HEAD IN THE WATER. THE SOUND OF FEET STAMPING, STAMPING...

I JAM my eyes closed, shake off the image-

OPPENHEIMER

I never saw her again.

124 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

124

As the room breaks up, Kitty speaks privately to me through CLENCHED TEETH as she gathers her things. No eye contact.

KITTY

I can make the last train back to Princeton.

OPPENHEIMER

I said nothing that I hadn't already said to you, Kitty.

KITTY

Well, today you said it to history.

OPPENHEIMER

This is a closed hearing-

KITTY

If they don't release a transcript, you will!

She DROPS her bag, spilling the contents. Garrison spots a small FLASK as Kitty sweeps it into her purse. I CROUCH-

OPPENHEIMER

I was under oath.

KITTY

You were under an oath to me when you went to see Jean.

She STANDS- I follow- She TURNS back- in my face-

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

KITTY (CONT'D)

You sit there, day after day, letting them pick our lives to pieces. Why won't you fight?

I don't answer. She leaves. Garrison steps up.

GARRISON

Robert, I'm not putting her up there.

125 EXT. BERKELEY CAMPUS - DAY

125

I stroll across the campus, enter an administrative building.

126 INT. LT. JOHNSON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

126

I knock. Johnson opens the door, SURPRISED.

JOHNSON

Dr. Oppenheimer, it's an honor. Please, take a seat-

OPPENHEIMER

No need. I just wanted to check whether I should talk to Lomanitz while I'm here- given your concerns.

JOHNSON

That's up to you, really, Professor. But I'd be cautious.

OPPENHEIMER

Understood. Oh, and as far as the union goes, I wanted to give you a heads up on a man named Eltenton.

JOHNSON

A heads up?

OPPENHEIMER

He might merit watching, is all.

JOHNSON

I'd love to get more details-

OPPENHEIMER

I've got an appointment now, and I leave early tomorrow-

JOHNSON

Come as early as you like. Since you haven't time now.

GROVES (V.O.)

You went back the next morning?

- 127 INT. TRAIN, SANTA FE TO CHICAGO - DAY 127
Groves sits opposite. I stare out the window.
OPPENHEIMER
I did. I had to, really.
- 128 INT. LT.JOHNSON'S OFFICE - MORNING 128
Johnson smiles, beckons me in. Indicates a SECOND MAN-
OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)
This time there was another man.
- 129 INT. TRAIN, SANTA FE TO CHICAGO - DAY 129
I stare out the window. Groves sits opposite.
OPPENHEIMER
Said his name was Pash.
GROVES
Pash? You met Colonel Pash?
- 130 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 130
Alone on the couch, I glance up, NERVOUS, as a man in uniform
walks past. As he sits, I study the back of his head.
ROBB
Colonel Pash, can you read from your
memo of June 29th, 1943?
PASH
Results of surveillance conducted on
subject indicate further possible
Communist Party connections. Subject
met with and spent considerable time
with one Jean Tatlock, Communist,
the record of whom is attached.
ROBB
The subject being Dr.Oppenheimer?
PASH
Yes.
ROBB
Whom you had not met?
PASH
Not then, but soon after...

131 INT. TRAIN, SANTA FE TO CHICAGO - DAY

131

OPPENHEIMER

He's head of security for the Project,
shouldn't I know him?

GROVES

No, he should know you. I'd never
put you in a room with Pash.

OPPENHEIMER

Why not?

GROVES

When Pash first learned about Lomanitz-
he told the F.B.I. he was going to
kidnap him, take him out on a boat,
interrogate him 'in the Russian
manner'...

132 INT. LT.JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

132

Pash sits down next to me, opposite Johnson.

PASH

Dr.Oppenheimer, this is a pleasure.
General Groves has placed a certain
responsibility in me, and it's like
having a child, that you can't see,
by remote control, so to actually
meet you... I don't mean to take
much of your time...

The disarming friendliness of the truly dangerous.

OPPENHEIMER

Not at all. Whatever time you choose.

PASH

Mr.Johnson told me of your
conversation yesterday, in which I'm
very interested. It had me worried
all day...

OPPENHEIMER

I didn't want to talk to Lomanitz
without authorization-

PASH

That's not the particular interest I
have. It's something a little more,
in my opinion, more serious...

133 INT. TRAIN, SANTA FE TO CHICAGO - DAY

133

GROVES

When the F.B.I. pointed out that such information couldn't be used in court Pash made it clear that he didn't intend to have anyone left to prosecute. The F.B.I. talked him down, but that's the man you're dancing with.

134 INT. LT.JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

134

PASH

I gather you've heard there are other parties interested in the work of the Radiation Lab...

OPPENHEIMER

Well, a man attached to the Soviet Consul indicated, through intermediate people, to people on this project that he was in a position to transmit information they might supply.

PASH

Why would anyone on the project want that?

OPPENHEIMER

Frankly, I can see there might be arguments for the Commander in Chief informing the Russians- they're our allies. But I don't like the idea of it going out the back door- it might not hurt to be on the lookout for it.

135 INT. TRAIN, SANTA FE TO CHICAGO - DAY

135

GROVES

You said that to Pash?

OPPENHEIMER

I was trying to put it in the context of... Russia's not Germany.

GROVES

Boris Pash is the son of a Russian Orthodox bishop. Born here, but in 1918 he went back to Russia to fight the Bolsheviks. This is a man who's killed Communists with his own hands.

136 INT. LT.JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY 136

Pash spreads his palms...

PASH

I'm not the judge of who should or should not get information. My business is to stop it going through illegally. Could you be a little more specific?

OPPENHEIMER

There's a man whose name was mentioned to me a couple of times- Eltenton. I think he's a chemist employed by Shell. He talked to a friend of his who's an acquaintance of someone on the project. To go beyond that would be to put names down of people who are not only innocent but were 100 percent cooperative.

137 INT. TRAIN, SANTA FE TO CHICAGO - DAY 137

Groves is staring at me like I just crapped my pants.

GROVES

You thought Pash would be satisfied with that?

OPPENHEIMER

I was trying to give them Eltenton without opening a can of worms. I told him a cock-and-bull story.

138 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 138

I am up front. Robb questioning-

ROBB

Did you lie to General Groves, too?

OPPENHEIMER

No, I told him I'd lied to Pash.

139 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY 139

Groves is on the stand, in civilian clothes-

GARRISON

Do you recall your conversation with him about the Chevalier incident?

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED:

139

GROVES

I've seen so many versions of it, I wasn't confused before, but I'm certainly getting there now.

GARRISON

What was your conclusion?

GROVES

That he was under the influence of the typical American schoolboy attitude that there's something wicked about telling on a friend. He did what he thought was essential-disclosing Eltenton.

140 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

140

Pash is testifying.

PASH

The memo I wrote at the time states 'Dr. Oppenheimer sought to provide information to burnish his image as loyal, clearly having heard of our investigation at Berkeley. He is not to be trusted on matters of security'.

141 INT. LT. JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

141

Pash gazes, unblinking, into my eyes...

PASH

These other people you mentioned, were they contacted by Eltenton direct?

OPPENHEIMER

No.

PASH

Well now, could we know through whom that contact was made?

OPPENHEIMER

It would involve people who ought not be involved in this.

PASH

Is this person a member of the project?

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED:

141

OPPENHEIMER

A member of the faculty, but not on the project.

PASH

Eltenton made the approach through a member of the faculty here at Berkeley?

OPPENHEIMER

As far as I know- there may have been more than one person involved. If I seem uncooperative I think you can understand that it's because of my insistence in not getting innocent people into trouble.

Pash stares at me. I finally keep my mouth shut.

PASH

You see me as persistent-

OPPENHEIMER

You are persistent, and that is your job. But my job is protecting the people who work for me.

PASH

Instead of us going on certain steps which may come to your attention and be a little bit... *disturbing* to you... I'd rather discuss those with you first. I'm not formulating any plans, I'm just going to have to digest the whole thing.

I nod at Pash. Get to my feet.

142 INT. TRAIN, SANTA FE TO CHICAGO - DAY

142

Groves takes in the story.

GROVES

You're protecting a friend. But who's protecting you?

OPPENHEIMER

You could.

GROVES

If you gave me the name.

OPPENHEIMER

If you order me to, I'll do it.

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED:

142

GROVES

You're making a mistake, Robert. A mistake that may haunt you. You need to *volunteer* this name.

I turn to watch the scenery trundle past.

ROBB (V.O.)

And did he give you the name?

143 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

143

GROVES

He did.

ROBB

But not at that time.

GROVES

No.

ROBB

In fact, it was some months later, wasn't it?

Groves nods.

144 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

144

I study the back of Boris Pash's head...

ROBB

And in the months between your interview with Dr. Oppenheimer and his eventual naming of Chevalier, did you expend resources trying to find the identity of the intermediary?

PASH

Considerable resources. Without the name our job was extremely difficult.

ROBB

When did you receive the name?

PASH

I was gone by the time Oppenheimer offered it up.

ROBB

Gone?

PASH

They felt my time would be better spent in Europe determining the status of the Nazi bomb project.

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED: 144

ROBB

Who did?

PASH

General Groves. He transferred me to London.

I lift my head at this.

INSERT CUT: MARBLES DROP INTO THE BOWL... 3/4 FULL...

145 EXT. LOS ALAMOS - NIGHT 145

Serber and I walk down the street. Snow falling.

SERBER

Little early for a Christmas party.

OPPENHEIMER

Something's up. Tolman's been away.

SERBER

Where?

OPPENHEIMER

Ruth won't tell.

We head towards Fuller Lodge...

146 INT. FULLER LODGE, LOS ALAMOS - LATER 146

A CHRISTMAS PARTY. DEBAUCHED. Kitty, in SANTA HAT, serves/spikes the EGGNOG. Bethe, Teller, Charlotte Serber, Neddermeyer, Kistiakowsky, Donald, Hornig, Bainbridge, Fuchs, Feynman amongst the revelers. I have Ruth cornered, glancing over at Kitty who pretends she wasn't looking at me and GRABS at the nearest male arm- pushing eggnog...

RUTH

Compartmentalization, Oppie. What makes you think I know, anyway?

I take *her* glass. Sip from it...

OPPENHEIMER

You do a good job of knowing where Mr.Tolman is... when it counts.

RUTH

Like now.

I turn- Tolman and Groves enter, brushing off snow...

GROVES

Atten-shun! We have an early Christmas present for you...

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED:

146

They step aside to reveal... NIELS BOHR. I grin.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED: (2) 146

BOHR (V.O.)
*The British pilots put me in the
bomb bay...*

147 INT. SAME - LATER 147

Bohr holds court. I listen at the back.

BOHR
...showed me the oxygen- of course I
messed it up. When they opened me
up in Scotland I was unconscious. I
pretended I'd been napping.

The crowd LAUGHS, loving it. Bohr peels off to talk to me.

BOHR (CONT'D)
Is it big enough?

OPPENHEIMER
To end the war?

BOHR
To end *all* war.

148 INT. LECTURE HALL, T-SECTION - LATER 148

I sip my drink, watching Bohr read the boards. Tolman,
Teller, Bethe and Serber sprawl, party hats, TINSEL scarves...

BOHR
Heisenberg sought me out in
Copenhagen. It was chilling- my old
student, working for the Nazis. He
told me things to draw me out...
sustained fission reactions in
Uranium...

TOLMAN
That sounds more like a reactor than
a bomb.

TELLER
Did he mention gaseous diffusion?

BOHR
He seemed more focused on heavy water.

TELLER
As a moderator?

BOHR
Yes. Instead of graphite.

Serber and Tolman GRIN. I nod. Bohr notices us relax...

(CONTINUED)

148 CONTINUED:

148

BOHR (CONT'D)

What?

OPPENHEIMER

He took a wrong turn. We're ahead.
And with you here to help us...

Bohr turns to Teller and the others-

BOHR

Gentlemen, could you give us a moment?

They shuffle out. Bohr looks at the MARBLES. Turns to me...

BOHR (CONT'D)

I'm not here to help, Robert. I
knew you could do this without me.

OPPENHEIMER

Then why did you come?

BOHR

To talk about *after*. The power you're
revealing will forever outlive the
Nazis. And the world is not prepared.

OPPENHEIMER

You can lift the rock without being
ready for the snake that's revealed.

BOHR

We have to make the politicians
understand- this isn't a new weapon-
it's a new world. I'll be out there,
doing what I can- but you...

(points at me)

You're an American Prometheus- Father
of the Atomic Bomb. The man who
gave them the power to destroy
themselves. They'll respect that.
And your work really begins.

I take this in. Charlotte Serber enters-

CHARLOTTE

I'm sorry, Oppie, but there's a call.
From San Francisco.

I look at my watch, surprised... look at Bohr, who nods 'Go'.

149 EXT. SNOWY WOODS, LOS ALAMOS - DAWN

149

Kitty, on horseback, finds my horse, tied up. She dismounts,
moving into the trees... she finds me curled up at the base
of a tree in the SNOW, distraught.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

149

KITTY

Robert?

She crouches, touches my shoulder- I look up, ASHAMED.

OPPENHEIMER

Her father called... they found her
yesterday... in the bath...

INSERT CUT: A WOMAN, FACE DOWN IN THE BATH, A CUSHION BELOW...

KITTY

Who?

OPPENHEIMER

She'd taken pills, left a note...
not signed... she took barbiturates...

*INSERT CUT: TATLOCK KNEELS IN THE BATH, POPPING PILLS. SINKS
SERENELY ONTO CUSHIONS UNDER THE WATER...*

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

But there was Chloral Hydrate in her
blood...

*INSERT CUT: GLOVED HANDS HOLDS TATLOCK'S STRUGGLING HEAD
UNDERWATER...*

I SHAKE OFF the image...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

There was a note.

KITTY

Jean Tatlock?

INSERT CUT: OPPENHEIMER, NAKED, SHAKES HIS HEAD AT TATLOCK.

OPPENHEIMER

We were together- she said she needed
me... but I told her I wouldn't see
her again. It was me.

Kitty SLAPS me in the face. I look up at her, bleary-eyed...

KITTY

You don't get to commit the sin,
then have us all feel sorry for you
that it had consequences.

(rises)

Pull yourself together. People here
depend on you.

150 INT. LECTURE HALL, T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

150

I vacantly preside over a shambles- the goldfish bowl is FILLED with marbles. As is the glass tumbler... Donald, Bainbridge, Feynman watch the others squabble-

HORNIG

Serber, I'm not quitting my job because Plutonium's radioactive!

