

4 INT. GEORGETOWN GYMNASIUM DAY

4

WRESTLERS working out:

Push-ups. Sit ups. Suicide drills. Everything in unison to the song. Among the wrestlers: Paige. The only female.

JUMP CUT:

A practice wrestling match between Paige and another wrestler. He has her almost pinned. But she uses her neck muscles to protect herself from being laid out flat.

The clock ticks down. Times up. Coach blows the whistle. The match is over. But the wrestler SLAMS Paige to the mat.

Paige leaps up and gives the wrestler a shove. WHAM!

WRESTLER

Hey what the hell you doin'?

PAIGE

(shoving again)

Cheap shot, man...

WRESTLER ONE

I can't fight you... You're a girl.

PAIGE

(smirking)

My strategy exactly.

The other wrestlers laugh. Paige smiles. A good sport.

COACH

Okay. Back to the mats, ladies.

PAIGE

I gotta head off, boss.

COACH

Where do you have to be? It's six in the morning.

Paige has a huge and beautiful smile. And we SMASH INTO:

5 EXT. GEORGETOWN STREETS. DAY

5

The Red Hot Chili Peppers song continues. Paige runs with enormous intensity as she nears her apartment.

6 INT. PAIGE'S BATHROOM DAY 6

Paige showers. Still out of breath. "Tell Me Baby" continues.

7 INT. BEDROOM DAY 7

- Ten outfits are strewn on a bed.

- A Closet in which one outfit remains. Paige snatches it.

- Paige stands in front of a full length mirror. She looks sharp and sexy in this outfit. The music continues.

8 INT. CAR. MORNING 8

Paige is driving and now singing along to the Chili Peppers. She pulls over. Sings along until the song now ends. She gets out of the car. We follow her.

She stands in front of the car. She's looking up. At *something*.

PAIGE

Showtime.

Now, we pull behind her. Satchel in hand, she is standing in front of the United States Capitol.

"CAPITOL CITY"

9 EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING. DAY 9

Paige walks up the white marble steps.

10 INT. SECURITY STATION- RAYBURN. DAY 10

Paige walks to a checkpoint where two armed guards stand.

PAIGE

Hi, fellas. How we doing today?

Paige walks through the metal detector. She points to the clock, which reads 7:15.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

I know. It's early. But this is how it's gonna be every day for me.

GUARD

First day on the job, huh?

PAIGE
I'm going to be a staff assistant
for Speaker Foxworthy.

GUARD
Good man. ID?

Paige hands the guard her ID badge. In the photo, Paige wears a HUGE grin. In fact, it is so HUGE he gives it a second look. Realizing this, Paige gives the guard the same HUGE grin. He shakes his head. The guard looks at his computer.

GUARD (CONT' D)
You're working in his district
office. You know how to get there,
Miss Paige Armstrong of-
(Looks at her ID)
Annandale, Virginia?

PAIGE
I do, sir. Have a great day.

11 INT. CAPITAL HALLWAY. MORNING 11

Paige walks down the long empty hallway. A single janitor sweeps up. Paige arrives at a door that reads "NOAH FOXWORTHY (R)". The grin grows even larger and she walks right into...

12 INT. FOXWORTHY'S OFFICE. MORNING 12

The most HUSTLING and BUSTLING offices you have ever seen.

Sixty people frantically at work. They are on the phone or going through files or making copies... it's a WHIRLWIND.

Paige looks at her watch. Yep. It's just 7:15 AM

And here comes a BALL OF FIRE named GLORIA, badly dressed, but still has the look of an insider politico.

GLORIA
(Looking at watch)
Morning, Armstrong.

PAIGE
You told me to be here at eight.

GLORIA
Which means one thing: Seven.
C'mon, let's go meet the boss.

Gloria starts to walk. Paige follows here, barely keeping up.

PAIGE

Already?

(beat)

Great. I've been working on a paper about greenhouse laws as they apply to the constitution, which I know is at the forefront of his agenda -- which is really brass-ballsy for a Republican - which is why I'm here-

GLORIA

Well, get us that paper right away. Because we have nobody working on what's at the forefront of the Congressman's agenda.

PAIGE

Okay. Sorry. Shutting down the whole eager beaver thing.

They come to a door.

GLORIA

Okay. Let's meet Mr. Brass Balls.

Gloria swings open the door...

13 INT. FOXWORTHY'S OFFICE. DAY

13

It is vast and ornate here. The perfect den for the most powerful legislator in all the land. The furniture is leather and dark brown. Exquisite paintings line the walls. Projected on a large screen is:

A SPEECH.

To the side of the screen are two young men, or, as they call them here, young Turks.

One is LYLE TRILLON: Chief of staff to Foxworthy. We'll come to hate him. Think of a young James Carville.

On the other side of the screen is MICHAEL "BIRDY" McGinty. He's the speech writer. A good-natured *wunderkind*.

DIRECTLY in front of the screen, hands on his hips, his back to us, is the MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE himself... NOAH BENJAMIN FOXWORTHY. He is reading the speech out loud.

FOXWORTHY

"We must trust the souls of great men... Sage ancestors to whom we have turned before..."

Gloria and Paige enter and take a position in the back. Paige has to bite her lower lip. She can't believe where she is...

FOXWORTHY (CONT' D)

And to whom we must turn again if we are to continue to blossom as a nation that..."

(turns to Birdy)

"Flourish" better than "blossom," OK? Rolls off the old tongue better.

BIRDY

Ok, sir.

LYLE

No offense, Birdy, but if we're taking a stand on abortion why are we invoking the founding fathers? Let's throw one good line about God's wrath into this... how abortion is an abomination to the Lord himself, and that's all we need.

BIRDY

That's just childish demagoguery-

LYLE

That's winning hearts and minds, Birdy - man up on this one.

FOXWORTHY

Girls. Girls. You're both pretty.

(continues reading)

So, "flourish," yeah? "Flourish as a nation. They saw fit to empower the states with their own wisdom so the people could have a triumph of the will.

From the back of the room ..

PAIGE

(quietly)

Ooops.

And that little quiet "oops" - barely audible- causes Foxworthy to turn.

FOXWORTHY

What's the what, Gloria?

GLORIA

I didn't say anything, sir.

FOXWORTHY

Oh. I thought I heard the dainty murmurs of a female voice.

PAIGE

That was me, sir. I didn't mean to interrupt.

FOXWORTHY

Good to know.

Foxworthy turns around to continue. But---

PAIGE

But, I think that you have a problem with your speech.

LYLE

If you don't mind, miss-

PAIGE

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you'll find this highly inappropriate. But when you talk about the triumph of the will - that's the title of a Lena Reifenstahl documentary, which was a Nazi propaganda film made at Hitler's request.

FOXWORTHY

Oh? What's your name?

PAIGE

Paige Armstrong. Today is my first day working for you.

FOXWORTHY

Well, Miss. Armstrong. You are absolutely right.

(beat)

That was absolutely inappropriate.

PAIGE

Yes sir.

LYLE

Gloria, why don't you show Ms. Armstrong where we keep the coffee filters.

And as Gloria and Paige leave, notice Birdy's look at her. He's interested. Foxworthy's glare gets Birdy back to work.

15

INT. LIBRARY. DAY

15

Paige and Gloria walk into the Foxworthy legal and political library. Hundreds of books line the walls.

PAIGE

God, I feel so silly.

Gloria starts to jab her with her finger. Furious.

GLORIA

"Silly" isn't what you should be feeling. "Humiliated"? Yeah. Or how about "sorry." Sorry's even better.

PAIGE

Well, yeah... I am, I guess...

