

HIGH & TIGHT

Pilot

by

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INT. THE CONSULATE - DAY

An ornate foreign consulate, practically a palace. The PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, flanked by advisors and security, walks briskly toward a giant staircase. The air is TENSE. The moment big. Down the steps comes an ARAB KING - robust, wearing a keffiyeh, glasses - with his own entourage. The parties meet in the center. An uneasy peace as they shake hands. As the Arab begins to speak in his native tongue, we see a young translator (who we'll come to know as JOE BARNES) edge close to the President's side. He's focused, listening. His eyes squint. This is his world now.

As the King speaks, Barnes leans toward the President's ear, WHISPERING. The President nods intensely as we cut to:

INT. THE CONSULATE - PRESS CONFERENCE - LATER

POTUS and the King stand at side-by-side podiums. Tension.

POTUS

Ladies and Gentlemen... we have a deal.

The room ERUPTS in cheers. The President, though, raises his hand to quiet the crowd.

POTUS (CONT'D)

Thank you. But I *cannot* take credit for this historic moment.

GASPS from the gathered press.

POTUS (CONT'D)

Frankly, it was only through the tireless work and talent of my interpreter, *Joe Barnes*.

The room erupts again - flash around the globe to cheering crowds huddled around TVs: COLLEGE KIDS in a dorm; INTELLECTUALS in a cafe; desert GUERRILLA FIGHTERS in the back of a Toyota pick-up with an anti-aircraft gun; NORAD where a SOLDIER pulls his hand away from the "Launch" button -

ARAB KING

Totally. I agree. It was all Joe. He is the man.

POTUS signals Joe to join him on stage. Joe waves to the crowd, smiles modestly and mouths "you're welcome."

POTUS

(To Joe, out of mic range)
Great work, young man.
(MORE)

POTUS (CONT'D)
 You know, the First Lady and I
 would be honored if you and your
 girlfriend would join us aboard Air
 Force One tonight.

POTUS points to a stunning woman at the back of the room.

POTUS (CONT'D)
 That's your girlfriend, right?

JOE
 (Smiling)
Fiance, Mr. President.

POTUS
 Goddamn, son. Nice work. I hear
 she's a bikini model, too.

JOE
 And a Rhodes Scholar, sir.

POTUS
 Joe, you ol' dog...

...SUDDENLY THE PRESIDENT'S WORDS CHANGE INTO ANOTHER
 LANGUAGE. AND THE VOICE OF AN OLD WOMAN. SPECIFICALLY...

INT. SMALL CLAIMS COURT - LOS ANGELES COUNTY - DAY

...An old Korean woman, MRS. CHUNG, who yells emphatically at
 Joe - now dressed in shirtsleeves and a brown tie - who snaps
 out of his daydream. This is our guy, JOE BARNES, 26, a
 bookish, unassuming interpreter. She stands with her cheap
 lawyer, next to a sleazy dude and his even-cheaper lawyer.

JOE
 Your honor, Mrs. Chung insists the
 mink was damaged when he brought it
 in and his claim check released her
 of all liability.

Gavel drop, find in favor of Mrs. Chung. She smiles at Joe.

MRS. CHUNG
 (In Korean)
*You're Korean is very good, young
 man. Thank you for your help. Come
 see me and I'll make you the best
 Kim-chi you've ever had.*

JOE
 Thank you, Mrs. Chung, but the part-
 time translators aren't supposed to
 fraternize with the litigants.

EXT. SMALL CLAIMS COURT - LATER

Joe sits on a bench, eating his brown-bagged lunch. His mood brightens as he answers a FACETIME CALL from BRITT - 25, more ordinary here. He starts to walk as he answers.

JOE

Hey you! How's the packing going?

BRITT

It's good. Would you mind if I bring your iPad with me?

JOE

To Costa Rica for eight months?

BRITT

Please? I want to put some games on it for the orphans. Ashley and Kyle are bringing theirs.

JOE

(smitten)

Look at you. Those'll be some lucky orphans having you around. It'll be like they have parents... almost.

Suddenly JAMISON RODNEY, 45, handsome, pops his head into Britt's end of the facetime.

RODNEY

Hi Joe!

JOE

Oh, Professor Rodney is there too, cool! Hi!

RODNEY

Thanks for letting me borrow her. She's going to change the world.

BRITT

Jamison, stop.

Rodney smiles and exits frame.

JOE

And he let's you call him 'Jamison' now? How awesome is that?!

BRITT

Joe, we're all adults.

JOE

Totally. Hey, my career advisor called. She wants me to come to her office today. Fingers crossed!

