

# The Contender

By  
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"To Get to power you need to display absolute pettiness. To Exercise power you need to show true greatness. Such pettiness and such greatness are rarely found in one human being."-

Napoleon Bonaparte

EXT. APACHAWAY RIVER. DAWN

Two Fishermen, JACK HATHAWAY and PAUL SMITH, sit in a small rowboat on the Apachaway River. It is a beautiful sight, two men enjoying the leisure life so rarely gives us. Above them is a lonely bridge that probably has not seen a car pass over it in years. As we slowly move in, we pick up the conversation.

HATHAWAY

... and it's got to be a foreigner?

PAUL

That's the drill.

HATHAWAY

And he can be living or dead, you said?

(beat)

What have you been getting on this question?

PAUL

That'd be cheating, sir. The answer might influence you.

~~We notice something odd. Hathaway is dressed like a guy "gone fishing". Smith, however, is not. Yes, he holds a rod in his hand, but he is wearing a a tie and dress pants.~~

HATHAWAY

I assume you've gotten a lot of Churchill and Mandela and I guess maybe DeGaulle... Geez, whose political career would I... You know, I think I'd go... you know who I'd go with? I'd go with Anwar Sadat.

PAUL

Anwar Sadat?

HATHAWAY

The Egyptian president.

PAUL

Right. No, I know. Well, that's a first. Sadat's a first. Never heard that one.

HATHAWAY

Yeah, it would be Sadat. Talk about standing up to political and popular pressure. I'd like to think that I have those kind of balls. There was one fella who didn't die in vain, I'll tell you that. He died for peace.

And now the CAMERA catches just a GLIMPSE of a TAPE RECORDER on Paul's lap, which is rolling....

PAUL

Are there any ideas that you'd die for?

HATHAWAY

Obviously, I'd die for this country. I served, you know, I was too young for Vietnam, but I was in Desert Storm.

\*  
\*

Paul nods. He knows. Everybody knows. Now We hear a FAR-OFF RUMBLING .... maybe a car approaching.

HATHAWAY

There wasn't a lot of shit to be in over there, but when there was, I was in it.

PAUL

Right. The Bronze Star and... What I meant was... would you take a bullet to advance abortion rights? The flat tax? Things that you have been behind for years.

Now, the sound is LOUDER and, yes, it is a car, and it seems to be a car out of control. Paul doesn't seem to notice.

PAUL (cont'd)

Would you die to advance a social agenda?

HATHAWAY

You mean like Civil rights or-

\*  
\*

Hathaway notices THE SOUND, though. He arches his head to look, but the boat is under the bridge and he can't get a real view.

HATHAWAY

Jesus...

The car is getting closer.

PAUL

Sounds like a drunk.

Now- SMASH!!!!!!!

ANGLE- BEHIND THE BOAT

As we see a PONTIAC dive headfirst into the river, almost perpendicular, in fact. A huge splash rocks the boat.

The two men steady themselves as the car instantly SINKS. Before Paul can do a thing, Hathaway is diving into the river. Paul pulls out a cell phone.

PAUL  
(in a panic)  
Yes... A car has just driven into a river

Paul Spins around.

PAUL (cont'd)  
We're at this bridge at this... this river,  
I don't know the name... can't you just  
trace this call?

Hathaway pops up, gasping for air. He looks around in a panic and then goes down again. The CAMERA stays on the water.

PAUL (OS)  
Smith...  
(beat)  
S-M-I-T-H.

2 INT. TV STATION. NIGHT

2

\*

Hathaway waits to go on the air. Standing next to him is Wilkie and his younger wife FIONA. In the b.g., the Anchor gets ready.

\*

HATHAWAY  
I don't know about this, Fiona.

FIONA  
Last night, Jimmy came home and told me that Mrs. Green told the class that it didn't matter if the Governor was Republican or Democrat, because on this day, Governor Jack Hathaway was a hero. Plain and simple.

WILKIE  
Governor, sir, when you go out there...  
Excuse me, Governor?  
(Hathaway turns to him)  
Look, sir, bottom line- you put your ass  
out there. You have this guy from the Post-

HATHAWAY  
Paul Smith

WILKIE  
...Paul Smith describing what you did as if  
you should get the Medal of Honor.

HATHAWAY

But that isn't the reality. Is it? She died, right? In the end, that's the reality.

From behind them, the Anchorman has started to go on the air.

WILKIE

Governor, there is one reality. The people have now given you Reagan-like approval numbers. Last week you're in the fifties now you're eighty-two.

FIONA

She died. That was a tragedy. You couldn't save her. But they couldn't save the Alamo, either. But everybody who died there was a hero. The American people need heroes as much as they do leaders, and now you can give them both.

SHOW PRODUCER

Governor, sir, we're going to need you in studio.

HATHAWAY

Sure, sure...

Fiona and Wilkie begin to back off.

WILKIE

Show your remorse. But don't be broken. You're a national leader. Think that way.

Hathaway nods as he walks out.

FIONA

Are you sure Bert's with us?

WILKIE

Bert has always been with us.

Behind the glass, Hathaway takes his seat, puts on his headphones.

FIONA

They're all going to be with us now.

TALK SHOW HOST

He has long been considered at the top of President Evans' list to fill the vacancy left by the death of the Vice-President almost three weeks ago.

But after the heroics that have become the stuff of national legend in these past few days, Governor Hathaway has emerged as the nation's choice to take on the post of heir apparant to the Presidency... Governor Hathaway, thank you for joining us.

HATHAWAY

Thank you, Bert.

TALK SHOW HOST

It has been, to say the least, an incredible week for you...

3 OMIT

3

\*

4 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE. EARLY EVENING.

4

We are tight on Hathaway's face. His head is lowered. At first, we hear the voice of PRESIDENT JACKSON EVANS (O.S.). The CAMERA pulls back to reveal where we are. The Oval office. Hathaway is on a couch. The President is in an armchair close to him. Standing behind Hathaway is CHIEF OF STAFF KERMIT F. NEWMAN.

PRESIDENT EVANS

It's a nasty bit of business what happened on that river. Nasty. It's a damn shame you were the unlucky bastard in that spot.

President Evans pulls out a cigarette.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

(about his cigarettes)

Six and a half years in the White House and the press still hasn't gotten wind of these little bastards.

Hathaway nods. He smiles gently.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Pretty heroic what you tried. Just like everybody's saying. Pure Audie Murphy.

HATHAWAY

Thank you. Thank you. I just wish that...

PRESIDENT EVANS

Don't know if it was me, I would've dove in there. I suppose I might have, but, honestly, I just don't know. Well, at least, for once, the media's turning one of us into a hero.

(beat)  
What was it like?

HATHAWAY

It was... I guess it was cold, sir.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Sure. This time of year. You were risking your life for that young lady. The cold alone could've snapped you like a twig.

HATHAWAY

I swam and... and... I got to the car. It was so dark, but the headlights were on and so were the interior lights. So... I got there... and the car was teetering on some kind of underwater ledge.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Teetering, huh?

HATHAWAY

Back and forth. I saw her plain as day. Very pretty. Young. I looked into her eyes. I saw true terror. She was basically being buried alive.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Wow.

HATHAWAY

She's looking up to me. At me. She's got this look of helplessness. The air bag had inflated. She was trapped. Couldn't move. I started pulling and pulling.

(bowing his head)

I needed air. I couldn't...

The President puts his arm around him.

HATHAWAY (cont'd)

By... the time I got back down to the car, she was gone. Her face was frozen in that look. She kept that look of sheer terror right into her death.

PRESIDENT EVANS

You did more than most men would.

HATHAWAY

I wonder. I really do.

PRESIDENT EVANS

I want you to know that I have Sam Friend personally running up the investigation.

HATHAWAY  
Investigation?

PRESIDENT EVANS  
It's just one of these "what if" things. They did an autopsy on the girl, her system was clean as a whistle. The car itself was in perfect condition. There was no reason for that car to have gone over the bridge.

NEWMAN  
Maybe she was dodging a rabbit. Who knows?

PRESIDENT EVANS  
That probably- You know what? That's probably it. But you're a Governor, Jack and we can't ignore the possibility, the possibility mind you, that there was some sort of fucking kamikaze thing going there.

HATHAWAY  
(pops his head up)  
An assassination attempt?

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Just a loose end.

Hathaway nods, lowering his head again, nodding.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Jack, look.  
(long beat)  
It just isn't going to happen.

Hathaway looks up at him, confused.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
I can't nominate you. Can't put you up.

NEWMAN  
We don't need another Chappaquidick, Governor.

HATHAWAY  
Chappa- I tried to save her. Kennedy didn't try. That was the rap on him. But, I tried.

NEWMAN  
You failed, Governor. Nobody's saying it's your fault, but you failed.

PRESIDENT EVANS

It's a bad beat, Jack. You're one of the leaders of this party. A rising star. But you've got a Republican heavy Judiciary and they're not going to give a rat's ass about that. They're not going to care about your years of service or what you've done for education in your state. This would be it. A girl died. And you let it happen.

NEWMAN

This administration needs a smooth confirmation. We've had a rocky time of it with the crime bill and we can't have any more obstacles put in front of us.

Hathaway stands and takes a deep breath...

HATHAWAY

It was good of you to tell me personally.  
(beat)  
And I'm behind whomever you select.

PRESIDENT EVANS

I know that, Jack. You're the future of the Democratic Party and you always will be. \*

NEWMAN

There's a boatload of press out there. I don't think you should avoid them... \*

HATHAWAY

I guess not.

NEWMAN

We can tell the press, I mean, you can tell them and we'll back it up, that you met with the President in order to withdraw your name from consideration. You wanted to concentrate on your Governorship.

HATHAWAY

You'd do that?

PRESIDENT EVANS

You bet.

5 INT. GLENDA'S OFFICE. DAY

5

The Oval office door opens. Newman and Hathaway walk out. Before they part, Hathaway just has to get in his say:

HATHAWAY

This is bullshit, Kermit. I'm the man for the job. I've been the man for for years. And I have a great relationship with Runyon... Look, is there anything you... \*

NEWMAN

Believe me, Jack. I've tried. He's made up his mind. Filling this slot may well be his (softly, almost conspiratorial) ... swan song. He wants to be careful with it. Best not to push it. \*

Hathaway nods. He walks the hallway as if it were a plank. He passes JERRY TOLIVER, Presidential counsel.

NEWMAN

(to Toliver)

Jerry, you wanna come in?

6 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE. EARLY EVENING.

6

President Evans is pouring some tea.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Well, that was as rough as it comes. Never seen anybody look so defeated.

NEWMAN

I thought he was going to cry.

TOLIVER

Morning, sir. Just saw the Governor. He looks like he had the shit kicked out of him.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Yup. Tea?

TOLIVER

Any more caffeine and I'll be voting for the flat tax.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Got this tea from the Greek ambassador. Never really thought of Greece as much of a tea producing country, but Jesus Christ if this isn't the tea to end all teas. Sit...

The two sit down. The President takes his seat.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)  
Well, then... I'd say old Jack Hathaway's  
had a shitty week.

TOLIVER  
So, he's out then? That's solid?

NEWMAN  
That leaves us with Malloy or Hanson.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
It's going to be Hanson. Malloy's out. \*

TOLIVER  
(clearly taken aback)  
Now, Mr. President. As you well-

PRESIDENT EVANS  
It's Hanson.

NEWMAN  
You know my position. I agree with Jerry.  
Hanson may have turncoated our way, but a  
turncoat's a turncoat...

PRESIDENT EVANS  
We have had a vacancy now for three weeks.  
The nation's moved from mourning to anxiety.  
I need a Vice-President. And I need somebody  
who reflects MY politics.

TOLIVER  
Right. So fill it with Frank Malloy.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
He has an inflammation of ambition, that  
one. He won't be doing his job, he'll be  
preparing to do mine. He's not even my  
number two choice. If Hanson doesn't work we  
go back to Hathaway.

TOLIVER  
Sir-

PRESIDENT EVANS  
But Senator Hanson's gonna work. And it is  
the job of you two to get this confirmation  
through. I need to know I can count on you.

NEWMAN  
Of course.

TOLIVER

Hanson is so young.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Okay, look. All this talk about age is going to stop right here. If Quayle can be the Vice-President then ...

(into intercom)

Glenda, I need to reach Senator Hanson. The Senate's in recess so you should try the residence in Ohio and then the one here in town. \*

7 INT. HANSON RESIDNCE/ BEDROOM.

7

WILLIAM HANSON, mid-forties, is making love to his wife, LAINE HANSON, 42, very attractive. Actually, this is more along the lines of torrid sex. The sheets are flying everywhere, the groaning and moaning out of this world. In the b.g., on the television, Hathaway is being interviewed at the White House.

THE PHONE RINGS.

William looks over at the phone. Laine pulls him back. The phone keeps ringing. William looks over again.

WILLIAM

It's line three.

William rolls off of her. Laine has look of pure frustration. She's been here before. William sits on the side of the bed.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

Hanson here... Yes... I'll hold.

William stands up. He's buck naked.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

Mr. President.

William motions excitedly to Laine who is now sitting up.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

Yes sir. Oh, fine, sir. Yes... Yes...  
Yes sir... Very well indeed... Yes. Yes.

Will puts his hand over the receiver and hands it to Laine...

WILLIAM (cont'd)

(whispering)  
It's the President.

Laine sits up in bed and takes the phone.

LAINÉ

Senator Hanson speaking, sir.

8 EXT. HATHAWAY RESIDENCE/ DRIVEWAY. DAY

8

Fiona Hathaway (33) stands in the driveway of the Governor's mansion. She is holding a portable phone, pacing, agitated. Her attention is sparked when she sees a limo pulling in. When the car comes to a stop she makes an instant move to one of the backdoors. When Hathaway gets out she's on him instantly

FIONA

That's what the prick said? He said to you,  
"We can't have another Chappaquidick, Jack"?

HATHAWAY

(trying to gain his bearings)  
Well, no, not Evans. That was Newman. Newman  
said the thing about Chappaquidick.

FIONA

What the fuck are they talking about? You  
weren't a fucking drunk who drove your car  
off of a fucking bridge and then abandoned  
some whore you were fucking to die.

HATHAWAY

That's what I said to them. Not like that.  
Not like the way you said it. But still-

FIONA

This is the second time they've fucked us  
over. Did he say who he was going with?

Hathaway shakes his head. He signals for the limo to leave.

FIONA (cont'd)

It's probably Malloy.

HATHAWAY

That's what I'm hearing.

FIONA

Malloy, who isn't worthy of... This isn't  
happening to me. Some fucking "plan."

(beat)

And you're just taking it. Taking it up the  
ass. This was the shot. This was it. The  
forward fucking progress. And now it's gone  
and all you can do is mope and say, "Frank  
Malloy, that's what I'm hearing."

Hathaway raises his head- his first act of some defiance

HATHAWAY

Well, what do you want me to do, Fiona?

Fiona moves in closer. She's not giving an inch.

FIONA

You can begin by giving a fuck. You can return Shelly Runyon's calls.

HATHAWAY

You know, before I left, he said to me, "Jack, you're a party man and who knows what's in the future." That's something, you know. I think he admired my loyalty to him.

FIONA

(slamming the phone into his hand.)

Call Shelly back.

9 OMIT

9 \*

MOTHER

Please, it would make us proud to know that  
it is in the home of a great man.

As the flag is given to Hathaway, the flashes burst with energy.

10 INT. LIMO/ TRAVELLING WASHINGTON DC- DAY

10

William and Laine are in the back of the limo. They both look elegant, William perhaps a bit slicker than she. William is searching through the liquor bottles. Also in the car is LEWIS HOLLIS, a young political fireball, Laine Hanson's Chief of Staff. Hollis notices William is about to pour himself a brandy.

HOLLIS

You don't want to have alcohol on your  
breath when you meet him, Will.

William nods and lays back on the headrest.

WILLIAM

(hardly believing it)  
I'm married to the Vice-President.

LAINÉ

I haven't been confirmed yet. In fact, I  
haven't even been asked yet...

WILLIAM

(quickly, to Hollis)  
You know what we have to do pronto? We have  
to start working Runyon. Runyon's going to  
be a problem.

HOLLIS

Runyon? I thought that the Senate advised  
and consented on appointments.

WILLIAM

On everything but the Vice-President. The  
26th ammendment doesn't specify who runs the  
show on the confirmation.

(to Laine)

I guess Runyon lobbied just hard enough to  
get his committee the gig.

HOLLIS

We can speak to his number two, Ted Edwards.  
I go way back with him.

(to Laine)

You look great, Senator. Just great.

(To William)

Doesn't she look great?

11 INT. PRESIDENTIAL BOWLING ALLEY. DAY

11

The CAMERA FOLLOWS a bowling ball, resplendent with the Presidential seal, as it rolls along the gutter. When it gets back to position, President Evans grabs it. Behind him is a secret service agent. We will know him only as STEVENSON.

PRESIDENT EVANS

What do you think, Stevenson?

STEVENSON

I'd go for the number four pin. Slightly right of center, sir.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Yup. That's what I was thinking.

The President lets go of the ball. He watches it roll. We hear the THWACK of the pins. From President Evans' and Stevenson's reactions it is clear he did not make it.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

That's what I get for my leftist tendencies.

The door opens. Another SECRET SERVICE OFFICER allows in GLENDA, the middle-aged secretary. \*

GLENDA

Sir. Senator Hanson and her husband are here. Shall I put them in reception?

PRESIDENT EVANS

No. No. Bring them in. Bring them in.

(beat)

Stevenson, I'm going to need some time with the Senator.

STEVENSON

Yes sir.

As Stevenson leaves, Laine and William walk in. Hollis follows and immediately takes a position in the back and out of the way. The President approaches them. Very friendly, shaking hands.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Senator!

LAINE

Mr. President. I'm sure you remember my...

PRESIDENT EVANS

Will Hanson! The McMahon campaign.  
(To Laine)

We tried to steal your husband away. He runs a helluva campaign. Helluva campaign.

(to William)

You gave me nightmare visions of returning to my law practice...

WILLIAM

Well, sir...

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

So, have you guys ever been down here before?

Laine and William shake their heads.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

Johnson built it in 1965. Right now, some terrorist camp in Libya is being spared a bombing raid because I'm obsessed with beating my 150 average.

(beat)

Do you guys want some lunch before we speak?

LAINÉ

I'm fine, thank you.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Check this out. Perk of the century. \*

(presses intercom)

Otto, are you there?

OTTO (VO)

Yes sir.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Otto, for dinner do you think you could arrange.... *Coq au vin* with, um, a side of penne and some... hazelnut pudding for desert? \*

OTTO (VO)

No problem, sir.

PRESIDENT EVANS

One day I'll catch them napping.

12 EXT. ROSE GARDEN. DAY

12

The President, Newman, Toliver and Laine walk through the Rose Garden. The flowers are lush and red. Things are good. Alive. \*

LAINE

The Sudan vote was a tough one. I'm honored that you don't bear a grudge.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Well, we'll have to disagree every now and then. The American people will respect us for it. And anyway (to Newman) how much did we win that one by?

NEWMAN

Sixty-one to Thirty-three.

PRESIDENT EVANS

It's pretty easy getting over things when you win. I guess Sudan is where the press will first make its hay.

LAINE

(smiling)

When we announce, I think the press will have other things on its mind.

The President nods knowingly.