GLORIA

These guys didn't hire you. I did. I read your resume. Stanford. ROTC. Four years in service. A year in Iraq. Brown. A kindergarten teacher. That's not the kind of chick you meet everyday. We're not light on staff. But I convinced the boys we have a winner here.

PAIGE

Thank you.

GLORIA

In other words, your performance reflects on my apparently appalling judgement. And so what's the first thing you do? You accuse Foxworthy of being a Nazi collaborator.

PAIGE

I think that's overstating it.

GLORIA

Hmmm. Okay, well... The sharpies in this office have used and abused these books for years. Put 'em in alphabetical order.

Gloria leaves the room. Paige stands by herself in the room. Surrounded by 2000 books.

16 INT. GLORIA'S CUBICLE. DAY- FEW HOURS LATER 16

Gloria looks up at her clock. 5:30 PM She stands up and grabs a box on her desk. Walks it over to the library.

17 INT. LIBRARY. DAY 17

PAIGE is on the phone and doesn't notice Gloria

PAIGE

Absolutely, you can be certain he'll vote against the confirmation... Okay... thanks?
(hangs up. To Gloria)
Just assuring a constituent the Speaker won't be voting "yea" on HR453. She really appreciated it.

GLORIA

Have you lost it?

PAIGE

Lost what?

GLORIA

Your mind. Lost your mind. You're stating agenda to constituents?

PAIGE

The Speaker's position isn't news. He was just on Larry King---

GLORIA

I'm not having this conversation with you. I'm not having a conversation in which I explain that you're not supposed to be talking policy with anybody yet... That you're not even qualified to know how Foxy likes his coffee let alone how he wants his views presented to his constituents. And it's not Speaker Foxworthy - It's Congressman Foxworthy. Over at his Speaker offices he's referred to as "Speaker Foxworthy". Got it? And what are you answering phones for anyway?

PAIGE

It just, you know, kept ringing...

Paige nods. Gloria drops the box she is carrying on the desk.

GLORIA

Next time let it keep ringing.
These are biographies of all
members of Congress. Split them
between parties and then rank order
them according to seniority.

Paige looks down. There are over five hundred of them

PAIGE

I'll have these for you in an hour.

Gloria takes a long beat. Then -

GLORIA

Look, you messed up. But this isn't
a sorority and I have better things
to do than haze you. Somebody has
to do *this* and somebody has to
alphabetize the books or nobody'll
find anything. Next week, a newbie
will come in and you'll be promoted
to making copies. Okay?

And somehow everything is now okay between these two.

GLORIA (CONT' D)

And if you stay out of trouble,
you'll be collating in no time.

Gloria notices Birdy approaching.

GLORIA (CONT' D)

What actress do people say you look
like?"

(off Paige's look)

"Yeah, I can see that, but she
doesn't have your... *Eyes.*"

Gloria walks off. Paige is baffled. Here comes Birdy.

BIRDY

How you doing? Birdy McGinty...

PAIGE

I'm okay. Thanks. First day and
all... Look, about me opening my
big mouth in there-

BIRDY

Ah, no worries. I was actually
thinking of writing another part of
the speech.

(MORE)

BIRDY (CONT' D)
 It would go something like this:
 "My hope is my life. It is *mon*
combat. It is *mi en kampf*."
 (off Paige's smile)
 I'm happy to get notes. In private.

PAIGE
 Right. Won't happen again.

He gives her a looking over, up and down, left to right.

BIRDY
 Lemme ask you - Which actress do
 people say you look like?

Paige looks over at Gloria who gives her a smirk.

PAIGE
 Well, people tell me I look like
 Jessica Lange from "Tootsie".

BIRDY
 I can see that. I can. Only she
 doesn't have your... eyes, Paigey.

Paige gathers up her papers. Her mood has changed.

PAIGE
 Well, that's to be expected, seeing
 as we're different people and all.

BIRDY
 (Laughing)
 Paigey, I don't know if this is-

PAIGE
 I told you my name, right? "Paige."

BIRDY
 Huh-huh.

PAIGE
 So, why're you calling me "Paigey"?

BIRDY
 Didn't realize it was a big deal.

PAIGE
 My mom thought it a big deal. She
 was pregnant with me for ten
 months. She almost died. And
 during those days she came up with
 Paige.

(MORE)

PAIGE (CONT' D)
Not *Paigey*, not *Pai geroo*, not the
Paigester. Paige. So, Mr. McGinty,
please call me-

BIRDY
Birdy.

PAIGE
"Paige". If it's cool with you.

BIRDY
It's cool with me. I, uh, see the
whole Jessica Lange thing now.

PAIGE
And, no offense, but this whole
seduction thing... that dog don't
hunt, okay? I know us newbies are
"fresh meat." But, see, I have no
intention of becoming anybody's
"sex toy" and-
(collects herself)
I'm sorry. That was out of line.

BIRDY
Any point inviting you to dinner?

PAIGE
Look, I don't wanna be a *cliche*.

BIRDY
The *cliche* part is my being turned
down by a beautiful woman.

PAIGE
Birdy, You wouldn't be interested
in me. Trust me.

BIRDY
I'm already interested in you.

PAIGE
That's because you haven't heard of
my hard and fast "three month rule"

BIRDY
Three month rule?

Paige and Birdy are necking uncontrollably. In private. He is in a tuxedo and wears it damn well. She is dressed to the nines--- as sexy and beautiful as you'd ever imagine.

BIRDY
I've never loved kissing, just
kissing, anybody (like this).

SUPER-IMPOSE: "Two months and twenty-eight days later"

PAIGE
Hmmm. I need to get back. My
break's over. Gloria's all alone.

BIRDY
Can I come over later?

PAIGE
Sure, just as long as you know...
That it's not happening tonight.

BIRDY
Its been three months.

PAIGE
Two months... twenty-eight days.

19 INT. ESTATE. NIGHT

19

Paige and Birdy walk into a vast ballroom. A faux casino night is in progress. Elegantly dressed men and women play various casino games. Up on the walls are posters for the charity in question, the RED CROSS. Paige walks away.

BIRDY
Hey.
(Paige stops)
Twenty-eight days? That's the bad
news. But there's good news, too.

PAIGE
What?

BIRDY
You're keeping count.

And off of Paige's sweet laugh, we come to the end...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

20 INT. ESTATE BALLROOM NIGHT

20

Gloria and Paige sit at a table close to the entrance. In front of them are a series of name-tags and red, white, and blue casino chips. Paige is speaking with a couple.

PAIGE

Okay, folks. You're all set. Here are your five hundred dollars in charity chips. We have ten prizes at the end of the night and you're all bought in for the raffle.

MAN

Thank you, young lady.

As the couple walks away.

GLORIA

Okay, they're the last ones. Our work here is done.

PAIGE

(standing)

Good. I'm gonna round up every member of the Environmental committee and set 'em straight on cafe standards. I'm going to try and round up some of these bohunks and convince them to pass HR283.

GLORIA

You do that. I'm gonna go find my future husband and lover... And I hope they're both good-looking.

ANGLE- A ten year old boy HENRY and his older brother JERICO, 19, are dressed in tuxedos.

HENRY

Isn't this illegal?

Jericho snatches a pig-in-a-bun from a moving serving tray.

JERICO

What're you talking about, Henry?

HENRY

Aren't we too young to be here?
Could dad get impeached?

JERICHO
This is all for charity. Its not
for real. And besides, you know
that dad's "The Man." And...

Paige walks past the boys. Jericho goes into action-

JERICHO (CONT' D)
Pardon me, Miss.

PAIGE
Yes?

JERICHO
I was wondering--- I'm Jericho by
the way---

PAIGE
Paige.

JERICHO
I was wondering if you could get me
a rum and coke.

PAIGE
I dunno. Are you twenty-one?