BRITT

Finally.

JOE

Um, yeah, so don't forget Friday night. Your candlelit going-away dinner.

BRITT

I won't. Okay, have to run. Bring me your iPad.

She's gone before he can say goodbye. He's too crazy about her to notice. He walks on.

INT. DR. DIANNE KERN'S OFFICE - UCLA CAMPUS - DAY

Joe knocks on the door and sheepishly enters.

JOE

Dr. Kern?

He is greeted by DR. DIANNE KERN, 40s, academic (*think Melissa McCarthy*).

DR. KERN

Joe, come in. Sit, sit. How's everything?

JOE

Um, it's, you know. Still looking for something permanent. Student loans are getting a little scary...

DR. KERN

Five years of grad school isn't cheap.

JOE

So I've learned.

DR. KERN

But two masters and a PhD in linguistics? You cannot put a price on the respect that garners you. Are you still living with your parents above the donut shop?

JOE

Yeah.

DR. KERN

Knew it! You smell like donuts.
Always have.

JOE

Sorry. It's my dad's place.

DR. KERN

Stop it. There's worse things to
smell like, believe me. My ex
smelled like a Claim Jumpers. So
listen, we might have something.
How'd you like to work for the *Los
Angeles Dodgers*?

JOE

Um, wow, so much. Yeah. That's...
football? No, hock...

DR. KERN

Baseball. Damn kid. You *really*
don't know sports. Here's the
thing, they've signed some hotshot
Korean player and they need a full-
time interpreter. You, sir, are the
only one I recommended.

JOE

Wow. Thanks! Wait, what about Mike
Park? This sounds perfect for him.

DR. KERN

Oh, I don't think Mike...

JOE

He grew up speaking Korean, he
likes baseball...

DR. KERN

Well, "likes" is a bit strong...

JOE

Didn't he translate for the Korea
team during that tourna...?

DR. KERN

Mike can't do it! Okay? Busted. Of
course I recommended him first. But
he got a job at the Korean Embassy.

JOE
 (Jealous, deflated)
 Oh, that's... awesome. For him.

DR. KERN
 Well, his uncle is very connected,
 so that helped. And before you ask,
 Edwin Yun is unavailable too.

JOE
 Oh, I forgot about Edwin. He's...

DR. KERN
 Addicted to gambling. They won't
 let him anywhere near a pro team.
 That turned up in his background
 check this morning. So you can see
 I'm in a bit of a *pinch* here!

JOE
 I was the third person you
 recommended?

DR. KERN
 Yes! *Third*.
 (Beat)
 So, there's no time for an official
 interview. You're meeting tomorrow
 with the owner and general manager.
 They're bringing you to the airport
 to pick him up. Consider it a
 tryout for the team!

JOE
 A tryout?

KERN
 Does that work for you?

JOE
 Yeah. I was just never very... good
 at tryouts... for teams...

INT. LIMO - THE NEXT MORNING

A nervous Joe sits in an ill-fitting suit with JERRY MCMICHAEL, 75, the bombastic, often unintentionally-racist billionaire owner who sips a morning bourbon, his third wife CAMILLE, 35, and VERONICA MOORE, 30s, the Dodgers' commanding, sharp and ambitious General Manager.

VERONICA
 Flight is showing on time, Jerry.

MCMICHAEL

Better be. Charters his own goddamn
747 on my dime. Balls on this guy.

VERONICA

There'll be a small group of beat
writers. Just the team-friendly
ones. You can say a few words.

MCMICHAEL

(re: Joe)

Fine. Who's this again?

JOE

I'm Joe Bar...

Veronica interrupts, reading from a dossier--

VERONICA

Joseph Richard Barnes. Korean
translator applicant.

MCMICHAEL

Doesn't look Korean.

JOE

No sir, I'm not.

MCMICHAEL

Oh who can tell nowadays? They all
claim to be something don't they?

JOE

I'm not claiming to...

VERONICA

Holds three degrees. Head of his
class at Berkeley. High school
valedictorian.

MCMICHAEL

Jesus kid, like school much?

VERONICA

Played one Little League season,
recording exactly zero hits.
Currently lives above his parents'
donut shop.

CAMILLE

I thought you smelled good.

JOE

I'm sorry, how do you know all that?

VERONICA

This is the big leagues, Barnes. That's how.

(Then)

Here's the deal: We've signed Woojin Kang to a six-year, \$174 million contract. He's a 29-year-old, five-tool outfielder.

JOE

Five-tool?

VERONICA

Means he does it all. Perfectly.