SERBER

We can't know what it might do to your reproductive system- Donald, help me out, here-

DONALD

You're on your own, pal.

HORNIG

(to Serber)

Your reproductive system's more exposed than mine. Presumably.

KISTIAKOWSKY

The implosion device is nowhere.

NEDDERMEYER

You can't rush everything, Oppie.

KISTIAKOWSKY

There's rushing and there's getting on with it- pick one, will ya?

BETHE

Teller's not helping- I've been asking for calculations on the implosion lenses for weeks-

TELLER

The British can do it- Fuchs-

FUCHS

Absolutely.

BETHE

It's *your* job, Teller!

TELLER

I'm engaged in research-

BETHE

On a Hydrogen bomb we're not even building!

Teller simply walks away. As he passes me-

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED:

150

TELLER

I won't work for that man.

BETHE

Let him go. He's a prima donna-

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED: (2)

150

SERBER

I agree. He should leave Los Alamos.

I sigh. RISE, clear and direct-

OPPENHEIMER

Kisty, you replace Neddermeyer.

Seth, I'm putting you on plutonium.

Lilli, go work for Kisty.

(off look)

Because he needs you.

(to Fuchs)

Fuchs, take Teller's role- you're exclusively on the implosion device.

I head for the door-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

And *nobody* is leaving Los Alamos.

151 EXT. T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

151

Teller is held at the gate. I approach. We face off in the 'street' like gunslingers.

TELLER

They won't let me leave.

OPPENHEIMER

I won't let you leave. Forget Hans, forget *fission*. Stay here and research what you want. Fusion. The Hydrogen bomb- whatever. We'll meet to discuss-

TELLER

You don't have time to meet. You're a politician now, Robert. You left physics behind long ago.

OPPENHEIMER

Once a week. One hour, you and me.

Teller considers this. Nods, turns to the GUARD-

TELLER

Now, raise that fucking barrier.

ROBB (O.S.)

So the Super was under development on your watch at Los Alamos...

152 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

152

ROBB
...yet, after the war, you tried to deny it was viable.

OPPENHEIMER
No. I pointed out technical difficulties with it.

ROBB
Didn't you try to kill it at the AEC meeting after the Russian bomb test?

OPPENHEIMER
No.

ROBB
But that was the recommendation the AEC offered, was it not?

OPPENHEIMER
After hours of discussion...

153 INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT (COLOUR)

153

Me, Bush, Nichols (CIVILIAN), Rabi, Fermi, Strauss and others.

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)
...about the best response.

BUSH
Truman has to do something...

Rabi opens his compasses wider...

RABI
An H-bomb would be 1,000 times the power of an A-bomb.

He draws a circle around Moscow...

RABI (CONT'D)
The only intended target would be the largest cities.

And a circle around St.Petersburg...

RABI (CONT'D)
It's a weapon of mass genocide.

STRAUSS
Why don't you draw some of those circles on this side of the map?

He points at the U.S.A...

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

153

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Start here...

(gestures around them)

New York.

As I listen to them I hear the sound of FEET STAMPING...

FERMI

It's a weapon of attack, with no
defensive value.

STRAUSS

Deterrence.

BUSH

Do we need more deterrence than our
current arsenal of atomic bombs?

I tense up as the STAMPING SOUND gets LOUDER and LOUDER...

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED: (2)

153

RABI

Drown in ten feet of water or ten thousand, what's the difference? We can already drown Russia, and they know it.

INSERT CUT: DOZENS OF FEET STAMPING, FASTER AND FASTER...

STRAUSS

Now they can drown us.

...SO FAST THE FEET BREAK RHYTHM, CAUSING CACOPHONY...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, I have to ask whether your discussion should be more of a technical one. Robert?

I JAM my eyes CLOSED, SHAKE OFF the image- the sound STOPS-

OPPENHEIMER

Teller's designs are as impractical as they were during the war.

LAWRENCE

The hydrogen bomb can be made to work, Oppie. You know that.

OPPENHEIMER

We can't commit all our resources to that chance.

STRAUSS

Then how would you have Truman reassure the American people?

OPPENHEIMER

By limiting the spread of atomic weapons through international control of nuclear energy.

STRAUSS

World government?

OPPENHEIMER

The United Nations. As Roosevelt intended.

STRAUSS

I asked what *Truman* should do. The world's changed. Communism threatens our survival.

OPPENHEIMER

Lewis, if we build a Hydrogen bomb, the Soviets would have no choice but to build their own.

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED: (3)

153

STRAUSS

Could they be working on it already?
Based on information from a spy at
Los Alamos?

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED: (4)

153

OPPENHEIMER

There was no spy at Los Alamos!

BUSH

Gentlemen, let's not get sidetracked.

OPPENHEIMER

I say we use this moment to gain concessions from the Russians by committing that we will not build the Hydrogen bomb.

STRAUSS

Thereby revealing its existence.

OPPENHEIMER

Which you seem convinced they already know.

BUSH

At this point I'd like the advisory committee members to meet in privacy to finalize our recommendations.

Strauss nods. Rises. Much of the room follows suit, leaving.

STRAUSS

I'm not sure you want to go down this road, Robert.

OPPENHEIMER

Lewis, we're the *Advisory* Committee. We'll give them our advice.

Strauss shrugs. As he, Lawrence and Nichols leave together, Borden approaches.

BORDEN

Dr. Oppenheimer? William Borden-Joint Committee on atomic energy.

OPPENHEIMER

Oh, yes.

BORDEN

During the war, I was a pilot. One night, flying back from a raid, I saw an amazing sight- like a meteor-

154 *INSERT CUT: BORDEN SPEEDS THROUGH THE NIGHT...*

154

BORDEN (V.O.)

A V2 rocket heading for England-

A ROCKET STREAKS PAST, RIPPING APART THE DARK...

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

154

BORDEN (CONT'D)

I can't help but imagine what it
will be for such an enemy rocket to
carry an *atomic* warhead...

INSERT CUT: A MISSILE RISES THROUGH THE CLOUDS

I hear the sound of FEET STAMPING...

INSERT CUT: DOZENS OF FEET STAMPING FASTER AND FASTER

I peer into the future...

INSERT CUT: HUNDREDS OF MISSILES RISE THROUGH THE CLOUDS...

I look at the map... Rabi's circles EXPAND like raindrops in
a puddle...

OPPENHEIMER

Then let's make sure we're not the
ones to make that possible.

But that's not the answer Borden wanted. He leaves. Fermi
and Bush remain. Rabi leans over to me.

RABI

Oppie, you don't want to go up against
Strauss.

OPPENHEIMER

If we both speak, they listen to me.

RABI

When you speak, they hear a prophet.
When Strauss speaks, they hear
themselves.

OPPENHEIMER

They'll listen to a prophet.

RABI

A prophet can't be wrong. Not once.

SENATOR MCGEE (V.O.)

*Didn't you accuse Oppenheimer of
sabotaging the development of the
Super?*

CUT TO:

155 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

155

Strauss shifts uneasily in his chair.

STRAUSS

*I was never one of those who bandied
around terms like 'sabotage'.*

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED:

155

*SENATOR MCGEE**But Mr.Borden was?**STRAUSS**As I understand it.**SENATOR MCGEE**How was Mr.Borden able to put together such a detailed indictment? He was no longer a government employee, and yet he appears to have had unlimited access to Dr.Oppenheimer's file. Might Mr.Nichols have given him access to the file? Or someone else at the AEC?**STRAUSS**Feelings ran high on these issues, but that's a very serious accusation, Senator.*

CUT TO:

156 EXT. LOS ALAMOS - DAY (COLOUR)

156

*RAIN. I ride my horse through the outskirts. Spot a FLIER stapled to a telegraph pole, ink running: **THE IMPACT OF THE GADGET ON CIVILIZATION - DISCUSSION, BLDG T31 SUNDAY, 11AM***

157 INT. CYCLOTRON BUILDING, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

157

*I enter to find 40 scientists meeting. Hornig is speaking.**HORNIG**Germany's about to surrender, the Japanese are losing. It's no longer the enemy who are the greatest threat to mankind- it's us. Our work.**Heads turn as they notice me.**OPPENHEIMER**Hitler's dead. But the Japanese fight on.**The audience is now turned my way...**HORNIG**Their defeat seems assured.**OPPENHEIMER**Not if you're a G.I. preparing to invade Japan. We can end this war.**MORRISON**How can we justify using this weapon on human beings?*

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

157

OPPENHEIMER

We're theorists- we can imagine a future, and our imaginings horrify us. But they won't fear it until they understand it, and they won't understand it until they've used it. When the world learns the terrible secret of Los Alamos our work will ensure a peace mankind has never seen. A peace based on the kind of international cooperation that Roosevelt always envisaged.

Some of the scientists nod. Scattered applause...

INSERT CUT: THE GOLDFISH BOWL IS FULL OF MARBLES...

158 EXT. LOS ALAMOS - DAY

158

I walk down the main drag with Groves.

OPPENHEIMER

Progress.

GROVES

Two years and a billion dollars worth?

OPPENHEIMER

Hard to put a price on it.

GROVES

Not really. Just add up the bills.

(points)

'Rural Free Delivery'... 80 babies delivered the first year. This year they've had ten a month.

OPPENHEIMER

Birth control's a little out of my jurisdiction, General.

Groves watches Kitty approach- she's HEAVILY PREGNANT.

GROVES

Clearly.

159 EXT. CANYON, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

159

An IMPLOSION DEVICE ROCKS the Canyon. Groves, Fuchs and I raise our heads- Kistiakowsky and Hornig rush to the device-

KISTIAKOWSKY

That's the one!

I put my PIPE on the wall as we CLIMB out of the bunker...

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED:

159

GROVES

Two viable bombs. I need a date.

OPPENHEIMER

September-

GROVES

July-

Kistiakowsky waves a trail of ticker tape-

KISTIAKOWSKY

That's the sweet spot, gentlemen!

OPPENHEIMER

August.

GROVES

July-

OPPENHEIMER

A test in July.

Fuchs hands me my pipe. I dust it off...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

But I need my brother.

(off look)

Frank knows the desert. He left
politics behind- he's been working
for Lawrence for two years.*INSERT CUT: FLYING OVER DESERT TO FIND FRANK STANDING BY A
JEEP WITH AN ARMY OFFICER.*

GROVES

What do we call the test?

OPPENHEIMER

(thinking)

'Batter my heart, three-person'd
god'

GROVES

What?

OPPENHEIMER

Trinity.

INSERT CUT: A STEEL TOWER IS RAISED IN THE DESERT...

160 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

160

ROBB

So you insisted on bringing on your brother, Frank, a known Communist-

OPPENHEIMER

Former Communist-

ROBB

You brought a known *former* Communist onto America's most secret and important defense project?

OPPENHEIMER

I knew my brother could be trusted absolutely.

ROBB

And you feel your judgement was sound on who on the team could be trusted?

KISTIAKOWSKY (O.S.)

Fuchs! Head down!

161 EXT. BERM - DAY

161

Behind a berm, Groves, Fuchs, Frank and I watch Kistiakowsky and Hornig arm a detonator. Fuchs shuffles lower.

KISTIAKOWSKY

Everybody ready...?

Kistiakowsky triggers A VAST EXPLOSION, SPLINTERING THE TOWER, SENDING A MASSIVE PLUME OF FIRE INTO THE AIR... the SHOCK WAVE throws DEBRIS onto me and Groves...

GROVES

I hope you learned something.

FRANK

We learned we're gonna need to be a lot further away...

GROVES

Well, figure it out. Fast.

(to me)

We leave for Washington tomorrow, and we're going to give them a date.

162 INT. HOTEL LOBBY, WASHINGTON DC - DAY

162

I walk across the lobby- someone GRABS my arm- Szilard, with the Scientist with Glasses in tow. I glance out the window, where Groves is getting into a car, waiting for me...

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

162

OPPENHEIMER

You're a long way from Chicago, Leo.

SZILARD

If we don't act now, they're going to use this thing against Japan. We booked a meeting with Truman, but somebody killed it. You're meeting the Secretary of War-

OPPENHEIMER

Just because we're building it doesn't mean we get to decide how it's used.

SZILARD

History will judge us, Robert. In Chicago we put together a petition-

Glasses holds out a paper- I PUSH it back- Glasses FLINCHES-

OPPENHEIMER

I'm not getting into that. Tell me your concerns and I'll relay them-

SZILARD

My *concerns*?! Germany's defeated, Japan's not going to hold out alone-

OPPENHEIMER

How would you know? You got us into this, you and Einstein, with your letter to Roosevelt saying we could build a bomb-

SZILARD

Against *Germany*.

OPPENHEIMER

That's not how weapons manufacture works, Szilard.

SZILARD

Oppie, you have to help.

OPPENHEIMER

Fermi's in the meeting. And Lawrence-

SZILARD

They're not you. You're the great salesman of science- you can convince anyone of anything. Even yourself.

163 INT. SECRETARY OF WAR'S OFFICE - DAY

163

I sit on a couch next to Fermi- Lawrence, Groves and Bush in chairs. Secretary of War STIMSON presides. Military, Scientists and Officials are scattered through the room.

STIMSON

The firestorm in Tokyo killed 100 thousand people. Mostly civilians. I worry about an America where we do these things and no one protests.

MARSHALL

Pearl Harbor and three years of brutal conflict in the Pacific buys a lot of latitude with the American public.

STIMSON

Enough to unleash the atomic bomb?

FERMI

In truth, the A-bomb might not cause as much damage as the Tokyo bombings.

STIMSON

What are we estimating?

BUSH

In a medium-sized city, 20 or 30 thousand dead.

OPPENHEIMER

Don't underestimate the psychological impact of an atomic explosion... a pillar of fire 10 thousand feet tall, deadly neutron effects for a mile in all directions... from One. Single. Device. Dropped from a barely noticed B-29... the atomic bomb will be a terrible revelation of divine power.

Groves carefully monitors my effect on the room...

MARSHALL

If that's true it would be definitive. World War II would be over. Our boys would come home.

STIMSON

This could end the war.

OPPENHEIMER

This could end *all* war. If we retain moral advantage.

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED:

163

Groves registers the pivot...

STIMSON

How so?

OPPENHEIMER

If we use this weapon without informing our allies, they'll see it as a threat and we'll be in an arms race.

MARSHALL

How open can we be with the Soviets?

BUSH

Secrecy won't stop the Soviets becoming part of the atomic world.