JERICHO
If I was, would I be asking a
beautiful woman to get me a drink?

Paige gives him an appreciative nod.

PAIGE
A valiant effort.

Paige leaves and Jericho's eyes follow closely.

JERICHO
I hope you were taking notes,
little man.

HENRY
Notes?

Somebody catches Jericho's eye. He smirks.

JERICHO
Gimme a second, bud.

HENRY
What should I do?

JERICHO

Mingle.

Jericho walks away.

ANGLE- ROULETTE TABLE

Foxworthy is working the room. He finds OSCAR TUSCON--
fifties, a Congressman from Wisconsin. Get to know him. He's
Foxworthy's favorite foil.

FOXWORTHY

Looking handsome, tonight, Oscar.

OSCAR

Oh, yeah, a regular James Bond.

FOXWORTHY

You have money on black *and* red?

OSCAR

Just trying to find a way where
there's no way for me to lose...

The ROLLING BALL lands on green.

CROUPIER

Green. Red *and* black lose.

FOXWORTHY

At least God loves the meek.

Lyle Trillon walks up to Foxworthy. He is dressed in office
attire - clearly not part of the party.

LYLE

You got a minute, sir?

ANGLE- BLACKJACK TABLE-

A beautiful woman in her mid-forties, ANGELA TUSCON is
debating whether to double down. She looks up at the dealer.

ANGELA

What do you think? Double down?

DEALER

Well, the book says no.

Jericho shows up behind her.

JERICHO

The book is written for chumps
stopping at the truck stop right
outside of Vegas.

ANGELA

Oh. Jericho. You clean up nicely.

JERICHO

Hi, Mrs. Tuscon. How's Teri?

ANGELA

Studying. What should I do here?

JERICHO

Single deck card. Twenty seven
cards out. Three of them tens. You
have a fifty-seven percent chance
of hitting the ten, which means you
win. More likely than not.

Angela moves her chips in, doesn't take her eyes off Jericho
--- smiling Mrs. Robinson-style. The dealer gives her a TEN.

DEALER

The lady wins.

ANGELA

(grinning to Jericho)
The lady wins...

ANGLE- Paige is standing with a woman in her late forties.
This is SENATOR DIANE SHELTON. A handsome, steely-eyed woman.

SHELTON

Well, if you're a Democrat, why're
you working with Foxworthy?

PAIGE

Because he's the only Republican
committed to fighting the
Greenhouse effect. I want to help
bring all his friends around. At
least we'll all be alive to bicker.

(beat)

Speaking of which, I was hoping to
talk to you about your carbon
emissions vote.

Gloria enters the fray.

GLORIA
Miss Armstrong bringing the wrath
of God down upon you, Senator?

SHELTON
Nah, she's adorable.
(to Paige)
Cute as a button, you are.

Shelton walks away. Gloria holds up four phone numbers.

GLORIA
Let's get outta here. Any longer
and I'm going to start doubling up.

21 EXT. ESTATE GARDEN. NIGHT

21

Lyle and Foxworthy stand in the garden. Birdy is with them.
Through windows we see the casino party still in motion.

FOXWORTHY
What's the what Lyle? I was busy
busting Oscar Tuscon's chops.

LYLE
This comes straight from my DoD
source. Apparently, soldiers for
the Guamez Valley drug cartel in
Colombia shot five of our marines.

BIRDY
Does your source know how the
President's gonna react?

LYLE
He's launching a Tomcat attack day
after tomorrow. We're using napalm
to eradicate the drug fields.

Foxworthy takes a big puff on his cigar.

FOXWORTHY
Is the prez gonna reach out.
Consult with us lowlies in
Congress.

LYLE
I don't think so, sir.

FOXWORTHY
Oh boy. This is going to be a
moment. Holy Moley.
(MORE)

FOXWORTHY (CONT' D)

President Bridgewater's gonna make a barn-burner outta this one. He's gonna open the war-chest on this one. Not gonna consult with us. And we're gonna have to sit back and watch his ratings go up.

(to Birdy)

Get the Defense committee in. Now. And write a statement up for me. Something, I dunno, memorable.

BIRDY

Yes sir.

FOXWORTHY

(To Lyle)

Get me some face time with the old man. Tomorrow.

22 INT. ESTATE. NIGHT

22

Foxworthy re-enters the party. He runs into Oscar who seems to be walking around aimlessly.

OSCAR

Hey, Foxy. You seen my wife?

FOXWORTHY

You can't find your wife? Not good news, my friend.

He pats Oscar on the back and moves away.

23 INT. JERICHO'S BEDROOM A FEW MINUTES LATER.

23

A typical teen's bedroom: WHO posters, the unmade bed, clothes strewn on the floor. Jericho enters with Mrs. Tuscon. She looks over the room. She pulls out a cigarette.

ANGELA

Ah, the good old days.

JERICHO

You can't smoke in here, Mrs. Tuscon.

She takes off his clip-on tie.

ANGELA

Don't call me Mrs. Tuscon. I much prefer "ma'am."

She reaches into kiss him

ANGELA (CONT' D)
I trust you're going to keep all
this to yourself.

JERICHO
What's the point then?

Angela laughs as they land on his single bed.

24 INT. BILLIARDS ROOM NIGHT

24

Gloria and Paige are playing pool. CNN plays on a flat screen. Playing in the BG is "Criminal" by Fiona Apple. Both women sway to the music. Paige takes a shot. Misses. Badly.

PAIGE
Spaz city.

GLORIA
You're not holding the cue right.

She takes Paige's hand. Stands behind her as she helps her hold the cue.

GLORIA (CONT' D)
Choke up on your grip.

Birdy walks in on them. An awkward and sexy sight. Paige notices him and starts to laugh.

PAIGE
This isn't what it seems.

BIRDY
And all this time I thought there
was a God.
(beat)
Gloria, we have a situation and
we'll be pulling an all-nighter. We
need to get the defense committee
over to the sit room. Let's get
some breakfast catered in and you
need to clear Foxy's schedule, mine
and, uh, Lyle's.

GLORIA
Got it.

Gloria turns to Paige who is watching the TV.

GLORIA (CONT' D)
See you tomorrow.

PAIGE

Right.

Gloria leaves Birdy and Paige by themselves. Birdy walks over to her. Runs his hands down her side.

BIRDY

Boy, you're really beautiful.

PAIGE'

You're a speech writer and you can't do better than...

Birdy leans in for a long slow kiss.

PAIGE

...that.

Paige has to recover here --- as though that kiss confirmed that she's in love.

BIRDY

I gotta go, kiddo.

PAIGE

What--- what's going on? Is this about Colombia?

And Birdy goes dark. Holds Paige by the shoulders.

BIRDY

How do you know about that? Was somebody down there talking?

Paige smiles, points to CNN - reporting on Colombia. He shrugs then returns the smile. She adjusts his tie.

PAIGE

If you hold your thumb there it makes a cool indentation.

BIRDY

By the way, I've been doing this for a while and, not to challenge you, but there's no such thing as a "Three month" rule.

PAIGE

Really?

BIRDY

"Three date," yes. Three month-that doesn't exist.

PAIGE

Wow, that's quite a *faux pas* on my part. I'll have to remember that for the next lucky contender.

BIRDY

(Laughing)

Could you do me a favor. On my desk is a package for Congressman Gearman. Could you have one of the interns run it over. *Tres importante.*

PAIGE

Gearman? Galloping Larry Gearman?

BIRDY

The one and only.

PAIGE

Tres importante, huh?

BIRDY

Life and death sorta stuff.

PAIGE

Um, how 'bout if I just handle it?

Birdy takes a second to consider.

BIRDY

I'm entrusting you with this. I'm counting on you.

PAIGE

As you should. I can handle it.