CAMILLE

Like if The Rock was an Asian baseball player.

VERONICA

Kang was born in Korea, spent the last six years dominating in Japan.

MCMICHAEL

Had to pay his Jap team \$15 million just to talk to him. Still stickin' it to us for Hiroshima.

CAMILLE

I miss eating donuts. And fries.

VERONICA

We outbid 11 other clubs for his services. He's a game changer.

CAMILLE

He's never been to America. Isn't that weird? A person who has never been to America? That's weird.

MCMICHAEL

We want you on him like white on rice. Pun intended.

VERONICA

We probably shouldn't use that one.

CAMILLE

There's also brown rice. He could be on him like white on brown rice?

(MORE)

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Which is healthier. But I don't eat that either. Or onion rings.

VERONICA

This is not just translating, Barnes. It's a babysitting gig. We need team eyes on Kang at all times, so you'll be living with him. That's non-negotiable.

JOE

So, he doesn't speak any English?

VERONICA

That's why we need you, C-3PO.

The limo pulls to a stop.

EXT. AIRPORT CURB - CONTINUOUS

Joe awkwardly follows them out of the limo. As McMichael and Camille go ahead, Veronica grabs Joe's arm. Deadly serious.

VERONICA

Barnes, let's get something straight. I'm the first woman General Manager in baseball history. I've been on the cover of Sports Illustrated and Forbes, know why? Because I've got balls the size of fucking coconuts. And I've bet both those giant, hairy coconut balls that Woo-jin Kang gets this team a World Series Championship.

JOE

(Intimidated and confused)
I'm totally rooting for that.

VERONICA

Shut up. Kang's a wild card. Sometimes surrounds himself with the wrong element. You understand what I'm getting at?

JOE

That you... identified someone with a history of questionable decision-making and gave him 174 million dollars?

VERONICA

We sell a wholesome family product you smartass little shit.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Last season our catcher groped a
sideline reporter on live TV and
our shortstop got a DUI in a stolen
taco truck. I don't need more TMZ.
That means the *team's* message gets
out at all times. Don't fuck it up.
And put these on. You look like
you're at your grandma's funeral.

She throws Joe a team polo shirt and khakis and walks on.

INT. AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER

Joe emerges from a bathroom, nervous. His suit and slacks now
in his arms as he wears team-issued polo and khakis.

VERONICA

What'd you take a dump? Let's go.

They walk briskly to the gate, where McMichael charms a small
gathering of writers. Just the hard-core LA beat guys, no TV
cameras, not a press conference.

MCMICHAEL

...he'd better be good, cost me
almost as much my first divorce!

The writers laugh, but their collective attention shifts as:

From the gate emerges WOO-JIN KANG, Korean baseball megastar,
equal parts David Beckham, Kenny Powers and Elvis. He's
flanked by TWO LARGE BODYGUARDS in suits & shades. Kang is a
presence. The world feels slo-mo as Joe takes him in: custom
Kiton suit; Luxioriator sunglasses; Cartier watch; alligator
shoes. This brash, electric jock demigod might as well be an
alien to Joe.

McMichael and Veronica smile big and scurry to greet Kang.

VERONICA

(Quietly, to Joe)
You're on.

Joe shuffles next to McMichael - reminiscent of his daydream,
only 100x more clumsy - as he does his wallet falls from the
pants he's holding and onto the floor. He awkwardly picks it
up. Tossing his suit onto a nearby seat. Kang watches Joe,
then looks to McMichael and Veronica. [NOTE: All Korean
language dialogue appears in *italics*. Subtitles.]

KANG

Who the fuck is this?

McMichael and Veronica just smile. Clueless. Turn to Joe.

JOE

Oh, he, um, wants to know who I am.

MCMICHAEL

(Through a forced smile)
Then tell him.

JOE

Um, I'm Joe Barnes. I'm the translator. I'm here to help you communicate.

Kang takes in Joe for a beat. Alright.

MCMICHAEL

Woo-jin Kang, I want to officially welcome you to the LA Dodgers.

Joe translates. Kang nods.

VERONICA

You're not obligated to say anything until tomorrow's press conference, but if you'd like to make a brief statement to the reporters, you can.

Joe translates.

KANG

Yeah, cool. Alright.
(He turns to the beat writers)
It's an honor to be here...

He pauses, turns to Joe, who translates. That wasn't so hard.

KANG (CONT'D)

I can't wait to hit all your home runs and bang all that sweet pink American pussy. All of it.

He pauses, smiles and turns to Joe, who's now stunned. Joe feels Veronica's eyes on him.