LAINE (cont'd)

You know, sir... Sheldon Runyon and Jack Hathaway have been friends for years. Runyon will come after me with all guns blazing. You know that.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Now, Senator, why do we have to worry about Shelly Runyon's guns when I control the atomic bomb?

(takes her hands)

I'll introduce you to the cabinet in one hour. We'll make the announcement then.

LAINE

That's fine, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT EVANS

It's how Gerry Ford did it with Rockefeller. I always thought it was pretty damn classy.

(to Newman)

Have we notified all the networks?

TOLIVER

I'm sure the pundits have all gone into a guessing feeding frenzy.

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS

A box of mallomars says that they've already gone and anointed Malloy.

(claps his hands together)

You look great, by the way. Just great.

3 INT. CABINET ROOM HALLWAY. DAY

13

Hollis and Jack are readying Laine. There is quite a bit of commotion, but Laine looks calm.

HOLLIS

Okay, it looks like they have a bank of microphones in there, but only one camera.

WILLIAM

A pool camera. I had them set it up so that they'll catch your right side.

HOLLIS

Who's there from the cabinet?

TOLIVER

Well, I think that they're all there, except for Shamna of Agriculture.

HOLLIS

Agriculture? What about State? Defense? CIA?

TOLIVER

Secretary Simmons and Brooks are both waiting. The CIA isn't in the cabinet.

HOLLIS

How you-doing, Laine? You doing swell?

LAINÉ

Neato.

HOLLIS

(clapping his hands together)

Hold down the fort. Hold down the fort. Is the President coming? The President's going to be here, right?

TOLIVER

Are you kidding? This is the old man's  
(moves in close, whispers)  
swan song.

\*

LAINE

Are you going to be Okay?  
(Hollis nods)  
It's going to be fine.

In the bg, we begin to hear the SWARM OF FOOTSTEPS and the CRACKLE of SECRET SERVICE WALKIE TALKIES.

14 INT. CABINET ROOM. DAY

14

Various cabinet members sitting. There are newspaper and magazine photographers on the other side of the room. There is a general political buzz to the talk. The door bursts open and in walks The President, followed by William, Newman and then Laine. The cameras start clicking away. All the cabinet members stand.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Thank you for coming here on such short notice. As I embarked on the task of selecting a Vice-President, I was driven by the emotion of wanting to make a choice that would have made Troy Ellard, my friend, proud. Senator Laine Billings Hanson of Ohio is that person. She has served her state with honor and dignity for ten years. Her leadership in the Senate, the House, and the Democratic party has been a beacon for my administration. She will make us proud. I trust both Houses of Congress will work expeditiously with bi-partisanship to confirm her so that she may begin to serve the people of this nation as she has her state. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Vice-President designate Laine Hanson .

\*

The reporters scream out questions and the photgraphers shoot.

TOLIVER

Okay, then, one at a time. Charlie?

CHARLIE

Ms. Hanson, do you think your being a woman played in the President's decision?

LAINE

Well, I... I just want to say first what an honor it is for me to be here, before you, in this position. I Hope to serve up to the standards which President Jackson set for me with that wonderful introduction.

\*  
\*  
\*

And the answer to your question is, yes, I certainly hope that the President took into account that as a woman I would have tendencies to concentrate my efforts on issues that may have been inadvertently ignored in past years.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

CHARLIE

Mr. Hanson, how does it feel knowing that you'll be the "second husband"?

\*  
\*  
\*

WILLIAM

Well, If I'm a second anything I am happy its to Laine.

\*  
\*  
\*

15 ICE. DAY

15

\*

CU- THE IMAGE OF LAINE ON THE TV. Pull back to reveal..

The door opening and Laine, William, Hollis, and Newman entering the somewhat plush office. Clearly, what is on the TV is a news report of the just completed press conference.

NEWMAN

First rate, Mrs. Hanson, first rate.

LAINE

Well, I learned a lot from Will.

NEWMAN

Ah, right. Will. You, sir, are going to make yourself scarce, I'm afraid.

WILLIAM

Of course, let me give you your privacy.

NEWMAN

No. I mean scarce. During the confirmation period, I want you out of sight.

LAINE

Pardon me?

NEWMAN

A wife who is always there behind her husband is perceived as supportive. A husband following around his wife is perceived as a puppeteer.

\*

LAINE

Well, that's very-

WILLIAM

No... no... Mr. Toliver's right on, Laine. He's right. Take my professional advice and let Hollis handle the day to day... (smiles) I'll be the man behind the curtain.

HOLLIS

What happens next?

TOLIVER

One, the FBI's going to have to do an extensive background check. Director Friend will handle the investigation personally.

\*

NEWMAN

We made sure of that.

\*

\*

HOLLIS

What do they need from us?

NEWMAN

(to Laine)

Just about every aspect of your life will be uncovered; Medical records, campaign reports, your bank accounts...What am I forgetting?

TOLIVER

...correspondence with government agencies, speeches, and of course. When Nelson Rockefeller was confirmed, they had 300 agents on him.

LAINÉ

They had more life and cash to investigate.

HOLLIS

At the same time we can run our own background check, hit some areas you guys may miss... just to be safe.

NEWMAN (cont'd)

Yes. Well, that's fine. At the same time, the House will put together it's bi-partisan sub-committee of the Judiciary to interview you and advise and consent to your nomination. Shelly Runyon's running the show there.

Laine nods. They both understand the implications of that.

TOLIVER (cont'd)

And, of course, we need to organize some photo ops of you and the President. We have the Mexican State visit you can hop in on, and of course, we need to set up something with you and Governor Billings-

LAINÉ

(that gets her attention)

Let's just keep him out of it.

NEWMAN

Keep him out of it? I don't think so. An endorsement from your father is a blessing, especially since he's Republican. Silence from him is as subtle as an elephant on fire.

LAINÉ

It's a dealbreaker.

AIDE

Sir, we have the team assembled.

NEWMAN  
 (to Laine)  
 We'll talk about it later.  
 (to aide)  
 Lets parade them in.

And now, a large group enters the room. Including Secret Service.

NEWMAN (cont'd)  
 Senator, allow me to introduce to you the  
 team handling your confirmation hearing.

Laine smiles at the group as they enter and take their position.  
 As she says hello to everybody, they greet her back. Then...

LAINE  
 I thank you all very much for coming  
 today and for your show of support. I  
 will however not be needing your services-

NEWMAN  
 Madame Senator-

LAINE (cont'd)  
 (to everybody )  
 Thank you very much.

NEWMAN  
 (painfully)  
 Okay, people, thank you.

The group grudgingly leaves. The secret service is staying.

LAINE (cont'd)  
 I'm sorry, guys.

SECRET SERVICE CHIEF  
 Mr. Newman?

NEWMAN  
 You can't turn down secret service protection.

LAINE

I'll accept the accoutrements of the position once I've been confirmed. Until then, I don't think the taxpayers should be footing any of my bills...

Newman nods to the agents, who dismiss themselves from the room. Once they do, before Newman can say anything...

LAINE (cont'd)

Hey, we're off to a good start. We're already slashing the budget.

16 EXT. CAPITAL BUILDING/ STAIRCASE. DAY

16

CONGRESSMAN SHELLY RUNYON, a powerful Republican who has been around for years, is walking up the steps of the Capitol Building. A young man waits for him near the top. He must be in his early thirties. His name is REGINALD WEBSTER. He is a freshman congressman.

WEBSTER

Congressman!

Runyon doesn't answer. He just gives the kid a look.

WEBSTER (cont'd)

Sir, if you could just give me a minute.

Runyon gives him that look. He has no idea who the kid is.

WEBSTER

I'm Reg Webster, sir.

RUNYON

Oh. Right. You're one of Stoney's boys. Are you a staff or an intern? \*

WEBSTER

I'm actually a Representative. I'm Reginald Webster... of Delaware.

RUNYON

Well, fuck me. I'm sorry, Webster. What can I do for you?

WEBSTER

I thought I could grab you for...

RUNYON (cont'd)

Walk with me, Mr. Wagner.

They continue to walk up the stairs.

RUNYON (cont'd)  
What's the skinny...

As they enter

17 INT. CONGRESSIONAL ROTUNDA. DAY

17

WEBSTER  
Sir, I was... I was...

RUNYON  
You what?

WEBSTER  
I'm looking to be in, you know... you ...  
the committee, sir. Mr. Robertson stepped  
down and, you know, there's an opening and  
I'd like to put my name forth. I think  
you'll find me industrious and hard-working-

RUNYON  
Webster, the Judiciary's for Senior members.  
Wheeling was in for five terms before we let  
him in. How long have you been with us?

WEBSTER  
I'm a freshman.

RUNYON  
Hmmm. What state are you from?

WEBSTER  
(He has already told him this)  
Delaware

They are interrupted by another congressman who ignores Webster.

CONGRESSMAN X  
Shelly.

RUNYON  
Walter-

CONGRESSMAN X  
I've been trying to reach you for five days.  
I've left you thirty-two messages

RUNYON  
Well, do me a favor then and leave a 33rd.  
(back to Webster)  
You knocked Henry Bettis out. Henry used to  
be in the Thursday night game. He was always  
good for a few hundred bucks.

WEBSTER

I, guess he ran his campaign like he played  
poker.

RUNYON

I take it you have a predisposition... about  
the confirmation, I mean.

WEBSTER

No, sir. I'm one hundred percent objective.

RUNYON

(to Webster, softly and with sincerity)

Tell you what. Go to your office, open your dictionary, take a magic marker and cross out the word objectivity. As long as you hold office, "objectivity" shouldn't be in your vocabulary. Your constituents want you for your opinions, for your philosophy, for your subjectivity.

Runyon pats him on the back and leaves for the House Chamber.

A18 INT. HATHAWAY GARAGE.DAY

A18

Fiona pulls into her garage next to a large bass boat. She finds that she cannot get out because she is too tight to the boat so she moves out the passenger side. When she does there is a MAID waiting for her as well as a FED.

MAID

Mrs. Hathaway, this young lady says she had an appointment with the Governor.

FIONA

The Governor's at the office. How'd you get through security.

FED

(showing badge)

Really, I had an appointment. They have me listed down at your gate.

FIONA

Well, he's at the office. I'm sorry-

FED

You know, I loved that Vanity Fair cover you did. It looks like they didn't need to airbrush or anything.

FIONA

Can you believe it? That's very sweet of you.

FED

You both looked great. Just great. Well, I'm sorry for barging in on you-

FIONA

Not your fault. This isn't the first-

FED

My gain, I guess. I admire you both. I'm a lucky girl. While all the other 'senior' agents ar looking into Laine Hanson's bank records, Laine Hanson's stocks, Laine Hanson's this, Laine Hanson's that, I get to meet the governor..

FIONA

I guess she's really getting the once over

FED

You've never seen such a mobilization...

(eyes boat)

"We need a bigger boat."

(giggles, Fiona's lost)

"Jaws"

FIONA

You like it. It's yours.

FED

Is this the-

FIONA

Scene of the crime. Its like this monument to... to... It's just an unpleasant memory. (beat) I've never been out there with the "Master fisherman" but every other person in Virginia has.

FED

(joking)

Well, not me.

FIONA (cont'd)

We should get rid of it. How much bass can you eat in your life, anyway.

18 INT. HATHAWAY'S CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY

18

A well dressed female fed is examining paintings when, on the other side of the room, Hathaway enters. He sits right away, forcing the fed to cross the entire room.

HATHAWAY

Hey, how are you. I'm Jack Hathaway.

FED

Hi, sir. It sure is good of you to see me.

HATHAWAY

Well...well... (of course)

FED

I know you're busy, I just came from your house...

\*  
\*

HATHAWAY

Yes, I heard. I'm sorry about that.

Did my girl offer you something to drink?

\*  
\*  
\*

FED

She did, she was very nice, your girl.

HATHAWAY

Yes, she is. She's very nice. So-

FED

So, I just wanted to cross a couple of "T"s, little stuff. Its all just part of the process. By the way, between us, I was real impressed with your graciousness on the Senator Hanson thing-

\*

HATHAWAY

Oh.

FED

You know, in supporting her. Real gracious.

HATHAWAY

Well, you know, I withdrew my name from consideration...

FED

Right. Right.

HATHAWAY

And she's a good choice. Really good. Anybody that knows her will tell you that.

FED

Oh. How long have you known her?

HATHAWAY

Well, no, I don't really-

FED

Oh. Because when you said that anybody who knows her-

HATHAWAY

I know... I know people who know her.

FED

Uh-huh.

HATHAWAY

I don't really know her. I met her at some functions... I think she'll do a good job.

FED

Between you and I, not on the record or anything, I was really hoping you'd go for the position. Especially, after what happened on the Apachaway. I think people would think in the back of their minds, this here's a guy who takes risks when the right thing is at stake.

Hathaway shakes his head, starts strumming his fingers. The FED pulls a small steno pad from her jacket.

\*

FED

Well, anyway... That was some real bad luck  
(beat)  
and odd your being right there.

\*

\*

HATHAWAY

Right there?

FED

In the crabbing area.

\*

Hathaway's not getting it.

FED (cont'd)

Its just that you were fishing for bass.  
Your wife was kind enough to show me your  
fishing boat. You fish in the Apachaway a  
lot, though... I thought you'd know ...so,  
anyway, its not important.. off topic...

\*

\*

\*

HATHAWAY

But, I don't fish a lot-

FED

I just thought your equipment was pretty  
sophisticated...

HATHAWAY

There's a big, you know, difference between  
wanting to fish and having time to fish.

FED

Tell me about it.

19 INT. HANSON RESIDENCE/ LIVING ROOM. DAY

19

The TV is on. In front of the television is Toliver. Sitting on a  
couch is Hollis, William, and Laine.

TOLIVER

Okay, look...

Toliver presses the "play" button on the VCR. Laine's image comes on. She is being interviewed by Larry King.

LARRY KING

... Do you think that the Chinese have anything to gain from this?

LAINE ON TV

Of course. Even for a country as large as China, their population is simply obliterating their agrarian...

Toliver stops the tape.

TOLIVER

Okay, that's all wrong.

LAINE

Wrong?

TOLIVER

Well, here is an important question and it looks like you're not even deliberating a response. The people want our leaders to have answers but they want to know that they're thought out.

LAINE

Well, I'm not sure I agree...

TOLIVER

Okay. Don't agree. Let's move on.  
Now. look at this. Here you have an  
opportunity to smile

\*  
\*

LAINE

Smile? We're talking about arms sales.

\*

TOLIVER

Well, now, see, the whole country thinks that you are uptight. Smile when talking about on the Senate. It shows relaxation. It shows confidence.

\*  
\*  
\*

Toliver takes her hand. He holds and taps it.

TOLIVER(cont'd)

Tap his hand as you do it. Be human. Be accessible. Just smile. A little bit, huh?

\*

LAINE

It's going to take a more than a smile and a tap of the hand to win over the country.

\*

The television is turned off.

LAINE

Was there anything else? Should I get a different shade of lipstick?

TOLIVER

(not recognizing the sarcasm)

No. The lipstick's fine. But, look at you. Your blouse is on too tight.

\*

(realizing his brusqueness)

You're a very attractive woman. But that can hurt us. Look at Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, Margret Thatcher. People wanted to vote for them but nobody wanted to fuck them.

WILLIAM

Hey, Jerry, c'mon...

HOLLIS

Well, it's a good thing Janet Reno isn't interested in the job.

20 INT. LARRY KING'S STUDIO- CNN. NIGHT

20

LARRY KING

Larrabee, Wyoming.... You're on with Vice-President designate Laine Hanson.

LARRABEE (OS)

I just want to say to the senator, that I'm with her, I respect her, and, it's a great thing for this country and for this administration that you are the nominee.

LARRY KING

What is your question?

LARRABBEE

I just wanted to ask you... if you could use one person from history as the model of what you'd like to be, who'd it be?

LARRY KING

That's a good question. Senator? \*

LAINÉ

That sounds like a question I should've been asked several times, but I can't quite recall it. Well, I have to think about that.

LARRY KING

Did you have an intense admiration for Golda Meir and Indira Gandhi, the first female prime ministers? \*  
\*  
\*

LAINÉ

Well, they were great leaders.

LARRY KING

Would you put Thatcher in that category? \*

LAINÉ

(smiling)

I don't think so... You know what? I think it would be Thomas Jefferson. \*

LARRY KING

A man.

LAINÉ

Yes, he was. I would have to say that he was the greatest political philosopher in American history. Of course, he owned slaves-

LARRY KING

Yes, he did.

LAINÉ

And I hold it against him that he got Americans so fat and out of shape.

LARRY KING

...Go on. \*

LAINÉ

(with a smile)

In 1802 Thomas Jefferson came back from Paris with the recipe for french fries.

LARRY KING

Ok.

(beat)

Now, given your history, is physical fitness going to be as significant a factor in your Vice-Presidential administration as it has been in your Senatorial one?

Laine leans forward and taps his hands, as Toliver taught her.

LAINE

Yes. And lesson one. Pas des pommes frites, Larry.

21 INT. RUNYON'S OFFICE. NIGHT

21

The CAMERA pans along the ornate desk of Shelly Runyon. We see a copy of a file: "WEBSTER, REGINALD (D)- Delaware. The CAMERA moves off of the television where we see the Larry King episode from the previous scene. Runyon is alone in the room, smoking a cigarette. Transfixed by what he sees on the television. He is snapped to attention by the voice of Newman.

NEWMAN (OS)

Shelly?

Runyon turns around and sees Newman and Toliver.

RUNYON

Heeeeeeeey!!! Guys! How are you?

Toliver and Newman exchange pleasantries with Runyon.

RUNYON (cont'd)

Just watching your girl...

TOLIVER

She's something else, huh?

RUNYON

I don't really know her. I Served with her for a few years and, hell, I guess we just ended up in different cliques. Literally.

TOLIVER

Congressman, the President asked us to come down here and let you know he'd appreciate your support on the Senator's confirmation.

RUNYON

Really?

NEWMAN

He asked me directly, Shell.

RUNYON

But the President didn't consider it important enough to meet me personally. \*

NEWMAN

This is important, Shelly. It's the boss' swan song. Putting a woman in office means something to him. In any case, Laine Hanson is the absolute best choice- \*

RUNYON

K. Look, I don't mind that she's a woman. Women could've gotten us out of a whole lot of messes. If Moses had been a woman, she'd have stopped off at a gas station and asked for directions rather than circling the desert for forty years. But I'm not confirming a woman just because she's a woman. A woman has an extra burden. She has to come on the world stage with perfect credentials. \*

TOLIVER

The world respected Margret Thatcher.

RUNYON.

They accepted Margret Thatcher because they knew that she had to answer to Ronald Reagan. A woman had better be pretty extraordinarily qualified to have nobody to answer to. And Laine Hanson is not that. Look me in the eyes. Tell me Laine Hanson is your first choice for the Vice-Presidency.

NEWMAN

Laine Hanson is my absolute first choice.

It takes him a while but Runyon says with a smile.

RUNYON

Ooooh, I so want you in my poker game.

NEWMAN

The country needs a smooth confirmation.

RUNYON

The President needs a smooth confirmation.  
The country needs a competent Vice-  
President.

A cell phone goes off. Newman pulls it out.

NEWMAN

Only one man has this number.

Newman moves away.

NEWMAN (cont'd)

Boss... There's a hair of  
hardball going on but I think  
we'll be okay.