Birdy kisses her on the forehead and leaves.

Paige looks at the configuration on the billiards table. She leans in and expertly--- WHAP!

Smashes two balls in at the same time.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

25 INT. BIRDY'S OFFICE. DAY

25

Paige is looking over Birdy's desk. Gloria is behind her.

PAIGE

He said it was on his desk.

GLORIA

Three months?

PAIGE

(grinning)

Tomorrow night.

GLORIA

You mean dates don't you? Three dates? I didn't even realize you guys were seeing each other.

(beat)

Look, Don't fall in love. It's a bad town for that sort of thing. I got a lot of battle scars.

Paige snatches an envelope off the table.

PAIGE

Voila.

GLORIA

But, then again, you've been entrusted with "the envelope".

26 INT. CONGRESSMAN GEARMAN'S OFFICES. DAY

26

Paige enters. These are less palatial digs than her boss'. Congressman Gearman's secretary is on the phone.

SECRETARY

You're the furniture department, you're the only one I can call.

The secretary gestures to Paige for the paperwork.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

The Congressman can't have his constituents sitting on a couch with a big rip down the middle...

(to Paige re: papers)

This is personal business... Just walk in and give it to him..

PAIGE

You want me to just walk in?

SECRETARY

Go on, sweetie, his meeting with the Pope was pushed two hours.

Paige shrugs and with a happy smile, she enters...

27 INT. GEARMAN'S OFFICE. CONT.

27

LARRY GEARMAN, a young Congressman, *African-American*, is on the phone with one of his constituents.

GEARMAN

Mrs. Reynolds, it doesn't matter how many letters you have written to the HMD, they'll never...

He sees Paige walking in and gestures to her to take a seat in front of him. She moves to the couch...

GEARMAN (CONT' D)

(to Paige)

Uh-Huh...it's got a rip in it.

(back on phone)

Respond in the way that you want.

Paige looks around the office. It is a shrine to NASA. Everywhere you look, photos from Space, of Astronauts, of the Challenger. On his desk is a replica of Apollo 13. There is a photo of NEIL ARMSTRONG behind him. Autographed.

GEARMAN (CONT' D)

Yes, we'll have an answer in a week, I'm sure. Bye then...

(hangs up. To Paige)

Is that it?

Paige hands him the paperwork. He starts to look it over.

PAIGE

I'm Paige Armstrong.

(re: Neil Armstrong photo)

No relation.

Gearman is too obsessed with "The Envelope" to get the joke.

GEARMAN

This is bull. Take this back to Birdy and tell him he can't trade Edgerin James for Teddy Bruschi.

PAIGE
Fantasy football? That's what "the envelope" is all about?

GEARMAN
Offense for offensive, defense for defense. It's an easy concept.

PAIGE
Who trades James away, anyway? The Cards are playing the Raiders who have the worst run defense in the league. Fantasy points galore.

Gearman grabs his jacket, then with nonchalance...

GEARMAN
You seem to have a pretty good sense of this. Maybe you can help me out. We can talk over lunch.

Paige is taken aback by this. But, why not...

28

INT. WHITE HOUSE SWIMMING POOL. DAY

28

PRESIDENT AMOS BRIDGEWATER swims laps with ferocious energy. A MARINE leads Noah Foxworthy to the edge of the pool. Bridgewater finishes his lap and looks up at Noah. He pulls himself out of the pool. He points to a towel.

BRIDGEWATER
Would you hand me that, Mr. Speaker?

Noah picks up the towel and throws it over to Bridgewater. The President snaps it out of the air.

BRIDGEWATER (CONT' D)
Got a bathing suit?

FOXWORTHY
(smiling)
Left mine at the office.
(looking around)
It's good to be the king.

BRIDGEWATER
Never been down here?

Noah shakes his head.

BRIDGEWATER (CONT' D)

One mile a day, everyday.

(beat)

So, what possesses you on this day?

FOXWORTHY

Oh, I was just wondering whether or not the President of the United States was on the edge of violating the War Powers Act. To wit, not notifying Congress within forty-eight hours of a military offensive.

BRIDGEWATER

Nope.

FOXWORTHY

Nope?

BRIDGEWATER

Nope.

FOXWORTHY

So, then, I have the word of the President of the United States?

BRIDGEWATER

You do.

FOXWORTHY

No act of war will be waged on Columbia?

BRIDGEWATER

Correct.

FOXWORTHY

That's all I need then.

BRIDGEWATER

Doesn't mean I'm not going to put an ass-whuppin' on some sons of bitches. As far as I know there isn't an ass-whuppin- powers act.

That statement is so definitive, so full of confidence, that it leaves Foxworthy stifled.

BRIDGEWATER (CONT' D)

Aw, Foxy, it's best you just get your checkers piece off my chess board.

(MORE)

BRIDGEWATER (CONT' D)

If you ever want to come for a swim, just call Betty and she'll make it happen.

He walks away, leaving Foxworthy in the proverbial dust.

29

INT. DENNY'S RESTAURANT. DAY

29

Paige and Gearman sit at a booth. He has a chili burger in front of him, she has an empty salad bowl. Paige is toying with a straw wrapper as Gearman yaps.

GEARMAN

They said it couldn't be done, black man getting elected in Colorado. But you know, I was a star on the Air Force football team and that's a football crazy state and... Are you listening?

PAIGE

I just... I know all this. I've studied you. Top to bottom.

GEARMAN

Yeah? Impress me. Tell me about me.

PAIGE

Bad idea. I have honesty tics.

Gearman gestures her to go ahead.

PAIGE (CONT' D)

Okay, it's generous for you to call yourself a football "star." Your stats weren't bad, but you weren't quite Joe Montana were you? More interceptions than touchdowns do not a football "star" make.

GEARMAN

You know my stats?

PAIGE

You applied for the space program but you didn't get in... On account of your grades. Bummer.

Paige pauses. Realizes she sounds like a stalker.

PAIGE (CONT' D)

I've been reading up on every Congressman, everything I can.

GEARMAN

Ambitious.

PAIGE

Well, I'm thinking of buying the joint, so-

GEARMAN

Tell me what I don't know about me.

PAIGE

Ok. You're going to serve one term

GEARMAN

What?

PAIGE

You're fighting to get Manville Industries a new defense contract.

GEARMAN

That's right. I have the votes.

PAIGE

Yes you do. Which means Jackson Lloyd of Oregon gets screwed out of Boeing getting a piece of the pie. And Jackson needs Boeing to get a piece of the pie. When he doesn't he's coming after you.

GEARMAN

Me? How?

PAIGE

Jackson will hold you responsible. Now, Jackson's the *de facto* leader of the blue dogs. And then good luck on getting any bill passed.

GEARMAN

I can get my bills passed without the blue dogs.

PAIGE

You couldn't get the Ten Commandments passed without the blue dogs, Congressman. And that's thirty-five votes you need to ensure sampling in your state. Without sampling, your district will expand to include Boulder.

(MORE)

PAIGE (CONT' D)

Then guess what? The only Boulder you're carrying will be on your shoulders going up a mountain called election day. What you need to do is work with Jackson to make sure both contractors get in on the action. But that's just my opinion.

GEARMAN

You know what you should do?

PAIGE

Go screw myself?

GEARMAN

You should come work for me.

PAIGE

I'm very honored. Really. But, I work for Noah Foxworthy and why wouldn't I want to work for the most powerful man in Congress?

GEARMAN

Because Foxworthy is Satan.

PAIGE

Satan? Where's your party loyalty?

GEARMAN

I am being loyal.

30 INT. FOXWORTHY'S OFFICE. DAY

30

Paige is walking down the hall, carrying sheets of paper. She turns to an INTERN.