JOE

(Shocked, completely improvising)
Um... I'm really looking forward to... hitting many home runs and... cats. I love cats. All cats. And look forward to... getting involved in a cat rescue charity.

Kang stares at him, then continues.

KANG

*I also want to meet a Mexican.
Never seen one. They're like your
slaves, right? I should also get
some bushy Mexican pussy while I'm
here, too.*

Joe is so nervous he could pass out.

JOE

*I'm... also quite eager to try some
of Los Angeles's Mexican cuisine.
And I'm passionate about Mexican
cats, also. They're so... furry.*

KANG

*You jock-sniffing turds have any
questions?*

JOE

Please no questions. Thank you.

As flashbulbs snap Kang looks suspiciously at Joe, McMichael jumps in for a posed handshake.

VERONICA

(To reporters)

Okay, guys, we'll see you tomorrow.

The reporters scatter.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

*Time to go see where you guys will
be living.*

MCMICHAEL

*Let the translator kid ride with
Kang. Give them a chance to get to
know each other.*

Kang smiles. Joe gulps.

END ACT ONE.

ACT TWOINT. LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Joe sits next to Kang, sweating bullets. The bodyguards sit opposite them like a scary Korean secret service. Kang lights a cigarette.

JOE

Mr. Kang, in America, certain terms are considered to be offensive, for example...

Until he is cut off...

KANG

(PERFECT ENGLISH)

Relax Krispy Kreme. I make \$27 million a year, that means I don't give a shit.

JOE

(Mouth agape)

You... wait... you speak English?!

KANG

Better than your Korean.

JOE

(Mouth considerably more agape)

For your information, Mr. Kang, I've visited Korea four times and my Korean has been called 'flawless' by some of the most well-respected scholars in Korea.

KANG

They were lying to make you feel good.

Joe is flustered, disappointed. Then, realizing.

JOE

(Re: the bodyguards)

So, you all speak English?

KANG

No. They think learning another language is for pussies.

JOE

(sotto)

Ah. They sound like my dad.

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

(Then)

Wait, I'm sorry, why do you need a translator?

KANG

Don't.

JOE

(Deflating)

Well, that's fantastic.

KANG

But I want one. Let me tell you what I've learned being the greatest fucking baseball player that Asia and probably the universe has ever seen: interviews are a hassle. They stand firmly in the way of what I want to do.

JOE

And what is that?

KANG

Help the homeless.

JOE

Wow, you really want to--?

KANG

No. I want to fucking party.

JOE

Ah.

KANG

And my life is a lot easier if the team and the backstabbing media don't think I understand them. So as far as anyone knows, I don't speak a motherfucking syllable of your motherfucking language, got it?

JOE

Who taught you English, Samuel L. Jackson?

(then)

This is so strange. And duplicitous. So you're just lying to everyone?

KANG

Actually you'll be the one lying.

JOE
I... can't be a part of this.

KANG
Fine.

They stare out their respective windows for a beat.

KANG (CONT'D)
But it's a real shame, Joe Barnes
of 614 West Plymouth Avenue, I
thought we were gonna be BFFs.

JOE
How do you know where I live?

KANG
I saw your ID when you dropped your
wallet. And judging by that suit
you left at the airport I'd guess
it's mommy and daddy's address.

JOE
My suit. Dammit! Wait, my wallet
was on the floor for like two
seconds, how did you read my ID?

KANG
I can count the seams on a 92-mile-
an-hour slider before I jack it
into the 3rd deck. I don't miss
much.

JOE
I have no idea what any of that
means.

Kang laughs. The limo pulls to a stop.

KANG
Even better. Let's go. We're here.

Kang climbs out, smoothly. A beat later, a flustered Joe
awkwardly follows.

CUT TO:

INT. PENTHOUSE CONDO - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator doors open and they step into a SPRAWLING SUITE -
their new home. McMichael, Camille, and Veronica already
there. Kang's bodyguards brings up his stuff.

VERONICA,
So Kang, what do you think?

EVERYONE waits for Joe to translate, including Kang...

JOE
Oh, right, sorry.
(Then, to Kang)
*I could say absolutely anything
right now and they have no idea.*

KANG
*That's right. How much you wanna
bet I can bang Camille before they
leave here?*

JOE
He loves it.

Kang looks around the place as Veronica takes Joe aside.

VERONICA
Remember Barnes, I'm holding you
personally responsible for his
behavior.

JOE
Sure, that makes sense.

VERONICA
(Softening, selling)
Listen, I'm aware this isn't your
thing. But Jerry McMichael is very
connected. Play this right? Maybe
he puts in a word with the State
Department. Down the line gets you
an embassy gig. You follow me?