A politician, BYRNES, clears his throat politely-

BYRNES

We've been told they have no Uranium.

BUSH

You've been misinformed. A Russian bomb is a matter of time.

LAWRENCE

To stay ahead, our program has to continue at full pace after the war.

OPPENHEIMER

Secretary Stimson, if I may. Not all the scientists on the project agree. In fact, this might be a moment to consider other opinions-

GROVES

The Manhattan Project's been plagued from the start by certain scientists of doubtful discretion and uncertain loyalty. One of them just tried to get a meeting with the President.

I say nothing. Groves looks directly at me.

GROVES (CONT'D)

We need them for now, but as soon as is practical, we should sever any such scientists from the program. Wouldn't you agree, Doctor?

I meet Groves' gaze. Stay silent... Nod.

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED: (2)

163

MARSHALL

If a Russian bomb is inevitable, perhaps we should invite their top scientists to Trinity.

BYRNES

President Truman has no intention of raising expectations that Stalin be included in the atomic project.

STIMSON

Informing him of our breakthrough, and presenting it as the means to win the war need not make unkeepable promises. But the Potsdam peace conference in July is the last chance for Truman to have that conversation. Can you give us a working bomb by then?

GROVES

Absolutely. We'll test fire before the conference.

STIMSON

And Japan?

OPPENHEIMER

If the test works you'll have two bombs for August.

STIMSON

Military targets?

OPPENHEIMER

There aren't any big enough.

CONANT

Perhaps a vital war plant, with workers housed nearby.

FERMI

Could we issue a warning? To reduce civilian casualties.

AIR FORCE OFFICER

They'd send up everything they have against us, and I'd be in that plane.

BUSH

If we announce it and it fails to go off we'd scupper any chance of Japanese surrender.

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED: (3)

163

LAWRENCE

Is there no way to demonstrate the bomb to Japan to provoke surrender?

GROVES

We intend to demonstrate it in the most unambiguous terms. Twice. Once to show the weapon's power. A second to show that we can keep going until they surrender.

STIMSON

We have a list of 12 cities to choose from. Sorry, 11, I've taken Kyoto off the list because of its cultural significance to the Japanese people.

Stimson senses the unease in the room...

STIMSON (CONT'D)

Let me make this simple for you, gentlemen. The Japanese will not surrender short of a successful invasion of the home islands. Many lives, American and Japanese, will be lost in that invasion. The use of the atomic bomb against Japanese cities will save lives.

164 EXT. BASE OF STEEL TOWER, TRINITY SITE - DAY

164

Frank shows Groves and me the site plan...

FRANK

Ground zero. Observation posts at 10,000 yards north south and west.

OPPENHEIMER

Where do we trigger from?

FRANK

South 10,000. Base camp is 10 miles south, here. And a further observation point on this hill 20 miles away.

I point to a crew digging a trench from the base of the tower.

OPPENHEIMER

What's that? The trigger lines went in already.

FRANK

The air force requested a line of lights for their B-29.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED:

164

OPPENHEIMER

What B-29? Our bomb's on the tower.

FRANK

They want to use the test to confirm the safe operating distance.

GROVES

Risky.

FRANK

Not as risky as dropping one over Japan and hoping we were right about the blast radius.

OPPENHEIMER

Don't let them slow us down- we're firing on the 15th.

FRANK

The 15th?! That's not-

Frank sees my expression-

FRANK (CONT'D)

The 15th.

165 INT. T-SECTION, LECTURE HALL, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

165

I show the plan to the division heads.

OPPENHEIMER

I'll be at the South observation point with Frank and Kistiakowsky. You'll all be assigned to base camp, far observation, or west observation.

INSERT CUT: I ENTER A TENT AT THE BASE OF THE TOWER- THE SILVER SPHERE OF THE BOMB IS SURROUNDED BY THE TEAM...

BETHE

Are those safe distances?

OPPENHEIMER

They're based on your calculations.

RABI

Time to stand behind your science, Hans. Literally.

INSERT CUT: THE BOMB IS HOISTED UP INTO THE TOWER...

TELLER

What about the radiation cloud?

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED:

165

OPPENHEIMER

Without high winds it should settle within two to three miles. Evacuation measures will be in place, but we need good weather for visibility so it should be fine. We go on the night of the fifteenth.

The team exchange looks-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

That's a hard deadline, so if anyone has anything... speak now.

BETHE

We need a final implosion test.

KISTIAKOWSKY

Couldn't hurt.

OPPENHEIMER

Do it. Is there anything else that might stop us?

A THUNDER CLAP takes us into-

166 EXT. OPPENHEIMER HOUSE, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

166

White sheets FLAP CRAZILY in the wind... through the window we see Kitty put her drink down reluctantly. She comes out to grab a sheet that has come loose from the line... notices a JEEP idling at the gate, ARMED GUARDS patiently waiting...

I emerge carrying an overnight bag. Kitty, one hand on the washing line, turns to look at me, curious.

KITTY

It's happening, isn't it?

I watch the sheets flapping. Glance at the Guards...

OPPENHEIMER

I'll send a message. If it's gone our way... 'Take in the sheets'.

She nods. I head towards the waiting jeep.

KITTY

Robert?

I turn, looking at Kitty amongst the FLAPPING SHEETS...

KITTY (CONT'D)

Break a leg.

167 EXT. CANYON, LOS ALAMOS - DAY 167
 A BANG as the final implosion test goes off... Kistiakowsky and Fuchs raise their heads... Kistiakowsky shows Fuchs the tape, grave.

168 EXT. STEEL TOWER, TRINITY TEST SITE - EVENING 168
 I watch the last TECHNICIAN come down. I nod at the man, then starts my lonely climb...
 I stare at the silver sphere of the first atomic bomb, its surface STUDED with detonators, WIRES DRAPED across it like spaghetti. Thunder RUMBLES. I watch the approaching storm...

169 EXT. BASE CAMP, TRINITY TEST SITE - EVENING 169
 Army tents. A WINDMILL SPINS FURIOUSLY...

170 INT. BASE CAMP, TRINITY TEST SITE - EVENING 170
 Fermi moves through the team, taking bets...
 FERMI
 Oppie's taken a very modest 3 kilotons... Teller's in for 45...
 Rabi pulls out some bills-
 RABI
 20.
 FERMI
 20 thousand tons of TNT... and does anyone want the side action on total atmospheric ignition?
 The Scientists groan and laugh. Soldiers look at each other 'what the hell?' Groves corners the army WEATHERMAN.
 GROVES
 Are you saying we'll have to delay?
 WEATHERMAN
 I'm saying it would be prudent.
 OPPENHEIMER
 Has this weather reached the site?
 The Weatherman gets on his radio. Kistiakowsky BURSTS in-
 KISTIAKOWSKY
 Oppie-
 The phone rings-

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED:

170

KISTIAKOWSKY (CONT'D)
Bethe's calling you to tell you the
implosion test failed, but-

I have the phone to my ear-

OPPENHEIMER
Hans. Yes, he's here. Yes.
(I hang up)
Is he wrong?

KISTIAKOWSKY
No.

OPPENHEIMER
So we're about to fire a dud?

KISTIAKOWSKY
No.

GROVES
Explain.

KISTIAKOWSKY
I can't. I just know the implosion
lenses will work.

OPPENHEIMER
If we fire those detonators and they
don't trigger the reaction, two years'
worth of plutonium will be scattered
across white sands.

KISTIAKOWSKY
(holds out his hand)
A month of my salary against ten
bucks says it lights.

I study Kistiakowsky. Take the bet.

WEATHERMAN
The wind's picking up at Zero, not
the rain. Lightning circling.

THUNDER. Rabi calls over-

RABI
Hey, Weatherman, you think it might
be time to get your men away from
the steel tower with the atomic bomb
primed to detonate via electrical
charge?

The Weatherman laughs. Then GRABS the radio-

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED: (2)

170

WEATHERMAN

Pull 'em out.

OPPENHEIMER

(to Groves)

Let's get to South Observation.
Make our determination there.

171 EXT. STEEL TOWER, TRINITY TEST SITE - NIGHT

171

The last trucks drive away, lightning on the horizon. The bomb sits there, impervious to peals of DRY THUNDER...

172 EXT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - NIGHT

172

Groves, the Weatherman and I watch rain LASH the desert...

OPPENHEIMER

The team hasn't slept for two nights.
We stand down, make the bomb safe,
it's weeks before we get back here.

GROVES

Then we miss Potsdam.

(checks watch)

I need to get word to Truman by seven.

(to the Weatherman)

Our window's closing. What's it doing?

WEATHERMAN

Raining. Blowing. Lightning.

GROVES

For how long, dammit!

WEATHERMAN

It's holding strong.

OPPENHEIMER

It'll break before dawn.

GROVES

How could you know that?

OPPENHEIMER

I know this desert. The air cools overnight. Just before dawn, the storm breaks.

WEATHERMAN

He could be right. But schedule it as late as possible.

OPPENHEIMER

Five thirty?

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED: 172

Groves considers this. Turns to the Weatherman.

GROVES

Sign your forecast. If you're wrong,
I'll hang you.

173 INT. BUNKER, SOUTH OBSERVATION POST - NIGHT 173

Groves and me, alone. Rain pelting down outside.

GROVES

Three years. Four thousand people.
Two billion dollars. If it doesn't
go off we're both finished.

OPPENHEIMER

I put my money on 3 kilotons. Any
less, they won't get what it is.

GROVES

What did Fermi mean by 'atmospheric
ignition'?

OPPENHEIMER

We had a moment where it looked like
the chain reaction from an atomic
device might never stop. Setting
fire to the atmosphere.

GROVES

Why's Fermi still taking side bets
on it?

OPPENHEIMER

Call it gallows humor.

Groves takes this in. Picks the scab-

GROVES

Are we saying there's a chance that
when we push that button... we destroy
the world?

OPPENHEIMER

Nothing in our research over the
last three years supports that
conclusion except as the most remote
possibility.

GROVES

How remote?

OPPENHEIMER

The chances are near zero.

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED: 173

GROVES

Near zero?

OPPENHEIMER

(smiling)

What do you want from theory alone?

GROVES

Zero would be nice.

I check my watch.

OPPENHEIMER

Well, in an hour and fifty-eight minutes, we'll know.

I listen-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

It's letting up...

174 EXT. TRINITY SITE - NIGHT 174

Searchlights settle on the gleaming steel tower. A line of lights leading from the the blackness of the nighttime desert to the tower comes on...

175 EXT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 175

Groves and I come out into gentle rain. The wind has fallen off. Frank comes up to meet us.

FRANK

The arming party's left Zero, heading this way, throwing the switches...

(to the Soldiers)

Turn the cars, ready for emergency evacuation...

176 EXT. SOUTH 1500 POST - NIGHT 176

Kistiakowsky and military personal, including BAINBRIDGE, get out of a truck. Kistiakowsky THROWS a SWITCH on the ground...

177 EXT. BASE CAMP, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 177

Rabi, Fermi and Bethe come outside. A SOLDIER hands them WELDER'S GLASS...

178 EXT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - NIGHT 178

Kistiakowsky and Bainbridge get out of the truck and enter the bunker.

- 179 INT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 179
Bainbridge pulls out a key. UNLOCKS the arming switches.
Kistiakowsky nods, Bainbridge THROWS THE SWITCHES.
- BAINBRIDGE
Twenty minutes.
- 180 EXT. TRINITY SITE - CONTINUOUS 180
A SIGNAL ROCKET flares up into the air...
- 181 EXT. BASE CAMP, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 181
Rabi, Fermi and the others watch the rocket go up-
- FERMI
Twenty minutes!
- 182 EXT. HILL TOP DISTANT OBSERVATION POINT - CONTINUOUS 182
A group of scientists, including Teller, Feynman and Lawrence
watch the distant rocket sputter...
- FEYNMAN
That's twenty!
- DARK GLASSES are handed out. Feynman refuses, jumping up
into the cab of a truck-
- SOLDIER
Hey, Feynman-
- Feynman TAPS the windshield-
- FEYNMAN
The glass stops the U.V.
- Teller, in dark glasses, is APPLYING SUNSCREEN at night-
- TELLER
But what stops the glass?
- Feynman looks at Teller. Looks at the glass, shakes his
head, grinning...
- 183 INT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 183
Groves moves to me-
- GROVES
I'm heading to base camp. Best of
luck.
- Groves shakes my hand.

(CONTINUED)

- 183 CONTINUED: 183
- GROVES (CONT'D)
Try not to blow up the world.
- 184 INT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - MOMENTS LATER 184
- I watch Bainbridge take his place at the KILL SWITCH.
- OPPENHEIMER
Watch that needle. If the detonators don't charge, or if the voltage dips below 1 volt, you abort.
- Bainbridge nods, watching the meter of the X-unit like a hawk. A nervous hawk.
- 185 EXT. BASE CAMP, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 185
- A loudspeaker broadcasts the countdown-
- LOUDSPEAKER
Two minutes to detonation...
- The two minute rocket goes up-
- ARMY CAPTAIN
Everybody down!
- The observers lie on the ground, facing away from the site.
- ARMY CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Do not turn around until you see light reflected on the hills. Then look at the explosion only through the welder's glass...
- LOUDSPEAKER
Ninety seconds...
- 186 EXT. DISTANT OBSERVATION POINT - CONTINUOUS 186
- Feynman TUNES the radio into the countdown relay-
- RADIO
Sixty seconds...
- Lawrence jumps in next to Feynman. The scientists peer into the distance through the windshield... Teller, pale with sunscreen, adjusts his dark glasses...
- 187 INT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 187
- Bainbridge PEERS at the X-unit... Frank and I peer at the tower... The electronic counter STARTS: **45, 44, 43, 42...**

(CONTINUED)

187 CONTINUED: 187

OPPENHEIMER
These things are hard on your heart.

LOUDSPEAKER
Thirty seconds...

FOUR RED LIGHTS flicker on-

188 EXT. STEEL TOWER, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 188
The bomb WAKES, detonators on its surface HUMMING...

189 INT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 189
The NEEDLE on the X-unit SHOOTS to the right-

BAINBRIDGE
Detonators charged!

I pull on a pair of WELDER'S GOGGLES...

190 EXT. BASE CAMP, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 190
Rabi lifts his head to peek around, welder's glass over his eyes... Groves shakes hands with Bush...

LOUDSPEAKER
...eighteen, seventeen...

191 EXT. DISTANT OBSERVATION POINT - CONTINUOUS 191
Feynman peers through the windshield. Teller studies the horizon...

RADIO
...twelve, eleven...