PAIGE

Have you seen Gloria?

INTERN

No. Sorry...

Paige opens the conference room door. Foxworthy, Lyle, and Birdy are meeting there.

PAIGE

Oops, excuse me.

FOXWORTHY

What do you need, young lady?

PAIGE
I was just looking for Gloria.
She's got a call on three.

LYLE
Well, not here.

And as Paige starts to leave.

FOXWORTHY
Young lady.

Paige turns around.

FOXWORTHY (CONT' D)
I read your paper. On the
greenhouse laws.

PAIGE
Really?

FOXWORTHY
Birdy gave it to me. Damn fine
piece of work. Eye-opening. My
colleagues in the party, they're
blind on this. But if anything
should put aside partisanship its
the environment.

PAIGE
I agree.

FOXWORTHY
Good that you're on the team.

And Paige's "poker-face" can barely contain her excitement.
She gives Birdy an acknowledging look. She nods to Foxworthy
with a smile. Leaves the room.

FOXWORTHY (CONT' D)
Birdy, old boy, rumor has it that
you're tapping that sweet thing.

BIRDY
Well, um, we've been seeing a bit
of one another. Very discreetly.

FOXWORTHY
Too bad. The discretion that is. A
girl like that could do wonders for
your reputation.

Lyle wants to return to the conversation they were having.

LYLE

So, those were his exact words?

FOXWORTHY

Exact words? I dunno. But, he was pretty dismissive. Our President's problem is that he's not great enough to be humble... A complete disregard for the War Powers Act.

(beat)

There's going to be no damn bombing mission. There's going to be no popularity spike. There's going to be no "Screw You" to Congress. And next time President John Wayne wants to lead the Cavalry against Sitting Bull, he's going to have to ask us to saddle up.

LYLE

I hope you told him that.

FOXWORTHY

Lyle, you never bring up the cannons if you don't have the ammo.

LYLE

I hear you loud and clear, sir.

FOXWORTHY

Good then.

As Foxworthy leaves, he gives Birdy a congratulatory slap on the back. When he is gone, Birdy turns to Lyle.

BIRDY

I told you about Paige in confidence, man.

LYLE

No such thing, really. Not when it comes to the boss.

BIRDY

And what did you mean when you said "loud and clear"?

LYLE

It means I'm going to clandestinely contact Miles Monroe at the Post. We're going to leak the military directives that my DoD source has given me.

(MORE)

LYLE (CONT' D)
 Monroe will contact the White House. The Prez will realize the mission's compromised and he'll scrap it. Foxy wins the battle, the Prez loses, and the angels sing.

BIRDY
 And who's giving him the documents?

Lyle looks out the office window directly at Paige.

BIRDY (CONT' D)
 No way. I'm not involving Paige. This is not what she signed up for.

LYLE
 Paige would be exactly who we would be using under normal conditions. She is inconspicuous yet loyal. And, now, because you're sleeping with her - we can't do our job? Look, we have a Machiavellian President who is outta control. Who must be stopped. Who must learn to honor the Constitution. And I'll bet little Miss America with those big brown eyes of ambition wouldn't disagree. So, why don't we let her decide what she signed up for.
 (beat)
 While we're at it, why don't you figure out what you signed up for.

And this leaves Birdy stymied.

31 INT. BIRDY'S CAR. NIGHT 31

Birdy drives. Paige is in the passenger side. There is an odd quiet between them

32 EXT. PARKING GARAGE. NIGHT 32

Birdy's car pulls up. He is sitting with Paige. Let's out a heavy sigh.

BIRDY
 We're here.

PAIGE
 Okay. So, what's the big mystery?

Birdy pulls out a manila envelope from the glove compartment.

PAIGE (CONT' D)

What's that? You're not trading Tom Brady for some punter, are you?

Birdy is too focused to get the joke.

BIRDY

Sometimes, when you want to get something done- something for the greater good- you have to play dirty in a clean way. Are you following what I'm saying?

PAIGE

I'm hanging on to every unspoken word.

(beat)

It's okay, baby. Whatever it is.

Birdy makes a decision: A decision to lie.

BIRDY

Congressman Powers is going to vote for a bill that'd lift pharmaceutical sanctions on Cuba.

Paige nods. "Go ahead".

BIRDY (CONT' D)

These are some files on the Congressman. He owns stock in several pharmaceutical companies.

PAIGE

That's a conflict of interest?

BIRDY

We want to get a reporter to call him and ask questions, make him *understand* he has that conflict. We're making him see the light. It's dirty clean, see what I mean?

PAIGE

And let me guess, there's somebody in that garage, a reporter?

BIRDY

Level B. I can't go in there myself. He can't know where it came from

(MORE)

BIRDY (CONT' D)
 The person who contacted this reporter doesn't even work for us. We called in a favor. Do you understand?

PAIGE
 Yes. Okay.

Paige takes the envelope away from him.

BIRDY
 I mean it, Paige. He can't know where this came from.

Paige nods. Birdy watches her disappear into the garage.

33 INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE. NIGHT

33

Paige walks gingerly into the underground garage. She takes a look around, hears something. She spins around and sees the embers of a lit cigarette.

She makes her way to the smoker, the click-clicking of her heels echoing throughout the garage.

PAIGE
 Hey.

The man throws the cigarette down to the ground and heels it.

MAN
 Hey.

PAIGE
 You waiting for me?

MAN
 (big smirk)
 You bet.

From behind Paige.

MILES
 She's with me.

MILES MONROE is in his late twenties. Good-looking. A bit of a square. Think Bob Woodward.

MAN
 My loss.

The man gets into his car and drives away. Miles motions Paige over. A bit embarrassed she walks over to him.

MILES
You're not the one who called me.

PAIGE
Nope.

MILES
(pointing to envelope)
Is that for me?

PAIGE
Oh.
(hands it to him)
I haven't looked inside.

Miles unclasps the envelope and looks through the documents.
He looks at them with interest. GREAT INTEREST.

MILES
Holy wow.

PAIGE
Looks like Fidel's gonna get his
Viagra after all these years.

MILES
Uh. What?
(beat)
You don't look like a Deep Throat.

PAIGE
Is that all people think about in
this town?

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

34 INT. WASHINGTON NEWS. NIGHT

34

HENRY GROSSMAN makes his way in and around the labyrinth of desks and computers that make up the newsroom. He comes to Miles's cubicle. Miles, our intrepid reporter, is typing. Henry picks up a piece of copy and starts to read it. It takes a bit for Miles to realize he's even there.

MILES

Oh, hey, Henry. I'm just polishing.

GROSSMAN

So, Miles it's going to be one of those things.

MILES

What's that?

GROSSMAN

We're going to kill the story. I know it's your first above the fold with us-

MILES

What? Are you giving it to Erlich?

GROSSMAN

I'm not giving it to anybody. The story's not running. It sucks but that's the way it is. National security. The boss just got off the phone with the President-

MILES

I knew it. I just knew it. If I placed a call to the White House for comment the story would get killed. Lemme tell you something, Henry, this paper is in serious danger of losing its credibility-

GROSSMAN

Hey. Don't be a patronizing asshole. Okay?

Miles shuts down. Crosses his arm, a child-like pout.

GROSSMAN (CONT' D)

We cut a deal. That's the good news. Soon as it goes down, you have an exclusive interview with the President. It's a *quid pro quo*.

MILES

Journalism isn't about *quid pro quos*-

GROSSMAN

Well, Miles, that's the way it is. Okay? Sometimes journalism is about *quid pro quos*.

(stands)

You should go down to research and get prepared for your interview with the President.