RUNYON

(to Toliver)

Jerry, out of curiosity, who is  
the President's second choice?

NEWMAN

I think maybe you should give  
him a call, soften up his  
ego...

TOLIVER

We haven't really settled on  
one-

RUNYON (cont'd)

- if Laine Hanson were to be hit by a flying  
car, who would the President then select?

NEWMAN

I'm going to get back into the  
fray here...

TOLIVER

Jack Hathaway. Off the record

Now Newman returns.

RUNYON

You know, Hathaway's Good man. For a  
Democrat. That's a man I'd say would have a  
smooth transition.

NEWMAN

Jack Hathaway?

RUNYON

Smooth as a baby's ass... Well, who the hell  
knows? Maybe Lainie will shock the world by  
pulling out a brilliance and erudition at  
the hearings none of us knows she has.

NEWMAN

Can we ask for basic fairness?. Fifty-fifty  
Democrat and Republican at the hearings?

RUNYON

Of course you can.

A22 INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM. DAY

A22

\*

A bunch of Kindergartners. In front of the class is their teacher. Laine is standing in the back of the room.

\*  
\*

TEACHER

Well, boys and girls, who knew back when we were scheduling "What my Parents Do" a few months ago we would get such a treat today. Timothy Hanson's mom is with us today. Timmy, do you want to introduce your mom?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Little Timmy Hanson, six years old, gets up from his chair and approaches the front of the room.

\*  
\*

TIMMY

My mommy's name is Laine and she's a Senator.

\*  
\*  
\*

Shyly he walks away. Laine walks up to the teacher's desk and rests on it. She loves this. This is her element.

\*  
\*

LAINE

Hi, kids!

\*  
\*

All the kids ring back with a greeting.

\*

TEACHER

Can anybody tell me what Mrs. Hanson is going to be?

\*  
\*  
\*

Several kids raise their hands.

\*

TEACHER (cont'd)

Janie.

\*  
\*

JANIE

Vice-President.

\*  
\*

TEACHER

That's right.  
(to Laine)  
Can the kids ask questions?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

LAINE

I would love to answer them.

\*  
\*

Several kids raise their hands.

\*

TEACHER

Hunter?..

HUNTER

What does a Vice-President do?

LAINE

Well a vice-President is there to advise the President on all sorts of important things, like the economy and how we should deal with foreign nations. The Vice-president also breaks ties when Senators vote.

TEACHER

Paige?

PAIGE

Are you going to live in the White House?

LAINE (cont'd)

No, the Vice President lives in another house that is called the Naval Observatory.

TEACHER

Jeremy?

JEREMY

What's a "cunt?"

TEACHER

Jeremy!

LAINE

It's okay. Jeremy, why did you ask me about that word.

JEREMY

Yesterday, I heard my daddy tell my mommy that you were a "cunt."

LAINE

Well, Jeremy, that's a very grown-up word and, in my house, I don't allow Timmy to use it. It's a very mean thing to call a woman. Your daddy must not like me very much.

Jeremy shrugs and sits down.

TEACHER

(to Laine)  
I'm sorry.

LAINÉ  
Don't worry about it.  
(to little Freddy)  
Hi, Freddy. Did you have a question?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

FREDDY  
What's a "dyke-bitch?"

22 OMIT

22

23 INT. CONGRESSIONAL GYMNASIUM. DAY

23

A bunch of Senators and Congressmen, including Runyon are playing a little half court basketball. Webster walks into the gymnasium. Runyon notices him and gives the time out signal. He walks over to the sideline, slowly dribbling the ball.

WEBSTER  
You asked to see me, sir?

RUNYON

One second.

Runyon turns around and poises himself to make a shot. Runyon aims and shoots. The ball goes up high, out of frame, and then... PLUNK... Comes down halfway between Runyon and the hoop.

24 INT. CONGRESSIONAL GYMNASIUM/ ELEVATED TRACK. DAY

24

Runyon and Webster are sitting and talking as the other lawmakers continue to huff and puff through basketball.

WEBSTER (cont'd)

These guys give you a workout, sir?

RUNYON

I give them one. You play ball?

WEBSTER

Not really. I play softball. I was hoping to put together a little league. Republicans versus Democrats sort of thing.

RUNYON

Wouldn't be fair. God would be on our side.  
(changing subject)  
Speaking of which, Mr. Webster, goddamn, but it turns out you're a Democrat.

WEBSTER

I... I... wasn't keeping it a secret.

RUNYON

There are just too goddamn many of us for me to keep track of these days. Look, sad to say, but I don't think I can bring you aboard the committee, son. Ray Spies makes all the decisions regarding the other party. It's a courtesy.

WEBSTER

But not a requirement.

RUNYON

No. No, it's not. That's true.

WEBSTER

See, if Mr. Spies interviewed me for even a minute, he'd refuse to put me on the committee. He'd find out that this afternoon I went to my dictionary and crossed out the word objectivity when it came to Laine Hanson.

RUNYON

Are you suggesting that Mrs. Hanson may not be your first choice for the position of Vice-President, Mr. Webster?

WEBSTER

Laine Hanson has stricken our party with policies and attitudes that are best served across the aisle... from where she came.

RUNYON

I take it, like most members of your party, your selection would be Governor Hathaway.

WEBSTER

Governor Hathaway's a great man... a visionary... and a hero to boot. But, he withdrew his name (from consideration)

RUNYON

Minds can be changed.

(beat... considering)

How much discretion can I count on from you?

WEBSTER

One hundred percent.

RUNYON

Even from your own leadership?

WEBSTER

I said One hundred percent, sir.

RUNYON

Good. Good man. This afternoon, you will have a phone number delivered to you. It is the number of a fat cat from your state who is apparently quite enamored of you. Give him a call. Tell him you need a favor.

WEBSTER

What favor?

25 INT. RUNYON RESIDENCE/ DEN. NIGHT

25

A fire is roaring. This is a comfortable and opulent den. Runyon and Hathaway, seated in armchairs, are having a conversation. Webster is standing by the fireplace. Next to him is Wilkie.

HATHAWAY

I think if I make the rounds, do the Sunday morning talk shows, raise the level of the game, out-talk her on the issues...

RUNYON

Issues? what kind of campaigns are they running in Virginia these days? Not the kind I'm used to. Look, Jack, the whole thing with this girl drowning? Bullshit.

HATHAWAY

No.No. I was there. I heard the President-

RUNYON (cont'd)

It's just an excuse. Jackson Evans has chosen to make putting a woman in office his swan song. Laine Hanson's the only reasonable choice in your party. He's not going with Boxer. She's too liberal. He's not going with Jones because she's older-

WILKIE

(overlapping)

Too old

RUNYON (cont'd)

... than he is. Winslet is not coming off the Supreme Court. Feinstein-

WILKIE

Nobody named Feinstein's getting in.

RUNYON

Laine Hanson is attractive. The mere fact she was a Republican means that she can't be too far to the left. She has a great pedigree. We can't get you in by convincing him that you're the right man for the job, Jack. We have to convince him she's wrong. And once we do that, you're in. Jerry Toliver as much as told me.

HATHAWAY

Look, I had an investigator come and ask me a few questions about her and I directed him to some people who I knew would be... helpful.. to us. But other than that, I'm not going for low blows. That's just not my-

WILKIE

I think what the Congressman is saying is that you don't have to, sir.

From the back of the room comes a well dressed man. He is Makerowitz

MAKEROWITZ

We have to go after her. We have to make her  
wade in her own blood.

\*

HATHAWAY

Wade in her own...? Who is this?

MAKEROWITZ

I'm Makerowitz.

\*

\*

RUNYON

He's Makerowitz.

\*

HATHAWAY

I'm sorry, that doesn't do a lot for me.

RUNYON

Web's got somebody, uh, a friend of his campaign, who's footing the not unimpressive bill of Mr. Makerowitz. \*

HATHAWAY

Oh.

RUNYON

... If a private citizen wants to do his own investigation and then reward the committee with some information about the nominee...

HATHAWAY

What do you want to find out? Campaign irregularities, bribes...?

WILKIE

Isn't that an FBI responsibility?

MAKEROWITZ

Yes, it is. But, It's doubtful they'll find anything. All her money's in a blind trust. \*

RUNYON

Anyway, Jack, the kind of improprieties you're talking about there, I think that helps her. I think the nation would be relieved to know that just because she's a woman does not mean that she can't be as ruthless as the rest of us.

MAKEROWITZ

Governor, you ever stabbed a man in the navel? \*

Hathaway doesn't answer. Makerowitz turns to Webster. \*

MAKEROWITZ

You? \*

Webster shakes his head.

MAKEROWITZ

Stab a man in the navel and that's all she wrote. The bleeding's so swift that it doesn't matter if Jesus himself puts his healing hand on the wound. That bastard is dead. We need to gut the bitch in the belly. We all have to understand, we're going to obliterate a life. Why we may even drive her to suicide. \*

RUNYON  
 (to Hathaway)  
 But it'll get you the Vice-Presidency.

6 INT. JEFFERSON HOTEL LOBBY. DAY 26

The Fed waits patiently for a Front Desk clerk DIERDRA to finish with a guest. He moves up to her.

DIERDRA  
 Hello, welcome to the (Jefferson)

He holds up his badge

FED  
 Miss Donahue?

The bright smile slips to a small smile.

DIERDRA  
 I was counting the days until you got to me.

DISSOLVE TO:

17 INT. JEFFERSON LOBBY. A FEW MINUTES LATER 27

DIERDRA  
 You can just do that? Pull phone records? \*

FED  
 I work for a pretty powerful guy.

DIERDRA  
 Boy, oh, boy. Well, yeah, I mean, we were  
 close for a while... less so recently... of  
 course. (laughing) Our career paths sort of  
 went in different directions. \*

FED  
 Well, at least you have your life... (beat)  
 You know, there's nothing sinister at work  
 here. At this point, we just have to look at  
 every element of her life, find everyone  
 that knew her. You don't know what you're  
 going to find. \*

DIERDRA  
 Have you found anything? \*

FED  
 No. Not really. \*

DIERDRA

Not really?

FED

I spoke to some of your other classmates and they told us she was pretty wild.

DIERDRA

Wild. Yeah. She was wild. Wild enough that you can be sure the tabloids are -

FED

Have they spoken to you?

DIERDRA

No. No. I didn't mean that. But somebody somewhere's going to talk. \*

FED

But not you. You haven't- \*

DIERDRA

Oh no. I don't know that much, though. When I spoke to her last it was the kid this and the kid that and- \*

FED

According to the records, you spoke to her about three weeks. The 15th. \*

DIERDRA

I guess so. I guess that makes sense. Oh. She told me that she was going to Vegas. Even asked if I wanted to come. \*

FED

Is that right? Vegas. \*

DIERDRA

Her treat even. I guess. We were going to stay at one of those ritzy new places. The Bel Age I think it is.... \*

28 EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY. DAY

28

Laine is jogging by herself. She looks sleek and athletic. Behind her a LIMO appears. She stops and jogs in place on the side of the street until the car catches up with her. The window rolls down and we see TOLIVER in the backseat.

TOLIVER

Quite a setting for a workout.

L A I N E

It's hard to come here and just... give up.

TOLIVER

Laine, several people in the loop have told us that the newsweeklies are coming out with stories that your father is going to specifically come out against your designation.

LAINÉ

My dad?

TOLIVER (cont'd)

You're too young, not mature enough for the job. That sort of thing. This could be very embarrassing for the President. I've never seen him so devoted. His... swan song can't end this way.

LAINÉ

I just don't believe it.

Toliver shrugs. "What can I tell you?" Laine starts to jog away.

LAINÉ

For the President, then.

30 EXT. BILLINGS RESIDENCE TENNIS COURTS

30

OSCAR BILLINGS, late sixties or early seventies is slamming tennis balls on his private court. He is being fed tennis balls from a ball machine. On the other end, a SERVANT is running around picking up the balls and feeding them into the machine. Sitting along the side is LAINE and her six year old child TIMMY.

OSCAR

(slamming the ball)

See that Tim-Tim? Its called Topspin. You know how you get topspin?

TIMMY

Uh-Huh

OSCAR

Tell me.

TIMMY (cont'd)

Cause Baby Jesus gave it top spin.

Boom. Oscar comes to an abrupt stop. As balls sail past him he is in slight disbelief.

OSCAR

Why do you say that Timmy?

TIMMY

'Cause Baby Jesus makes everything.

OSCAR

(walking over)

And who told you that?

TIMMY

Mrs. Moyer. In Kindergarten. And mommy says I gotta listen to Mrs. Moyer.

LAINE

(to Oscar)

I'm working on it, dad.

OSCAR

I lost my career for striking all this nonsense out of the public school system.

LAINE

I ought to put him in public school, then.  
(to Timmy)

Remember what I told you about moving your grip down and to the left?

Timmy nods. Laine ruffles his hair.

LAINÉ (cont'd)

Why don't you go an see if dad has found his  
bathing suit yet.

\*  
\*  
\*

Timmy nods and runs off. Oscar sits next to her.

OSCAR

They're there to teach not to...

LAINÉ

Preach. He's six. He also believes in the  
tooth fairy and that George Washington never  
told a lie.

OSCAR

It just drives me crazy.

There is a long pause. Laine doesn't need to answer.

LAINÉ

Thanks for seeing me, dad.

OSCAR

Why wouldn't I see you?

LAINÉ

(smiling)

Partisanship.

OSCAR

I gotta love at least one Democrat.

LAINÉ

(slowly, on eggshells)

Dad, we're getting all sorts of reports that  
you may not be ready to back me. That you're  
opposed to my confirmation. That you're  
blackballing me with the press.

OSCAR

You've read quotes from me (that say I-)

LAINÉ

No, no... just that we should expect to be  
reading of your opposition soon.

OSCAR

Well, excuse my Swahili, but you're being  
led a line of pure bullshit. I haven't said  
a word.

LAINÉ

Maybe it's just that. That you've been quiet.

OSCAR

I just hate the press. Swore I'd never speak to them again once I left the mansion. But I guess you're going to force my hand on this.

LAINÉ

You wouldn't have to say much, dad. Just enough so that...

OSCAR

Right. Well, I'll call back Joe Glynn at the Times. He's A-Okay. He'll write it up well. I leaked some shit about Buchanan to him. that damn near won him the Pulitzer.

\*  
\*

LAINE

Thank you.  
(beat)  
What would you do... have done in my case?

OSCAR

It's hard not to jump when your President asks you to jump. That's for sure.

LAINE

I'm on three committees, I deputy chair the Ways and Means. After the next election...

\*  
\*

OSCAR

You could be the first female leader. That would be something.

LAINE

~~Ben Franklin~~ said that the Vice President ought to be addressed as your "Superfluous excellency." In the past ten years I have enjoyed the kind of power the Vice-Presidency can't offer. Why would anybody want to give that power up?

OSCAR

Baby, power is where power goes.

31 EXT. GOLF COURSE. DAY

31

DIRECTOR FRIEND of the FBI is lining up a putt. Behind him comes a golf cart with the fed aboard. FRIEND putts. The golf cart arrives. Friend nods to his CADDY who moves out of the way.

FRIEND

When I asked for you the other day, they told me you were in Vegas.

FED

Business, sir.

FRIEND

Vegas's business.

The fed pulls out a PINK FILE and hands it to Friend.

FED

Very much our business, sir.

32 INT. NEWMAN'S OFFICE. EARLY EVENING.

32

Newman is at his desk looking over a PINK file, shaking his head. Also there is DIRECTOR FRIEND of the FBI.

FRIEND

I couldn't believe it myself. What do you want me to do with it?

NEWMAN

(reaching for intercom)

I guess we should ask the boss.

33 INT. WEBSTER'S APARTMENT. DAY

33

Webster opens the front door of his tiny D.C. apartment. Makerowitz is at the door. Makerowitz holds a thick BLUE FOLDER by his face. \*

WEBSTER (cont'd)

Is that it? \*

MAKEROWITZ

Them's the goods. And the goods are good. \*

WEBSTER

Can I look at it? \*

Before Makerowitz hands the file over he opens it looks at the contents. Makerowitz pulls out a photo, lifts it above his head and smiles broadly as he examines it. \*

MAKEROWITZ

I just want to savor the moment. \*

WEBSTER

C'mon, c'mon. \*

Makerowitz hands it over. Webster snatches the photo. His face goes almost white as he looks at it. He studies it, scrutinizes it... \*

MAKEROWITZ

The answer to your first question is "Yes, that's her." The answer to your second question is, "Yes, she's doing exactly what you think she's doing." \*

(handing him the file)

And the story behind it is even better.

34 INT. RUNYON RESIDENCE/ DEN. NIGHT

34

Runyon and Webster sit across from one another. Runyon is looking over the photos. He is shaking his head in sly delight.

WEBSTER

It's... sexual.

Runyon lifts up his head, his smile broadening.

RUNYON

Yes.

WEBSTER

She's actually *blowing* somebody.

RUNYON

(almost at a giggle)

And that seems to be just the half of it.

WEBSTER

We have it confirmed. That's her. That's one of the rooms in the frat house. Makerowitz actually went to the campus and confirmed it with his own eyes. She transferred colleges a few weeks after this incident.

\*

Runyon puts the documents down and leans back in his chair.

RUNYON

Web, why does life treat guys like you and me so well? Now, this girl, this...

(leans forward to read)

Patricia LaVaMeere...

WEBSTER

We've scheduled her deposition for the day after tomorrow. She thinks she can get a dozen others to verify the story.

RUNYON

Wait... (yelling)... Julian!!!

Almost immediately, a butler named Julian pokes his head in.

RUNYON (cont'd)

Julian. The Congressman and I will have some champagne... No, scratch that... Red wine.

(with the broadest smile)

Red wine is what goes with red meat.

35 INT. SHAKEY'S PIZZA. DAY

35

A Washington bureaucrat named TED EDWARDS is sitting in a booth. In front of him is a plate crammed with food. After a few seconds HOLLIS enters the booth and sits down. He's very well dressed.

HOLLIS

Hey, Ted.

TED

How you doing, Lewis?

Hollis sits down and looks at the heaps of food.

HOLLIS

Hungry?

TED

(thinking he's clever)

You didn't have to dress up.

HOLLIS

I had to accompany the Senator to the Gridiron lunch.

Ted pushes the BLUE FILE forward.

HOLLIS (cont'd)

What's this?

TED

It's why you're here.

Hollis opens up the file, at first eyeing Ted and then looking down at the file.

TED

Look Hollis, you can't let anybody know where you got this. If Runyon found out that I gave it to you I wouldn't only lose my job, I'd- Christ, he's a very powerful, guy.

Hollis nods his head but his attention is elsewhere.

TED (cont'd)

That's her, man. Laine Hanson getting gang-banged. It's like something out of Hustler. That's her for sure. I know it's tough to tell with her crotch in- with her face in somebody's crotch-

HOLLIS

(still looking down, shaking)

Why are you showing me this?

TED

I'm not going to be party to an ambush.

HOLLIS  
Why are you showing me this, Ted?

TED  
Ok, see, I want out of Runyon's office. I thought maybe you could get me on staff with the Senator or...

HOLLIS  
So, that's all Runyon can come up with?

TED  
"That's all?" Read the deposition of this LaVamere lady...  
(beat)  
Look, you have days until the hearings begin. This'll probably disappear if she...

HOLLIS  
If she does what, Ted?

