

Prologue

A mechanical interpretation of Strawberry Alarm Clock's "Incense And Peppermints" emanated from the small device on his nightstand. Wrenched from a comfortable state of slumber, he snatched the small silverish mechanism from its resting place, flipped open the protective cover, and held it to his ear. "This better be important," he growled.

A familiar voice answered him in a resolute tone which rang somewhat of finality. "Project Freedom is a go," the voice explained.

Wide eyed, he sat upright in his bed. "Today? Are you sure? I understood he wouldn't arrive for another three weeks."

"The Senator's in the air as we speak. He moved the trip up at the very last minute."

"Shit," he spouted. "Shit, shit, shit, what's the new ETA?"

"He should arrive at the hotel in roughly three and a half hours."

"Hotel? Not his home?"

"Right, he's decided to make the announcement from the Westwood."

"V.I.P. security entrance?"

"Right," the voice said. "Under the circumstances, I'll understand if you choose to forgo plan A and concentrate on plan B."

Heavy sighs punctuated each end of a long pause as his mind weighed the new set of variables. "I can do it," he finally said.

"Are you sure? Plan B might offer us a more controlled environment in which to..."

“I can do it,” he interrupted sharply. “Plan B was always meant to be a fallback, let’s not focus on it as long as plan A is still salvageable.”

“Fair enough,” the voice agreed. “Reminds me of Reno.”

“Only, Reno was personal. This is for our country,” he corrected the voice.

“Agreed.”