JOE
(This is interesting)
Yeah. Okay.

VERONICA
Make us look good, everybody wins.

MCMICHAEL
Alright, tell him to enjoy the
views. We've got that thing to get
to. At the place.

Veronica, McMichael and Camille exit.

KANG
Call the car, time to go out.

JOE
 (to himself)
 Oh crap.

EXT. DARK INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - NIGHT

The limo pulls to a stop in a gritty, isolated part of town. Kang's bodyguards open the door for a nervous Joe.

JOE
 Um, where are we?

KANG
 (climbing out)
 One of my Yakuza friends told me about this spot.

JOE
 Yakuza? As in Japanese mafia?

Joe spots a LARGE ASIAN BOUNCER in a dimly-lit doorway.

JOE (CONT'D)
 So it's like a speakeasy theme restaurant? Should I Yelp it?

EXT. INDUSTRIAL WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Kang's bodyguards confer with the bouncers, who open the door to what appears to be an empty warehouse. Kang confidently follows them in, Joe can't help but notice their MACHINE GUNS as they pass through another door, down some steps into...

INT. UNDERGROUND NIGHTCLUB / CASINO - CONTINUOUS

A dark, underground club. Smoke and K-Pop fill the air as women dance on risers high above the packed dance floor. Across the industrial space, seedy high-rollers surround craps and roulette tables. The place is peppered with pro athletes, Asian millionaires and Arab royalty looking to party. Joe - in his polo and khakis - stands out like a sore thumb. Kang smiles a wicked smile.

JOE
 It's like a K-Pop version of The Hunger Games. What is this place?

KANG
 A playground for important people.

JOE
 Is that Ann Curry?!

KANG

Hope not. I never called her back.

JOE

So, hey we should probably keep a low-profile, right? Maybe just get some appetizers, call it a night?

Two smiling cocktail waitresses approach the guys, handing them shots of Soju, encouraging them to drink.

WAITRESS #1

Cumbai!!

Kang smiles, takes a shot. CUMBAI! Joe reluctantly does the same, nearly choking. Kang grabs two more as he heads in...

KANG

Joe Barnes, it's my first night in America. I'm going to take this opportunity to break some of your laws.

Crash into video-style montage of the night that ensues...

- Kang pours bottles of champagne into the glasses of fans / party people on the dance floor (Joe nervously sips a sprite)

- Kang sits in a VIP booth surrounded by girls. They dance and preen in hopes of getting his attention. He pets a BABY WHITE TIGER on his lap. (Joe, overcome by cat allergy symptoms, struggles to open a Benadryl packet)

- Kang in the bathroom, cigarette in his mouth, fucking a party girl from behind. (Joe walks in on them accidentally, quickly walking back out. He stops a random dude about to go in, "Um, it's occupied")

- Kang confidently pushes a stack of chips onto a red square at the roulette table. Nods of respect from the underworld high-rollers. (Joe trapped against the wall by a drunk and aggressive party girl, she's covered in glitter and neon make-up, which is smearing on Joe, she giggles "you smell like donuts")

- Kang rolls craps and wins, collects a wad of bills surrounded by fans, quickly makes it rain \$100 bills. (Joe alone in the VIP booth as the baby tiger - who might be playing, might not be - has him cornered. He fails to get anyone's attention)

END MONTAGE.

INT. UNDERGROUND NIGHTCLUB - LATER

An exhausted Joe stands next to Kang at the bar.

JOE
You know, it's getting pretty
late...

DRUNK FAN (O.S.)
KANG!!

A hammered Korean dude, 20s, approaches Kang, screaming.

DRUNK FAN (CONT'D)
*Woo-jin Kang! Fuck yeah! You're the
best!*

KANG
(Blowing him off)
Thanks.

The fan puts his arm around Kang. The bodyguards stand, but Kang shakes them off.

DRUNK FAN
*The best! And the worst. I bet big
money on you in the Japan Series...*

The fan's attitude changing. Sinister. Kang senses it.

DRUNK FAN (CONT'D)
*And you lost. You lost
motherfucker. You owe me!*

The fan reaches for a knife, but as he pulls it, both bodyguards jump in. One grabs his arm, **BREAKING IT IN HALF**, jamming the blade through his hand, sticking it to the bar. He screams as the other bodyguard head-butts him, knocking him out cold and **COVERING** a terrified Joe in blood splatter.

KANG
(To Joe, calmly)
I could use a sauna.

END ACT TWO.