192 INT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 192
A GONG sounds at T-minus 10- Bainbridge peers at the needle, which BOBBLES- his hand FLINCHES- the needle settles...

LOUDSPEAKER
Ten, nine, eight...

Frank and I peer through the holes in the concrete...

LOUDSPEAKER (CONT'D)
...seven, six, five...

Kistiakowsky SCRAMBLES out of the bunker-

193 EXT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 193
-and up onto the embankment, eyes locked on the tiny glow of
the distant tower...

LOUDSPEAKER
...four, three...

194 INT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 194
I stare straight ahead...

LOUDSPEAKER
...two, one...

Bainbridge watches the needle as the counter goes down to-

LOUDSPEAKER (CONT'D)
...zero.

My breath stops- an agonizing instant before-

SILENT LIGHT. FULL BRIGHT NOON SUNNY DAY LIGHT.

195 EXT. BASE CAMP, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 195
Rabi sees SUDDEN DAYTIME- turns to the LIGHT, peers through
the welder's glass at **BLINDING SILENT WHITE...**

196 EXT. DISTANT OBSERVATION POINT - CONTINUOUS 196
Lawrence is stepping out of the car as Feynman SHUTS his
eyes against **INSTANT DAYLIGHT...** a **HUSHED INTAKE OF BREATH**
from the crowd of sunglasses-clad distant observers...

197 INT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 197
All we can hear is my TREMULOUS BREATHING as the LIGHT becomes
less BLINDING, resolving into a FIRE BALL, **BRIGHT AS THE**
SUN, BUT GIANT... I YANK off my goggles... watch the ROILING
PLASMA become more visible in its HELLISH CONTORTIONS...
CLIMBING into the sky like the DEVIL'S CLAW...

My PUPILS are PINPRICKS-

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)
Now I am become death, destroyer of
worlds...

And then- **CRACK!!!!!!.....!!!!!!.....!!!!!!.....**

I am hit by the WIND and DUST of the **SHOCK WAVE-**

THE **THUNDER OF A THOUSAND STORMS** ROLLS OVER, **DEAFENING-**

198 EXT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 198
Kistiakowsky is BLOWN OFF HIS FEET...

199 INT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 199
With the wave of **DARK THUNDER**, TERRIBLE BEAUTY GIVES WAY TO **FEAR**... I TREMBLE as I watch the glowing cloud climb to its full height, its inner fire dimming to a HELLISH SCARLET... DUST CLOUD RISING, CRACKLING WITH PURPLISH ENERGY...

As the sound diminishes to a RUMBLE and night REGAINS the desert floor Frank turns to me-

FRANK

(quiet)

It worked.

I nod, awe-struck...

200 EXT. BASE CAMP, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 200
Startled murmurs, then a few claps... then CRAZY, CHEERING, CLAPPING, DANCING... in the middle of it all Rabi tries to understand what just happened...

201 EXT. DISTANT OBSERVATION POINT - CONTINUOUS 201
ECSTATIC CHEERING... even Teller SMILES... Feynman pulls out some BONGOS and hops onto the hood of the truck... people DANCE to his PAGAN RHYTHM as the dawn CREEPS IN...

202 EXT. SOUTH OBSERVATION POST, TRINITY TEST SITE - CONTINUOUS 202
Kistiakowsky GRABS me in a big HUG- steps back- holding out his hand for payment. I pull out my wallet, frown- there's nothing in it-

OPPENHEIMER

I'm good for it.

Kistiakowsky GRINS-

KISTIAKOWSKY

Yes, you are! Yes, you are!

203 EXT. BASE CAMP, TRINITY TEST SITE - MOMENTS LATER 203
Rabi, still amidst the celebration, watches a car pull up. I get out, walking like GARY FUCKING COOPER- the crowd spots me... goes NUTS...

Groves turns to an AIDE-

(CONTINUED)

203 CONTINUED:

203

GROVES

Get me Potsdam. Right away.

I nod at Groves, move through the sea of congratulations to find Serber...

OPPENHEIMER

Get a message to Kitty...

Serber's face falls, perturbed-

SERBER

We can't say anything-

OPPENHEIMER

Just tell her to bring in the sheets.

Serber grins. I spot Groves on a FIELD TELEPHONE- then am HOISTED ONTO JOYFUL SHOULDERS...

204 INT. OPPENHEIMER HOUSE, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

204

Kitty wrangles the kitchen phone while she feeds our baby daughter and young son-

KITTY

Sorry. Yes, Charlotte, go ahead.

*CHARLOTTE (over phone)**Well, I don't know, he just said to tell you to bring in the sheets.*

Kitty freezes, letting the phone come off her ear...

*CHARLOTTE (over phone) (CONT'D)**Kitty? Kitty?*

Kitty smiles, tears forming. It is done. FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

205 EXT. T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

205

I watch CRATES hoisted on trucks by the army...

*OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)**They musn't drop it through cloud cover-*

206 INT. T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

206

I am talking to the AIR FORCE OFFICER who is supervising the crating of equipment-

(CONTINUED)

206 CONTINUED:

206

OPPENHEIMER

If they detonate it too high in the air, the blast won't be as powerful-

AIR FORCE OFFICER

With respect, Dr. Oppenheimer. We'll take it from here.

I lose sight of the bomb as THE CRATE IS CLOSED.

207 EXT. T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

207

Groves appears at my side, watching the loading...

OPPENHEIMER

Did Truman brief Stalin at Potsdam?

GROVES

'Brief' would be an overstatement. He referred to a powerful new weapon, Stalin said he hoped we'd make good use of it against Japan.

OPPENHEIMER

That's it?

GROVES

Robert, we've given them an ace. It's for them to play the hand.

Frustrated, I drop my cigarette and GRIND it out-

OPPENHEIMER

You're aiming for the 6th?

GROVES

That's up to the C.O. in the Pacific.

OPPENHEIMER

Should I come with you to Washington?

GROVES

What for?

OPPENHEIMER

Well... you'll keep me informed?

Groves turns to leave-

GROVES

Of course.
(looks back)
As best I can.

(CONTINUED)

207 CONTINUED:

207

I watch Groves leave, uneasy. A truck pulls out, REVEALING TELLER. He crosses, watching the loaded truck move away...

TELLER

Would the Japanese surrender if they knew what was coming?

OPPENHEIMER

I don't know.

TELLER

Have you seen Szilard's petition?

OPPENHEIMER

Yeah. What the hell does Szilard know about the Japanese?

(I look at Teller)

You're not signing it?

TELLER

A lot of people have.

OPPENHEIMER

Edward, the fact that we built this bomb doesn't give us any more right or responsibility to decide how it's used than anyone else.

TELLER

But we're the only people who know about it.

OPPENHEIMER

I've told Stimson the various opinions of the community.

TELLER

But what's *your* opinion?

I watch another truck pull out...

OPPENHEIMER

Once it's used, nuclear war, maybe all war, becomes unthinkable.

TELLER

Until somebody builds a bigger bomb.

208 INT. OPPENHEIMER HOUSE, LOS ALAMOS - NIGHT

208

Kitty comes downstairs to find me sitting at the kitchen table. The phone in front of me.

OPPENHEIMER

I thought they would call.

(CONTINUED)

208 CONTINUED: 208

KITTY
It's only the fifth.

OPPENHEIMER
In Japan it's the sixth.

209 INT. OPPENHEIMER'S OFFICE, LOS ALAMOS - DAY 209

I pace my office, agitated.

OPPENHEIMER
Charlotte? Try Groves again.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
Truman's on the Radio-!

I BOLT into-

210 INT. FOYER, OPPENHEIMER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 210

Charlotte is patching the P.A. to the Radio-

TRUMAN (over radio)
...16 hours ago an American airplane
dropped one bomb on Hiroshima and
destroyed its usefulness to the
enemy...

211 INT. OFFICE, T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - DAY 211

Frank is doing paperwork when the P.A. WHISTLES-

TRUMAN (over P.A.)
That bomb had more power than 20,000
tons of TNT...

212 INT. CORRIDOR, T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS 212

As Frank emerges, others DRIFT into the corridor, shocked...

TRUMAN (over P.A.)
It is an atomic bomb. It is a
harnessing of the basic power of the
universe...

He hears BANGING and CHEERING- through the window SOLDIERS
BEAT on trash can lids. Frank and the Scientists try
uncertain smiles and handshakes...

213 INT. OPPENHEIMER'S OFFICE, LOS ALAMOS - DAY 213

I listen to the radio-

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED:

213

TRUMAN (over radio)
*The force from which the sun draws
 its power has been loosed against
 those who brought war to the Far
 East...*

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 Groves on one!

I white-knuckle the phone...

GROVES (over phone)
*I'm very proud of you and all of
 your people.*

OPPENHEIMER
 It went alright?

GROVES (over phone)
*Apparently it went with a tremendous
 bang.*

OPPENHEIMER
 Everybody here is feeling reasonably
 good about it. It's been a long
 road.

GROVES (over phone)
*I think one of the wisest things I
 ever did was when I selected the
 director of Los Alamos.*

I gently put down the phone...

TRUMAN (over radio)
We have spent 2 billion dollars...

214 EXT. LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS

214

I walk in a relieved daze...

TRUMAN (over radio)
*...on the greatest scientific gamble
 in history and won.*

Horns HONK, soldiers CHEER... people WAVE... I nod back...

215 INT. FULLER LODGE, LOS ALAMOS - NIGHT

215

A restless, excitable CROWD is packed into the bleachers,
 like a HIGH SCHOOL PEP RALLY...

216 INT. LOBBY, FULLER LODGE, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS 216
 Kitty reaches forward and adjusts my tie. We hear the sound of DOZENS OF FEET STAMPING RHYTHMICALLY...

217 INT. FULLER LODGE, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS 217
 The impatient crowd is STAMPING IN UNISON...

218 INT. LOBBY, FULLER LODGE, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS 218
 Kitty nods at me, I take a breath and PUSH through the door-

219 INT. FULLER LODGE, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS 219
 As I walk past the rear bleachers I get a close view of DOZENS OF FEET STAMPING IN UNISON... the STAMPING FEET GET FASTER as I approach the stage...
 The STAMPING GROWS OPPRESSIVE- FASTER and FASTER until RHYTHM BREAKS, causing CACOPHONY which PEAKS as I step up...
 I raise my hands in a theatrically victorious gesture- the crowd CHEERS...

OPPENHEIMER
 The world will remember this day.

LOUDER CHEERING...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 It's too early to determine what the results of the bombing are...

Though the crowd is still CHEERING, their sound DIMINISHES...

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 But I'm sure the Japanese didn't like it-

CHEERS. CHEERS. CHEERS. BUT **NO SOUND**. As I look out at the EXCITED FACES I can hear my own BREATHING... I carry on-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 I'm proud of what you accomplished...

The crowd seems to go NUTS, but all we hear is the QUIET CREAKING OF SEATS and SHUFFLE OF FEET as they REACT, HANDS SILENTLY CLAPPING, MOUTHS SILENTLY JAWING... I try again-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 I just wish we'd had it in time to use against the Germans...

(CONTINUED)

219 CONTINUED: 219

The CHEERING AND CLAPPING PEOPLE GET TO THEIR FEET in
MORTIFYING SILENCE...

I stare at them, straining to hear something, then-

PIERCING SCREAMS not cheers, as **INSTANT DAYLIGHT** POURS IN
THE WINDOWS- **BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER-**

My eyes are pinpricks as I see CHEERING/SCREAMING MOUTHS
STRETCHED GROTESQUELY WIDE-

**CRACK!!...!!!!...!!!!...!!!!... THE THUNDER OF A THOUSAND
STORMS** ROLLS OVER, **DEAFENING-**

I see FLESH RIPPED FROM THE SMILING YOUNG FACES... I see
PLASMA ROILING and the DEVIL'S CLAW reach into the night
sky... I see piles of ASHES where the young crowd was
cheering...

220 INT. SAME - LATER 220

I DRIFT through a SILENT, KINETIC WHIRLWIND OF CELEBRATION,
CLAPPED on the back, KISSED... NODDING and HOLLOW SMILES...
I see a YOUNG WOMAN LAUGHING... I STEP on something, look
down to see my foot inside a CHARRED CORPSE... I look up,
SHAKING OFF THE IMAGE... I see young people MAKING OUT under
the bleachers, a hand up a sweater... I see the Young Woman
again but NOW SHE JUST CRIES AND CRIES AND CRIES...

221 INT. LOBBY, FULLER LODGE, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS 221

DRIFTING through... I see a young man sitting, back to the
wall, WEEPING, a woman trying to console him...

222 EXT. FULLER LODGE, LOS ALAMOS - CONTINUOUS 222

As I exit, REVELERS RUN PAST, JOYFUL... turning, I see a
Young Physicist at the wall, bent double...

As I pass, he looks up, DISTRAUGHT, VOMIT AROUND HIS MOUTH.

FADE TO BLACK.

223 INT. LOBBY, OVAL OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY 223

Relief. Gentle formality. I look at the coffee table: Time
Magazine- me on the cover '**FATHER OF THE ATOMIC BOMB**'.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Dr.Oppenheimer?

An AIDE on softly clicking heels, points at the magazine.

AIDE

Nice picture.

(CONTINUED)

223 CONTINUED: 223

I look up at her. Blank.

AIDE (CONT'D)
President Truman will see you now.

224 INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 224

Truman comes from behind his desk to shake my hand-

TRUMAN
Dr. Oppenheimer, it's an honor.

OPPENHEIMER
Mr. President. Secretary Byrnes.

Byrnes nods, sits. I take a seat. Truman leans on the desk.

TRUMAN
How's it feel to be the most famous
man in the world?

I can't think of an answer.

TRUMAN (CONT'D)
You helped save a lot of American
lives. What we did at Hiroshima was-

OPPENHEIMER
And Nagasaki.

TRUMAN
What?

OPPENHEIMER
Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

TRUMAN
Obviously. Your invention let us
bring our boys home. Your country
owes you a great debt.

OPPENHEIMER
It was hardly my invention.

TRUMAN
It's you on the cover of Time.
(indicates Byrnes)
Jim here tells me you're concerned
about an arms race with the Soviets.

OPPENHEIMER
Well, it's that... now is our chance
to secure international cooperation
on atomic energy, and I'm concerned-

(CONTINUED)

224 CONTINUED:

224

TRUMAN

You know when the Soviets are gonna have a bomb?

OPPENHEIMER

I'm not sure I could give a-

TRUMAN

Never.

