

WALLY: Sid, I came as soon as I--(*SIDNEY just looks at him. He comes in. Puts hat on table.*)

~~Cut: [*Crosses to IRIS putting his hat on table*] I heard about your sister. If there's anything I can do...(*IRIS doesn't respond*) She's in bad shape, Sidney. Why don't you call a doctor?]~~

(*SIDNEY just hands him his hat.*) I know, Sidney. You think I'm the prince of all the bastards.

SIDNEY: No, as a matter of fact you exaggerate: I'd say you're a rather rank-and-file bastard. Good morning, O'Hara.

WALLY: Sidney, it's not like you think it is--

SIDNEY: Nothing ever is. (*indicates the door*)

WALLY: Look, Sid, this is *me. Wally*. Do you think I would have gone along with them if there was another way? I haven't changed on you, Sid. I'm the same man. Only I've had to face up to something finally: in order to get anything done, anything at all in this world, baby--

SIDNEY: --"You've got to know where the power is."

WALLY: (*shrugs*) That's the way it's always been, that's the way it always will be.

SIDNEY: I see. And besides--"All the real prostitutes are everybody else."

WALLY: Name calling is the last refuge of the ineffectuals. You rage and I function. Think about that sometime, Sid. Look, you know that stop sign that the housewives have been trying to get at Hudson and Leroy Streets? With the baby carriage demonstrations and the petitions and all? Well, they'll get their stop sign now. *I'll* get it for them. But not as some wide-eyed reformer. And better garbage collection and the new playground and a lot of other things too.

SIDNEY: And Willie Johnson, O'Hara? How's about the narcotics traffic...and the police?

WALLY: That's more complicated. You don't go jumping into things.

SIDNEY: I see: we can go on stepping over the bodies of the junkies, but the trains will run on time! (*He clicks his heels and throws off the Fascist salute.*)

WALLY: Well, as a matter of fact I knew it would be like this. That you would be standing there with that exact expression on your face: filled with all the simple selfrighteousness of bleeding innocence again debauched! It must feel good, eh, Sid? To be

able to judge! One good betrayal vindicates all our own crimes, doesn't it? Well, I'm going to tell you something I learned a long time ago. "If you want to survive--"

SIDNEY: "--you've got to swing the way the world swings!"

WALLY: (*angry*) Exactly. You either *negotiate* or get out of the race!

SIDNEY: (*looking at him curiously, a beat*) I see. Your friends don't waste time, do they? Thanks, pal. Message delivered.

WALLY: Sidney, what are you talking about?

SIDNEY: They're after my paper now, aren't they, O'Hara?

WALLY: Sidney this is not a good time.

SIDNEY: It's a perfect time.

WALLY: You don't understand. They don't want anything. Nothing changes. I've made them understand that. You go on as you've always wanted...

SIDNEY: You mean covering the art shows? Doing charming little photographic essays of the snow on our quaint little streets? Yes? (*WALLY nods.*) And leave the *world*—to you?

WALLY: It's not like that. The world needs people like you--to do what you do best. To raise our sights You have a gift, man, an instinct--for writing--for music--ideas. You turn people on.

SIDNEY: Right. But what if at some point I choose to write about *other* things...say, for example-- "*them*"?

WALLY: Sidney, "they" didn't do you in. You did yourself in and there ought to be a lesson in it for you: stay up in the mountains with your banjos and your books where you belong.

SIDNEY: Yes, but suppose I don't want to. Suppose I'm obtuse. Suppose I *refuse*?

WALLY: Sidney, make sense. What *for*? The election's a formality now. You know that.

SIDNEY: Sure. But suppose I refuse?

WALLY: Sidney, I'm talking to you as a friend...

SIDNEY: *Suppose I refuse?*

WALLY: (*reluctantly*) Then the paper won't last six months.

SIDNEY: (*stares at him; bitter laughter*) Six months. A lot can happen in six months...

WALLY: I mean it, Sidney.

SIDNEY: Oh, *I* mean it, too! Man, don't you know what kind of house you just walked into? Didn't Death breathe on you as you came through the door? I don't think you understand what really happened here last night—

CUT: [*for the first time IRIS stirs*] I'm sorry, honey, but I have to...

You see, Wally, Gloria didn't *die*--Old people die...seasons die...flowers die. But Gloria--you never did get to meet Gloria, did you? Well, Gloria was a girl who "swung the way the world swings." A girl who bought the whole package--everything you stand for--

WALLY: Now just a damn minute--

SIDNEY: Everything you stand for! And last night while I lay stoned on that couch, that girl--(*His voice breaks and he cannot go on. A beat as he struggles.*)

While I lay there in a drunken stupor--(*He is unable to continue.*)

WALLY: Sidney, I really have to go. What is it that you're trying to say?

SIDNEY: That I'm going to fight you, O'Hara.

WALLY: Sidney, you're overwrought. We'll talk about it tomorrow.

SIDNEY: We'll talk about it *now*. I'm going to fight you, O'Hara, because I have to. Because I know something now and I have to live with it: the fact that my sister

is dead because for a little while last night *I bought the package too*. Don't you understand, man? The slogans of capitulation can KILL! Every time we say "Live and let live"—death triumphs! Too much has happened, too much has happened to me. I love my wife--I want her back. I loved my sister--I'd like to see her alive. I love Alton. I loved Willie Johnson. I--I love *you*. I wish--I wish it could all be different...but no way! That which warped and distorted all of us is all around: it is in this very air! This swirling, seething madness that you ask us to help maintain! It's not good, Wally--your world. It's no--damn--good! You have forced me to take a position. Finally--the one thing I never wanted to do. (*shrugs*) Just not being *for* you is not enough. To live, to breathe--I've got to be against you.

WALLY: (*the genuine passion of the compromised*) My friend, you reek of innocence!

CUT: [IRIS: (*suddenly, turning*) ~~The question is, Wally, what is it you reek of?~~

SIDNEY: I'll tell you what he reeks of. He reeks of--no, read it in the next issue, Iris. Six months? Isn't that what you said, Wally? Six months? Thirty-two issues--

IRIS: Twenty-six, Sidney...

SIDNEY: (*He looks at her: "you sure?" She nods. He shrugs.*) Twenty-six issues.]

SIDNEY: Goodbye, O'Hara. I'll see you again. Only let me warn you: this time, thanks to you, I'll be tougher--more seasoned--harder to deceive--

WALLY: (*with genuine wonder*) Sidney, you really are a fool...

SIDNEY: Always have been. A fool who believes that death is waste and love is sweet and that the earth turns and men change every day and that rivers run and that people want to be better than they are and that flowers smell good and that I hurt terribly today, and that hurt is desperation and desperation is--energy and energy can *move* things...

WALLY: Let me know the time and place of the funeral. I'd like to send flowers. (*WALLY exits.*)