ACT THREEINT. KOREAN SPA - KOREATOWN - LATER

A naked Kang sits with a shell-shocked and uncomfortable Joe, wearing only humidity-soaked briefs. His face still with remnants of blood, glitter and neon make-up. The naked bodyguards sit nearby.

KANG

I dig America. The women here are very respectful. Just not of themselves.

JOE

Kang, we have a press conference in six hours. If Veronica finds out what we did tonight I'm fired. First day. Fired.

KANG

What makes you think I've decided you can have the job?

JOE

What?

KANG

Why is your underwear on?

JOE

Excuse me?

KANG

Take them off.

JOE

I'm not really comf...

KANG

Is there a problem?

Joe looks at the bodyguards, who glare at him. He slowly stands and awkwardly removes his briefs. He closes his eyes and takes a breath, maybe about to cry.

KANG (CONT'D)

What the fuck is the matter?

JOE

I don't know what's happening...

KANG

Barnes, relax, I'm not your fucking priest. This is a spa. It's where we do business. Where we learn if we can trust each other. I see your dick, you see my dick...

(re: bodyguards)

We both see their dicks, they see our dicks.

JOE

I get it, we all have dicks.

KANG

And nothing to hide. If this is gonna work I have to trust you.

JOE

Well, locally, our trust exercises don't feature quite as many dicks.

KANG

You need to get yours wet Joe Barnes.

JOE

Excuse me?

KANG

When's the last time you got some?

JOE

Some what?

KANG

Jesus, you're not a virgin are you?

JOE

No! No, for your information, I have a serious girlfriend and our intimacy is none of your business.

KANG

Tell me about her.

JOE

Her name is Britt. And she's amazing.

(waxing poetic)

We met in grad school. On our first date we went to a Portuguese art exhibit and took turns revealing facts about each other in all the different languages we spoke.

He pauses for effect.

KANG

Uh huh.

JOE

A lot of people find that really interesting and romantic.

KANG

Would have been interesting and romantic if she let you eat her out in the parking lot.

JOE

Nice to see your English includes our more charming colloquialisms. Anyway, in two days she goes to Costa Rica to build an orphanage with our old professor.

KANG

Is the professor a dude?

JOE

Yes.

KANG

He's banging her.

JOE

I beg your pardon?

KANG

Don't be a chump Joe Barnes.

JOE

Okay, first, they're not going alone. There's three other people, including our friend Evan, who is gay and totally has my back. Second: you think that didn't occur to me? I'm not an imbecile. I know she's a beautiful woman and Professor Rodney has always taken an interest in her. But it's called trust. Britt and I are in love and we trust each other.

KANG

Good to see you're also fluent in chump, because that is straight chump-speak.

JOE

Maybe in the sexist culture you're from women are just subservient objects to any man they're with. But American girls are different.

KANG

I've been here six hours, I've fucked three of them. They aren't that different.

JOE

Nevertheless. I planned this big dinner for us tomorrow.

KANG

To tell her you're going to bone other chicks while she's gone?

JOE

To propose.

Joe pulls a ring from a pocket of the soaked khakis sitting next to him. He hands it to Kang, who looks at the tiny rock.

KANG

This looks like a regular diamond took a shit.

JOE

It's called a marquise cut.

KANG

Has she somehow offended you?

JOE

(grabbing it back)

Hey, not all of us have eight-figure contracts.

KANG

Listen, if there's one thing I've learned as the greatest lover in Asia and probably the universe, it's never tie yourself down to a girl who is moving somewhere without wi-fi. Especially with another dude.

JOE

I love her.

KANG

Alright. Then what's the hold up?

JOE
What do you mean?

KANG
You love her. You bought her a half-diamond ring. Don't be a pussy. Ask her right now.

JOE
It's 6:20 in the morning.

KANG
Hey, can't hit a grand slam if you stand there taking pitches, hoping for a walk. Swing bro. Grip it and rip it. You love her right?

Joe suddenly feels excited.

JOE
Of course I do... okay, okay yeah!

KANG
Let's get you engaged.

INT. LIMO - DAWN - LATER

Joe, slightly cleaned-up, holds flowers and the ring box.

KANG
Women love spontaneous. Proposal at sunrise. You got this.

JOE
You think she'll say yes?

KANG
Of course, it'll just be hard to understand her because she'll already be blowing you.

JOE
Okay, I don't... I mean, let's not... Anyway, here I go!

Joe excitedly hops out.

EXT. BRITT'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Joe knocks. Newly confident and ready. A startled Britt answers the door but doesn't want to let him in.