TED  
There aren't a lot of options on this one, Hollis. Read the deposition.

HOLLIS  
That's what I'm going to do. Thank you, Ted.  
(leans forward, sarcastic?)  
You're a good man.

\*  
\*

Hollis gets up holding the file. And as Hollis walks away...

TED  
Think about that staff position, Okay?

But Hollis is out of earshot. Stay on Ted looking out the window as he watches Hollis get into his car. Ted pulls out his phone.

TED (cont'd)  
Hey... Is he in? ... Ted... Hi, sir. Well, his face practically slid off his face, Mr. Runyon. She's a goner.

36 OMIT

36

\*

37 INT. HANSON RESIDENCE/ LIVING ROOM. DAY

37

CLOSE- WILLIAM'S FACE.

WILLIAM  
T. F., I will not tolerate this! We have been through too much... too much...

stuff, too many hard times to have you dick  
me around like this! What? No! You listen to  
me! Just quiet down.

The CAMERAS PULLS BACK slowly. William begins the big pace.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

Get the big picture here! Your offer is a pure insult. We want One or nothing at all.

William is in a lather. We can see his veins.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

HALF?! HALF?! HAVE YOU LOST YOUR LITTLE FAIRY MIND! YOU CAN TAKE YOUR HALF AND...

TIMMY

Dad!

Now the CAMERA REVEALS that all of this has been done in Timmy's presence. He is in his school clothes. He looks worried.

WILLIAM

One second.

(to Timmy)

I got her on the ropes.

(back to phone)

You, friend, do not know what suffering is!

TIMMY

Dad!

WILLIAM

What?

TIMMY

You're making her angry.

William gives Timmy an "I know what you're doing" gesture.

TIMMY (cont'd)

Dad, please. Fifty cents is okay.

William shrugs and gets back on the phone.

WILLIAM

Okay, my client...

(glares at Timmy)

Against my advice has agreed to your offer. But we want it tonight and they better be shiny.

(hangs up, to Timmy)

I could've gotten you a dollar. She was on the edge, Timmy. Ready to break. You can't be weak in this world, kiddo.

TIMMY

But fifty cents is a lot of money, daddy.

HOLLIS (OS)

Yes, it is.

We pull back to reveal Hollis in a business suit. He is holding the BLUE FILE. He has just entered.

TIMMY

Hollis! I lost a tooth.

He runs to Hollis holding out his tooth.

HOLLIS

Wow. A front tooth. Daddy's right. He could've gotten you a dollar. But now the tooth fairy wants to do business with you.

TIMMY

I'm gonna go put it under my pillow now!

Timmy runs out of the room.

WILLIAM

Hey, Hollis. You know, I have no idea where Laine is. Do you have any idea?

HOLLIS

She's addressing a National Organization of Women breakfast.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

That should be an easy... is everything OK, Hollis. You look a bit weatherbeaten.

38 INT. HANSON RESIDENCE/ GAMEROOM. DAY

38

William is reading the report, which is laying on top of a pinball machine. He is concentrated, almost shaking. Hollis sits next to him, his head bowed.

HOLLIS

I was up all night. I haven't even changed. The debate was who do I go to. You or Laine? And, in the end, I just couldn't face her.

WILLIAM

You did right, Hollis.  
(bangs fist on machine)  
Jesus Christ!

HOLLIS

It's a worst nightmare scenario...

CU- THE REPORT

We are pushing in on the report itself, which is clearly the deposition section. We push in and in as we HEAR Hollis O.S.:

HOLLIS (os)

The committee claims they can get even more depositions, from at least four other guys who say they had sex with Laine that night...

But now we have pushed in so far to the deposition that we are...

39 INT. DEPOSITION ROOM. A FEW DAYS EARLIER 39

A woman named PATRICIA LAVAMERE is at a table with an ATTORNEY who is pacing the room as he questions her. RUNYON is sitting in.

PATRICIA

She was putting on a sex show.

ATTORNEY

How long did this go on for?

PATRICIA

It was hours.

~~The CAMERA PUSHES IN on a tape recorder, until we are in the~~

40 INT. FRAT HOUSE. NIGHT 40

A hundred revelers cheering something on. We can't quite make out what it is that we see between and beyond the throng of cheering students, but we can be fairly certain it is sexual activity.

PATRICIA (VO)

In her defense she was drunk. And to be honest, after she fucked and sucked those two assholes she was carried to another room and boys were going in and out of there, but I don't know if she was fucking them.

RUNYON (VO)

Excuse me, Counselor, may I...?

41 INT. DEPOSITION ROOM. SAME AS BEFORE 41

ATTORNEY

Of course.

RUNYON

Just to clarify, why exactly was Mrs. Hanson, strike that- Laine Billings involved in this disgusting and appalling behavior? That's what's important to me...

42 INT. HANSON RESIDENCE/ GAMEROOM. DAY 42

Will is reading on. He seems broken. His eyes welling.

HOLLIS

Will, we have to start thinking in terms of an end game. Some way out.

43 INT. LIMO/ TRAVELLING WASHINGTON DC. DAY 43

Laine sits in the back, waving to the throngs of women (and a few men) who have lined the streets for her. She is smiling. Content.

LAINÉ

Did you hear the speech, Rowen?

ROWEN

No ma'am. But it sure looks like they did.

44 EXT. HANSON RESIDENCE/ PORCH. DAY 44

Will sits outside. Next to him is a pitcher of orange juice and the BLUE FILE. Laine opens the screen door. It is clear she has just come home. She is beaming.

LAINÉ

There you are. Hey, you should've...  
(something is wrong)  
What's (up)?

WILLIAM

It's all fucked up, Laine.

LAINÉ

What's fucked up?

WILLIAM

I have to tell you something, Lainey. I have to tell you something bad.

LAINÉ

(sitting)  
What is it?

WILLIAM

It seems Runyon or somebody close to him has been running a private investigation, looking for stuff the feds wouldn't touch.

\*

WILLIAM (cont'd)

It was a long time ago, Laine. Twenty-six  
years ago.



They told me it happened sometimes when she got nervous. Gloria hugged me and thanked me for a great night, as if nothing ever happened. The parents told me they'd be forever grateful for my kindness to their daughter. I still get a Christmas card from them every year.

(beat)

It's the worst thing I've done in my life.

Laine is just about stymied.

LAINE

Why are you telling me this awful thing?

WILLIAM

(totally broken)

Because I don't want to have one up on you.

And with that, William pushes the file in front of her. She begins to read it. She almost starts shaking.

WILLIAM

Laine, you don't have to (say anything). We should just call Mr. Newman and tell him that this is coming down the pike.

LAINE

(monotone)

The daughter of the Governor was gang-banged, putting on a sex show for a bunch of frat boys, fucked by at least eight drunk idiots. Imagine being a young freshman and that is the legacy that's been established for you. It destroyed me this ugly, stupid thing. I had to transfer. It destroyed me then and I have been stupid enough to think it wouldn't return to destroy me now.

WILLIAM

(quietly, sad realization)

It's true.

LAINE

I'm going to tell you, Will. I'm going to tell you what happened because you're my husband and I love you. I'm going to tell you and then I'm just never going to talk about it again.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

45 INT./EXT. HANSON RESIDENCE/ LIVING ROOM. DAY

45

From the inside, looking through the window, Laine tells her story. We can't hear her, but William is clearly pained and angry. Whatever he's hearing, he doesn't want to hear it.

46 INT. LAW OFFICES. DAY

46

William is pacing. Newman stands by the window. ALAN, a private eye, is leaning up against a door. Laine sits on a couch.

LAINÉ

I don't understand. Has the President asked me to step down?

NEWMAN

He doesn't know anything about it.

LAINÉ

So, you're asking me to step down.

NEWMAN

I'm asking you to do what's in the best interest of the party and this President.

LAINÉ

Well, I'm sorry. I can't do it. Not for this. And if I know our President, he's not going to allow me or himself to get shot down over what would have been a private sexual encounter.

NEWMAN

(somber)

This is some swan song for the old man. \*

ALAN

So the Senator got a little wild when she was nineteen. Big deal.

NEWMAN

Let me explain the *big deal* to you. The people of this nation can stomach quite a bit. But one thing they can't stomach is the image of a vice-President with a mouth full of cock.

WILLIAM

Hey, c'mon, you don't have to use- Look, we all should start using the word "alleged."

NEWMAN

They've got a photo, they've got witnesses, they've got the "alleged" slut transferring colleges-

Will gets in his face.

WILLIAM

Look, I'm a husband first and I'm not going to tolerate talk like that about my wife.

NEWMAN

(non-pulsed)

Well, get used to it. Especially when not even your wife will defend herself.

(to Laine)

Give me something, Laine. Anything. Hell, just deny it. Why don't you just deny it?

LAINE

It is simply beneath my dignity-

NEWMAN

(holding up the photo)

Dignity. Right.

(shaking his head, to Alan)

Well, we just have to make it not worthwhile for Runyon. What have you found on the distinguished gentleman from Illinois?

ALAN

Some pretty good stuff, actually. There was an SEC investigation-

NEWMAN

Stocks? Come on, I want something embarrassing, something sexual. Cows, midgets, little boys, that sort of thing.

LAINE

If we do that, we're no better than he is.

Newman stops in his tracks. This gets him.

NEWMAN

We are no better than he is.

ALAN

There's nothing there, anyway. He got married when he was twenty-one. There is no evidence he ever cheated on his wife...

LAINÉ

It's too bad we're not running in France. We could really nail him on that.

NEWMAN

When do you have your lunch with him?

LAINÉ

Lunch with Shelly Runyon? I'm not going to have lunch with him.

WILLIAM

Right. No way, Jose. We're not sending Laine into that prick's lair.

Hollis looks through his notebook.

HOLLIS

We're scheduled for this Wednesday at 1:00.

47 INT. CONGRESSIONAL DINING ROOM. DAY

47

Runyon is sitting by himself at a perfectly manicured table. There is a waiter next to him, a PERSONAL WAITER. Runyon is having some soup. Laine walks in by herself, her high heels clicking on the marble.

RUNYON

Laine...

LAINÉ

Shelly.

RUNYON

I'm sorry, I started. You were late and...

LAINÉ

Not too late, I hope.

RUNYON

Well, a minute or two, anyway. Were you tied up with anything?

LAINÉ

No. I'm sorry. I'm just late.

RUNYON

Don't worry yourself over it. I ordered you the Porterhouse.

LAINÉ

I don't eat meat. I'll just have the penne, Clem.

\*  
\*  
\*

RUNYON

You should really try the steak. Hugo's really on all cylinders with it.

(to waiter)

Tell Hugo to burn it on the outside like he did for me.

LAINÉ

Thank you. But, I just don't eat meat.

(to waiter)

I'll go ahead with the penne.

The waiter smiles nods and summons another waiter over.

RUNYON

So, how are... how are Will and your boy?

LAINÉ

Let's forgo the small talk today, Shelly. It'll make me feel cheap.

RUNYON

Well, let the "Big Talk" begin.

LAINÉ

Mr. Chairman, with all due respect...

RUNYON

(to the waiter)

Looks like I have a little disrespect coming my way...

\*

LAINÉ

(to waiter)

Would you excuse us for a second?

The waiter bows and moves away.

RUNYON

I'm pretty sure there's some kind of waiter-patron confidentiality.

Laine pulls out the BLUE FILE and places it in the center of the table. He tries to hide his surprise at seeing it.

LAINÉ

Have you seen this?

RUNYON

Yes. That's my file on you, Senator. How did you get it?

LAINÉ  
Have you read it yet?

RUNYON  
How did you get it?

He sees that she's not going to answer.

RUNYON (cont'd)  
Have you read it?

There is an aching silence between them.

LAINÉ  
What do you have to say for yourself?

RUNYON  
With all due respect, it doesn't matter what I have to say for myself.

Laine leafs through the paper.

LAINÉ  
It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that all you can claim about me is that I had sex while I was in college.

RUNYON  
Deviant sex.

LAINÉ  
Who says it was deviant?

RUNYON  
I do... And what I say the American people will believe. And you know why?

Laine just stares him down. There is no reason to answer.

RUNYON  
Because I'll have a very big microphone in front of me.

LAINÉ  
You must really hate me, Shelly.

RUNYON  
It's not possible to hate you. You're a... what the hell was it Roberts called you the other... he called you a "groovy chick."  
(beat)  
What I do detest is your selfishness.

LAINE

I have served this nation without regard for personal income or for...

RUNYON

You're selfish because you want to take on a job that positions you to assume a mantle of gigantic responsibility and you do it full well with the knowledge that you are not...

(stops himself)

Greatness is the orphan of urgency, Laine. Greatness only emerges when we need it most, in times of war or calamity. I can't ask somebody to be Kennedy or Lincoln. They were men created by their times. The only thing I ask for is the promise of greatness. And that, Laine, you can't offer.

Laine gets up and leans into Runyon. She speaks softly.

LAINE

I wouldn't be using sex as leverage if I were you, Shelly. Because, if there's one thing you don't want it's a woman with her finger on the button who isn't getting laid.

And as she gathers her material to leave-

RUNYON

Will that be the argument the Senator offers up before committee?

CUT TO:

48 CU- PORTRAIT OF WOODROW WILSON

48

CUT TO:

49 INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY. DAY

49

Webster is looking at the portrait. A WAITER in a white butler's outfit comes to him.

WAITER

Sir? Can I get you something to drink?

WEBSTER

Nope. I'm fine.

And he does appear to be very fine indeed. He's so excited being here. The waiter nods and leaves. Webster wanders the hallway. He comes to the portrait of Harry Truman. BOOM!

We hear a door bursting open and heavy footsteps. Webster spins around. It is President Evans, arm outstretched.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Mr. Webster!

WEBSTER

Mr. President.

PRESIDENT EVANS

It's good to see you. Good indeed.

WEBSTER

It's an honor.

PRESIDENT EVANS

I've wanted to have you up for some time.

WEBSTER

Really?

PRESIDENT EVANS

You betcha! You unseated that old bastard Bettis. He must've voted against me seventy percent of the time. \*

A waiter walks over with a plate that has a sandwich on it.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

You know what this is? It's a shark steak sandwich. Fucking shark steak! You want half?

WEBSTER

Thank you, no.

PRESIDENT EVANS

You're a vegan?

Webster shakes his head.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

So, you'd choose not to break bread with the President of the United States?

Webster smiles and takes half the sandwich.

WEBSTER

Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT EVANS

When I was in the Senate, Bettis could always be counted on to leave half a grand on the poker table. Always stayed in. \*

Never folded, always wanted a miracle card.  
 (points to painting)

Truman was a poker player. Damn fine one as I understand it.

(beat)

Now, son, I understand that you may be making a mess of our plans to put Laine Hanson into the Vice President's mansion.

How does the President know this? Oh. Right. He knows everything.

WEBSTER

Right now I can't see supporting her... sir. \*

PRESIDENT EVANS

How old are you, Mr. Webster?

WEBSTER

Me? I'm twenty-eight.

PRESIDENT EVANS

And you think that at your age and experience you're one to sit and judge Mrs. Hanson?

WEBSTER

That's the whole point, isn't it? I am.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Mister Webster, I am asking you as a personal favor to lay off. It's one thing to break ranks and vote in opposition to my candidate but to actively attack her from the bench is another.

WEBSTER

Mr. President, I just don't believe in Laine Hanson. Especially when we have at our disposal Gov. Hathaway, a party loyalist, an idealist, and a bona fide hero. And I can not and shall not vote for a candidate just because she's a woman. I am nothing if I do not follow my heart.

PRESIDENT EVANS

(with slight irony)

I envy you. I do. You know why? Because, someday, years from now, you'll come in here with your family and look at my painting. And you'll be able to say to them, your kids and your grandkids, "Way back then I defied my President. It cost me my re-election and kept me out of politics forever. I was on a track to maybe, someday, end up right here."

I was destined to make the kind of change in this country that only great men, given the right time and place, can make. Now I have none of that. But it's okay, because I did what was in my heart.

(he takes a big bite)

The heart can't ever be wrong. Can it, Mr. Webster?

50 INT. RUNYON KITCHEN. NIGHT

50

MAY RUNYON sits late at night at the kitchen table wearing her bathrobe. Next to her is a glass of milk. She is reading some papers. RUNYON walks in, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. She looks up at him. He looks down at the papers she is reading. It is the BLUE FILE. Runyon walks to the fridge and takes out a bottle of milk. He pours himself a cup.

RUNYON (cont'd)

You went through my desk?

May continues to read the papers. Then, without looking up...

MAY (cont'd)

It never crossed my mind when I was a young woman that I'd be this age and not have kids. Somehow, in my mind, kids, raising them, making them good people, it's what I wanted. But then I met you and I realized that I'd be trading that dream so you could live yours. We sacrificed all of that so we could do good...

RUNYON

(softly)

We have done good.

MAY

I was never prouder than when you fought to make all hate crimes a federal and capitol offense. You stood so tall, defied the world, and you won. It was then I realized our sacrifices were not in vain. That you were a great man. And now, every achievement you've ever had will be eliminated because with this horrible... filth you'll go down as a second rate Joe McCarthy.

(beat)

Your problem, Shelly, is that you have no sense of history.

RUNYON

She's no good (for this country)

MAY

Than convince us on the merits of who she is, rather than who she was on one night.

Runyon wants to say something but May beats him to it.

MAY (cont'd)

And if that doesn't convince you, than I promise you, you do this terrible thing tomorrow and you will lose me.

CUT TO:

51 CU- PORTRAIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN 51

TIMMY (OS)

... and he freed the slaves and also he won the Civil War.

52 INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY. DAY 52

Timmy and Laine are in front of the portrait. Timmy is dressed very smartly in a tie and jacket.

LAINÉ

He was probably our greatest President.

TIMMY

Even better than George Washington?

LAINÉ

Well, it's a running debate.

BOOM! A door bursts open and President Evans strides in. Behind him is GEORGE, the White House photographer.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Laine Hanson!

LAINÉ

Mr. President.

They greet each other with great warmth. The President bends down in front of Timmy.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Now, you must be one Timothy Hanson?

TIMMY

Timothy Muskie Hanson.

LAINÉ

One of my first acts as a Democrat was to name him.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Well, Timothy Muskie Hanson, how'd you like a great big cookie? Any kind you want.

TIMMY

No, thank you.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Any kind at all. Oatmeal, white chocolate...

Timmy shakes his head.

LAINÉ

We just had dinner.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Well, in that case, should we have our photo taken, young man?

Timmy nods.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

I love your tie. Where'd you get it?

TIMMY

My mommy got it for me.

PRESIDENT EVANS

How do I look?

TIMMY

Your tie's kinda crooked.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Really? Can't take a picture like that. Will you fix it for me?

Timmy nods and adjusts the President's tie. As he does...

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

Your mommy tells me that you know more about the Presidents than most grown-ups.

TIMMY

I like to study them.

PRESIDENT EVANS

I think we're ready for business, George.

Timmy and the President stand side by side.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)  
You must be very proud of your mom.

TIMMY  
Huh-huh. Being Vice-President is much better than being President.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
I'm sure you're right.

TIMMY  
'Cause nobody wants to shoot the Vice-President.

POOF! The CAMERA FLASH goes off.

53 INT. OVAL OFFICE. LATER.

53

LAINE  
I don't know. Nervous, I guess.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Good, good. The night before a confirmation hearing? Anything else, and I'd have withdrawn your name.