35 EXT. WASHINGTON CITY STREETS. NIGHT

35

Miles is driving his car. Steaming. He screeches to a halt and starts banging on the roof of his car, beyond infuriated. Bang-bang-bang. When he calms down, he picks up his cell phone. He considers making a phone call.

He dials. Waits for an answer.

MILES

Boy, it's a lucky day for my favorite blogger. Pull out your keyboard... The President is going to launch a napalm attack on Colombia... No, no... it's solid...

36 INT. FOXWORTHY'S OFFICE. NEXT DAY

36

Paige is at the copying machine. Behind her the volume on CNN has suddenly gone UP. A small crowd has gathered around the Television. She gets on her tiptoes to see Pentagon spokesman SYLVESTER ALEXANDER at a podium

SYLVESTER ALEXANDER

Good morning. Two hours ago, the President of the United States ordered a napalm attack on the Guamez valley in Colombia.

WHOOSH! Birdy speeds past her and opens Foxworthy's door, never quite closing it, so that Paige can see Birdy, Lyle and Foxworthy as she watches the TV from a few yards away.

SYLVESTER ALEXANDER (CONT' D)

I regret to inform you that a F-18 Super Hornet was shot down before the mission could be accomplished.

(angry beat)

(MORE)

SYLVESTER ALEXANDER (CONT' D)

A report was posted on the Nichols Report. It did get up before the attack, but while in flight, so their preparedness could be attributed to the posting.

PRESS MEMBER

Do we know how the Nichols Report obtained the information?

SYLVESTER ALEXANDER

No. But there will be an investigation.

PRESS MEMBER

Do we know if the pilot was able to bail out of the plane?

SYLVESTER ALEXANDER

All indications are not, I'm afraid.

Paige's eyes begin to well up. Paige looks into Foxy's office. Lyle nods to her. Then Lyle closes the door.

GLORIA

You ready to go?

PAIGE

(re: television)
This is really sad.

GLORIA

Sad is what this town's about, kid. How you deal with the sadness is what you're about.

PAIGE

That's sad, too.

GLORIA

C'mon. Let's freeload some brie and wine and get our mind off things.

INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY. DAY

Miles and Sylvester Alexander walk together.

ALEXANDER

You ever been here, before?

MILES

On the tour. Never up here, though.
Hallways aren't as wide as I
thought they'd be.

They take a left.

MILES (CONT'D)

Isn't the Oval Office down there?

ALEXANDER

The President would like to meet
you in the Red room

MILES

The Red room?

And with that they enter...

INT. THE RED ROOM DAY

Where the President stands talking with a young woman on the
far end of the room

ALEXANDER

Sir.

The President spins on his heels. Miles stiffens up.
Bridgewater walks over to Miles and extends his hand.

BRIDGEWATER

Miles.

MILES

Mr. President.

Bridgewater leans in:

BRIDGEWATER

(in a whisper)

Boy, you sure showed me.

MILES

Sir?

BRIDGEWATER

To think I could keep a good man
like you down.

ALEXANDER

Sir, You've got U.S. News in ten
minutes. It's a phoner.

BRIDGEWATER

Right.

And Alexander nods and is out of there.

BRIDGEWATER (CONT' D)

Good of you to make it down.

MILES

Of course, I was (just)-

BRIDGEWATER

Love to introduce you to somebody.
(to the woman)

Mrs. Pine, would you-

MRS. PINE walks over. She is dressed in black.

BRIDGEWATER (CONT' D)

Mrs. Pine, this is Miles Monroe

MRS. PINE

How do you do?

Miles nods at her with a friendly smile.

BRIDGEWATER

Mrs. Pine's here husband is a bona fide American hero. He was flying an F-16 for us over Columbia. He was shot down because the drug cartel there got word of our attack while he was in the air. Read it on the internet if you can believe that.

(holds her hand)

He will be awarded the Navy Cross, ma'am. Soon enough that you can bury him with it.

Miles's face goes pale.

BRIDGEWATER (CONT' D)

Now, Miles here, Mrs. Pine- Miles here killed your husband. He leaked the information to the net.

He looks at the two of them

BRIDGEWATER (CONT' D)

I'm sure the two of you will have plenty to talk about.

And with that, Bridgewater leaves the room

37

INT. HAY ADAMS HOTEL LOBBY. NIGHT

37

A big party is going on. A banner reads "UNITED STATES INSURERS ADJUSTERS." The room is crowded with suits and suitettes. There may be a more boring crowd somewhere, but it'd be tough to find. Paige and Gloria enter are at the buffet.

PAIGE

We have anything tomorrow night?

GLORIA

USAA is having a thing-a-ma-jig.

PAIGE

Is that goat cheese? I hate goat cheese.

GLORIA

I dunno, try it.

Gloria gestures with her eyes for Paige to look behind her. There is Congressman Gearman stuffing his face.

PAIGE

Hey, Congressman.

GEARMAN

(his mouth full)

Hey, how ya doin'?

PAIGE

I'm okay. This is my friend-

But Paige sees that Gloria is engaged in conversation with a young lobbyist. She turns back to Gearman.

PAIGE (CONT' D)

So, you come here often?

GEARMAN

Can't afford to eat three meals a day on a Congressman's salary.

PAIGE

Well, someday you'll be a sellout and everything will be fine.

GEARMAN

I'd sell out if I could find somebody to buy.

(MORE)

GEARMAN (CONT' D)
So, are we thinking that's goat
cheese? I can't eat goat cheese.

PAIGE
I think it's Roquefort.

Gearman takes a big bite. He makes a disgusted face. He finds
a napkin and spits the food into it.

PAIGE (CONT' D)
That sure wasn't very Congressman-
like.

Gearman looks for a trash can and throws the napkin away.

GEARMAN
I was going to hit Politikis. You
wanna join me? Get a quick drink?

PAIGE
A drink? No... I have a boyfriend.

GEARMAN
Well, I actually was thinking about
trying a little harder to get you
to work for... with me.

A hand lands on Paige's shoulder. We don't see who it is. But
when Paige spins around she is stunned by who she sees.

39 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR. DAY

39

Paige is standing with Miles Monroe.

PAIGE
I can't help you. I gave my word.

MILES
I protect my sources.

PAIGE
Miles, I-

MILES
Can I tell you something?

PAIGE
Sure.

MILES
You're a seriously cold bitch.

PAIGE
Pardon me?

MILES
We both have blood on our hands,
but it seems that only I have it
pumping through my body. The
information you gave me got
somebody killed. I just want to
know who's agenda I was working.

PAIGE
Congressman Powers? What did he do
to himself?

MILES
Powers? What are you talking about?

PAIGE
What are you talking about?

40 INT. HAY ADAMS HOTEL LOBBY. NIGHT

40

Paige walks back into the party. Steamed. She finds Gloria
talking to the same lobbyist. She taps her on the shoulder.

PAIGE
I'm sorry. Can I-

Gloria excuses herself. She and Paige move away.

GLORIA
What's going on? I like this guy. I
was toying with the idea of giving
up on my vaunted three hour rule.

PAIGE
Where's Foxworthy?

GLORIA
He's giving Special Orders on C-
Span. Why? What's going on?
Is something wrong?
(beat)
Are you going to do something dumb?

PAIGE
Probably.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

41 ANGLE- TELEVISION SCREEN

41

Foxworthy is on TV, the C-SPAN logo in corner.

FOXWORTHY

The USDA data reveals that the top 100 recipients of federal farm subsidies were eligible...

We are now in...

THE HOUSE CHAMBER

Foxworthy is at the Podium and facing an ABSOLUTELY EMPTY CHAMBER, save for Birdy and Lyle, who are sitting in the pews, doing paperwork and not paying any attention.

FOXWORTHY (CONT' D)

..at that time for payments of up to \$600K a year. These agribusiness are hardly what we would call "Family Farms."