BRITT

Joe, what are you doing here? I thought we're having dinn-- Jesus, have you been up all night?

JOE

Britt, I couldn't wait. I love you, and I don't want another day to begin without...

He quickly realizes she's wearing a man's dress shirt.

JOE (CONT'D)

...that shirt is super big on you.

BRITT

Oh, Joe... shit.

Professor Rodney, shirtless, comes to the door. The blood leaves Joe's face. Rodney's an arrogant prick.

RODNEY

Joe, good morning. We were just talking about you.

Joe is stunned. Devastated. Crushed.

JOE

Professor Rodney..?

BRITT

Joe, it's not a big...

JOE

You... you... can't take my iPad.

Joe stumbles as he backs away. He can barely speak.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

A shell-shocked Joe emerges, drops the flowers in the cart of a passing homeless woman. Kang rolls down the window. WTF?

JOE

I gotta go.

Joe starts walking, the limo inches with him.

KANG

Hey what the hell happened?

JOE

(Mumbling)
You were right.

KANG

What?

JOE

You were right, okay! She was with him. They were together. Like they slept together. I'm gonna puke.

KANG

Hey you're welcome!

JOE

For what? Putting me in the most humiliating position of my life? Swing for the fences! Grip it and rip it! I hate baseball!

KANG

I just saved you eight months of celibacy during your sexual prime, you ungrateful dick. She's in the jungle having orphanage orgies and you're sitting on your hands waiting for her.

Beat. Joe stops. Limo stops.

JOE

(Sickened)
Orphanage orgies?

KANG

What?

JOE

You're talking about kids, man.

KANG

Orphans are children? Oh fuck! English is not my first language bro! I thought you said Whorephanage, like a whore house.

JOE

Why would anyone go to Costa Rica to build a whore house?!

KANG

I found it strange too!

JOE

Forget it.

Joe walks on. Limo inching with him.

KANG
I'm your freaking Guardian Asian.

The limo window goes up. Beat. Joe crushed. The window comes back down. Kang now holds an UZI, which he extends towards Joe, who mopes on, not looking.

KANG (CONT'D)
Here.

Joe turns, sees the gun, jumps.

JOE
What the heck?!

KANG
Untraceable. Go kill that motherfucker.

JOE
No! No, Kang, are you...

Joe's phone rings.

JOE (CONT'D)
Oh shit! It's Veronica Moore.

He answers. Intercut the call, Veronica in her office.

VERONICA
Where the hell are you?!

JOE
Oh hey Veronica! You're a morning person. Um, we are... just getting some breakfast.

VERONICA
Listen smegma, I know Kang never came home last night. If you got so much as a parking ticket...

Joe glances at Kang who has a cigarette in his mouth and examines the uzi.

JOE
No tickets! Just a quiet evening. Kang was jetlagged so we saw some... sights.

VERONICA

Well, just so we're on the same page, if he's not at the press conference at eleven sharp, I will cut out your eight-language tongue and wipe my ass with it.

Joe shudders at that thought. Click. Veronica is gone.

JOE

So Kang, I'm not gonna kill anyone, okay? And you should probably put away the machine gun.

KANG

Relax. I wasn't going to let you do it. Just giving you perspective.

JOE

Perspective?

KANG

So your girl is a huge skank? Trust me, someday you are gonna look back on this and beat off so hard.

JOE

Jesus Christ. Look, thanks for helping me find perspective. But this is California. Brandishing a firearm here is a felony.

KANG

What are you the gun police? It's not even loaded...

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!!!! The uzi, which Kang holds quite casually, accidentally goes off in his hand, shredding a nearby newspaper box. The limo door pops open and the two dive in. Kang laughs. Joe terrified.

KANG (CONT'D)

Oh snap. I shot the shit out of that box.

JOE

You said it wasn't loaded! We're going to jail!

KANG

(Looking out the back window)

Relax. There's nobody even there. Everybody thinks it was fireworks.

JOE
Fireworks? At 7:15 in the morning?!

KANG
Is that not a thing here?

JOE
(Gathering himself)
Okay, Kang, 'illegal discharge of a gun' charges aside, you did help me avoid a big mistake, and as much as it hurts, I appreciate it. So maybe I can help you too. At this press conference let's just keep it cool.

KANG
What's that supposed to mean?

JOE
It means, it's probably best for everyone if we keep it short and sweet and about baseball. Okay? You have to trust me.

Off Kang's uncertain look...

JOE (CONT'D)
Now I'm just gonna puke for the next thirty to forty minutes.

Joe opens his window and sticks out his head.

