

**THE LAST KING OF AMERICA**

by

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**Format:** Short Film Screenplay, 8 pages. **Genre:** Thriller.

**Logline:** Given immunity from prosecution by the Supreme Court, the US President takes extreme measures to rid himself of his nemesis and stay in power.



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**BLACK SCREEN**

**SUPERIMPOSE:** In 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "with respect to the President's exercise of his core constitutional powers, immunity from prosecution must be absolute".

**SUPERIMPOSE:** In a dissenting opinion, Justice Sotomayor wrote: "In every use of official power, the President is now a king above the law".

**FADE IN:**

**INT. WHITE HOUSE, OVAL OFFICE - DAY (PRESENT DAY)**

US **PRESIDENT GRAY**, 70s, stern, joyless face, sits at the Resolute desk reading a paper copy of the WASHINGTON POST. He closes the paper, tosses it onto his desk like a frustrated toddler.

He jabs at the phone station on his desk, speaks into it.

PRESIDENT GRAY

Paula, get my press secretary in here.

**PAULA**, female mid-30s, replies through the phone station's loud-speaker.

PAULA (O.S.)

(filtered)

I'll send him in now Sir. The Secretary of Defense is also waiting to see you.

The President picks up a pen from the desk, repeatedly clicks the tip out and in while he waits.

The Oval office door opens, **PRESS SECRETARY COLLINS** enters, an earnest bespectacled man, late-30s, in a suit with thin tie. He approaches the desk.

PRESS SECRETARY COLLINS

Mister President.

PRESIDENT GRAY

What does the latest polling say?

PRESS SECRETARY COLLINS  
The latest average has you ten points  
behind the Senator nationally, Sir. A  
little less in battleground states.

The President flings the pen onto the desk.

PRESIDENT GRAY  
Goddammit! So what's so great about  
this damn woman?

PRESS SECRETARY COLLINS  
She's very popular Mister President.

PRESIDENT GRAY  
I can see that, dumb-ass!

PRESS SECRETARY COLLINS  
She's promising to roll back your  
tax-breaks for the rich and close  
loop-holes like carried interest. She  
wants affordable health care for all.

PRESIDENT GRAY  
Hell, some of those people have made  
big campaign contributions. I can't  
tell them they're going to pay the  
same rate as everyone else. And the  
health insurers are also big  
contributors to my Pacs. People  
should work harder so they can pay  
their hospital bills or not get sick  
in the first place. Okay, I've heard  
enough, you can get out.

The press secretary obediently leaves. The President presses  
the button on his phone station again.

PRESIDENT GRAY (cont'd)  
Paula! Get the Secretary of Defense  
in here.

President Gray leans back in his chair, **SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
RIVERS** enters, 40s, neatly groomed. He approaches the  
President.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RIVERS  
You wanted to see me, Mister  
President.

PRESIDENT GRAY  
We have a national emergency that we  
need to deal with. Which is your best  
special ops unit?

The Secretary sits down opposite President Gray.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RIVERS  
Seal Team Six, Sir. They're stationed  
at Fort Bragg.

PRESIDENT GRAY  
I want a personal and private meeting  
with their commanding officer.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RIVERS  
That would be highly irregular, Sir.

PRESIDENT GRAY  
I'm the commander in chief and I'm  
telling you I want them in here, so  
arrange it!

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RIVERS  
Yes, sir. I'll do it right away.

Rivers gets up, walks towards the door.

PRESIDENT GRAY  
(mutters to himself)  
Idiot.

**INT. WHITE HOUSE, OVAL OFFICE - DAY, TWO DAYS LATER**

A special forces officer with weather-beaten face, **COLONEL HOPPER**, male 50s, stands at ease in the Oval Office. The President, a manila folder marked "EYES ONLY" in his hand, motions him to the facing sofas in the middle of the room.

PRESIDENT GRAY  
Please Colonel, have a seat.

COLONEL HOPPER  
Thank you, Sir.

Colonel Hopper sits, the president sits down opposite.

PRESIDENT GRAY  
Colonel Hopper, the stability and  
health of our great Republic is  
always my uppermost concern.

COLONEL HOPPER  
Yes Sir, of course, Sir.

PRESIDENT GRAY

There are some elements in this wonderful country of ours that seek to undermine that stability, that health, replace my administration with chaos and disorder.

COLONEL HOPPER

I'm not sure I understand where you're going, Sir.

PRESIDENT GRAY

One thing I prize beyond everything else, Colonel, is loyalty. Are you and your men loyal soldiers?

COLONEL HOPPER

Absolutely Sir, we swore an oath to uphold the constitution.

PRESIDENT GRAY

But are you loyal to me?

COLONEL HOPPER

You're our commander in chief, Sir. We will follow your orders.

PRESIDENT GRAY

Good. That's what I wanted to hear. In this folder are my orders.

The President passes across the manila folder. Colonel Hopper takes it, opens it, peruses the sheets of paper inside, his brow furrows.

PRESIDENT GRAY (cont'd)

If you give me the names of all those involved I'll provide them and yourself with a pre-emptive presidential pardon on the day of the operation, dated on that day.