NEWMAN  
What about this Webster, sir?

PRESIDENT EVANS  
One second. Anybody here hungry?  
(into intercom)  
Otto, do you think you could whip up some kung Pao chicken but with walnuts?

OTTO  
I'll have it sent right up, sir.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
(little smile of triumph)  
The kid? I met with him. He reminded me of me when I was his age. That's bad. K, you need to put out the word that no matter what the kid does, nobody's to give him a hard time. He's misguided but he has something, and in the future... who knows?

NEWMAN  
Well, I'm sure the Senator can handle Mr. Webster. But, there is one concern.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Concerns. Right. K. told me about this  
college romp you had, Laine.  
(distracted)  
Shit. Tomorrow's the 17th.

The President goes behind his desk and buzzes his secretary.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Give me just a second, guys.

Glenda walks in.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Glenda, tomorrow's Bidwell's birthday. Have  
we gotten something for the son of a bitch?

GLEENDA  
Bidwell's the gentleman at state?

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Right.

GLEENDA  
You got him a leatherbound "Don Quixote."

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Good. Good. Good gift. Metaphorical gift.  
He'll be trying to figure out why I got him  
that book forever.  
(to Laine)  
Were you married at the time?

LAINE  
You know, sir, I'm just not going to comment  
on the whole thing. It's beneath me and  
it's beneath the process.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
(to Newman)  
Maybe I shouldn't have gone so tough on  
Shelly in Hartford.

NEWMAN  
Well, then this would all be moot because  
you wouldn't be President.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Know what? Married? Not married? One guy?  
two guys?

Look. Just look these bastards in the eye and tell 'em what you told me. They're going to confirm you because they know I'll never appoint a Republican. But they want to embarrass you in the process. They want to send you into this administration as a virus. So, you have only one choice.

(beat)

Don't be embarrassed.

54 INT. RUNYON'S OFFICE. DAY

54

About 15 Congressmen are gathered in the room, Webster included. It is clear that Runyon is handing out assignments.

RUNYON

Tyler, you're handling foreign affairs. Her passport barely has a stamp in it and we can use that to our advantage. Jones's on the flat-tax issue. You should be able to demolish her there... \*

CONGRESSMAN HARDING

I wouldn't be that cavalier. She seems pretty well thought out to me.

RUNYON

Just go at it. No prisoners on this one. \*

RUNYON

And, Web, we'll do that thing in the beginning.

Webster nods. Runyon looks at his watch. This is it. Runyon begins his speech and when Shelly Runyon speaks his minion listen. And as he speaks, as has been the case all along, his voice is soft but forceful.

RUNYON

Two hours, gentlemen.

(beat)

It is now up to us to light the spark which will result in a moral uprising, so that we may have a new birth of national honesty and decency. Sometimes, in this process, you'll question even yourselves. And that's fine. That's healthy. For what are we if we are not what we believe. Laine Hanson is a cancer. A cancer of liberalism. A cancer of disloyalty. Her nomination itself is the cancer of affirmative action. What we will sing with voices stentorian is that she is the cancer of virtuous decay.

55 EXT.ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY. DAWN

55

Laine is jogging in a white sweatsuit. She is graceful, pensive, concentrated. With every step, gains speed. Faster, faster, and faster. And we continue hearing Runyon from the previous scene

RUNYON (VO)  
Clausewitz said that War is the natural extension of politics...

She looks almost Olympian. Eventually, she slows down...

RUNYON (cont'd)  
But Politics is also the extension of war. They are one and the same... And in this war there will be casualties...

She comes to a stop, hands on her hips, breathing hard.

ANGLE- helicopter shot- Ascending over Laine Hanson. We go higher and higher until Laine, in her white outfit, cannot be set apart from the tombstones.

RUNYON (VO)  
But so help me God, not among us.

56 INT. COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM. DAY

56

A bustle of activity. Laine, Hollis by her side, is chatting with various people. Newman and Toliver are there chatting away. Runyon and the Congresssman enter. Runyon brings down the gavel. Laine and Hollis move to the witness table. Quiet.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

RUNYON  
Ladies and gentlemen. My name is Sheldon B. Runyon of the great state of Illinois. It is my privilege and honor to serve as the chairman of these special hearings. We are here today, for only the third time in our history, to ensure the proper implementation of the twenty-sixth amendment. And for the first time, the House has taken on that responsibility. Myself and my esteemed colleagues are determined to ensure that this very important matter be handled with expedition and dignity. I am proud to welcome our friend and colleague, Laine Hanson. Madame Senator, I welcome you.

LAINÉ  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

RUNYON

Would the gentle lady from Ohio please rise  
and raise her right hand? \*

Laine does so (after first raising her left).

RUNYON (cont'd)

Madame Senator, do you swear to tell the  
truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
truth, so help you God?

LAINE

I do.

RUNYON

Please be seated.

WEBSTER

Mr. Chairman, point of order.

RUNYON

The chair recognizes Mr. Webster of, uh,  
of... Delaware.

WEBSTER

Mr. Chairman, I direct your attention to  
tab C-25 of the ledger. This is a transcript  
of a question and answer session at Harvard  
between the nominee and several students. On  
the bottom of page 16 you will find the  
following remark by the nominee, in reference  
to a question about the separation of church  
and state. The nominee said, quote- "The  
separation exists because we can not have a  
fairy tale govern a nation. " That, Mr.  
Chairman, was eighteen months ago.

Runyon is seemingly annoyed, but we know better.

RUNYON

What, sir, is the point?

WEBSTER

Well, the Senator has just sworn an oath to  
an entity she does not believe in.

RUNYON

(kindly almost)

Madame Senator, do you understand you have  
promised to be truthful to the committee?

LAINE

Yes.

RUNYON

And you understand that lying to this body  
is perjury, punishable under the law?

LAINE

I do.

RUNYON

I'm sure we're agreed that even though the  
Senator has shown a disdain for religion and  
those practising it, which is her  
Constitutional right- that does not  
necessarily make her a liar. I'm confident  
we can proceed. Madame, for the record,  
would you state your name and address?

CUT TO:

57 CU- TELEVISION

57

It is later in the hearing. Laine is talking.

LAINE (ON TV)

... On the other hand it is very hard to  
reconcile the tariffs against Japan vis a  
vis those against, say, South Korea...

58 INT. WASHINGTON POST NEWSROOM. DAY

58

\*

And we see the same image on a TV in the back corner of a busy  
newsroom. Reporter JOE SMITH is at his computer. Something  
catches his eye. He snaps to attention and presses the print  
button. He swings his chair around and searches the room. An  
editor passes by him.

JOE

Lew, you've gotta see this.

The EDITOR bends over and picks up the document.

JOE (cont'd)

The Nichols report just posted this.

EDITOR 1

Say, that's my kind of girl.

(closer)

Is that....?

59 INT. CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ROOM. NEXT DAY

59

We begin this shot very tight on Runyon's face. He is  
overlooking some documents, shaking his head sadly.

RUNYON

Now, I have an issue to speak of and I am most gravely concerned. If this body will indulge me, I have before me a perfect example of the need for this institution to pass the Internet Libel Protection Act. In the *Nichols Report* piece that was posted to forty million internet subscribers just twenty minutes ago, it is claimed that you, Senator, were involved in a sexual imbroglio while in college, that is, trading favors with several partners in exchange for entry into a sorority. Though we will not waste the committee's time with such nefarious and sleazy innuendos, I will not deny the Senator her right to respond to them.

LAINE

May I...

A PAGE brings her a copy of the papers. Inserts of words:

"Sex Train" "drunken" "orgy" "fellatio"

Laine finishes and looks up. Total silence in the room.

LAINE

Mr. Chairman, I have nothing... I will not respond to this article.

RUNYON

And I say "Bravo!" to you, Senator. Bravo to you! Let me first state that I encourage very American and every citizen on this planet to boycott the *NICHOLS REPORT*. This is the type of filth and degenerate pornography that should not see the light of day. I can only assume, Senator, that you will not only bring suit against the perpetrators of *WWW.NICHOLS REPORT.COM*, but also against the remarkable look alike that appears in these disgusting photos - and when you do file suit, know that it comes with my full support. And, I assure you it will not be this committee's business to make an issue of your promiscuity be it twenty years ago or even now. Your refusal to deny this report of sexual deviance will not have an affect on this committee or whether or not it votes to advise and consent to your nomination.

There is an uncomfortable silence - a terrible silence- then...

LAINE

Thank you.

RUNYON

You are most welcome, madame. And again,  
bravo to you!

Runyon starts clapping and now so does the entire chamber. Laine cannot help but be embarrassed by this surreal moment.

60 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE. EARLY EVENING.

60

The President is sitting by the fireplace with the MEXICAN PRESIDENT. REPORTERS and photographers are there for a classic photo op. In the corner of the room are Newman and Toliver.

REPORTER

Mr. President, would you comment about the allegations made on the internet today...

PRESIDENT EVANS

I'm not discussing any allegations especially those made on the internet.

REPORTER TWO

But sir, the sexual allegations were made very public today by Congressman Runyon...

PRESIDENT EVANS

And I'm sure he quite regrets it.

The reporters laugh.

REPORTER

Sir, do you think if the allegations are accurate, Senator Hanson will be viewed by the public as morally fit to take office?

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

I'll tell you what. I'm sure president Batista and I would both welcome the votes of only those people with sexual indiscretions in their past.

Laughter again. Evans seems to have them.

\*

NEWMAN

(privately)

Who scheduled this fucking thing?

TOLIVER

He's holding his own. Nobody's going to fuck with Jackson Evans' swan song. No sir.

61 INT. RUNYON'S OFFICE LOBBY. NIGHT

61

A few of Runyon's constituents wait outside of Runyon's office. SHEILA, the clerk is typing. Webster walks in, obviously late.

WEBSTER

Hey, Sheila.

(turns to the constituents)

Hey, all.

SHEILA

They've been waiting for about ten minutes.

62 INT. RUNYON'S OFFICE. NIGHT

62

Webster comes in just in time to hear...

HARDING

(obviously rehearsing)

And her involvement in prostitution-

RUNYON

No. Al, you've gotta couch it like, uh, this is something for the AG to investigate-

HARDING

"It's embarrassing..." Hey Reg.. "It's embarrassing when a newspaper can beat the FBI with such scathing information."

RUNYON

Okay, but still... It's very... heavy..

HARDING

Heavy.

RUNYON (cont'd)

Sinister. Although that's a nice touch. Giving the director of the FBI the bone.

(notices Webster)

Reggie, how are we doing with "America live?"

WEBSTER

It's all set. What's going on?

RUNYON

We've been going over his statement in response to the Washington Post story.

WEBSTER

Which Post story?

HARDING

The one that says a secret investigation is  
ongoing to determine if Laine Hanson  
accepted money for her fuckfest in college.

WEBSTER

I didn't see this story.

RUNYON

It'll be in tomorrow's afternoon edition.  
Just in time for the Congressman to make his  
statement and just in time for it to stick  
in the minds of Americans over the weekend.

WEBSTER

How did they get the story?

RUNYON

(smiling)

Unnamed sources close to the investigation.  
(to Harding)  
Al, thanks. Let's just dot the "I"s on this  
later.

\*  
\*

Harding nods to both men and leaves the room.

RUNYON (cont'd)

I think I smell some self-righteous  
indignation coming my way.

WEBSTER

Is there any truth whatsoever to the story?

RUNYON

Well, there's going to be an investigation.

WEBSTER

But, she's going to have truth on her side.  
She's going to deny it and make us all look-

RUNYON

Let her. Let her deny just that part of the  
story.

63 OMIT

63

64 OMIT

64

65 INT. ABC STUDIOS. NIGHT

65

Laine is seated ready to go on the air. As the CREW prepares,  
Hollis, William, and Toliver talk to themselves and a producer of  
the upcoming AMERICA LIVE broadcast.

PRODUCER

Talk to me about "trust" one more time and I'm  
going to start treating it like an insult.

WILLIAM

Look, nobody's trying to insult anybody. We just don't want Peter to get into this thing tangentially, you know what I mean? We can't let this thing become more of a circus than what it is.

PRODUCER

AMERICA LIVE is not in the circus business. \*

HOLLIS

No, you're not. Pete's always been fair- \*

PRODUCER

That doesn't mean he'll softball the Senator. You're going to be Vice-President and we must deal with legitimate issues of concern. Like, this atheism thing and-

HOLLIS

Well, that's bullshit, too, Ray. What about the economy? The Middle-East-

LAINÉ

It's fine, Ray.  
(to Hollis)  
It's fine.

HOLLIS

Okay, but if that comes up...

PRODUCER

It will come up....

HOLLIS  
Stick to facts. The "In God we Trust" debate- that's good. Nobody can tackle you on that. Just don't preach atheism. Preach the Constitution! God has no business on government currency.

TOLIVER  
(to producer)  
Where's her monitor?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

WILLIAM  
And make sure to sneak in something about Mubarak...

PRODUCER  
There's no monitor for her. She'll hear Pete in the earpiece.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

HOLLIS  
We don't have to waste time with that. Nobody in Des Moines's going to ask, "Hey, why isn't she eulogizing Hosni Mubarak?"

TOLIVER  
Hey, that's crock city. We've talked about this before. If Pete can see her than she should be able to see him. It gives him a sensory advantage...

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

A Very well dressed man, STEVE (42), walks into the room and goes straight for Will and Hollis

STEVE  
Hey, guys. You've got one helluva candidate.

WILLIAM  
Thanks, we think so.

PRODUCER  
You want to pull her. Pull her. But the rules are the rules. Even for Evans.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

STEVE  
Hi, I'm Steve Poulet.

TOLIVER  
This is pure bullshit.

\*  
\*

WILLIAM  
Will Hanson.

LAINE  
Guys! (beat) We knew the rules going in.

\*  
\*  
\*

STEVE  
Yes, I know. She has great dignity. She was just great in the hearings today. Cool and collected.

LAINE  
I think I have a small shine, here.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

A MAKE-UP girl moves in to correct the problem. Steve moves in.

STEVE  
Hi. I'm Steve Poulet.

Laine barely looks at him in the frenzy. A stagehand walks in.

STAGEHAND

Okay, lets back up. Its in ten. We need you,  
Steve.

STEVE

Sure. By all.

As Pouillet leaves the room. Everybody backs off from Laine. She adjusts herself as the producer counts her down. Now, note that we can hear only Laine, not PETER CRENSHAW (the anchor). When the producer points to her she puts on a smile. She is so very composed. Hollis paces relentlessly behind the cameras.

LAINE

Thank you for having me Peter...

That would be fine...

Well, it has been a taxing experience, but it ought to be. If we are forced to take the voters out of the equation, the vetting system by simple necessity must be arduous...

I'll have to plead "Motherhood" on that one.

Pete, I not only served on the foreign relations committee, but sponsored the Hanson-Feinman bill which readjusted the War Powers Act to allow the executive to respond to state-sponsored terrorism...

WILLIAM  
(whispering)  
You did a nice job on this one, Jerry.

LAINÉ \*  
Like that of Iraq and Libya and \*  
North Korea. But, rather than \*  
boring you with a resume, I'd \*  
rather answer your questions on \*  
specific issues of foreign \*  
policy. \*

Now, we get a long beat. Something changes in Laine's demeanor.

LAINÉ  
Well, Mr. Crenshaw, I suppose I could ask you how you'd feel in the same situation.

Hollis stops in his tracks. This doesn't sound right.

LAINÉ  
(smiles)  
It appears they spelled my name right.

Now, Hollis and William and Toliver race out of the studio.

65A INT. STUDIO HALLWAY.

65A

They come to a monitor.

CRENSHAW  
They are the mystery men, those allegedly involved in the alleged sexual incident with the then Laine Billings. As one can expect, there has been a nation-wide search for them. Now, one has surfaced. Steven Poulet, welcome to Nightline.

And now, POW, Laine's image is side by side with Steven Poulet, the man who had been chatting with Laine's entourage.

STEVE (TV)  
Thank you, Ted.

CRENSHAW (TV)  
Mrs. Hanson, do you recognize, Mr. Poulet?

LAINÉ (TV)  
No.

STEVE (TV)

The truth is that Laine and I had that one incident and I don't believe we ever saw each other again after that. To her credit, she was very drunk when she had sex with Hor- with my friends- my brothers and I-

HOLLIS

We're going to sue these fuckers. We're going to sue them all. And we're suing fucking Nightline for ambushing us...

CRENSHAW (TV)

Mrs. Hanson I see that you are shaking-

LAINÉ

Not at this gentleman, but at you. This gentleman has infiltrated your show and ...

CRENSHAW

Mrs. Hanson, you still have not taken a stand on the accuracy of this report...

STEVE

It's very accurate, Pete. And those photos are accurate, too. They were up on the frat. house bulletin board for months. We called it, uh "Life in the Sex Laine."

LAINÉ

It's a cliché, Pete, but it certainly applies here. I will not dignify those remarks or your questions with a response.  
(starts to undo her mike)  
Good evening.

66	OMIT	66
67	OMIT	67
68	EXT. HANSON PORCH. LATER THAT NIGHT.	68

William Hanson swings on the porch. Behind him the world is pitch black. The porch lights are off. From the interior lights, we can see the melancholy look on his face. After a few seconds, the screen door opens. It is Laine in her nightgown.

LAINÉ

Will.

No response.

LAINE (cont'd)  
Are you okay, Will?

Will nods his head. Laine sits down next to him.

WILLIAM

You can fight back. Just a bit.

Laine lays her head on his shoulder. Now, all of a sudden, the pitch blackness explodes into gigantic SHEETS OF LIGHT as photographers start clicking away. It almost looks like a long shot view of an aerial bombing.

69 EXT. HANSON RESIDENCE. DAY

69

LAINÉ is on the front porch swing. Hollis and Timmy play catch on the front lawn. Two secret service agents are also there. One of them is Stevenson. Stevenson walks up to Laine and whispers to her. She nods to him. He speaks into his walkie-talkie.

STEVENSON

Okay, that's a Roger.

A car comes up to the top of the driveway and settles. May Runyon gets out of the car.

70 EXT. HANSON FRONT PORCH. DAY

70

May and Laine are on the swing. Hollis can't help but to pace.

MAY

He's not a bad, man. He believes in what he's doing. There's an odd integrity there. But in this business, with so much at stake, it is not enough to be true to yourself, you have to be right...This is an ideological rape (beat) of all women.

LAINÉ

I'll survive this, then. For all of us.

MAY

Tomorrow, Congressman Marshall will question you. He's going to hit you with abortion. And, I promise you, somehow, Shelly's going to find a way to call you a baby-killer. \*

HOLLIS

We're ready for it, Mrs. Runyon. Our position papers were worked on by-

MAY

(just to Laine)

You let him finish. And then look him in the eye and tell him and tell the world, "Mr. Runyon, twenty years ago, your wife May had an abortion. Do you think her a murderer?"

Hollis and Laine look each other over.

HOLLIS  
He's a hypocrite.

MAY  
No. He's not. Shelly has no idea.

71. INT. CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ROOM. FRIDAY MORNING

71

\*

Laine looks composed as ever. So does Runyon.

CONGRESSMAN MARSHALL  
Are you saying you would appoint a supreme court justice based on his being pro-choice?

\*

LAINÉ  
(trying not to patronize)  
Mr. Marshall, a Vice-President does not appoint the Supreme Court justices.