I look at the President, incredulous...

OPPENHEIMER

Mr. President, the Russians have good physicists and abundant resources-

TRUMAN

Abundant? I don't think so.

OPPENHEIMER

They'll put everything they have...

I taper off.

TRUMAN

I hear you're leaving Los Alamos. What should we do with it?

OPPENHEIMER

Give it back to the Indians.

Truman laughs. But I'm not joking. Truman looks to Byrnes for help.

BYRNES

Doctor Oppenheimer, if what you say about the Soviets is true, we have to build up Los Alamos, not shut it down.

I WRING my hands, deeply uncomfortable...

OPPENHEIMER

Mr. President, I feel that I have blood on my hands.

Truman looks at me differently. Pulls the crisp white handkerchief from his breast pocket and offers it-

TRUMAN

You think anyone in Hiroshima or Nagasaki gives a shit who built the bomb? They care who dropped it. I did. Hiroshima isn't about you.

(CONTINUED)

224 CONTINUED: (2)

224

Truman gestures to Byrnes, they both RISE. I get to my feet.
Awkward. As I leave I hear-

TRUMAN (CONT'D)

Don't let that cry-baby back in here.

The door of the Oval Office CLOSES on me...

STRAUSS (V.O.)

Robert saw that hand-wringing got
him nowhere...

224A INT. LOBBY, OVAL OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

224A

Walking past I notice my face staring back at me from the
cover of the magazine on the table...

STRAUSS (V.O.)

By the time I met him, he'd fully
embraced his 'father of the bomb'
reputation...

CUT TO:

225 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

225

Strauss sits talking with the Senate Aide.

STRAUSS

He used his profile to influence
policy...

INSERT CUT: 'LIFE' MAGAZINE- **OPPENHEIMER, NO.1 THINKER ON
ATOMIC ENERGY...** OPPENHEIMER RUNS A GAUNTLET OF FLASHBULBS...
OPPENHEIMER AND KITTY ARE PHOTOGRAPHED AT OLDEN MANOR...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

But all along- with McCarthy on the
rise- he knew he was vulnerable.
His brother was blacklisted by every
university in the country...

INSERT CUT: FRANK WORKS A RANCH IN COLORADO...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Lomanitz wound up working the
railroad, laying track...

INSERT CUT: LOMANITZ SWINGS A HAMMER...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Chevalier went into exile...

INSERT CUT: CHEVALIER CARRIES SHOPPING, STEPPING AROUND
CHICKENS IN A RURAL FRENCH ALLEY...

(CONTINUED)

225 CONTINUED:

225

STRAUSS (CONT'D)
But none of that stopped Robert from
pushing the GAC to recommend arms
control instead of the H-bomb.

INSERT CUT: STRAUSS MOVES THE FLOWERS ON THE TABLE IN THE
HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM, WATCHING OPPENHEIMER...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)
He was devastated when that didn't
go his way...

*INSERT CUT: headline: **TRUMAN ANNOUNCES H-BOMB PROGRAM...***

CUT TO:

226 INT. BALLROOM, PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT (COLOUR)

226

Drink in hand, I watch the room sing 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY' to Strauss. Ruth Tolman is next to me, staring at the NEWSPAPER.

RUTH

I miss Richard more than I can bear...

I turn to Ruth, sympathetic.

RUTH (CONT'D)

But part of me's glad he didn't live to see where this is all going.

I nod, understanding. She downs her drink and leaves.

STRAUSS (O.S.)

Robert, my son and his fiancée are desperate to meet the father of the atomic bomb...

Strauss is there with his adult children-I glance at them, raise a glass, then turn away. Strauss stands there, humiliated. The couple awkwardly moves off.

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Is this a bad time?

OPPENHEIMER

What do you think, Lewis?

STRAUSS

I think it must have been a blow for you-

OPPENHEIMER

For the world.

STRAUSS

The world? What does Fuchs mean to rest of the world?

OPPENHEIMER

Fuchs? Klaus Fuchs?

Strauss looks at me with concern...

STRAUSS

You haven't heard. Klaus Fuchs, the British Scientist you put onto the implosion team at Los Alamos?

INSERT CUT: FUCHS HANDS OPPENHEIMER HIS PIPE...

(CONTINUED)

226 CONTINUED:

226

STRAUSS (CONT'D)
 Turns out he was spying for the
 Soviets. The whole time. I'm sorry,
 Robert, you must feel awful.
 (gestures to bar)
 Have another. On me.

Strauss moves off. I stand there. Frozen.

STRAUSS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*After the truth about Fuchs came
 out, they stepped up surveillance on
 Robert. He knew his phone was tapped,*

CUT TO:

227 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

227

STRAUSS
 He was followed everywhere...

INSERT CUT: OPPENHEIMER, DRIVING, CHECKS HIS REAR-VIEW MIRROR,
 SPOTS A SEDAN FOLLOWING HIM...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)
 His trash picked through...

INSERT CUT: KITTY, FROM THE KITCHEN WINDOW, SPOTS A SUITED
 MAN PICKING THROUGH THEIR TRASH...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)
 But it never stopped him speaking
 his mind.

SENATE AIDE
 A man of conviction?

STRAUSS
 Sure. Or maybe he thought fame could
 actually protect him. When Eisenhower
 took over, Robert saw one more chance.
 He took it...

228 INT. CORPORATE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT (B&W)

228

Oppenheimer is lecturing... Strauss is in the crowd...

OPPENHEIMER
 America and Russia may be likened to
 two scorpions in a bottle, each
 capable of killing the other, but
 only at the risk of his own life.
 There are various aspects of this
 policy which I would like to discuss
 but can't.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

228 CONTINUED:

228

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Follies that can occur only when even the men who know the facts can find no one to talk about them, when the facts are too secret for discussion, and thus for thought. Candor is the only remedy. Officials in Washington have to start leveling with the American people, and telling them what the enemy already know about the atomic armaments race.

Strauss notices two Generals exchanging unfavorable looks.

STRAUSS (V.O.)

A lot of scientists blame me, but how was I supposed to protect him.

229 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

229

STRAUSS

That was the last straw for Robert's enemies.

SENATE AIDE

So he had to lose his security clearance.

STRAUSS

And with it, his credibility.

SENATE AIDE

But how could they do it? He was a war hero- and he'd already told everyone about his past...

STRAUSS

Borden dredged it all up again.

SENATE AIDE

But how could Borden get access to Oppenheimer's F.B.I. file? Could it have been Nichols?

STRAUSS

I can't imagine he'd do that. But whoever did unleashed a firestorm that burned a path from the White House right to my desk at the AEC. You see them in there trying to hang Oppenheimer round my neck. I've worked my whole life to get here - the cabinet of the United States of America - and now, in front of the entire country, they want to put me back in my place...a lowly shoe salesman.

(CONTINUED)

229 CONTINUED:

229

COUNSEL

Lewis, we can win this thing.

SENATE AIDE

I think we can make the Senate grasp that you did your duty, painful though it was. Will Hill's testimony back that up?

COUNSEL

Hill should be fine.

STRAUSS

I don't really know him, but he was one of Szilard's boys in Chicago. And they never forgave Oppenheimer...

CUT TO:

230 INT. LECTURE HALL, LOS ALAMOS - NIGHT (COLOUR)

230

Serber and MORRISON lecture using slides we never see.

STRAUSS (V.O.)

...for not supporting their petition against bombing Japan.

I watch as part of a large audience.

MORRISON

This was taken 31 days after the bombing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

230 CONTINUED:

230

MORRISON (CONT'D)

Virtually everyone in the street for nearly a mile around was instantly and seriously burned by the heat of the bomb.

Serber changes the slide. I react slightly.

MORRISON (CONT'D)

The hot flash burned suddenly and strangely.

SERBER

The Japanese told us of people who wore striped clothing upon whom the skin was burned in stripes.

Changes slide. I LOOK AWAY from the screen. I hear the sound of FEET STAMPING as Morrison continues...

MORRISON

There were many who thought themselves lucky, who crawled out of the ruins of their homes only slightly injured. But they died anyway. They died days or weeks later from the radium-like rays emitted in great numbers at the moment of the explosion.

231 EXT. T-SECTION, LOS ALAMOS - NIGHT

231

I light my pipe. Teller comes up.

TELLER

Did you read this crap in the papers? A British physicist saying the atomic bombings weren't the last act of World War Two but the first act of this cold war with Russia.

OPPENHEIMER

Which physicist?

TELLER

I think you knew him. Patrick Blackett?

I remember-

INSERT CUT: BLACKETT TAKES A MOUTHFUL OF APPLE...

I smile to myself, rueful...

(CONTINUED)

231 CONTINUED:

231

OPPENHEIMER

He may not be wrong. We bombed an enemy that was essentially defeated.

TELLER

Robert, you have all the influence now.

I look at Teller.

TELLER (CONT'D)

Urge them to continue my research on the Super.

OPPENHEIMER

I neither can nor will, Edward.

Teller looks at me. Hurt.

TELLER

Why?

OPPENHEIMER

It's not the right use of our resources.

TELLER

Is that what you really believe?

I say nothing.

TELLER (CONT'D)

J.Robert Oppenheimer. Sphinx-like guru of the atom. Nobody knows what you believe. Do you?

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)

I hope that in years to come you will look back on your work here with pride...

232 EXT. FULLER LODGE, LOS ALAMOS - DAY

232

I give my leaving address, Groves by my side. The THOUSANDS of members of the Los Alamos community listen...

OPPENHEIMER

But today that pride must be tempered with a profound concern. If atomic weapons are to be added to the arsenals of a warring world... then the day will come when people will curse the name of Los Alamos and Hiroshima.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

232 CONTINUED:

232

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

The peoples of this world must unite
or they will perish. The atomic
bomb has spelled out these words for
all men to understand.

THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE echoes around the mountains...

CUT TO:

233 INT. SENATE OFFICE - MORNING (B&W)

233

Strauss and Counsel drink coffee. The Senate Aide BURSTS in-

SENATE AIDE

Sorry, Admiral- I stopped off to get
this-

The Senate Aide holds up TIME MAGAZINE: Strauss is on the
cover- **THE STRAUSS AFFAIR, SENATE V. PRESIDENT**

SENATE AIDE (CONT'D)

It seems pretty favorable...

The Counsel looks over Senate Aide's shoulder-

COUNSEL

There's Oppenheimer. What's the
caption?

SENATE AIDE

'J. Robert Oppenheimer- Strauss fought
him...

(pauses)

...and the U.S. won.'

COUNSEL

That'll work.

The Senate Aide is perturbed. Looks up at Strauss.

SENATE AIDE

Those are your words. From yesterday.

STRAUSS

We needed to pivot.

SENATE AIDE

But how could you know what Time
Magazine would write...?

STRAUSS

Henry Luce is an old friend.

The Senate Aide stares at Strauss, realizing...

(CONTINUED)

233 CONTINUED:

233

SENATE AIDE

You've sat there and let me tell you how this is done. But you've been far ahead. All along...

STRAUSS

Survival in Washington is about knowing how to get things done.

SENATE AIDE

You get things done. What was it you said about Borden? Why get caught holding the knife yourself? I'm beginning to think that Borden was holding the knife for you.

STRAUSS

Oh?

SENATE AIDE

As Chairman of the AEC, you had access to Oppenheimer's file...

CUT TO:

234 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

234

I sit there testifying. Robb checks his notes...

ROBB

In the years following the war, would you say you exerted a great influence on the atomic policies of the U.S.A.?

OPPENHEIMER

I think great would be an overstatement.

ROBB

Really? If we look at the issue of isotopes... were you not personally responsible for destroying all opposition to their export?

I think back to my congressional testimony...

235 INT. CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ROOM - DAY

235

The room is all chuckles and smiles at my performance...

OPPENHEIMER

You can use a bottle of beer for making atomic weapons, in fact, you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

235 CONTINUED:

235

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
do... I'd say isotopes are less useful
for atomic energy than electronic
components, but more useful than a
sandwich. I'd put them somewhere in
between.

The room LAUGHS appreciatively. I lean over to Volpe-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
How'd I do?

Volpe glances back at Lewis Strauss, eyes down, ENRAGED...

VOLPE
Maybe a little too well, Robert.

236 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

236

OPPENHEIMER
I was the spokesman, but the opinion
was unanimous amongst scientists.

GRAY
That will do for today. We'll
reconvene tomorrow, when we'll hear
from Dr. Isidor Rabi.

237 INT. HOTEL ROOM, WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

237

I sit on the bed, Garrison and his team go over notes.
Kitty raids the mini-bar.

GARRISON
Rabi will help us. But it's going
to come down to how much influence
Borden has been able to exert on
Teller-

Kitty is laughing as she opens a miniature with her teeth.

GARRISON (CONT'D)
Did I say something funny?

KITTY
Borden, Borden, Borden. We all know
it's Strauss.

OPPENHEIMER
Kitty, Lewis brought me to Princeton.

KITTY
And you humiliated him in front of
Congress.

(CONTINUED)

237 CONTINUED:

237

OPPENHEIMER

That was six years ago.

KITTY

The truly vindictive are as patient
as saints.

GARRISON

Strauss claims to be neutral.

Kitty THROWS the miniature at me- it SMASHES into the wall-

KITTY

Wake up! It's always been Strauss-
and you know it. Why won't you fight
him, for Christ's sake?!She stalks into the bathroom, SLAMMING the door. Garrison
watches me clean up the miniature...

GARRISON

I've said it before, Robert. We
should not put her on the stand-

CUT TO:

238 INT. SENATE OFFICE - MORNING (B&W)

238

The Senate aide stares at Strauss in morbid fascination...

SENATE AIDE

*It wasn't Nichols or Hoover or one
of Truman's guys- it was you. You
gave the file to Borden... you set
him on Oppenheimer, convinced him to-*

STRAUSS

Borden didn't take any convincing...

239 INT. NICHOLS OFFICE, AEC - NIGHT (B&W)

239

*Nichols is behind the desk, but Strauss commands the room,
instructing Borden...*

STRAUSS

*Take your time, use the entire file.
Write up your conclusions and send
them to the F.B.I.*

BORDEN

*The material's extensive- but it
isn't new.*

(CONTINUED)

239 CONTINUED:

239

STRAUSS

Your conclusions will be. And they'll have to be answered.

NICHOLS

Hoover passes them to McCarthy?

STRAUSS

(shakes head)

Oppenheimer's too slippery for that self-promoting clown. I've talked it over with Hoover- he'll hold McCarthy at bay while you do this at the AEC.