INT. LA DODGERS MEDIA ROOM - PRESS CONFERENCE - LATER

To the side of the dais, Kang gets touch-ups from a stylist as Joe stands next to Veronica. Hordes of media file in.

VERONICA
Any more all-nighters Barnes and I will use my high heel to insert a GPS right up your... Megan!

Veronica's tone changes instantly as MEGAN MCMICHAEL, 26, [*think Jane Levy*] walks up. She's pretty, polished, dynamic. Joe is struck by her. She doesn't notice him.

MEGAN
Veronica. We ready?

VERONICA
The floor is yours, ma'am.

Megan takes the podium to welcome the press.

JOE
 (to Veronica)
 Um, who is that?

VERONICA
 Megan McMichael. Head of community
 relations.

JOE
 Jerry's daughter?

VERONICA
 The only one of his six children
 not currently in rehab. She will
 own this team one day.

Joe just stares for a beat. She may be important later.

MEGAN
 ...so please give a warm Los
 Angeles welcome to the newest
 Dodger, Woo-jin Kang.

Kang takes the stage with Joe trailing. Quick cut sequence as they go through the motions of the press conference. Joe interprets sports cliches like "I'm thrilled to be here" / "Anything I can do to help the team." Kang poses with his new #69 jersey. Veronica is pleased.

INT. DODGERS LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Kang sits alone by his new locker, gripping a bat. LA jersey buttoned over a shirt and tie. Contemplative. Joe approaches.

JOE
 Car's waiting, you ready to go?

No reply.

JOE (CONT'D)
 Something wrong, Kang?

KANG
 No. My life is amazing. I'm rich as
 fuck. I get all the pussy I want.
 Some that I even don't want, but
 I'm not passing that shit up...

Joe not sure where this is going.

KANG (CONT'D)
 But, sometimes I still feel,
 kinda... like shit, you know?

JOE
(figure of speech)
Diamond shoes are too tight?

Kang looks at his feet. He's wearing actual diamond shoes.

KANG
No. They fit great. Had them custom fitted in Tokyo. They're comfortable as fuck.

JOE
It's a figure of... nevermind.

KANG
That fucker was right.

JOE
Who?

KANG
In the club. That heckler. The Japan Series. I struck out to end it. One run down. Man on third. I struck out.

JOE
Well we all mess up.

KANG
They wouldn't let me forget that shit. Never would.

JOE
Wait, is that why you're here?

KANG
I'm gonna show them that I can hit against the best in the world. In Major League Motherfucking Baseball. Fuck them.

JOE
You didn't want to come here, did you?

KANG
America is cool, but it's different.

JOE
Kang, I think you're homesick.

KANG

Homesick is for pussies. I'm not homesick. I'm just sad because I'm not where I usually am or around things that are familiar.

JOE

Right. Well... wait a minute.

EXT. HAI FASHION CLEANERS - CRAPPY STRIP MALL - EVENING

Establishing shot of a small, dingy dry cleaning business.

INT. HAI FASHION CLEANERS - CONTINUOUS

Behind rows of plastic-covered clothing, Kang and Joe sit in a small kitchen with Mrs. Chung - the woman from court - eating homemade delicacies. An old TV plays the Korean station. She goes to the stove, Kang and Joe share a moment.

JOE

This better?

KANG

Thanks Joe Barnes.

JOE

I should probably be thanking you.

KANG

Yeah, no shit.

JOE

Hey, where are your bodyguards?

KANG

Running an errand.

INT. UNIVERSITY OFFICES - HALLWAY - EVENING

The bodyguards match a name on a piece of paper to the one on the door. "Jamison Rodney." They knock. Rodney opens.

RODNEY

Can I help you guys?

They smile, push him in and shut the door behind them.

INT. HAI FASHION CLEANERS - CONTINUOUS

Kang smiles knowingly. Joe, oblivious, looks at the TV, where the Korean News covers a POLITICAL PRESS CONFERENCE. Tight on Joe's face, then...

INT. THE CONSULATE - PRESS CONFERENCE

Back in Joe's daydream, identical to the beginning, only this time, POTUS stands at one podium, flanked by Joe...

POTUS

Ladies and gentleman, we have a
peace deal!

KANG (O.S.)

Fuck that.

...and at the other podium stands Kang, sunglasses, smirk, cigarette. Joe looks over at him, what are you doing here??

KANG (CONT'D)

Peace is for pussies.

Cheers from the imagined room, Joe just looks around, what is happening? Kang stands at the podium, looking at Joe. Smoke slithers perfectly around his face and he smiles as if he knows something the rest of us don't.

END OF PILOT