\*

CONGRESSMAN MARSHALL  
Should you succeed the President or even advise the President...

\*

LAINÉ  
I would be inclined, though not without flexibility, to discard any man or woman who is pro-life from serving on the high court.

CONGRESSMAN MARSHALL  
So, you'd allow a personal political belief to enter into such a decision?

\*

LAINÉ  
Abortion isn't a Constitutional issue. The fine ladies and gentlemen who serve on the Supreme Court, which is now stacked with right-wing appointees, have no business deciding whether the women of this nation will have to resort to back-ally abortions or -

CONGRESSMAN MARSHALL  
You mean they have no business deciding whether women have a licence to commit murder-

\*

RUNYON  
Congressman Marshall, your time is up...

\*

CONGRESSMAN MARSHALL  
Sir, can the distinguished gentlelady from Ohio at least answer...

\*

\*

RUNYON

The lady has made clear her propensity for abortion. I think we can move on.

Now Hollis can't take it.

HOLLIS

Mr. Chairman, I must object...

RUNYON

Mr. Lewis, you do not have speaking privileges in these proceedings..

Now Laine calmly breaks in.

LAINE

Mr. Chairman, I find the term 'propensity for abortion' misrepresentative of my position. I have a propensity for a woman's right to (choose.)

RUNYON

... to abort a child. To kill a baby as it grows in the womb.

(composes himself)

I am sorry. When it comes to this issue I am very... Personally, Senator, I don't believe our citizens have a right to butcher a defenseless human being simply as a "matter of choice." At the risk of my own future I tell you this, if you support the right of a woman to choose you are supporting nothing short of a holocaust for the unborn.

ANGLE- LAINE

contemplating her options. Does she drop the bomb? Does she destroy one Shelly Runyon with the simple nugget provided by May Runyon? Hollis writes on the pad. She looks down. It is the word: "YES". She looks at it, contemplates some more. Then...

LAINE

I believe my position on this issue is clear.

RUNYON

Yes, it most certainly is. Well, I trust that everybody is quite prepared for the three-day weekend. Be safe, and we will reconvene Tuesday morning at 10:00AM.

The GAVEL CRASHES down and everybody begins to disperse.

Laine and Hollis rise and they begin to gather their papers

HOLLIS

(privately to Laine)

If you're in a knife fight, you gotta pull out the fucking knife, Senator.

LAINE

This damn abortion thing. It's a no win killer. Every time, every single time, it's a fight between good and evil and there's no way of telling which side you're on.

72 INT. CONGRESSIONAL ROTUNDA. DAY

72

RUNYON

This fucking abortion platform is a Goddamn ball and chain. Next time, we gotta get in and out of this son of a bitch in three seconds flat. Who's the prick who brought it in? Was it Reagan or Buchanan?

CONGRESSMAN MARSHALL

I don't know. Maybe it was Nixon.

\*

RUNYON

Nixon was too good a politician for that.

73 EXT. CAPITAL STEPS. DAY

73

Harding is holding a newspaper headline "FBI Investigating Possible Prostitution by Laine Hanson." Among those watching Harding is Webster.

CONGRESSMAN HARDING

Make no mistake about it ladies and gentlemen, the Senator's lack of a willingness to address this issue, either in these chambers or when confronted on a national television show, gives one cause to consider the story's veracity.

REPORTER FOUR

Some people would say that a person's sex life should not be an issue whatsoever.

CONGRESSMAN HARDING

In this case, the Senator is said to have performed multiple sex acts with multiple partners.

Furthermore, one of the nation's leading newspapers is this afternoon reporting that the Senator may have been rewarded with cash for the sex. Perhaps the Senator's views on prostitution parallels her views on abortion, that a woman has a right to do what she wants with her body, even if it is a criminal act. Perhaps a special prosecutor...

74 INT. LAINE'S OFFICE.

74

There is a LOBBY GROUP of about six people in Laine's office: TEAMSTERS. Though everybody is in a jacket and tie, there is a slovenliness to them. They seem out of place in Laine's elegant office, but Laine herself seems to be very accommodating. Laine leans up against her desk as she listens intently.

LOBBYIST 1

There's a whole thing goin' on there with, on the one hand, the meat packers, and, on the other hand, us. Now, they can hurt us, no doubt, but we can knock them on their ass, too.

LAINE

I spoke to Hank Winslet-

LOBBYIST 2

When did you speak to Hank?

LAINE

Before the hearings this morning.

LOBBYIST 2

Bastard won't take my calls-

LAINE

Look, Fred, you remember the last time we spoke? You were right where you are right now, and Hank was sitting right were Lenny is, and you started telling him about what a shame it would be if the refrigeration systems on the trucks went out-

LOBBYIST 2

Kind of, I guess-

LAINE

Hank's a hothead. He took that as a threat.

LOBBYIST 1

If we were threatening he'd know it.

\*  
\*

LAINE (cont'd)

That's what I thought. So, now we have to do  
some massaging. Hank's got to be treated  
with kid gloves. Look, when you guys go  
before the anti-trust committee don't you  
want Hank on your side?

\*  
\*

LOBBYIST 1

But not at any cost. My boys have pride.

LAINE

Your boys have families, Sal. Taking care of them is where their pride should be.

An intercom buzzes. It is JERRY, Laine's secretary.

JERRY (OS)

Your 7:00, Madame Senator.

LOBBYIST 2

(frustrated)

Well, I guess we got our ten minutes.

LAINE

Send him in, Jerry.

(to group, as they exit)

Let's resolve things. Give me a few minutes.  
If you guys want something to drink,  
Jerry'll take care of you.

The lobbyists move out, happy that they will be resummoned.  
Webster walks in. He waits for them to close the door.

WEBSTER

Wow. You still have time for this stuff?

Laine moves behind her desk. She is much more business-like.

WEBSTER (cont'd)

That was Charley Brooks, right? Teamsters? \*

LAINE

What can I do for you, Mister Webster?

WEBSTER

Look, I'll bet you're wondering why I'm here. You see, I just...

LAINE

(looking over some papers)

You're here because you want to know why I'm not fighting back.

Before Webster can get in a word...

LAINE (cont'd)

Because despite it all you have some odd sense of fair play. You're kicking my ass and it's gone from feeling like easy pickings to out and out bullying.

WEBSTER

Look, there should be some back and forth between us, the committee and you.

LAINE

I'll give you back and forth...

(beat)

On social security, abortion, relations with Israel, on defense spending, on the census, on the Dow Jones, on almost everything. But not this. Not on my private life. Its nobody's business.

WEBSTER

That's not what the people will tell you. The people will tell you that you set the standards of morality for their children. especially the girls.

LAINE

Have you ever heard of Issac Lamm?

WEBSTER

Issac Lamm? No.

LAINE

He was the first one to come before HUAC- The House UnAmerican Activities Committee. He was also the first one to name names. He was the first one to cooperate with the government. The dominoes fell from there. Careers crushed, families destroyed. Imagine, Mr. Webster, if Mr. Lamb, had just said "fuck you" to the committee. Imagine how much harder he'd have made it for them.

WEBSTER

Are you accusing the committee of sexual McCarthyism?

LAINE

It's not necessary to make the accusation.

(beat)

I can't respond to the committee's lightly veiled accusations because it's not okay for them to be made.

WEBSTER

Or maybe you can't respond because the answers are too shameful.

LAINÉ

You know what? You're young and I'll choose to be amused by your naïveté. And I'll give you the benefit of the doubt and spell it out even more clearly. If I were a man, nobody would care how many sexual partners I had in college. And if it's not relevant for a man then it is not relevant for a woman.

(intercom)

Jerry, send the folks back in, would you?

(to Webster)

I've got to finish this up.

Webster gets up to leave, his hand on the doorknob. He turns around. There is one more thing he has to say.

WEBSTER

I just didn't think you should've taken that oath is all. \*

As the LOBBY GROUP reenters the room...

LAINÉ

Yeah, you were probably right on that one.

75 INT. CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ROOM. DAY

75

It is the next day. The gallery is fuller than ever.

RUNYON

I want to start by saying that much has been made of the reports in the press of an investigation into possible, *possible* I say again, criminal behavior on the part of the nominee. This committee will wait for the report from the FBI before taking the matter up. However, I'll once again afford the nominee an opportunity to respond.

LAINÉ

(cool, composed)

I too will wait for the FBI report before responding... if there even is one.

RUNYON

(shuffling some papers)

Madam Senator, tell us a little bit about your family. Do you have any children?

LAINÉ

I have one six year old boy. Timothy.

RUNYON

A very young boy... Now, I see here that when you had Timothy, you were absent from your duty for a few months. Maternity leave.

LAINÉ

I believe in the right and responsibility of every mother to take maternity leave.

RUNYON

Paid maternity leave?

LAINÉ

I do not believe we should penalize our citizens for having children.

RUNYON

I think I'm on safe ground saying that valuing motherhood is quite non-partisan. Now were you to get pregnant again, do you plan to take maternity leave again?

Laine stares ahead blankly. Then...

LAINÉ

I have not given that any consideration.

RUNYON

No? Are you still able to bear children?

LAINÉ

Yes, I believe- yes, I am.

RUNYON (cont'd)

Yet, you have not given this matter any consideration? Perhaps that means- No, strike that. Madame Senator, let us assume you ascended to the Presidency and that you were to have a child during your term. Would you cede your duties to your Vice-President? And for how long?

WEBSTER

Mr. Chairman! Would the Chair have the designate assure this committee she would tie her tubes before she assume office?!

Runyon slowly looks over, surprised to say the least.

RUNYON

I have the floor, Congressman.

WEBSTER

Then I request a point of order.

\*  
\*

RUNYON

And you shall be afforded one when I am  
finished. I ask again (then)

\*  
\*  
\*

WEBSTER

With all due respect-

\*

LAINE

The truth is that while we have not put a seal on the concept of having another child, my husband and I practise birth control.

RUNYON

Uh-huh. Okay. I'd now like to enter the arena of loyalty. Loyalty is a revered quality among Vice-Presidents. Agreed?

\*

\*

LAINE

Yes. Of course.

RUNYON

Do you consider yourself a loyal person?

LAINE

Very much so, yes.

RUNYON

Yet you chose to officially move from the Republican to Democratic party when you left this House in order to run for the Senate.

LAINE

I view switching parties as a testament to my loyalty to my country. I felt the Republican Party had shifted from the ideals I cherished through my youth, ideals taught to me by my father.

RUNYON

A great man, Governor Billings. Out of curiosity, how does he feel about your abandoning your party?

LAINE

Well, I'm pretty sure he voted for me in the last election.

The room laughs. Including Runyon...for now.

RUNYON

As a Republican, did you ever vote along party lines but against your own beliefs?

LAINE

Never.

RUNYON

You still believe in every vote you made?

LAINÉ

Yes.

RUNYON

Including your vote to impeach President Clinton?

LAINÉ

Yes. It was an issue of fairness. The President, as Commander in Chief, stood by while several Military officers, including candidates for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, were prosecuted for adultery or were not permitted to advance in their careers. I am opposed to making adultery or even lying about it a crime in our armed forces. But while it is a law, it should be enforced without consideration of rank, even if that rank is Commander in Chief.

RUNYON

Perhaps the Senator is unaware that Commander in Chief is not actually a military rank.

LAINÉ

Of course. I think we can say of President Clinton that he was not guilty but responsible.

RUNYON

Not guilty but responsible. I like that very much. I think I'll use that if you don't mind.

LAINÉ

If that's your wish.

RUNYON

When considering you for the Vice-Presidency we must also consider your worthiness as Commander in Chief. Would you agree?

76 INT. HANSON HOME. DAY.

76

William is sitting at home, his head buried as he watches the proceedings on the television.

WILLIAM

Here it comes.

77 INT. CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ROOM. SAME TIME

77

LAINE

Yes.

RUNYON

In that case, given your feelings on the matter, have you ever committed adultery?

LAINE

No, I have not.

RUNYON

No?

LAINE

No.

RUNYON

You're quite sure? You understand, Madame Senator, that you are under oath here?

LAINE

Yes. I understand that between the two of us I am the one under oath.

78 INT. CONGRESSIONAL GYMNASIUM. DAY

78

\*

Laine is shooting hoops. She makes a few, misses a few, but her sweat-soaked shirt is an indication of her intense workout. She is the only person in the gym, save for a GUARD at the end. On to the court comes Webster.

\*

\*

\*

\*

WEBSTER

Senator?

Laine continues to shoot throughout the scene. Webster's head moves in natural rhythm to the serves.

\*

\*

LAINE

Go ahead, Mr. Webster, I can do two things at the same time.

WEBSTER

Madame Senator, I wanted to...

LAINE

See what whores do on their time off?

WEBSTER

The things I've done- They may not be nice and they may not be political savvy, but they have served the greater good. And they have been honest. Once we steer away from honesty... we steer away from any possibility of doing the right thing. Look, I know you're not a whore. I know that.

LAINÉ

I'm just not going to-

WEBSTER

I know, you're not talking about it. So, let me. The constitution, was created to be a shield that protects the American people. Now, we're using it as a sword. It's just... you know; not for me.

Webster pulls out an envelope..

WEBSTER (cont'd)

Somebody else has stepped forward. Somebody else from that incident sent me a letter. Or, you know, they sent it to the committee. Runyon put me in charge of the correspondence.

(beat)

It's a bombshell. That's for sure. I don't think you can keep quiet about what's in here. Mr. Runyon has a copy.

(hands it to her.)

And now so do you. I beg you to deal with this.

DISSOLVE TO:

79 INT. CONGRESSIONAL GYMNASIUM. DAY

79

Laine sits by the basket, clutching the letter by her side. She is in a daze, clearly blown away by what she has read.

80 INT. COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM. DAY

80

SENATOR SKAKLE

Mr. Chairman, the committee would like to call Cynthia Charlton Lee.

From the back of the room comes an elegant woman, attractive, about the same age as Laine. She is CYNTHIA LEE. As she moves to the table she nods to Laine who doesn't respond.

\*

RUNYON

Mrs. Lee, we just need to swear you in.

Cynthia nods and raises her right hand.

RUNYON

Mrs. Lee, do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CYNTHIA

I do.

RUNYON

Please state your name for the record.

CYNTHIA

It is Cynthia C-H-A-R-L-T-O-N Lee.

SENATOR SKAKLE

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Miss Lee thank you for joining us today. Now you are under subpoena, is that correct? \*

CYNTHIA

(very shy, nervous)

Yes.

SENATOR SKAKLE

I understand you're nervous, but please believe me when I tell you you are among friends. Miss Lee, you are not married? \*

CYNTHIA

No... no, I'm not.

SENATOR SKAKLE

But you once were? \*

CYNTHIA

Yes. I was married to William Hanson.

SENATOR SKAKLE

Who is now married to the nominee? \*

Cynthia turns around and faces Laine. Cynthia's face is full of apology. Laine nods to her, as if to pre-forgive her.

SENATOR SKAKLE (cont'd)

Miss. Lee? \*

CYNTHIA

Will married Laine after our divorce.  
It was about seven years ago.

CONGRESSMAN SKAKLE

Your divorce, right. I have read your  
divorce papers and it cites "irreconcilable  
differences." Could you tell us, what were  
those irreconcilable differences?

Cynthia seems tongue-tied.

SENATOR SKAKLE

Was your husband physically violent to you?

CYNTHIA

No.

SENATOR SKAKLE

Did you have financial disagreements?  
Disagreements over how to raise your kids?

CYNTHIA

We didn't have children.

CONGRESSMAN SKAKLE

Well, were there infidelities?

CYNTHIA

Yes. There was one.

CONGRESSMAN SKAKLE

And is it safe to say that this infidelity  
precipitated the divorce.

Cynthia nods.

RUNYON

Miss Lee, please answer the question  
verbally. Was that a "Yes."?

CYNTHIA

Yes. It was. It was a "yes".

CONGRESSMAN SKAKLE

Did you, ma'am, have the affair?

CYNTHIA

No. It wasn't me.

CONGRESSMAN SKAKLE

It was your husband then?

CYNTHIA

Will handled the... he was in charge of Laine Billing's first Senatorial campaign. He was with her all the time.

CONGRESSMAN SKAKLE

Are you suggesting the Senator, the nominee, engaged in an affair with your husband?

\*

Cynthia nods.

CONGRESSMAN SKAKLE

Once again, Miss Lee-

\*

CYNTHIA

Yes.

CONGRESSMAN SKAKLE

Did the nominee know Mr. Hanson was married?

\*

CYNTHIA

I was friends with Laine. We were... good, good friends.

CONGRESSMAN SKAKLE

Miss Lee, would you explain to this committee, as you did in deposition, how you discovered that the nominee was involved in a sexual affair with your husband?

\*

It takes Cynthia a while to get started. But she does.

CYNTHIA

On the night of the elections, I was at home because I had the flu. I was watching TV, watching Laine about to give her acceptance speech. I was very sad that I couldn't be there. It was a triumph for Laine, my friend, and for Will, my husband. She was up at the podium. Will was by her side. He was holding her hand in victory. The person on the other side of Laine, she was sort of clasping hands with that person. But with Will, the fingers were interlocked. It's odd that I noticed it, but I did. My doorbell rang. I answered the door. There was a man there, very nicely dressed and he had a summons for me. A divorce summons.

SKAKLE

I'm sorry to hear that. Nobody should have to go through so cruel an event.

\*

(beat)

I have no more questions for this witness.

81 INT. LAINE'S OFFICE. DAY

81

\*

Laine is in the process of being besieged by reporters.

\*

REPORTER ONE

Senator, why did you choose not to cross  
Cynthia Lee?

LAINE

There was nothing to cross.

HOLLIS

Look, guys, we're playing ball, so don't  
suffocate us. Move back, a bit...

REPORTER TWO

Mrs. Hanson, were you involved in group-

LAINE

I know you guys have a job to do. I came out  
to talk with you to address only one issue.  
Since this committee chose to humiliate a  
very private woman in the most public  
possible setting, I will apologize to her  
alike and I will do so privately when she  
allows me to do so. What I did to Mrs. Lee  
was wrong. It was not done of malice, indeed  
the opposite. Love is an involuntary reflex  
and I fell victim to it. I deeply regret  
that I caused Cynthia pain. This is  
especially saddening for me because of how  
close we once were. Whether or not the  
affair that Will and I had should have a  
bearing on my assuming office is for the  
committee to decide. I dare not assume that  
I have the objective wisdom to make that  
determination. Thank You.

\*

82 INT. OVAL OFFICE. NIGHT

82

President Evans slams his fist down on the table. It shocks  
everybody because nobody, not the audience and none of the  
characters in the film, have seen this kind of anger from him.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Son of a bitch!

LAINE

I'm not sure I get the point of all this.

NEWMAN

Aw, hell, Laine, you said under oath you never committed adultery.

LAINE

That's right.

NEWMAN

You perjured yourself.

LAINE

I didn't commit adultery.

Newman stops himself. How can he put this delicately?

NEWMAN

You were fucking Will when he was married.

PRESIDENT EVANS

(starting to calm down)

C'mon now, K. There's no need for that.

LAINE

Even the loosest definition of committing adultery would not-

PRESIDENT EVANS

You know, goddamit, Kermit, Laine's right. You're right, Laine.