NICHOLS

A trial?

STRAUSS

No trial. You can't give Oppenheimer a platform, you can't martyr him. We need a systematic destruction of Oppenheimer's credibility so he can never again speak on matters of national security.

BORDEN

What, then?

STRAUSS

A shabby little room, far from the limelight...

INSERT CUT: ROOM 2022 IS OPENED UP. DUSTED, TABLES ARRANGED...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

A simple bureaucratic procedure- His Q clearance is up for renewal.

(points at Borden)

You send your accusations to the F.B.I....

INSERT CUT: BORDEN PULLS PAPER FROM HIS TYPEWRITER. HE SEALS AN ENVELOPE...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Hoover sends them to the AEC...

(points at Nichols)

You're forced to act. You write up an indictment...

240 INT. FRONT HALL, STRAUSS RESIDENCE - NIGHT (B&W)

240

Strauss opens the door to Oppenheimer...

(CONTINUED)

240 CONTINUED:

240

STRAUSS (V.O.)
Tell Oppenheimer his security
clearance is not being renewed...

241 INT. LIVING ROOM, STRAUSS HOUSE - NIGHT (B&W)

241

Nichols hands the indictment to Oppenheimer who sits and
reads. Strauss hands Oppenheimer a drink...

STRAUSS (V.O.)
But offer him the chance to appeal.

Oppenheimer looks up from the letter.

OPPENHEIMER
Can I keep this?

NICHOLS
No.

STRAUSS
As you can see, Robert, it's not yet
signed. If you do decide to appeal,
they'll have to send you a copy...

Oppenheimer rises. In a daze. Strauss takes his arm...

242 INT. NICHOLS OFFICE, AEC - NIGHT (B&W)

242

STRAUSS
When he appeals, I appoint a board...

INSERT CUT: THE GRAY BOARD TAKE THEIR SEATS IN ROOM 2022...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)
They will, of course, have Counsel-

INSERT CUT: ROGER ROBB TAKES HIS SEAT...

NICHOLS
A Prosecutor?

STRAUSS
In all but name.

NICHOLS
Who?

STRAUSS
Roger Robb.

NICHOLS
Ouch.

(CONTINUED)

242 CONTINUED:

242

STRAUSS

*Robb will have security clearance to
examine Oppenheimer's file...*

INSERT CUT: ROBB OPENS A MASSIVE BLACK BINDER...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

As will the Gray board...

*INSERT CUT: A BLACK BINDER IS PLACED IN FRONT OF EACH BOARD
MEMBER...*

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Defense counsel will not.

*INSERT CUT: GARRISON, AT HIS TABLE IN ROOM 2022 LOOKS
COVETOUSLY AT THE BLACK BINDERS GRACING EACH PLACE BUT HIS...*

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

*A closed hearing- no audience, no
reporters, no burden of proof.*

NICHOLS

No burden of proof?

Strauss sips his drink. Smiles at Nichols...

STRAUSS

We're not convicting, just denying.

243 *INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (B&W)*

243

Oppenheimer is seated at the witness table...

OPPENHEIMER

*This answer is a summary of relevant
aspects of my life in more or less
chronological order...*

244 *INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)*

244

The Senate Aide looks like he ate a bad nut.

STRAUSS

*What is it you said? 'This is just
how it's done'?*

SENATE AIDE

Forgive my naivete.

STRAUSS

*Amateurs seek the sun and get eaten,
power stays in the shadows.*

244 CONTINUED:

244

SENATE AIDE
(points to Time Magazine)
You're out of the shadows, now.

STRAUSS
That's why this has to work.

SENATE AIDE
*Well, Teller's testifying this morning-
 that'll help, then Hill is in the
 afternoon.*

STRAUSS
Hill should help us, too.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: a LETTER- **AEC** letterhead- '**DEAR DR.OPPENHEIMER...**'

STRAUSS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
As you can see, it's not yet signed...

245 INT. LIVING ROOM, STRAUSS HOUSE - LATER (COLOUR) 245

I look up from Nichols' letter- SHELL SHOCKED.

STRAUSS
*If you do decide to appeal, they'll
 have to send you a copy...*

I hand the letter back to Nichols. Strauss takes my arm...

246 EXT. STRAUSS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 246

Strauss gently guides me down the steps...

STRAUSS
Take my car and driver. I insist.

OPPENHEIMER
I'll have to consult my lawyers.

STRAUSS
*Of course. But don't take too long,
 I can't keep Nichols at bay. I'm
 sorry it's come to this, Robert.*

Strauss, like a parent, puts me into the back of his car.

247 INT. STRAUSS CAR - NIGHT 247

I sit in the back, shadows flicking across my face...

(CONTINUED)

247 CONTINUED:

247

OPPENHEIMER (V.O.)
*Nichols wants me to fight so that he
can get it all in the record...*

248 INT. VOLPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

248

Kitty and I sit with Joe Volpe.

OPPENHEIMER
Strauss thinks I should walk away...

VOLPE
You could. Your security clearance
expires tomorrow. Just let it go.

KITTY
You'd be accepting the charges!
You'll lose your job. Your
reputation, your place in history!
We'll lose our house. Robert, we
have to fight.

I look at Kitty. Nod.

VOLPE
As AEC Counsel, I can't represent
you. I'll call Lloyd Garrison.

OPPENHEIMER
He's good.

VOLPE
The best. But I have to warn you...

249 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

249

I watch Garrison scramble to make notes...

VOLPE (V.O.)
This won't be a fair fight.

ROBB
During your interview with Boris
Pash in 1943 did you refer to
microfilm?

OPPENHEIMER
No.

Robb consults a paper in his black binder.

ROBB
You never said 'a man at the consulate
expert in the use of microfilm'?

OPPENHEIMER
Not specifically.

(CONTINUED)

249 CONTINUED:

249

GARRISON

I'd like to know what document Mr. Robb is quoting from, and if we might be furnished with a copy.

ROBB

The document is classified.

GARRISON

Members of the board, we're now hearing some new account of the interview... shouldn't we get back to first hand information?

ROBB

This *is* first hand.

GARRISON

How so?

Robb looks at Grey. Who nods.

ROBB

There's a recording of the interview.

Garrison is shocked. I shake my head.

GARRISON

You've let my client sit up here and potentially perjure himself and all this time you had a recording-?

ROBB

No one told your client to misrepresent his former answers-

GARRISON

Misrepresent? It was 12 years ago!
(to the Board)
Can we listen to this recording?

ROBB

Mr. Garrison, you don't have clearance.

I SNAP at the absurdity-

OPPENHEIMER

But you're reading it into the transcript!

Garrison puts a calming hand on my arm-

(CONTINUED)

249 CONTINUED: (2)

249

GARRISON

Is this proceeding interested in truth or entrapment? Because if it's truth...

Garrison points at the BLACK BINDERS in front of them all-

GARRISON (CONT'D)

Where's the disclosure? Where's the witness list?

GRAY

Mr.Garrison, this is not a trial- as you're well aware. Evidentiary rules do not apply. We're dealing with national security.

GARRISON

How does national security prevent the prosecution from providing us a list of witnesses?!

Gray looks at Garrison, stony-faced.

GRAY

Perhaps a brief recess is in order.

OPPENHEIMER

If I may? You gentlemen have my words. If you say it's from a transcript then I'll accept it. I've already explained that I made up a cock-and-bull story.

ROBB

But not the level of detail. Why would anyone present such an elaborate fiction?

OPPENHEIMER

Because I was an idiot. I found myself trying to give a tip to the intelligence people, without realizing that when you give a tip you have to offer the whole story. Asked for details, I went off on a false pattern. There was no microfilm, no consular attache. There weren't three or more people involved on the project. There was one person involved. That was me.

ROBB

Why lie?

(CONTINUED)

249 CONTINUED: (3)

249

OPPENHEIMER
Clearly with the intention of not
revealing who was the intermediary.

ROBB
Your friend, Haakon Chevalier. The
Communist.

OPPENHEIMER
Yes.

ROBB
Is he still your friend?

I look from smug Robb to the expectant Board members...

OPPENHEIMER
Chevalier is my friend.

Robb backs down, SATISFIED.

250 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ROOM 2022 - DAY

250

Oppenheimer and Garrison take a break. Rabi approaches.

GARRISON
Dr.Rabi, thanks for coming.

Garrison looks around to see Robb conferring with his team.

GARRISON (CONT'D)
(lowered voice)
Do you know anyone the prosecution
has called?

RABI
Teller, obviously.
(looks at Oppenheimer)
They've asked Lawrence.

OPPENHEIMER
What did he say?

RABI
He wasn't going to help them...

OPPENHEIMER
But?

RABI
Strauss told him that you and Ruth
Tolman had been having an affair for
years. The whole time you lived
with them in Pasadena...

(CONTINUED)

250 CONTINUED:

250

*INSERT CUT: I SIP FROM RUTH'S DRINK AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY.
RICHARD ENTERS BANGING SNOW OFF HIS SHOULDERS...*

RABI (CONT'D)

He convinced Lawrence that Richard died of a broken heart.

OPPENHEIMER

That's absurd.

RABI

Which part?

OPPENHEIMER

The broken heart. Richard never found out.

Rabi tries not to smile. Shakes his head.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Is Lawrence going to testify?

RABI

I don't know.

251 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

251

Rabi is testifying.

GARRISON

Dr.Rabi, what Governmental positions do you currently hold?

RABI

I'm Chairman of the General Advisory Committee to the AEC, succeeding Dr.Oppenheimer.

GARRISON

And how long have you known Dr.Oppenheimer?

RABI

Since 1928. I know him quite well.

GARRISON

Well enough to speak on the bearing of his character, loyalty and associations?

RABI

Dr.Oppenheimer is a man of upstanding character, loyal to the United States, to his friends and to the institutions of which he is a part.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

251 CONTINUED:

251

RABI (CONT'D)

I've examined his security file, and in spite of the associations in there, I do not believe Dr. Oppenheimer is a security risk, and that these associations from the past should bar him from continuing as a consultant to the AEC.

252 EXT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ROOM 2022 - DAY

252

I sit, exhausted. A segment of orange drops into my lap-

RABI

Eat.

I 'sip' at the orange. Rabi spots Lawrence coming down the corridor- Rabi straightens to his full height- STARES DOWN Lawrence, who looks from Rabi to me. Then TURNS and leaves.

OPPENHEIMER

What was that?

RABI

Nothing to worry about.

253 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - LATER

253

Robb cross-examines Rabi-

ROBB

Dr. Rabi, after the Russian A-bomb test, did Dr. Lawrence come to see you prior to the GAC meeting?

RABI

You'd be better off asking him.

ROBB

I fully intend to. Did he come to you about the Hydrogen bomb?

RABI

Yes. We all felt that after the Russian explosion we had to do something to regain our position.

ROBB

So you agreed with those who felt we should launch a program for the Super at that time?

(CONTINUED)

253 CONTINUED:

253

RABI

No. There were all kinds of legitimate concerns about the allocation of our resources.

GRAY

Would you say Dr. Oppenheimer was unalterably opposed to the H-bomb?

RABI

No. He thought a fusion program would come at the expense of our awfully good fission program.

ROBB

But that proved not to be the case?

RABI

In the event, both could be done. Los Alamos, which Dr. Oppenheimer founded, rose to the occasion and worked miracles, absolute miracles.

ROBB

May I ask one more question? A purely hypothetical question. Suppose this Board should not be satisfied that in his testimony here Dr. Oppenheimer had told the whole truth... what would you say then about whether or not he ought to be cleared?

RABI

If you want to set me up on the Board, then I'll give you an answer. But I've never hidden my opinion that I think this whole proceeding is a most unfortunate one.

ROBB

Why?

RABI

He's a consultant- you don't want to consult the guy? Don't. Why go through all this against a man who's accomplished what Dr. Oppenheimer has? Look at his record- we have an A-bomb and a whole series of it, and we have a whole series of Super bombs and what more do you want, mermaids?

CUT TO:

254 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

254

Strauss watches with satisfaction as Teller testifies.

TELLER

...that's why I'm here today. To express the warm support for science and scientists Mr. Strauss has shown over the years I've known him.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you Dr. Teller. We'll break now, unless there's any immediate business.

STRAUSS

Senator, I'd like to once again request that we're furnished with a list of witnesses.

CHAIRMAN

And I'll remind the nominee that we don't always have that information in advance. We do know that Dr. Hill will be here after lunch.

With that, the Chairman BANGS his gavel...

CUT TO:

255 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

255

Robb addresses the board...

ROBB

Our next scheduled witness, Dr. Lawrence, has apparently come down with... colitis..,

I glance sideways at Garrison, who almost smiles-

ROBB (CONT'D)

So I'll proceed instead with William Borden.

I watch as Borden is sworn in.

ROBB (CONT'D)

Mr. Borden, as a result of your study of Dr. Oppenheimer, did you reach certain conclusions?

BORDEN

I did.

(CONTINUED)

255 CONTINUED:

255

ROBB

Did there come a time when you expressed those conclusions in a letter to Mr.J.Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation?

BORDEN

That is correct.

ROBB

Prior to writing that letter, did you discuss the writing of it with anybody connected with the Atomic Energy Commission?

BORDEN

I did not.

ROBB

Do you have a copy of the letter with you?

Robb's assistant distributes copies of the letter...

BORDEN

I have one in front of me.

ROBB

Would you be good enough to read it?

GARRISON

A moment, please!

Garrison holds up a finger, FRANTICALLY reading ahead-

GRAY

What's the purpose of the delay?
He's simply going to read this.

GARRISON

Mr.Chairman, this is the first we've seen of this letter- and I see statements, at least one, which I don't think anybody would be happy to have go into the record- accusations that have not before been made and are not part of the indictment from Nichols.

Garrison holds up the letter-

GARRISON (CONT'D)

Is it the opinion of the Board that these are matters into which inquiry should now be directed?

(CONTINUED)

255 CONTINUED: (2)

255

I scan down the letter for what he's seen. My face falls...

GRAY

Testimony of this witness is not in any way going to broaden the inquiry.

GARRISON

How can it avoid it, sir? Supposing you should believe the witness? Mr.Robb is tasked by this board with calling in witnesses, and he brings in one to make accusations of a kind that I don't think belong here.

ROBB

Mr.Chairman, the witness wrote this letter on his own initiative laying out evidence which has already been before the board. His conclusions are valid testimony just like the positive conclusions of friends of Dr.Oppenheimer. It cuts both ways.

GARRISON

How long has Counsel been in possession of the letter?

