



THE MOUNTAINTOP

Lights up. Night. April 3, 1968. Room 306. The Lorraine Motel. Memphis, Tennessee. The outside street lights project the shadows of rain sliding down the pane onto the walls.

The motel room door creaks open. The rain pours outside. Enter Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tired. Overwrought. Wet. He is ready to take his shoes off and crawl into bed. He coughs. He is hoarse. He stands in the doorway, the red and yellow motel sign casting a glow onto his face. He yells out of the door into the stormy night.

START

KING. Abernathy, get me a pack of Pall Malls, when ya go. Naw. Naw. Naw. I said Pall Malls. I don't like those Winstons you smoke. You can call me siddy all you like, I want me a Pall Mall. Pall Malls, man! Don't be cheap. Be back soon, man. I'm wanting one. Bad. That's right ... That's right ... *(He closes the door. He locks the deadbolt. Click. He chains the door. Rattle. Then he pulls the curtain tight over the window. He walks around in the darkness, but he knows the lay of the room well. He turns on a lone lamp that instantly illuminates the room. Water stains pockmark the walls. Bright orange and fading brown '60s decor accent the room. The carpet is the color of bile. He loosens his tie. Unbuttons his shirt. Coughs. An opened briefcase lies on one of the two full beds, covered with ruffled peach sheets. He picks up his sermon papers from the bed. Reading.)* "Why America is going to hell ... " *(He goes into the bathroom.)* "Why America is going to hell ... " *(We hear him urinate. He flushes the toilet. He walks back into the room.)* They really gonna burn me on the cross for that one. *(He turns on a lone lamp that instantly illuminates the room.)* "America, you are too ARROGANT!" *(He goes to the nightstand and checks the empty coffee cups.)* What shall I say ... what shall I say ... *(He goes to the black rotary phone on the nightstand*

between the beds. He dials.) America ... Ameri — *(He stops. In complete silence: unscrews the receiver. Checks the phone for bugs. None there. Screws the receiver back. Checks the nightstand. None there. Sighs. Dials again.)* Room service? There's not any more room service, tonight? When did it stop? Last week? We were here last week and y'all were still serving room service 'til midnight. Been always able to get me a cup of coffee when I wanted it. Needed it. Pardon? I just want a coffee. One cup. *(Pause.)* Thank you! Got to do some work before I go to bed. You can bring it on up. Room 306. *(He smiles a broad smile.)* Yes, we call it the "King-Abernathy Suite," too. I appreciate that, sir. We thank you for your prayers, sir. We're not gonna stop. These sanitation workers gonna get their due. I'm here to make sure of that. Yes, sir! My autograph, sir? *(Beat.)* Uhhhhh ... I don't give those out. I only give thanks. Sorry, sir. Yes. It'll be right up? Five minutes? Thank you kindly. Kindly. *(He hangs up. He gives the phone a "what the fuck was that about" look.)* "America, America, my country 'tis of thee ... " *(He begins to take off his shoes.)* "My country who doles out constant misery — " *(He smells them.)* Woooooh! Sweet Jesus. I got marching feet and we ain't even marched yet! *(He throws them down. He turns to rifle through his suitcase.)* Shit. She forgot to pack my toothbrush again. *(He dials on the rotary phone. Singing to himself.)* Corrie, pick up ... Corrie pick up, Corrie, Corrie, Corrie pick up ... *(She doesn't. He puts the phone down.)* My country who doles out constant misery. War abroad. Then war in your streets. *(Under his breath.)* "Arrogant America." What shall I do with — *(He throws himself back on the bed. There is a knock at the door. He rushes to go and answer. He undoes the deadbolt, then the chain.)* Reverend, about time, man. **The store ain't but down the street —** *(Enter Camae, a beautiful young maid. She stands in the doorway, one hand holding a newspaper over her head to catch the rain, the other balancing a tray with a cup of coffee.)*

CAMAE. Room service, sir.

KING. That was fast.

CAMAE. Well, I been called quickie Camae befo'. *(He is taken aback, stunned by her beauty. She waits and waits and waits. He snaps out of it.)*

KING. Where are my manners? Come on in. *(He steps aside. She walks in. Dripping over everything.)*

CAMAE. Where would you like me to put this?

END