(beat)

In order for her to be committing adultery she'd have to be married at the time. You're knit-picking in reverse now. Your husband may be an adulterer but you're not. Fine. What you are is a sex-crazed home wrecking machine. You're the female Warren Beatty, Runyon knows you're clean of perjury. but he's gotten the world thinking you're something out of a bad soap opera. You've Goddamn crystallized the difference between being guilty and being responsible.

LAINE

Are you asking me to step down, sir?

PRESIDENT EVANS

No. It's not going to be that easy for you and it's not going to be that easy for them.

They caught you being a human being, that's all. I'll die before Shelly Runyon checkmates me.

NEWMAN

I think what the President is trying to say is that the Sitting Bull routine isn't working.

LAINE

Sitting Bull routine?

NEWMAN

Fight back. Show them that Laine Hanson isn't going to take their shit. Take the fight out of them.

LAINE

And what's the process?

NEWMAN

Confess.

LAINE

Confess?

NEWMAN

Confession brings you sympathy. Play it any way you want. Confess and then show indignation that a man would never have to go through hell for having done this! Confess and demonstrate to the young women of America how such sexual impropriety can ruin their lives. Confess and then preach about the danger that alcohol can create for you. For God's sake just confess!

LAINE

I understand, Kermit. Truly I do. And, you know, it's really just nobody's business-

And now Newman explodes. It is a shocker because we've never seen him like this.

NEWMAN

WELL IT IS OUR FUCKING BUSINESS! Personally, I don't care who you fucked and how many times and in how many positions- as long as it doesn't threaten the administration! You can be cavalier on your own dime.

\*

\*

LAINE

Mr. President, I am fully prepared to step down. But my personal life and past is just that. I will do whatever you say.

The President gets up and before leaving the room taps her on the shoulder.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Just let 'em have it with your closing statement.

83 INT. CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY

83

Laine sits rigidly, proudly...

\*

LAINE

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the committee... Just to be absolutely clear about that which needs to be clear. I stand for a woman's right to choose. I stand for the elimination of the death penalty. I stand for a strong and growing armed forces and for the notion that we have the responsibility and indeed the obligation to risk and even sacrifice the lives of our troops if it means stomping out genocide on this planet. I stand for seeing every gun taken out of every home. Period. I stand for making the selling of cigarettes to our youth a federal offense. I stand for term limits and campaign reform, . And Mr. Chairman... I stand for the separation of church and state. And I stand for it for the same reason I believe our forefathers did. It is not there to protect religion from the grasp of government, but to protect our government from the grasp religious fanaticism. I may be an atheist, but that does not mean that I do not go to church. I do go to church. I go to the church that emancipated the slaves, that gave women the right to vote, that propelled us to challenge Hitler, and that gave us every freedom we hold dear. My church is this very chapel of Democracy that we sit in together. I do not need God to tell me what are my moral absolutes. I need my heart, my brain, and this church.

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RUNYON

Is that it? You have nothing else to say?

LAINE

I wish those to be my final words.

RUNYON

Okay, then, I thank the nominee for her  
patience and stamina.

The committee will adjourn for the evening and in the morning will caucus to determine as to whether to advise and consent to the appointment of Laine B. Hanson as Vice President of the United States of America. Ms. Hanson, you are excused...

A PAGE comes behind Runyon and whispers in his ear.

RUNYON (cont'd)

Okay, it appears that the committee has one more witness who we have only now successfully subpoenaed... Madame Senator, would you have any difficulty with beginning the proceedings tomorrow at 10 AM?

LAINE

That will be fine sir.

RUNYON

Very well then.

BOOM! The gavel comes crashing down. Hollis and Laine stand. A PAGE brings over an envelope which Hollis unseals.

34 INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

84

Oscar Billings, Laine's father, is in his bathrobe looking out on the DC cityscape. Hollis is next to him.

OSCAR

Runyon wants to get the nation's most popular Republican to stand in front of him and explain how he feels about his daughter being a whore. That's what he wants.

HOLLIS

Right. And we have a few ideas for you..

OSCAR

I know what the fuck I'm going to say. I don't need you to tell me what to say!

HOLLIS

(taken aback)

Is there a problem here, sir?

OSCAR

How the hell could you let this happen? Why the hell didn't you protect her? How could you let them rip my girl apart. Jesus! Didn't you have anything on Runyon?

HOLLIS

We had something. But Laine wouldn't use it.

OSCAR

Of course Laine wouldn't use it! She has too much character for that. That's why people like you are hired. \*

There is a KNOCK. Laine pokes her head in the room.

LAINE

Dad?

HOLLIS

I'll leave you two alone.

Laine walks to her father. She hugs him.

LAINE

We haven't had a chance to speak.

OSCAR

I think we've chosen not to speak.

(beat)

Baby, I know things are tough right now. I know it's Goddamn embarrassing. So just to get things even between us, lemme tell you about a little something from my past. I was twenty-three-

LAINE

Dad. You know what? It's Okay. Really.

OSCAR

Thank you.

(looking directly out window)

You know, I felt ashamed a few days ago when all that stuff about you came out. And then, a few minutes later, I felt something different. I felt ashamed that I was ever ashamed. Ashamed that I was ready to ever give you up that easily. The truth of the matter is that it's more difficult for your dad to assume that you're an imperfect flesh and blood human being than it is for your constituents.

LAINE

The polls are terrible. I don't know that the nation will ever take me seriously.

OSCAR

The nation will get over this Laine. They'll get over it not because they've always loved you but because they respect you. They respect the sacrifices you have made to serve them- serve their interests. Sacrifice is the first pillar of greatness.

\*  
\*  
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\*  
\*

LAINE

And they'll say moral behavior is the second.

\*  
\*  
\*

OSCAR (cont'd)

Ethical behavior. If sexual impropriety, whatever, had been allowed to disqualify people from leading this country, there never would have been a New Deal, we may not have entered World War II, and the Soviets might still have nukes in Cuba. The old man is with you baby, right to the end.

\*  
\*  
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85 INT. HANSON RESIDENCE. NIGHT

85

Laine and William make love. The phone RINGS and RINGS and RINGS. ~~We push in and see its line three.~~

86 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY. NIGHT

86

Laine stands at the nurses station, using the hospital phone. Her face tells it all. Devastation. Exhaustion. Behind her, in the distance is William standing outside of a hospital room where a police guard is sitting guard. Beyond Will sit Hollis and Timmy.

LAINE

I can't do that by myself. We'll make the decision together... I don't want to think about that right now, Tessie. I just need you here and dad should- you should see...

And now, in the distance, something distracts Laine. A doctor has entered frame and begun speaking to Will.

86A INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY-BILLINGS AREA. NIGHT

86A

Will and the doctor speak. In the bg, Laine is rushing to end her talk.

DOCTOR

We pumped his stomach. He must have taken ...twenty... or so... Lasix-

WILLIAM

Lasix? What's (that?)

DOCTOR

That's an amphetamine that clearly-

WILLIAM

He had a heart attack. Plain and simple.

And, now, here comes Laine.

DOCTOR

Yes. But it was self-induced by the pills

WILLIAM

He-had-a-heart-attack. Plain-and-simple.  
He's an old man.

DOCTOR

Yes. Okay.

WILLIAM

And, I don't think that Lai- the Senator  
needs to know the... the causal effect of-

DOCTOR (cont'd)

Mr. Hanson, do you have any children you  
~~want me to have brought here?~~ Do you-

WILLIAM

Timmy's, Timmy's here.

DOCTOR

Do you want us to get a clergyman for you?

Now Laine has arrived.

LAINE

Doctor?

WILLIAM

The doctor was just wondering if we wanted  
to bring in a clergymen.

LAINE

Thank you, no. He wouldn't want that.

DOCTOR

Yes ma'am.

LAINE

It was very decent of Walter Reade to give this kind of privacy...

DOCTOR

There isn't anybody here who doesn't very much admire the Governor.

LAINE

Well, I'd very much like to thank whomever it is that needs to be thanked. Are they almost done in there? \*

DOCTOR

Yes, just a few minutes I think.

William and Laine nod and walk over to the other two.

WILLIAM

Hey, buddy.

Timmy does not respond. He is deep into Gameboy.

LAINE (cont'd)

I think we have a Gameboy champ on our hands. What level are you at?

TIMMY

(not looking up)

Four. But I'm almost at five.

WILLIAM

Boy. That would be a record.

Timmy is concentrated. After a few seconds. Laine takes his arm.

LAINE

Timmy?

Timmy looks up at her, his lips quivering.

TIMMY

Is grandpa going to die?

LAINE

I think so, Timmy. He had a bad, bad heart attack.

TIMMY

(lips quivering)

But, I don't want grandpa to become nothing.

LAINE

(kneeling in front of him)

Timmy. Your grandpa will always be something. It's the one thing about being great. You are always there.

A nurse walks out of the hospital room. The doctor nods an approval for them to go in the room.

LAINE (cont'd)

You wanna go see Grandpa?

87 INT. OSCAR'S HOSPITAL ROOM. NIGHT

87 \*

Laine walks to the bed. She takes Oscar's hand. Hollis and William move to the back of the room. Timmy walks up to the bed.

TIMMY

Hi, Grandpa.  
(gingerly)  
does it hurt?  
(no response)  
Grandpa... Mommy says you're going to die.  
(no response)  
... And I know there's no God and no  
heaven... but if there is, will you tell  
grandma that I got my orange belt in Karate.

OSCAR

(barely)  
You bet.

William bends down next to Timmy.

WILLIAM

Go wait outside, Timmy. Okay?

Timmy nods and starts to go out. But he thinks better of it and runs back to the bed and kisses his Grandpa for the last time. Then he heads out the door and there standing on the threshold is SHELLY RUNYON. Runyon stays put and looks about the room. There is an odd humility to him. Laine walks over to him. Gets close. Very close.

RUNYON

Good evening, Senator.

Laine closes the door behind them, so we are back in the...

87A INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY. NIGHT

87A

RUNYON

I just wanted to let you know, Senator, that we're all praying for your father.

LAINÉ

Which way?

(Runyon is dumbstruck)

I'd really rather yours not be the last face he sees before he dies, Shelly.

\*  
\*

RUNYON

He asked for me. he asked for me. \*

Shelly leans forward to open the door but is blocked by Laine. \*

RUNYON (cont'd) \*

.. I got a call from the hospital and they  
said he wanted to see me.

But now Laine is almost physically aggressive.

LAINÉ

You're not going in there. No way. \*

RUNYON

You know, he's great to me too. To all of us  
who entered government because of his  
idealism and... and dignity... he was great  
too. \*

LAINÉ

Shelly, I just don't give a fuck. \*

RUNYON

This is a hair petty, don't you think?

LAINÉ

Please leave... Really. I mean it. \*

RUNYON

Are you not even curious why he called me?

LAINÉ

I'm sure he was going to ask you to lay off.

RUNYON

And I'd have said "no." And he'd have  
respected me for it. Please wish him  
godspeed for me. \*

88 EXT. PATIO DECK- PRESIDENTIAL YACHT. NIGHT

88

The SEQUOIA floats gently on the Potomac. Filet Mignon is being  
served to Runyon and the President on the deck.

PRESIDENT EVANS

"Which way?"

RUNYON

That's what he said to me.

PRESIDENT EVANS

"Which way." (beat) And he was lying there  
with tubes and the oxygen and the works?

RUNYON

Oh, yeah. He had the works. And then he  
beckons me forward and he says to me, "As my  
dying wish, make sure she's confirmed."

PRESIDENT EVANS

No kidding?

RUNYON

I'm being absolutely serious.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Well, that's not playing fair. I'll give you that. But, wow.

RUNYON

So, I'm trying to come up with a good rejoinder there, he'd respect that, and all of a sudden he starts to gasp, I mean his throat just begins shaking.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Shaking, huh?

RUNYON

And the heart monitor starts to go ballistic, the doctors are running in, they're doing the thing with the... with the... what do you call those things?

PRESIDENT EVANS

Zappers?

RUNYON

Well, you know what I mean anyway. Now, I've backed off, see. And Laine's going nuts, yelling "Get him back! Get him back!" And you know what? They did it. The old son of a bitch starts breathing. He's alive again.

The President lays down his knife.

PRESIDENT EVANS

They brought him back?

RUNYON

And, Laine, she goes to his side, and I guess he's barely there, barely alive. And she's saying to him, "Daddy, I want to go too." And, uh, I, uh, I heard what he said. He said to her, "Baby, we're all going." And then, just like that, the line goes flat.

The President ponders for a second and then returns to his meal.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Well, Jesus Christ, I hope when I go that I get a shot at a good line like that.

Very McKinley. Very Wilson.  
 (long beat)  
 You want an oatmeal cookie?

Runyon looks down at his half-eaten filet mignon. An oatmeal cookie, did he say?

PRESIDENT EVANS

Trevor?

A cabin boy TREVOR moves forward.

TREVOR

I'm getting them, sir.

PRESIDENT EVANS

They find these raisins, these giant raisins, well, you'll see. Taste like grapes.

(beat)

Shelly, you've really made a mess of things for me. You sure did clobber me.

RUNYON

Well, don't take it too hard. It's not ~~exactly fair when six foxes and one chicken~~ are voting on what to have for dinner.

(leans forward)

Isn't it possible, sir, that I've been acting in the best interest of the United States?

TREVOR comes with two plates, each carrying an oatmeal cookie.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Nope. I don't think it's possible. And that's what pisses me off the most. Its all about retribution. For Hartford. I may have taken the Presidency from you, Shelly. But you one-upped me. You took away my legacy.

RUNYON

(thoughtfully)

I look at her and I see somebody who has proven she has the capacity for disloyalty-

PRESIDENT EVANS

Or the capacity for seeing the light.

Runyon nods. But now he ponders. Its time to come to the raison d'etre of the meeting...

RUNYON

We're both sticking to our guns. The difference is that mine are loaded... When you get back to your desk, Mr. President, you'll find waiting for you a file. This file will explain why we wanted Oscar Billings to testify on Monday. It seems that three years ago, when Laine Hanson was sponsoring the Hanson-Jarvitz bill... that was the Home Care tax incentive-

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS

I know what it was, Shelly.

RUNYON

Laine Hanson's defining moment. And to make a long story short, it seems Oscar Billings committed a sum total of four million dollars to the campaign funds of at least seven Senators. All seven went her way.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

(BEAT) Did she know?

RUNYON

It doesn't matter does it? Of course, we can't prove graft per se... Not on her part.  
(leans forward)

Look, she's not being confirmed. We can sit for hours and talk about greatness and leadership and it all comes back to the fact that Laine Hanson will not be confirmed. I'm not going to name names, but I have seven from your side that are giving her the ax.

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS

Indeed? The ax?

RUNYON

We can go through the process of a vote, if you want to waste time and suffer the humiliation, or we can just move on. There are a lot of good folk you can choose from.

PRESIDENT EVANS

(after long consideration)

Who? Who can I be certain will be confirmed?

RUNYON

The man you wanted in the first place. Jack Hathaway.

PRESIDENT EVANS

(after thinking about it)

I'll tell you what. I'll give you Governor Jack Hathaway. But, I want to be Goddamn sure that you give him a smooth ride.

RUNYON

You have my word. There's a reason they call me "Honest Shell."

PRESIDENT EVANS

Irony.

(Should Runyon take this as an insult. He smiles, not sure.)

I want an insurance policy. I want a piece of the rock. I want to make sure you don't pull some baloney outta your hat to make a mockery of my administration again. Tell you what I'm going to do. I'll ask Mrs. Hanson and Mr. Hathaway to be at the Oval office tomorrow, before the D.A.R. banquet. I would like you to be there, too. But before then, Shell, I need you to marry yourself to this guy. I need a public statement from you that makes his sinking your sinking.

\*  
\*

RUNYON

But, I'm not sure I can get a press conference-

The President wipes his mouth with a napkin and stands up

PRESIDENT EVANS

Get him confirmed, Mr. Chairman. Fast and furious.

\*  
\*

89 INT. LIMOUSINE. NIGHT

89

Runyon lays his tired head on the headrest.

LIMO DRIVER (OS)

Mr. Runyon?

Runyon keeps his head back.

LIMO DRIVER

Would you prefer I bring you around back?

Now, we see what the limo driver sees: A swarm of reporters in front of Runyon's apartment. Runyon marvels at the sight and then smiles a smile of realization.

Now, we see what the limo driver sees: A swarm of reporters in front of Runyon's apartment. Runyon marvels at the sight and then smiles a smile of realization.

RUNYON  
No. I'll be fine.

90 EXT. RUNYON'S APARTMENT BUILDING. A FEW MINUTES LATER

90

RUNYON has taken his position in front of the reporters.

REPORTER FIVE  
How do you respond to the rumors that Mrs. Hanson is withdrawing her name?

RUNYON  
That's a rumor that I've not yet heard.

REPORTER SIX  
Is it true that you visited Governor Billings' bedside on the night he died?

RUNYON  
Yes, it is true. And I'm sure you'll understand when I ask for you to respect the privacy of his final moments.

REPORTER SEVEN  
~~Did he mention anything about the hearings?~~

RUNYON  
Our conversation was private.

REPORTER EIGHT  
Mr. Runyon, have you heard about the possibility of Governor Hathaway returning to the list of Vice-Presidential designates?

Runyon takes pause. And so it begins...

RUNYON  
Mr. Hathaway is a fine man...

REPORTER EIGHT  
Do you think he would have a smoother ride than Mrs. Hanson?

RUNYON  
Let me go on the record as saying: It is my opinion that there isn't a man alive...  
(smiles)  
Not a Democrat alive who could bring more vitality, more creativity, and more integrity to the office of Vice-President. I would in fact stake my career...

CUT TO:

91 INT. OVAL OFFICE RECEPTION AREA. NIGHT

91

Where the President is watching Runyon on Live TV-

RUNYON (ON TV)

On Jack Hathaway's smooth and efficient confirmation.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Good job, Shelly.

RUNYON (ON TV)

But, right now, I have no indication that Laine Hanson has stepped down let alone Governor Hathaway stepping in.

92 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE RECEPTION AREA. NIGHT.

92

\*

As Glenda sits at her desk, Hathaway, in a tuxedo, and Fiona stand outside the Oval office doors. Fiona is adjusting his tie.

FIONA

When was the last time that the Second lady of the United States dressed you? And for a state dinner no less.

HATHAWAY

He hasn't even asked me yet, Fiona.

FIONA

I suppose you didn't hear Shelly Runyon's proclamation of you as Pope yesterday.

HATHAWAY

I know, I know...

FIONA

(to Glenda)

She's in there, right?

Glenda nods.

FIONA (cont'd)

She's getting the heave-ho right now.

(whispering)

And all this time you thought I was the trophy.

RUNYON (OS)

JACK!

Runyon enters the room. He is also in a tuxedo, an ill-fitting one. He gives a peck on the cheek to Fiona and hugs Hathaway.

RUNYON (cont'd)  
(whispering)  
We did it, boy. We did it.

GLEENDA  
(into intercom)  
Everybodys' here, sir.

RUNYON  
You're looking good, Jack.

HATHAWAY  
Thanks.

RUNYON  
That tie looks great on you.

The Oval office door opens. Toliver is at the threshold.

TOLIVER  
Governor, Mr. Chairman, the President will  
see you now.

93 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE. NIGHT.

93

\*

CU- PRESIDENT AND LAINE by the window. The President looks splendid in his tux. Laine is beyond gorgeous in her gown. But there is a look of quiet desolation on her face.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
It's tough. I know.