ROBB

Mr.Garrison, I don't think I should be subject to cross-examination by you.

GRAY

Mr.Garrison, given that we on the Board have all read the letter, isn't it better to have it in the record?

Garrison says nothing. He looks at me, frustrated.

GRAY (CONT'D)

Let's proceed.

BORDEN

'Dear Mr.Hoover, the purpose of this letter is to state my opinion, based upon years of study of the available classified evidence, that more probably than not J.Robert Oppenheimer is an agent of the Soviet Union.'

I turn the letter face down, staring at its blank whiteness...

(CONTINUED)

255 CONTINUED: (3)

255

BORDEN (CONT'D)

'The following conclusions are justified. 1. Between 1929 and 1942, more probably than not, J.Robert Oppenheimer was a sufficiently hardened Communist that he volunteered information to the Soviets. 2. More probably than not, he has since been functioning as an espionage agent.

I watch the STENOGRAPHER calmly type this into the record...

BORDEN (CONT'D)

3. More probably than not, he has since acted under a Soviet directive in influencing United States military, atomic energy, intelligence, and diplomatic policy.'

Devastated, I cannot meet the eye of anyone in the room. Garrison gets up from his place. Sits down next to me.

GARRISON

I'm sorry, Robert.

OPPENHEIMER

Isn't anyone ever going to tell the truth about what's happening here?

CUT TO:

256 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

256

Strauss and his Counsel take their seats as the Chairman calls to order. Strauss looks around the room, CHEERFULLY.

CHAIRMAN

We will now hear from Dr.David Hill.

Strauss peers at a FAMILIAR man in GLASSES, DAVID HILL-Szilard's note-taking Scientist WHOSE PEN OPPENHEIMER GRABBED...

CHAIRMAN (CONT'D)

Dr.Hill would you care to make a statement?

HILL

Thank you. I have been asked to testify about Lewis Strauss, a man who has given years of service in high positions of Government and who is known to be earnest, hardworking and intelligent.

Strauss glances at Counsel, satisfied.

(CONTINUED)

256 CONTINUED:

256

HILL (CONT'D)

The views I have to express are my own, but I believe that much I have to say will help indicate why most of the scientists in this country would prefer to see Mr. Strauss completely out of the government.

Strauss narrows his eyes...

SENATOR PASTORE

(friendly lob)

You're referring to the hostility of certain scientists directed at Mr. Strauss because of his commitment to security, as demonstrated in the Oppenheimer affair?

HILL

No.

Dr. Hill takes a sip of water before continuing...

HILL (CONT'D)

Because of the personal vindictiveness he demonstrated against Dr. Oppenheimer, and against all those who have disagreed with his official positions.

Counsel turns to Strauss, who is FIXATED on Hill. The Senate Aide REACTS, surprised. MURMURS echo through the chamber...

HILL (CONT'D)

In my ten years observation of Mr. Strauss I have seen his incapacity to change a position, the subordination of his integrity to the attainment of political goals and an obsessive quest for popular and professional approval...

The audience REACTS- Strauss SHAKES his head- the Chairman BANGS the gavel-

CHAIRMAN

Order!

CUT TO:

257 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

257

Vannevar Bush is sworn in.

(CONTINUED)

257 CONTINUED:

257

BUSH

It appears to most scientists around the country that Oppenheimer is now being pilloried and put through an ordeal because he expressed his honest opinions. The written charges against him are in a poorly written indictment which the Board should have rejected from the outset.

EVANS

Dr. Bush, I thought I was performing a service to my country in hearing this case.

BUSH

No Board in this country should sit in judgment of a man because he expressed strong opinions. If you want to try that case, you can try me- I have expressed strong opinions, often unpopular, many times. I'm doing so right now. When a man is pilloried for doing that, this country is in a severe state... excuse me, gentlemen, if I become stirred, but I am.

CUT TO:

258 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

258

Strauss fumes as Hill reads his statement.

HILL

From the standpoint of public welfare, the most injurious exercise of personal vindictiveness in which Lewis Strauss has engaged was in the personnel security prosecution of J. Robert Oppenheimer, who had not hesitated to disagree with Mr. Strauss on certain questions of fundamental policy. Oppenheimer made mincemeat out of Strauss' position on the shipments of isotopes to Norway, and Strauss never forgave him this public humiliation. Another controversy between them centered around their differences in judgment on how the H-bomb would contribute to national security.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

258 CONTINUED:

258

HILL (CONT'D)

Oppenheimer had considerable influence and prestige, and Strauss was able to find a few ambitious men who also disagreed with Oppenheimer's position, and envied him his prestige in government circles.

Teller, in the audience, stares at Hill...

HILL (CONT'D)

Strauss turned to the personnel security system in order to destroy Oppenheimer's effectiveness-

SENATOR PASTORE

But, Doctor Hill, we've already heard that Mr. Strauss did not bring the charges, or participate in the hearings against Dr. Oppenheimer.

HILL

I realize that Mr. Strauss didn't sign the letter of charges, but I think when all of the evidence is viewed, it becomes highly plausible that the Oppenheimer matter was initiated and carried through largely through the animus of Lewis Strauss.

CUT TO:

259 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

259

Groves is testifying.

ROBB

General, would you clear Dr. Oppenheimer today?

GROVES

Under my interpretation of the Atomic Energy Act, which did not exist when I hired Dr. Oppenheimer in 1942... I would not clear Dr. Oppenheimer today if I were a member of the commission.

ROBB

Thank-you, General.

GROVES

But I'm not sure I could've cleared any of those guys.

ROBB

That's all.

(CONTINUED)

259 CONTINUED:

259

GARRISON

General, Dr. Oppenheimer had no
responsibility for the selection or
clearance of Klaus Fuchs, did he?

GROVES

No, not at all.

(CONTINUED)

259 CONTINUED: (2)

259

GARRISON

You wouldn't want to leave with this board even the remotest suggestion that you're here questioning Dr. Oppenheimer's basic loyalty to the United States in the operation of Los Alamos?

GROVES

By no means. I hope I didn't lead anybody to think otherwise for an instant.

GARRISON

Would you say that the revocation of Dr. Oppenheimer's position would be in the public interest?

GROVES

The revocation under such extreme publicity I think would be most unfortunate, not because of the effect on Dr. Oppenheimer- that I leave to one side- but because of the disastrous effect upon the attitude of the scientists of this country toward doing government research.

GRAY

Thank you, General.

Groves gets up, walks past me with a formal nod.

260 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ROOM 2022 - DAY

260

Garrison checks his watch.

OPPENHEIMER

She'll be here.

GARRISON

Do you even want her here?

OPPENHEIMER

Only a fool or an adolescent presumes to know someone else's relationship, and you're neither, Lloyd.

Kitty comes around the corner. Unsteady. I watch her walk towards us, not entirely straight... she catches my eye-

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Kitty and I, we're grown-ups. We've walked through fire together. And she'll do fine.

261 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

261

Kitty is at the witness table. From behind I can see her fiddling distractedly with her purse...

GARRISON

Mrs. Oppenheimer, you are no longer a member of the Communist Party?

KITTY

No.

GARRISON

When would you say that you ceased to be a member?

KITTY

When I left Youngstown in 1936.

GARRISON

Will you describe your views on Communism as pro, anti, neutral.

KITTY

Very strongly against. I've had nothing to do with Communism since 1936. Since before I met Robert.

GARRISON

That's all.

HILL (V.O.)

The record demonstrates that Oppenheimer was not interrogated by impartial and disinterested Counsel for the Gray Board...

Robb gets up to cross examine...

CUT TO:

262 INT. SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY (B&W)

262

Strauss watches Hill continue to answer questions...

HILL

... he was interrogated by a prosecutor who used all the tricks of a rather ingenious legal background to try to trick Oppenheimer into erroneous statements, and he did succeed in a few instances.

(CONTINUED)

262 CONTINUED:

262

SENATOR SCOTT

You are charging now that the Gray Board permitted a prosecution of Dr. Oppenheimer. Do you think, then, that the members of the Gray Board were unfair?

Hill takes a beat to consider this.

HILL

I can only say if I'd been on the Gray Board, I would've protested against the tactics of the man who served in fact as a prosecuting counsel- a man appointed not by the Board but by Lewis Strauss.

Strauss strokes his chin, feigning indifference.

SENATOR MCGEE

Who was this...?

CUT TO:

263 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

263

HILL (V.O.)

Roger Robb.

Robb tries to put himself in Kitty's eye line...

ROBB

Mrs. Oppenheimer.

She will not meet his gaze.

ROBB (CONT'D)

Did you have a Communist Party membership card?

KITTY

I, I'm not sure...

Kitty starts fiddling with her purse...

ROBB

Not sure?

KITTY

Well...

She FREEZES. The Board members look at her. Garrison looks at me...

(CONTINUED)

263 CONTINUED:

263

ROBB
Presumably the act of joining the
Party was sending some money and
receiving a card?

Kitty is focused on her purse...

ROBB (CONT'D)
No?

And then Kitty LOOKS UP at Robb, pure STEEL-

KITTY
It was all just so long ago, Mr. Robb,
wasn't it?

ROBB
Not really-

KITTY
Long enough to have forgotten.

ROBB
Did you turn in the card or rip it
up?

KITTY
The card whose existence I've
forgotten?

ROBB
Your Communist Party membership card-

KITTY
I haven't the slightest idea.

ROBB
Can a distinction be made between
Soviet Communism and Communism?

KITTY
In the days when I was a member I
thought they were definitely two
things-

Garrison and I hang on her every word...

KITTY (CONT'D)
I thought the Communist party of the
United States was concerned with our
domestic problems. I now no longer
believe this. I believe the whole
thing is linked together and spread
all over the world.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

263 CONTINUED: (2)

263

KITTY (CONT'D)

I've believed this since I left the party 16 years ago.

ROBB

But-

KITTY

17 years ago. My mistake.

ROBB

But you-

KITTY

Sorry, 18. Yes, 18 years ago.

Robb sighs patiently.

ROBB

Were you familiar with the fact that your husband was making contributions to the Spanish Civil War as late as 1942?

KITTY

I knew that Robert gave money from time to time, yes.

ROBB

Do you remember whether he gave money on a regular or periodic basis?

Kitty smiles sweetly-

KITTY

Do you mean regular, or do you mean periodic, Mr. Robb?

ROBB

(annoyed)

I mean... regular.

KITTY

He did not.

ROBB

Were you aware that this money was going into Communist Party channels?

KITTY

Don't you mean 'through'?

ROBB

Pardon?

(CONTINUED)

263 CONTINUED: (3)

263

KITTY

I think you mean 'through Communist Party channels'.

ROBB

Yes.

KITTY

Yes.

ROBB

Would it be fair to say that this meant that by 1942 he had not stopped having anything to do with the Communist party? I don't insist that you answer yes or no. You can answer any way you wish.

KITTY

I know that. Thank you. But the question isn't properly phrased.

ROBB

Do you understand what I am trying to get at?

KITTY

Yes, I do.

ROBB

Why don't you answer it that way?

KITTY

I don't like the phrase 'having anything to do with the Communist Party' because Robert never had anything to do with the Communist Party as such. I know he gave money for Spanish Refugees. I know he took an intellectual interest in Communist ideas-

ROBB

Are there two kinds of Communists? An intellectual Communist and a plain ordinary Commie?

Kitty laughs the laugh of the free.

KITTY

I couldn't answer that one.

EVANS

(delighted)

I couldn't either.

(CONTINUED)

263 CONTINUED: (4)

263

Gray shoots a look at Evans. CHUCKLES around the room.
Garrison looks at me. Nods. She did good.

264 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

264

I watch Teller testify.

ROBB

Is it your intention to suggest that
Dr.Oppenheimer is disloyal to the
United States?

TELLER

I do not want to suggest anything of
the kind. I have always assumed,
and now assume, that he is loyal to
the United States. I believe this,
and I shall believe it until I see
very conclusive proof to the opposite.

ROBB

Now, a question which is a corollary
of that... do you or do you not
believe that Dr.Oppenheimer is a
security risk?

TELLER

In a great number of cases I have
seen Dr.Oppenheimer act in a way
which for me was exceedingly hard to
understand. I thoroughly disagreed
with him in numerous issues, and his
actions, frankly, appeared to me
confused and complicated. To this
extent, I feel that I would like to
see the vital interests of this
country in hands which I understand
better and therefore trust more.

GRAY

Thank you, Doctor.

Teller gets up from the table, as he walks past me he holds
out his hand...

TELLER

I'm sorry.

I shake his hand.

KITTY (V.O.)

You shook his fucking hand?!

265 INT. DINING ROOM, OLDEN MANOR, PRINCETON - NIGHT

265

KITTY

I would've spat in his face!

GARRISON

I'm not sure the Board would've appreciated that.

KITTY

Not gentlemanly enough? You're all being too goddamn gentlemanly.

VOLPE

Gray must see what Robb is doing- why doesn't he shut him down?

Garrison shrugs.

KITTY

(to me)

And you? Shaking Teller's hand- you need to stop playing the martyr.

266 EXT. OLDEN MANOR, PRINCETON - NIGHT

266

Garrison drives off. Volpe turns to me-

VOLPE

Robert, you can't win this thing. It's a kangaroo court with a predetermined outcome. Why put yourself through more of it?

OPPENHEIMER

I have my reasons.

Volpe shrugs. Embraces me. Gets in his car.

EINSTEIN (O.S.)

He has a point, you know.

I turn. Einstein steps into the light.

EINSTEIN (CONT'D)

You're a man chasing a woman who doesn't love him any more- the United States Government.

OPPENHEIMER

I'm not sure you understand, Albert.

EINSTEIN

No? I left my country, never to return.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

266 CONTINUED:

266

EINSTEIN (CONT'D)

The German calamity of years ago repeats itself- people acquiesce without resistance and align themselves with the forces of evil. You've served America well, and if this is the reward she has to offer perhaps you should turn your back on her.

OPPENHEIMER

Dammit, I happen to love this country.

Einstein considers this. Nods slowly.

EINSTEIN

Then tell them to go to hell.

CUT TO:

267 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

267

Strauss BURSTS in, fuming...

STRAUSS

This has become a trial about a trial!

SENATE AIDE

It's not good that he's telling them that you initiated the hearings.

STRAUSS

He can't prove it. He can't prove that I gave the file to Borden.

SENATE AIDE

He doesn't have to. We're not in court, there's no burden of proof...

Strauss realizes. Shakes his head at himself...

STRAUSS

They're not convicting. Just denying.