COLONEL HOPPER

Are you sure about this, Mister President?

PRESIDENT GRAY

Colonel, the threat to our democracy is existential. Of that I'm certain. That folder's contents are the only written evidence of this operation. It must be burned after its contents have been shared with your team.

(MORE)

PRESIDENT GRAY (cont'd)  
Also, this operation should not be  
discussed anywhere else, especially  
by digital means, understood?

COLONEL HOPPER  
Yes Sir, I understand.

**INT. FORT BRAGG, BRIEFING ROOM - DAY**

A windowless spartan briefing room, lit by hanging ceiling  
lights that cast conspiratorial shadows.

At a table in combat fatigues sits **LEE**, late 20s, very fit.  
He has the President's manila folder open in front of him on  
the table. Colonel Hopper, arms folded, stands in front of  
him, leaning his body back against a table.

Lee looks up, meets Colonel Hopper's eyes, squints.

COLONEL HOPPER  
To remind you Soldier, we don't do  
politics. We follow orders.

LEE  
What about police, secret service?

COLONEL HOPPER  
There's an access tunnel below the  
building from the sewers. They won't  
expect entry from there.

LEE  
Getting out?

COLONEL HOPPER  
There will be mass confusion. The  
location is surrounded by tall  
buildings. They'll have no idea where  
the shot came from. If you meet  
resistance, engage and eliminate as  
necessary. Once you get back down to  
the basement and the access tunnel,  
you can't be stopped.

**INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Alone, in civilian clothes, Lee is cooking with a wok on the  
stove. He chops vegetables. Pours some oil into the wok,  
throws in the vegetables, stirs them as they sizzle.

The front door is heard opening and closing along with rattling keys. Lee's wife **KATE**, late 20s, a cute woman with short dark hair, arrives home.

KATE (O.S.)  
That smells good!

LEE  
Pad pak ruam.

Kate enters the kitchen, puts a bag and door keys down. She's very pregnant.

KATE  
No idea what that means but it's got my mouth watering.

LEE  
Thai vegetable stir fry. How was school?

KATE  
A lot of American history. The kids had a hard time taking in that we fought a dictator to create this country.

LEE  
Crazy King George?

KATE  
You clearly didn't miss that lesson at school.

LEE  
How crazy was he?

KATE  
Total nut job. Wasn't going to let go of his precious colonies. Remember when we went to see the show Hamilton. The kids laughed a lot when I sang them the line:  
(softly sings)  
'When push comes to shove I'll send a fully armed battalion to remind you of my love'.

Lee smiles, grabs her affectionately from behind, touches her baby-bump, kisses her on the cheek.

LEE  
I think your kids will remember you as the best history teacher.

KATE

How about ordering in some pizza tomorrow night and watching the Presidential debate together. The pundits are expecting fireworks when the Senator gets under the President's skin with some zingers.

LEE

Honey, I'm really sorry but something's come up at work. I'll be on a job until really late.

KATE

Something far away?

LEE

Local but you know I can't say much. Don't worry, it's a quick mission. You can tell me about all the zingers when I get back.

**EXT. ROOFTOP OVERLOOKING CITY HALL - NIGHT, NEXT DAY**

Lee lies prone on the roof, sniper rifle with silencer aimed downwards towards the steps of the City Hall below. He is in dark combat fatigues, no insignia, no hat, earphones on his head with stalk microphone. He looks through the scope with one eye.

LEE

(into microphone)

In position and lined up with eyes on the exits.

COLONEL HOPPER (O.S.)

(filtered)

The debate has just ended. The target should appear soon.

Large BLACK SUV CARS drive in front of the steps. Dressed in overcoats, the President and an elegant female **SENATOR**, 50s, emerge at the same time from different doors on either side of the top of the steps, both surrounded by aides and security.

POV through Lee's scope: The crosshairs line up on the President's head, move sideways to the Senator's head. End of POV.

Lee's finger wraps around the gun's trigger. Lee speaks softly into the microphone.



LEE  
Target acquired. Permission to  
engage.

COLONEL HOPPER (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Granted. Fire at will.

LEE  
One last thing... You have my pardon,  
right?

COLONEL HOPPER (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
It's in front of me. Full and  
unconditional. Signed a couple of  
hours ago by the President. Today's  
date. Ink's hardly dry.

Lee's finger squeezes the trigger.

The gun recoils as a single muffled shot rings out.

Lee looks up from the scope to see pandemonium unfold below.  
Women scream, people cower, secret service agents draw guns,  
scan for the shooter.

Lee scrambles backwards with the rifle.

**INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE, LOUNGE - SAME**

Kate is curled up on a sofa watching TV, eating pizza, open  
pizza box on a low table in front of her.

She leans forward, eyes open wide as she sees the same  
pandemonium in front of the City Hall on the TV screen.

**EXT. CITY HALL, STEPS - CONTINUOUS**

A body lies face down on the steps, a pool of blood around  
their head.

The Senator pushes through the crowd of people surrounding  
the body. Looks down, horrified, at the dead President.

**CUT TO BLACK.**

**THE END**