LAINE  
I feel empty.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
At least, Laine, you had a dad whose absence  
makes you feel empty.

In the b.g., Hathaway and Runyon enter. Somebody is on the couch in the back of the room, but we can't quite make him out. Newman sits in an armchair. In the chair next to him is William.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Everybody would understand if you asked for  
a two-week delay.

LAINE  
I'm not sure I could stomach another two  
weeks.

The President nods to her and turns to Hathaway and Runyon.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Gentlemen!

The President gestures for all to take their seats and all do.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

You know what? Before we start, I can't stomach the idea of touching that chi-chi food we always serve at the state dinners.

(into intercom)

Glenda. See if we can put together a grilled cheese sandwich. Muenster Cheese on rye.

GLEENDA (OS)

Yes sir.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Well, Jesus Christ, Shell, those were some very nice things you had to say about Jack.

(beat)

Ah! I understand you guys have never met. Laine Hanson this is Jack Hathaway.

HATHAWAY

Of course, I am quite in awe of you, ma'am.

LAINE

Thank You.

HATHAWAY

My condolences, by the way.

PRESIDENT EVANS

(to Laine)

I'm ordering flags at half-mast on Monday.

LAINE

I'm sure he would have been delighted that a Democrat gave that order.

The tension in the room breaks with laughter. The buzzer RINGS.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Yes, Glenda.

GLEENDA

Sir, the kitchen is all out of Muenster.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Really? Wow. Well, Jesus, let's get on it. We don't want the wheels to be coming off the wagon.

(to group)

Well, here we are. Quite an event, quite a sad event.

HATHAWAY

Sir, if I may, I just want to say that... well, one day you were kind enough to tell me I was, "the future of the party." And, let me just tell you that these are tough times, the future uncertain, and I'm happy to be able to perhaps make things smooth.

PRESIDENT EVANS

The future. Yes, well, there is one thing quite certain about the future...

The President goes to the PINK FILE that Friend had given Newman earlier. He gives it to Hathaway

HATHAWAY

What's this?

FRIEND

Sir, you have the right to remain silent.

PRESIDENT EVANS

take it easy, Fred...

FRIEND

Sir we have to read him his rights.

HATHAWAY

What's going on, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT EVANS

Mr. Director, I think that the Governor knows his rights. You know your rights, right, Jack?

Hathaway nods in a state of shock.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

(to Friend)

You don't have to humiliate him.

(to Hathaway)

You fucked up Jack.

RUNYON

Well. I don't mind confessing that I am at a total fucking loss here.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Do you know what the girl did for a living?

HATHAWAY  
What girl?

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS  
the girl from the river.

\*

\*

HATHAWAY  
She was a paralegal. I think.

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS  
No...no... Before that.

\*

\*

FRIEND

She was a military .14 Golf.

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS

Jack, you fucked up. The feds found the money you wired to her account at the bellagio in Vegas.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

FRIEND

200 thousand.

\*  
\*

PRESIDENT EVANS

And that ad you placed in that magazine where you found her..

\*  
\*  
\*

FRIEND

soldier of Fortune

\*  
\*

Hathaway is devastated... defeated... busted

\*

RUNYON

Soldier of Fortune? Is somebody gonna start speaking English around here.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Shelly! He paid a girl to drive a car off a fucking bridge. He paid her to save her!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

RUNYON

(to Hathaway)

Jack?

PRESIDENT EVANS

I guess you just didn't count on that airbag, huh?

\*  
\*

RUNYON

Jesus Christ.

\*

HATHAWAY

I think maybe... maybe... I should just...

LAINE

(almost paternal)

You shouldn't say anything, Governor. You need to speak to an attorney.

PRESIDENT EVANS

We all respect you here, Jack, ..

FRIEND

Governor, i'll have to ask you to come with me...

PRESIDENT EVANS

Hold on, there. We all respect you, jack. And we'll try to make this as smooth as possible. Hell, I don't even know what the charge would be,

FRIEND

Negligent homicide.

Hathaway tries to hand back the file.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Who doesn't want a shortcut to greatness?

Hathaway nods. He stands up and readjusts his tie. He looks the room over and speaks only to Laine.

HATHAWAY

Good luck, ma'am.

LAINE

You too.

Hathaway and Friend leave the room. From the doorway, we see the astonished Fiona. The door closes. After a few seconds:

PRESIDENT EVANS

It's a Goddamn shame about the Muenster.

RUNYON

(standing)

Mr. President!

PRESIDENT EVANS

Yes, Shelly.

RUNYON

You set me up, sir.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Well, just this once.

RUNYON

(looking briefly at Toliver)  
"Governor Hathaway is the second choice."  
(back to President.)  
For the record, I find what you did to be  
manipulative and... and... underhanded.

\*  
\*  
\*

PRESIDENT EVANS

Let's just say, Mr. Chairman, that I am  
guilty but not responsible.

They stare at each other for a moment. But there is a difference.  
And that difference is the President's ever slight smile.

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

And, Shelly, you needn't worry about us  
exposing the fact that you leaked that  
horrible material about Laine to the  
internet. Because I know what you have on  
us... what you told me about on the boat.

Runyon stands. He knows reverse blackmail when he hears it.

RUNYON (cont'd)

It changes nothing. She is still who she is.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Yes she is. And so are you... And on your  
way home you'd better think of whose  
confirmation you'll guarantee to the five  
dozen reporters outside your apartment.

94 INT. BALLROOM. NIGHT

94

The President, Laine, Will, Newman, and Newman's wife stand in a  
reception line greeting individuals. Webster and his date ELAINE  
are a few people away. Newman galnces around the room, notices  
something and leaves. Webster and Elaine make it to the top of  
the line.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

PRESIDENT EVANS

How are you, Reggie?

WEBSTER

Good evening, sir. Sir, May I introduce to  
you Ms. Elaine Bidwell.

ELAINE

(in a state of shock)  
Mr. President... it's so beautiful here... a  
real Lennox festival.

\*  
\*

Elaine greets each. This is one helluva date for her.

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS

Ms. Bidwell. May I introduce Vice-President  
designate Laine Hanson, her husband William  
Hanson, and Chief of Staff Kermit Newman.

(to Webster)

I've asked that you be seated at my table,  
Mr. Webster... if that'd be ok with you.

\*  
\*  
\*

A95 EXT. WHITE HOUSE FRONT STEPS.

A95

Toliver is chugging on a cigarette. He is alone until... Newman  
strides out.

\*  
\*

NEWMAN

There you are.

\*  
\*

Toliver turns around startled.

\*

TOLIVER

Hey, K.

\*  
\*

NEWMAN

You know, I don't know what you were  
thinking when you told Runyon that he had an  
open shot at getting his boy in. But whether  
you did it or not it doesn't much matter.  
Either way you're not coming to work  
tomorrow.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

TOLIVER

Yeah.

\*  
\*

B95 INT. BALLROOM. NIGHT

B95

\*

A FEW HOURS LATER- Everybody is seated. The President has not yet touched his *coq au vin*, though most everybody is done.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

So, Herbert Hoover is going insane. He has done more than can be reasonably hoped for to cure the depression but his poll numbers are in the dirt. Nixon bad. So he invites his predecessor, Cal Coolidge, over for a *tete-a-tete*. He bemoans all he's done and how, instead of getting credit for it, he seems to have become the nations' whipping boy. Mr. Coolidge says to him, "Mr. President, you can't put the bulls in with the cows and expect to have calves running the next day." Hoover nods and says, "I know, but I'd at least like to have some contented cows."

The table laughs. The President looks down at his plate and starts to cut his food.

WEBSTER

That's a great story... is it true?

PRESIDENT EVANS

Only a politician can be asked that question and not be insulted.

The President lights up when he hears the MUSIC start up.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

Mr. Hanson, if you'd permit me, I'd be most honored if your wife would dance with me.

The President gives his arm to Laine. She stands up and then the two of them, looking like royalty, make their way to the dance floor. A crowd gathers around. For a little while there, every problem in the world seems to have disappeared. The President is clearly sending a message by dancing with Laine Hanson. Now a few more people move on to the dance floor... Now a few more. The CAMERA has moved TIGHT on Laine and the President.

LAINÉ

It's a beautiful affair.

PRESIDENT EVANS

A good night.

LAINÉ  
Thank you, sir. Thank you for this... for  
showing me respect.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Respect. Let me show you respect.

And WHOOSH the two spin.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. WHITE HOUSE GROUNDS. NIGHT

95 \*

CU- HAVANA CIGAR

is lit and then brought up to the President's mouth.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Last time I shared these with somebody it  
was with the President of Russia  
(beat)  
Or maybe it was with that... that youngster  
who just won Wimbledon for the second time.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

LAINÉ  
Well, I'm honored.

\*  
\*

Laine also has a huge cigar in her hand. Laine starts coughing.

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)  
You're not supposed to inhale.

\*  
\*

LAINÉ  
Maybe that's the first thing you should've  
told me.

\*  
\*  
\*

They walk over the ridge. Then the President withdraws from his  
vest pocket a letter.

\*

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Recognize it?

LAINÉ  
Where did you get it, sir?

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Where you got yours. Where Shelly Runyon got  
his. From Mr. Webster, who may not know his  
right from his left, but apparently knows  
right from wrong.

(staring at the letter)  
Now I understand you even less. You're an  
enigma-

LAINÉ  
(smiling)  
Wrapped in a riddle.

The President takes off his jacket and lays it on the ground for  
Lainé to sit on as they both sit. \*  
\*

PRESIDENT EVANS  
( conspiratorially)  
Madame Senator, what if I just told you that  
I was just busting at the seams to know what  
happened that night, to hear the truth from  
your own lips. Totally off-the-record.

LAINÉ  
Not between the President and the Senator,  
but between the President and Lainé?

PRESIDENT EVANS  
Better. Between Jack and Lainé. \*

LAINÉ  
(takes a deep breath )  
I had just turned eighteen when I got to  
college. I'd never been away from home,  
really. I was immediately... I was  
immediately lonely. And that's when the  
sorority kicked in. I wanted them and they  
wanted me. I was the daughter of a Governor  
for Chrissakes.

PRESIDENT EVANS  
A true-blue catch.

LAINÉ  
I guess so. Like any other sorority, they  
have a rush-

The President looks like he's losing her.

LAINÉ  
It's like an initiation. They have this  
girl, this woman that Runyon deposed, Pattie  
LaVamere. She runs the sorority. She gives  
it to me straight. If I want to be "In" I  
have to go to their brother fraternity  
and... have sex with two... boys. What a  
coup for them, huh? The daughter of a big-  
time Republican doing a frat house.

I tell them that there's no chance. I wasn't a virgin, but I wasn't exactly a porn star either. The whole idea was pretty hairy.

PRESIDENT EVANS

I'll bet.

LAINÉ

But six beers later I'm talking a different tune. So, off we go to the frat house. Well, half the girls are there and about a zillion boys and everybody is cheering my name, "Laine... Laine..." And I'm just stumbling around. So eventually, I just say, I'm going to go for it. If getting laid is a common initiation for boys in the frat, than why not for us? Right?

PRESIDENT EVANS

You're asking me?

LAINÉ (cont'd)

No. No. I just... Okay, they send me into this room. It's dark and dim and there are these two guys there... They were wearing towels around their waists. So, I stumbled over there... you really want to hear this?

PRESIDENT EVANS

Are you kidding? Go on...

LAINÉ

I get on my knees. And the first guy, he slips off his towel and I see his ... "thing"... and... I say... it was the first thing that came into my mind... I say...

PRESIDENT EVANS

(laughing)

Come on... What did you say?

LAINÉ

I said, "I'm sorry, I don't smoke." And then I just got the Hell out of there.

The President covers his face with his hands laughing. After a few seconds, he composes himself and then Laine notices that the President is distracted and maybe upset.

LAINÉ

Are you okay, sir? Are you upset?

PRESIDENT EVANS

Nah, I'm just wondering what I'd pay to be in college again.

Laine laughs. She can tell that it's going to be okay.

LAINE

The next day the campus was rampant with the word that I'd been the center of a gang-bang. The Governor's daughter. Let me tell you, that's one hell of a bell to unring.

PRESIDENT EVANS

But the photograph?...

LAINE

Not me. I never took my clothes off and, even if had, I have a big old birthmark on my right thigh that the lady with the lovely physique in the photo lacks.

PRESIDENT EVANS

And the witnesses?

LAINE

Pure urban legend and a little bit of wishful thinking thrown in.

PRESIDENT EVANS

You know, you could have just looked those pricks in the eye, told them the truth, and then told them to fuck off. And barring that, you could at least have told me.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

LAINE

(gently, sweetly)

Well, see, it really wasn't any of your business, either. It still isn't. But there's something about almost puking on a Havana that just turns a girl to mush.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Works every time. Now, these two guys, this Jack-

\*  
\*

LAINE

Jack-

\*  
\*

PRESIDENT EVANS

Jack Bennett and Larry Bellows? Their letter makes it pretty clear that nothing happened, they are ready to come forward, be deposed.

LAINE (cont'd)

Yes, I know. That's good of them.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Well, that's it. The end. The good guys win. I am going to call a press conference and read this letter. And Goddamn if you don't have the fastest confirmation on record.

LAINE

No, sir.

PRESIDENT EVANS

No sir? No sir, what?

LAINE

I'd prefer we not have the press conference.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Maybe you've been out of the law for too many years, but, see, this is what we call exculpatory evidence.

LAINE

I realize (that)

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

This is your ticket to wherever history will take you.

LAINE

Principles only mean something if you stick by them when they're inconvenient. If I ever did answer the questions- even to exonerate myself- it would mean it was okay for them to have been asked in the first place.

PRESIDENT EVANS

You would sacrifice your reputation-

LAINE

People have sacrificed a lot more for a lot less. You have to help me here. You must never repeat what you know.

PRESIDENT EVANS

You realize where that leaves us don't you?

LAINE

I'm afraid so, sir.

Over the ridge, seven secret service appear. Jackson smells with mischief.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Busted.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
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\*  
\*

96 INT. CAR. DAY

96

William is at the wheel. Laine is in the passenger seat. She is wearing a jogging outfit. As she speaks, she stares out the window, not bearing to face Will. But as he listens to her, we realize he is listening... he is really, really listening. in the bg we hear a RADIO playing- it is an analysis of a speech that the President is about to give. we hear speculation that Laine's name will be withdrawn from consideration.

LAINE

It's going to be okay, you know. It is. I have another year and a half on my term and that's a long time to recover, you know what I mean? And even if I don't, well, a seat on the corporation is mine and you... you still can go on with what you do... It's going to be okay. We're going to make it... It was a great opportunity but there'll be others. Right? You bet. It's going to be okay.

(as the car slows to a halt)

Okay.

Laine opens the door. And as she steps out...

WILLIAM

You're right, Laine. Its gonna be okay.

LAINE

Pace me at 5-10, okay?

She closes the door and starts to jog. William starts up the car. We PULL BACK to reveal we are outside of ARLINGTON CEMETERY.

97 INT. CONGRESS. DAY

97

President Evans strides forcefully into the Congressional chamber as the members applaud.

98 INT. CAR. SAME TIME

98

William is at the wheel of the car. On the radio, we hear NPR which is tuned into the Congress. The ovation continues.

WILLIAM

Can you hear?

Laine, who is jogging alongside the car. She gives him a thumbs up.

99 INT. CONGRESS. SAME TIME

99

Once he gets to the well, the President takes his position at the podium. The President waits for the ovation to die down.

PRESIDENT EVANS

Napoleon once said, when asked to explain the lack of great statesmen in the world, "To get power you need to display absolute pettiness. To exercise power, you need to show true greatness."

Such pettiness and such greatness are rarely found in one person." I look back upon the events of the past weeks and I have never come so to grips with that quotation. For ladies and gentlemen of this Congress, it pains my soul to tell you that you have brought blood and shame under this great dome. Your leadership has raised the stakes of hate to a level where we cannot separate the demagogue from the truly inspired. And believe this: There are traitors among us. I'm not talking about those of you who sided against your party leadership. I'm talking about those of you who were patriots to your party but traitors to the necessary end result- that of righteousness, the truth, the concept of making the American dream blind to gender.

100 EXT. ROAD. DAY

100

Laine jogs at a brisker pace as we continue to hear the speech.

PRESIDENT EVANS (OS)

You know, I am not free of blame. From the start I should have come down here and pointed a finger your way...

101 INT. CONGRESS. DAY

101

We are behind Runyon and we see what he sees. The President pointing at the whole gallery but eventually directly at him.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

..pointed a finger your way and asked you, "Have you no decency, sir?!"

Now Runyon stands up. He walks down the aisle, heading out.

PRESIDENT EVANS (cont'd)

You may walk out on me and you may walk out on this body, but you can not walk out on the will of the American people. Americans are a good people, a just people, and they will forgive you Mr. Runyon, but they will not forget. Hate and ego have no place residing in what my good friend Laine Hanson calls the chapel of Democracy.

102 EXT. ROAD. SAME TIME

102

CU-Laine's face. She's breathing hard, but with a small smile.

PRESIDENT EVANS (os)

So, Let me make one thing clear. Come at us with whatever weapons you have in your arsenal. But there is no weapon as powerful as that of an idea whose time has come. A woman will serve in the highest level of the executive. Simple as that.

103 INT. CONGRESS. DAY

103

PRESIDENT EVANS

Yesterday, I told Laine Hanson that she could decide her own fate. She could continue in her fight for confirmation and I'd stand by her. But she has asked me to allow her to step aside so that my administration could end on a note of triumph and not controversy. Those of you who actively worked to bring her down, understand that Laine Hanson asked to have her name withdrawn from consideration not because she isn't great, but because she isn't petty, because those two conflicting leadership traits could not live as one within her body or her soul.

104 INT. CAR. SAME TIME

104

WILLIAM

You hearing this babe?

PRESIDENT EVANS

Greatness comes in many forms. Sometimes it comes in the form of sacrifice and that's the loneliest form of all. \*

LAINÉ

I hear.

PRESIDENT EVANS

It turns out that Laine Hanson is a woman- is an American- of principle and she has inspired me alike. Because my principle tells me to stare down those of you who would allow your pettiness to interfere with the clear dictates of our Constitution.

(long beat)

I cannot accept Mrs. Hanson's withdrawal. I now call for an immediate vote of confirmation for Laine Hanson. I want a live roll call. I want to see your faces.

Those of you who would eliminate the prospect of greatness in American leadership based on half truths, lies and innuendos.

105 INT. CONGRESS. DAY

105

PRESIDENT EVANS (os)

I will not be deterred by partisanship. I will not be deterred by misogyny and hate. You have now come face to face with my will. This is my choice and so it shall be yours. Confirm my nominee, heal the wounds of the nation, and let the American people explode into this millennium with the exhilaration of having done the right thing.

And now the cheers. The President walks down the aisle with Newman. We see that it is the balcony of civilians cheering and not the congressmen.

PRESIDENT EVANS

(whispering to Newman)

How's that for a swan song.

106 EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY. DAY

106

Laine has stopped. Her hands are on her hips, breathing hard. In the b.g. we hear a NEWS ANALYST. William gets out of the car. He hugs Laine, who hugs him right back.

WILLIAM

You're back

LAINE

I know.

And, for the first time, all her emotions flow out.

FADE TO BLACK.

\*