

## THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

LEWIS

You skipped the whole paragraph.

SHEPHERD

And Monday morning it is.

LEWIS

"American can no longer afford to pretend that they live in a great society"...and then nothing. You dumped the whole handguns paragraph.

SHEPHERD

This is a time for prudence, Lewis.

LEWIS

That was the kick-ass section.

SHEPHERD

I thought what with being the President and all...

LEWIS

Sir, of course I didn't mean to imply--

SHEPHERD

I thought you'd be turning cartwheels this morning, Lewis -- 63 percent job approval.

LEWIS

That's great news, sir, but...  
Sir, the press is gonna need an explanation.

SHEPHERD

For what?

LEWIS

Because you dropped the whole kick-ass section, now we've got this thing hanging out there.

## THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

SHEPHERD

There's a thing hanging out there?

LEWIS

"Americans can no longer afford to pretend that they live in a great society." Then ...nothing. No explanation. No context. So now it's just this thing.

SHEPHERD

And it's hanging out there?

LEWIS

Yes, sir.

Mr. President, I really feel we need to focus on...

SHEPHERD

Lewis, however much coffee you drink in the morning, I want you to reduce it by half.

LEWIS

I don't drink coffee.

SHEPHERD

Then hit yourself over the head with a baseball bat, would you please?

LEWIS

Mr. President...

SHEPHERD

Okay. First, I wanted to say congratulations. Three years ago, we were elected to the White House by one of the narrowest margins in history, and today Kodak tells us 63 percent of registered voters think we're doing a good job.

LEWIS

Wait a second. You wanted me to poll registered voters?

## THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

SHEPHERD

But the poll also tells us what we already knew: We don't get this crime bill of ours through Congress and these numbers are gonna be a memory. So, starting today, we're shifting it into gear.

LEWIS

Can I tell my morning press gaggle that gun control--

SHEPHERD

Crime control, Robin. Gun control means we're wimps and we're soft on crime.

LEWIS

Hang on, are we not--

SHEPHERD

Lewis--

LEWIS

Are we not putting back the handgun restrictions?!

SHEPHERD

We're leaving 'em out.

LEWIS

Sir, we campaigned on this issue. Now, I understand we took it out when we were in the low forties, but we can push it through now.

SHEPHERD

After the elections.

LEWIS

Sir, we may never have an opportunity like this again. Let's take this 63 percent out for a spin and see what it can do.

## THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

SHEPHERD

We can't take it out for a spin, Lewis. We need it to get re-elected. For reasons passing understanding, people do not relate guns to gun-related crime. Lewis, we want you to be legislative liaison on this. You're gonna run the show on the hill.

LEWIS

Can I just say, to return to the subject for one moment, that it might be easier to fight a war on drugs if we weren't arming drug dealers.

SHEPHERD

Lewis, we've gotta fight the fights we can win.

LEWIS

Yes, sir.

SHEPHERD

We want to announce the crime bill at the State of the Union, which is 72 days from today. The last nose count put us 18 votes short.

SHEPHERD

Eighteen votes in 72 days.

LEWIS

Thank you, Mr. President.