The Senate Aide nods.

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Why would Hill come here to tear me down? What's his angle?

SENATE AIDE

Do people need a reason to do the right thing?

Strauss GLARES at the Senate Aide.

SENATE AIDE (CONT'D)

I mean, as he sees it.

(CONTINUED)

267 CONTINUED:

267

STRAUSS

I told you Oppenheimer poisoned the scientists against me! Right from that first meeting...

INSERT CUT: STRAUSS WATCHES OPPENHEIMER HAND EINSTEIN HIS HAT AS THEY SPEAK DOWN AT THE LAKE...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

I don't know what Oppenheimer said to him that day, but Einstein wouldn't even meet my eye...

INSERT CUT: AS STRAUSS APPROACHES, EINSTEIN WALKS PAST WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING HIM, CLEARLY UPSET...

STRAUSS (CONT'D)

Oppenheimer knows how to manipulate his own. At Los Alamos he preyed on the naivete of scientists who thought they'd get a say in how we used their work... but don't ever think he was that naive himself...

CUT TO:

268 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

268

I am back at the witness table. Robb squares up.

ROBB

Doctor, in your work on the Hydrogen bomb at Los Alamos and in the years following, were you deterred by any moral qualms about the development of this weapon?

OPPENHEIMER

Of course.

ROBB

But you still got on with the work, didn't you?

OPPENHEIMER

Yes, because this was work of exploration. It was not the preparation of a weapon.

ROBB

You mean it was just an academic excursion?

(CONTINUED)

268 CONTINUED:

268

OPPENHEIMER

No. It's not an academic thing whether you can make a Hydrogen bomb. It's a matter of life and death.

ROBB

Beginning in 1942 you were actively pushing the development of the H-bomb, weren't you?

OPPENHEIMER

Pushing is not the right word. Supporting and working on it, yes.

ROBB

When did these moral qualms become so strong that you opposed the development of the Hydrogen bomb?

OPPENHEIMER

When it was suggested that it be the policy of the United States to make these things at all costs, without regard to the balance between these weapons and atomic weapons as part of our arsenal.

ROBB

(theatrical confusion)

What did moral qualms have to do with *that*?

OPPENHEIMER

(struggling)

What did moral qualms have to do with it?

ROBB

Yes.

269 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

269

Strauss is pacing now...

STRAUSS

Oppenheimer wanted to own the atomic bomb. He wanted to be the man who moved the earth. He talks about putting the nuclear genie back in the bottle- well, I'm here to tell you that I know J. Robert Oppenheimer and if he could do it all over he'd do it all the same.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

269 CONTINUED:

269

STRAUSS (CONT'D)
*He's never once said he regrets
Hiroshima- he'd do it all over because
it made him the most important man
who ever lived...*

270 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

270

I struggle to find an answer for Robb...

OPPENHEIMER
We freely used the atomic bomb.

ROBB
In fact, Doctor, you assisted in
selecting the target for the drop of
the atomic bomb on Japan?

Now I can hear the sound of FEET STAMPING...

OPPENHEIMER
Yes.

ROBB
You knew, did you not, that the
dropping of that atomic bomb on the
target you had selected would kill
or injure thousands of civilians, is
that correct?

OPPENHEIMER
Not as many as turned out...

ROBB
How many were killed or injured?

The feet are stamping FASTER and FASTER...

OPPENHEIMER
70,000.

ROBB
70,000? At both Hiroshima and-

OPPENHEIMER
110,000 at both.

ROBB
On the day of each bombing.

OPPENHEIMER
Yes.

ROBB
And in the weeks and years after?

(CONTINUED)

270 CONTINUED:

270

OPPENHEIMER

It's been put at between 50 and 100
thousand...

ROBB

220 thousand dead? At least?

I nod.

ROBB (CONT'D)

Did you have moral scruples about
that?

OPPENHEIMER

Terrible ones.

ROBB

But you testified the other day that
the bombing of Hiroshima was very
successful?

OPPENHEIMER

Well, it was technically successful.

(CONTINUED)

270 CONTINUED: (2)

270

ROBB
Oh, technically.

OPPENHEIMER
It's also alleged to have helped end
the war.

The stamping feet are LOUDER and FASTER...

ROBB
Would you have supported the dropping
of a Hydrogen bomb on Hiroshima?

271 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

271

Strauss TURNS on the Senate Aide-

STRAUSS
*But he wanted all the glory and none
of the responsibility. So he needed
absolution. He needed to be a
martyr, to suffer, and take the sins
of the world on his shoulders. To
say 'no, we cannot continue on this
road' even as he knew we'd have to...*

272 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

272

I search for an answer- the FEET STAMPING ever LOUDER-

OPPENHEIMER
It would make no sense at all.

ROBB
Why?

OPPENHEIMER
The target is too small.

ROBB
Supposing there had been a target in
Japan big enough for a thermonuclear
weapon, would you have opposed
dropping it?

OPPENHEIMER
This was not a problem with which I
was confronted.

ROBB
I'm confronting you with it now,
sir. Would you have opposed the
dropping of a thermonuclear weapon
on Japan because of moral scruples?

(CONTINUED)

272 CONTINUED:

272

OPPENHEIMER
I believe I would, sir.

ROBB
Did you oppose the dropping of the
atom bomb on Hiroshima because of
moral scruples?

OPPENHEIMER
We set forth our-

ROBB
I'm asking you about it, not 'we'.

OPPENHEIMER
I set forth arguments against dropping
it. But I did not endorse them.

273 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

273

Strauss PACES the room, FURIOUS-

*STRAUSS
He knew he'd have to be seen to suffer
for what he did. It was all part of
his plan. He wanted the glorious
insincere guilt of the self-important
to wear like a fucking crown. And I
gave it to him...*

274 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

274

Robb gets right in my face, incredulous-

ROBB
You mean having worked night and day
for 3 years to build the bomb, you
then argued it shouldn't be used?

OPPENHEIMER
No. I was asked by the Secretary of
War what the views of scientists
were- I gave the views against and
the views for.

ROBB
You supported the dropping of the
atom bomb on Japan, didn't you?

OPPENHEIMER
What do you mean 'support'?

ROBB
You helped pick the target, didn't
you?

(CONTINUED)

274 CONTINUED:

274

OPPENHEIMER

I did my job- I was not in a policy-making position at Los Alamos- I would have done anything that I was asked to do-

ROBB

You would have made the H-bomb, too, wouldn't you?

OPPENHEIMER

I couldn't.

The STAMPING breaks rhythm to become **CACOPHONOUS...**

ROBB

I didn't ask you that, Doctor.

OPPENHEIMER

I would have worked on it, yes. But to run a laboratory is one thing, to advise a government is another.

THE LIGHT OF **A THOUSAND SUNS** POURS IN THE WINDOW...

ROBB

And the GAC report, which you co-authored, following the Russian atomic test said that a Super bomb should never be produced, did it not?

OPPENHEIMER

What we meant- what I meant- was that it would be a better world if there were no Hydrogen bombs in it.

LIGHT **STABS** THROUGH **CRACKS IN THE WALL...**

ROBB

Wouldn't the Soviets do anything to increase their military strength?

OPPENHEIMER

If we did it, they'd have to do it. Our efforts would fuel their efforts- just as it had with the atomic bomb!

PLASTER **BREAKS AWAY** AS LIGHT **POURS** INTO THE ROOM... I JAM my eyes closed, **MORE AND MORE EXPOSED...**

ROBB

'Just as with the atomic bomb.'
Exactly. No moral scruples in 1945, plenty in 1949...

(CONTINUED)

274 CONTINUED: (2)

274

The sound STOPS. The light is gone.

GRAY

(gentle)

Dr. Oppenheimer, when *did* your strong moral convictions develop with respect to the Hydrogen bomb?

I open my eyes, exhausted...

OPPENHEIMER

When it became clear to me that we would tend to use any weapon we had.

Silence.

275 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

275

Strauss has stopped...

STRAUSS

J. Robert Oppenheimer- the martyr. I gave him exactly what he wanted. To be remembered for Trinity, not Hiroshima, not Nagasaki. He should be thanking me.

SENATE AIDE

Well, he's not.

Strauss looks at the Senate Aide's neck, wondering if he could get one hand all the way around it. Speaking softly-

STRAUSS

Do you still have enough votes, or is the crowning moment of my career about to become the most public humiliation of my life?

The Senate Aide looks down at his buck slip, counts his tally.

SENATE AIDE

You'll scrape through.

Strauss looks at the Senate Aide. He smiles.

STRAUSS

Then gather the press.

CUT TO:

276 INT. ROOM 2022, ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY (COLOUR)

276

I sit with Garrison and listen to Gray pass judgment...

(CONTINUED)

276 CONTINUED:

276

GRAY

J.Robert Oppenheimer, this board, having heard testimony from you and many of your current and former colleagues has come to the unanimous conclusion that you are a loyal citizen...However, in the light of your continuing associations and disregard for the security apparatus of this country, together with your somewhat disturbing conduct in relation to the Hydrogen bomb and the regrettable lack of candor in certain of your responses to this board, we have voted two to one to deny the renewal of your security clearance.

I barely hear the rest...

GRAY (CONT'D)

A full written opinion, with a dissent from Mr.Evans will be issued to the AEC in the coming days...

The Board rises, aides start collecting files. Still dazed, I take the phone from Garrison-

GARRISON

It's Kitty.

KITTY (over phone)

Robert? Robert?

I take a breath. Not trusting my voice...

OPPENHEIMER

Don't... don't... don't... take in the sheets.

CUT TO:

277 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

277

We hear the press gathering behind the doors. Strauss checks his tie in the mirror. Smooths his hair. The Senate Aide enters, buck slip in hand.

STRAUSS

Is it official?

SENATE AIDE

I'm afraid there were a couple of unexpected holdouts.

Strauss freezes, absorbing the impact.

(CONTINUED)

277 CONTINUED:

277

STRAUSS

I'm denied?

The Senate Aide leaves him hanging for a beat.

SENATE AIDE

I'm afraid so, sir.

Strauss doesn't know what to do or where to look.

(CONTINUED)

277 CONTINUED: (2)

277

STRAUSS

Who were the holdouts?

SENATE AIDE

There were three, led by the junior Senator from Massachusetts. Young guy, trying to make a name for himself. Didn't like what you did to Oppenheimer.

STRAUSS

What's his name?

The Senate Aide checks his tally...

SENATE AIDE

Uh..., Kennedy. John F.Kennedy.

CUT TO:

278 EXT. OLDEN MANOR, BACK GATE OVERLOOKING THE INSTITUTE - DAY (COLOUR)

278

I approach Kitty, who's been crying.

KITTY

Did you think if you let them tar and feather you the world would forgive you? It won't.

OPPENHEIMER

We'll see.

CUT TO:

279 INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY (B&W)

279

Strauss listens to the hungry press pack beyond the door. He TURNS on the Senate Aide-

STRAUSS

Goddamn it! You told me I'd be fine!

SENATE AIDE

Well, I didn't have all the facts, did I?

STRAUSS

I did what was right for this country. They don't want me in the cabinet room? Maybe they should just invite Oppenheimer instead.

SENATE AIDE

Perhaps they will.

(CONTINUED)

279 CONTINUED:

279

STRAUSS

*He turned the scientists against me.
One by one. Starting with Einstein.
I told you about that? About
Einstein, by the pond?*

The Senate Aide picks up Strauss's hat and coat...

SENATE AIDE

*You did. But, you know, sir, since
nobody knows what they said to each
other that day, is it possible they
didn't talk about you at all? Is it
possible they spoke about something...*

Hands Strauss his hat and coat...

SENATE AIDE (CONT'D)

...more important?

*Strauss looks at the Senate Aide like he wants to kill him.
The Senate Aide OPENS the office door and the FLASH BULBS
EAT STRAUSS ALIVE as we-*

CUT TO:

280 EXT. LAKESIDE, INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY, PRINCETON - DAY 280
(COLOUR)

*I approach the figure by the lake. The figure's hat BLOWS
off, releasing a mass of GREY CURLS. Strauss watches from
the doorway as I SCOOP up Einstein's hat...*

EINSTEIN

Robert. The man of the moment.

I hand him his hat. He looks out at the lake.

EINSTEIN (CONT'D)

*You once had a reception for me at
Berkeley. Gave me an award. You
all believed I'd lost the ability to
understand what I'd started. So
that award wasn't for me... it was
for all of you.*

Einstein turns to me.

EINSTEIN (CONT'D)

*Now it's your turn to deal with the
consequences of your achievements.
And one day... when they've punished
you enough...*

281 INT. CABINET ROOM, WHITE HOUSE - DAY

281

Dozens of formally attired GUESTS. Kitty by my side. Many faces, now older, are there- Rabi, Lawrence, Frank, Jackie...

EINSTEIN (V.O.)

*They'll serve salmon and potato salad,
make speeches, give you a medal...*

LYNDON JOHNSON places a MEDAL around my neck. I SMILE and shake the President's hand. Kitty BEAMS as she, in turn, shakes Johnson's hand... Frank comes up to me, gives me a quick embrace-

FRANK

You're happy, I'm happy...

OPPENHEIMER

Then I'm happy you're happy.

Lawrence claps me on the shoulder, smiling affectionately...

EINSTEIN (V.O.)

*Pat you on the back and tell you all
is forgiven...*

Teller approaches, I smile and take his offered hand...

EINSTEIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Just remember. It won't be for you...

Teller turns to Kitty, offering the same smile and handshake...

EINSTEIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...it'll be for them.

Kitty STARES Teller down, letting his hand hang in the air like a WILTING PLANT... and we-

CUT TO:

282 EXT. LAKESIDE, INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY, PRINCETON - DAY

282

Einstein TURNS to leave. Up the hill, Strauss approaches...

OPPENHEIMER

Albert? When I came to you with those calculations?

Einstein pauses. I watch raindrops make circles on the surface of the pond...

(CONTINUED)

282 CONTINUED:

282

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

We were worried that we'd start a chain reaction that would destroy the entire world...

EINSTEIN

I remember it well. What of it?

OPPENHEIMER

I believe we did.

Einstein PALES. TURNS, passing Strauss without a word...

The sound of FEET STAMPING...

CLOSE IN on my staring eyes as I visualize THE EXPANDING NUCLEAR ARSENALS OF THE WORLD... THE FEET, FASTER AND FASTER-

When I can take it no longer, I JAM my eyes CLOSED and we-CUT TO BLACK.

CREDITS.

END.