The Chamber door opens and Paige walks in. Birdy does not notice until she sits down next to him and she pats him on his knee. They both listen as Foxworthy finishes.

FOXWORTHY (CONT' D)

Our agriculture policy is based on keeping our farms on an economic model that existed during the Depression. Our policy is locked into a nostalgia. Thank you.

Foxworthy gathers up his paperwork.

FOXWORTHY (CONT' D)

And the crowd goes wild.

Foxworthy finds his overcoat draped over a chair.

FOXWORTHY (CONT' D)

You have an interest in grain subsidies, Ms. Armstrong?

PAIGE

Actually, I'm more interested in pharmaceutical sanctions on Cuba.

Foxworthy has no idea what to make of this. Paige turns to Birdy who knows exactly what this is about.

PAIGE (CONT' D)
You son of a bitch.

BIRDY
Okay now, Miss Armstrong.

PAIGE
Miss Armstrong?

FOXWORTHY
I normally enjoy a good lover's spat. But I've a date with the wife.

Foxworthy starts to walk away, but Paige blocks him

LYLE
What the hell are you doing, Armstrong?

BIRDY
The Speaker didn't have any idea what I asked you to do. The reporter was supposed to call the White House. Let the President know he knew about the impending attack. Hours before. For security reasons the assault would be scrapped. The President would've learned his lesson.

PAIGE
Lesson?

BIRDY
..But it somehow got on the internet while the bombers were still in flight. They were able to get their air defense ready. It's not your fault. You shouldn't-

PAIGE
Of coursed it's not my fault! I didn't know what was in that envelope. And I didn't know because you lied to me. You gave me some BS about Congressman Powers.

LYLE
You didn't tell her?

BIRDY
I was trying to distance you.

Lyle turns to Foxworthy who seems to be enjoying all this.

LYLE

Sir, you should go.

FOXWORTHY

Oh. Don't mind me.

PAIGE

Distance me, my ass. You didn't tell me because you knew I wouldn't go through with it.

BIRDY

Paige, If you want to work for somebody else, I can help. I got buddies at the Pentagon and State.

PAIGE

No way. I'm not moving an inch. You're going to have to fire me. And you'd better pin it on something good. You'd better catch me selling secrets to the Chinese. Anything less and you're going to be taking a lot of oaths at a lot of depositions.

Foxworthy casually intercedes.

FOXWORTHY

She's right, Birdy. Miss Armstrong is a big girl. She coulda used a good does of the truth because then we'd know where she stood. What happened in Colombia? Our pilot dying? Well, that was just too damn bad. Death in the military, Miss Armstrongs - which you should know since you served- is qualified by only one thing: The greater good. In this case, the use of unbridled power was put into check. This President now knows treating our Constitution with flippancy is unacceptable. It cost us one man and your apparent self righteous disapproval. But I'll take that, because I'll do what it takes to remind that son of a bitch that he's a President and not a king.

PAIGE

That's not how you do it. You want to keep the president in check? You do it with the law. You do it with an investigating committee. With a special prosecutor

FOXWORTHY

Oh. Is that how you do it? The silly idealism of youth.

PAIGE

The silly idealism of youth is what has changed the world. Over and over.

FOXWORTHY

Which explains the mess we're in.

(beat)

But look, you're a smart girl. Why don't you, I dunno, write me a paper on your ideas. Let's see if any of 'em pop.

PAIGE

You don't need to patronize me.

FOXWORTHY

Oh, but you need to be patronized.

(beat)

It also seems you need, well, what Birdy's been giving you...

Foxworthy starts to walk away. Paige gives Birdy a hard look.

BIRDY

Look, I didn't... He's just... You signed a confidentiality agreement. You realize that.

And Paige does realize that. She just stares at Birdy.

BIRDY (CONT'D)

Whatever your opinions, there's nothing you can say or do about it.

And, now, Paige cannot bear the level of patronization. She turns on her heels and yells to Foxworthy.

PAIGE

Hey!

Foxworthy stops. He turns around.

PAIGE (CONT' D)
I'm going to run against you.

Lyle snorts. Amused.

PAIGE (CONT' D)
You don't deserve your seat.

Foxworthy considers this for a beat. And he looks her over, this pretty, sweet, naive little girl.

FOXWORTHY
Okey-dokey.

Foxworthy gestures to his men. Birdy shakes his head to Paige and then he and his boss leave.

42 INT. CONGRESSIONAL ROTUNDA. DAY 42

Foxworthy walks out of the hallway, Birdy and Lyle following. Foxworthy walks to JED, the Capitol police officer.

JED
How ya doin' there, Congressman?

FOXWORTHY
I think we have some unauthorized personnel in the chamber, Jed.

43 INT. HOUSE CHAMBER. DAY 43

Paige stands there, taking it all in. She catches a glimpse of the podium. THE podium. The podium where so many great men have stood delivering so many momentous speeches.

She looks left. Right. She walks with trepidation to the Podium. Her hands grip the Podium. A small smile then:

BOOM! From all the doors, the Capitol Police break in, weapons cocked. This is the opening scene of our show.

JED
Hold it right there!

Paige's hands go down in the air.

PAIGE
I'm Paige Armstrong, staff assistant.

The Police start to close in on her.

PAIGE (CONT' D)
Just hold on, okay?

Paige slowly reaches into her jacket pocket and pulls out her ID and holds it up.... And then she gives a big and stupid smile replicating the ID.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

44 EXT. ANNANDALE STREET. DAY

44

Paige is at a storefront, peering from the outside in. A small sign indicates this is Democratic National Headquarters. She tries the door. Locked. She bangs on the door and gets no response. Defeated, she moves back to her car and gets in. As she revs up the engine, a car pulls in front of her and a man, mid thirties, gets out. This is DELL. Dell walks up to the storefront and pulls out his keys. Paige gets out of her car and moves up to Dell.

PAIGE

Hi there.

DELL

Hey.

Dell opens the door.

PAIGE

Is this Democratic headquarters?

Dell looks at the stenciling on the door.

DELL

So it is.

45 INT. DEMOCRATIC HQ. DAY

45

Dell hangs up his coat. He is laughing in response to whatever Paige has just said.

PAIGE

Look, I know it might seem (crazy)-

DELL

Do you want some coffee or something?

PAIGE

No, thank you.

Dell finds a broom and starts sweeping. Paige follows him.

PAIGE (CONT' D)

This is the place to start, right?
You're the guy to come to?

DELL

Look, I come in twice a week. To check messages and sweep up.

PAIGE
Well, you do a nice job.

DELL
The point is, we're not much of a presence here.

PAIGE
Huh-huh. And what's the point of the "point?"

DELL
What's your name, again?

PAIGE
Paige Armstrong.

DELL
I'm Dell Monroe, by the way.
(beat)
Well, Miss Armstrong, the point is Noah Foxworthy has held office for eight terms and has one of the highest popularity ratings in the history of Congress. Do you know he's run unopposed three times?

PAIGE
Well, yeah.

DELL
Don't you think you should have thought about that before you skipped in here and said, "So how do you sign up to run for Congress?"

PAIGE
I didn't "skip" in here.

DELL
Oh, you skipped. It was quite charming, actually.

He stops in his tracks.

PAIGE
Noah Foxworthy's gotta go.

DELL
I agree.

PAIGE
He's a bad man.

DELL
The worst.

PAIGE
Bad for the country.

DELL
Yep.

PAIGE
And I'm going to stop him

DELL
Now, look, you're what, twenty-six?

PAIGE
Twenty-seven.

DELL
College graduate?

PAIGE
I was an Econ major.

DELL
No kidding.
(beat)
Angela Wilcox is resigning as the
city comptroller. An econ major
from Stanford? Why not?

PAIGE
I want to run against Foxworthy.

DELL
Then I suggest you both enter the
fifty yard dash at the county fair.

47 INT. BASKETBALL COURT. DAY 47

Gearman is playing basketball with a group of friends. He sees Paige sitting in the bleachers. He excuses himself.

48 INT. BASKETBALL COURT BLEACHERS. DAY 48

Paige and Gearman sit together.

PAIGE
Are you winning?

GEARMAN

There's no score. We're just here to beat the hell out of each other.

PAIGE

I thought about your offer-

GEARMAN

Yeah. Look, Paige---

PAIGE

Oh-oh. "Look, Paige".

GEARMAN

You're forbidden fruit.

PAIGE'

I don't know what that means.

GEARMAN

There is an e-mail going out about you. That you were fired for cause.

Paige shakes her head. She can't believe it.

GEARMAN (CONT' D)

What happened?

PAIGE

A confidentiality clause happened.

(beat)

We could do good work together.

GEARMAN

I'm sorry. Its not in my interest or my constituent's interest that I piss off the leadership. And-

PAIGE

Never mind, Congressman.

(she stands)

You're a good man. Weak, but good.

With that, she leaves.

49

INT. SECURITY AREA- CAPITOL- NIGHT

49

Paige sits on a bench. She exchanges a smile with the security guard from the start of the film. She is uneasy. Gloria walks through security carrying a box.

PAIGE

Hey. Thanks.

GLORIA

Yeah. I think that's everything.

PAIGE

It didn't take long for me to be restricted from the building.

GLORIA

It sucks how its all gone down.

PAIGE

I'm stupid and impulsive and naive.

GLORIA

And headed for great things.

Paige picks up the box.

PAIGE

Great things I'll leave to you.
Keep the bastard in line, okay?

At that moment, Birdy materializes. He is on his way out. He shares a look with Paige, a small regretful smile, even. Then, after a hesitation, he walks out.

GLORIA

I'm always a phone call away.

Paige nods. She knows that. And she leaves.

50

INT. FOXWORTHY'S KITCHEN. NIGHT

50

Foxworthy is chopping up carrots. Birdy still has his overcoat on. A file sits in front of him

FOXWORTHY

You cook?

BIRDY

No. I've thought about learning, though. Everybody I know who cooks just (loves it)-

FOXWORTHY

It's a kinda therapy, you know. Maude resents it whenever I get home early and kick her outta the kitchen.

BIRDY

(holds up the file)
Sir, got the whole shebang.

FOXWORTHY

(smirking)

You need to read her file to know all about her? Hell, Birdy, how many times you slept with her?

BIRDY

I haven't really. I mean, she's got this thing... a three month rule.

FOXWORTHY

There's no such thing. Now, there's a three date rule-

BIRDY

That's what I said.

(beat)

Oh. Well, she's twenty-seven, Stanford undergrad. She was on the wrestling team up there.

FOXWORTHY

Stanford has a girl's wrestling team?

BIRDY

No. They don't.

There is a bemused beat and then...

Birdy (CONT' D)

She applied to the FBI. Was turned down for.... It doesn't say why. She was a Rhodes Scholar but left mid-term to finish her Masters at Brown. And here's the cherry...

He hands the file over to Foxworthy and points to a section. Foxworthy's eyes open and smiles widely.

FOXWORTHY

Well, I'll be a son of a bitch.

BIRDY

Maybe we should take her seriously? Or maybe just not too lightly. I mean, that's some kind of pedigree.

Foxworthy pushes the file back.

FOXWORTHY

Birdy!

(beat)

(MORE)

FOXWORTHY (CONT' D)
 We're at a crossroads. Can you feel it? For the first time since I came into office we're *this* close on the flat tax, *this* close to getting a majority in the court, *this* close on partial birth. I'm up to my ass in creating history. So you'll excuse me if I don't take her...

He holds Paige's adorable, pixie-like photo up...

Foxworthy (CONT' D)
 ...seriously. I don't have the time and neither do you.

Birdy stares straight into the face in the photo. Jericho enters the room

JERICHO
 Hey, dad. Hey Birdy.

BIRDY
 How you doing, Jericho?

Jericho looks at the photo. Takes an apple.

JERICHO
 Hey, that's the hot piece of ass from the casino party.
 (to Birdy)
 You getting some of that?

Birdy shakes his head "No."

Jericho takes a big bite of the apple. Continues to admire the photo.

JERICHO (CONT' D)
 You got her number?

51 INT. DINER. NIGHT

51

Paige is sitting in a booth, eating chili, reading the want ads on her laptop. She looks out the window and sees a car pull up. Dell gets out. His eye catches Paige. He waves to her and enters the diner. He sits.

DELL
 Thanks for seeing me. This your joint?

PAIGE
 (politely impatient)
 What's up Mr. Monroe?

DELL
Look, I wanted to apologize.

PAIGE
For calling me an idiot?

DELL
That word wasn't used.
(off her look)
Okay. I insinuated it.
(beat)
I spoke to Beau Brimmer at DNC,
just let him know you stopped by,
its SOP. Anyway, we both had
ourselves a chuckle... Two hours
later, he calls back. And damn.
They want you to run.

This takes a few strong and solid seconds to settle in.

PAIGE
Oh.

DELL
Well, Paige, we're peas in a pod
because that's what I said. "Oh."
(beat)
You didn't tell me you worked for
Foxworthy. That's a big piece of
information to leave out.

PAIGE
Well, I do. I did.

DELL
You also didn't tell me that you're
Hunter Armstrong's grand-daughter.

And this hits her. She continues eating.

DELL (CONT' D)
You're a story, see. A story. We
can get some coverage of the
campaign. Get our issues out.
You still interested?

PAIGE
I dunno, man. You're right, of
course. I'm a little girl without
any experience except three months
of getting coffee and answering
phones for Foxworthy. Coming to
you was just a whim-

DELL

(cuts her off)

There are two rules. One: We'll run this campaign independently. Technically, the party doesn't want in. They just want somebody on Foxworthy's ass, nipping away, chipping away, so that in two years they can send in a ringer. Then in four years, they can take him down.

(beat)

This doesn't mean that people friendly to the party won't contribute a buck now and then. But basically we're on our own.

(beat)

Two:

Dell takes out a napkin and writes something down.

DELL (CONT' D)

You remember how badly McGovern lost to Nixon?

PAIGE

I remember reading about it in history class.

DELL

(smiling)

For you that would be a moral victory.

He holds up the napkin and it reads:

Foxworthy 89%

Others 8%

Armstrong 3%

DELL (CONT' D)

That assumes you vote for yourself.

(beat)

You're deader than Kurt Cobain. But, see, that gives you the freedom to say what no other politician can say.

PAIGE

What's that?

DELL
Whatever-you-want.

PAIGE
You mean whatever *you* want.

DELL
We'll mesh.

PAIGE
So, what do I get out of this?
Other than the title of Paige the
Ass Nipper?

DELL
We all come to D.C. to make a
difference, right? How many of us
get the chance? Think on it. I'm
working at the Local 242. You can
call me there.
(points at the napkin)
Maybe that'll go into the
Smithsonian someday.

Paige nods. She watches Dell as he leaves. She looks at the
napkin. Now, an almost internal smile crosses her face.

PAIGE
Three percent, my ass.

A WAITRESS passes by her.

PAIGE (CONT' D)
Excuse me.

WAITRESS
Yes? What can I do you for?

PAIGE
What's your name?

WAITRESS
Mary.

A hair of hesitation. Then... Paige puts out her hand.

PAIGE
Hi, Mary. My name's Paige Armstrong
and I am running for Congress.

THE END

