

Hail Mary

by

Douglas Pike (c) 2018

FADE IN:

EXT. LAS VEGAS CHIPS' FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

The Las Vegas Chips' name adorns a spotlit gold dome.

INT. STADIUM

SCOREBOARD

With three seconds left, the Las Vegas Chips lead the Los Angeles Orcas 14-10.

SKYBOX/FIELD INTERCUTTING

Gray-haired Chips' owner PRESTON ATWATER nervously taps the side of his glass of water containing three ice cubes, as he watches the final seconds of his team's disastrous first season. Beads of sweat accumulate on his suntanned, wrinkled brow. A closed bible is at hand. Preston takes his hand away from the glass, thumps the bible.

Despite the presence of numerous GUESTS and his normally outspoken wife, CLAIRE, the skybox is silent.

CHIPS' FIFTEEN YARD LINE

With the game clock stopped, the REF places the ball inside the fifteen. Fourth down shows on the sideline down indicator.

ORCA'S SIDELINE

Close to the grandstands, eight exquisite, scantily-clad cheerleaders suggestively dance.

LAS VEGAS CHIPS' SIDELINE

Behind the players and coaches, eight homely women, dressed as Puritans, hold bibles. They simultaneously open them, read to themselves.

CHIPS' HEAD COACH

MATT TUMBLER, the furious coach of the Chips pulls his quarterback, EVAN KARKOWSKI, closer by his face mask.

MATT TUMBLER

Just take a knee, Karkowski!  
That's all we need to end this  
hell-hole of a season with one  
stinkin' win! Think you can do  
that without screwin' it up?

KARKOWSKI

Yes, Coach Tumbler.

Tumbler angrily releases his grip, spits as Karkowski runs to the huddle. ASSISTANT COACHES step away.

HUDDLE

Dirty and exhausted, the slouching eleven Chips want nothing more than the season to end.

PLAY CLOCK

The seconds tick down. Thirteen seconds remain to get this play off.

BACK TO SCENE

KARKOWSKI

I'm takin' a knee on three. We  
finally won one, Chips. Break!

FIFTEEN YARD LINE

The Chips line up, take a three-point stance, followed by the Orca's defense.

Karkowski approaches the center, prepares to take the snap.

KARKOWSKI

Hut!...

SKYBOX

A skybox WAITER, holding an ice bucket, approaches Preston Atwater. Silver tongs in hand, he drops a fourth ice cube into the owner's glass of water.

WAITER

A little more ice, Mr. Atwater.

Preston glares at the glass, raises his maniacal gaze to the dumbfounded waiter.

PRESTON ATWATER  
You idiot! You imbecile! I never  
take four cubes in my glass!

FIELD

Three seconds remain on the play clock.

KARKOWSKI  
Hut!...

SKYBOX

Preston, six-foot-four, bolts to his feet, grabs the waiter by his starched, white jacket lapels, flings him out of the box.

EXT. SKYBOX

The waiter, with his ice bucket, plummets thirty feet into protective netting.

Shrieks and howls erupt from the CROWD, at the sight of the falling man.

FIFTEEN YARD LINE

The Chips' center is distracted by the commotion.

KARKOWSKI  
Hut!

The resulting errant snap is fumbled. The ball squirts loose, hits an Orca's helmet, bounds toward the Chips' own goal line.

GAME CLOCK shows all zeroes.

A mad dash by all twenty-two players ensues. At the one yard line the Orca's middle LINEBACKER secures the ball, dives into the end zone. The final gun sounds.

SCOREBOARD

Orca's win 16-14.

Pandemonium in the end zone as the entire Orca team and staff celebrate their miraculous win.

Programs, cups, souvenirs rain down onto the field.

Matt Tumbler tackles Karkowski, pulls off a shoe, beats him with it.

SKYBOX

Dead silence reigns. Livid, red-faced Preston crushes the water glass in his hand. Blood streams.

PRESTON ATWATER  
You see? You see?! This is what happens when attention to detail breaks down!

Guest flee for the skybox exit.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)  
A fourth goddamn ice cube! He had no business giving it to me! I only take three! That set off an unstoppable chain reaction of events!

Claire approaches.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Preston, dear, you're bleeding.

Preston looks down at his bloody hand.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Claire, kindly get the doctor up here. Tell him I need stitches -- exactly thirty-three.

CHIP'S SIDELINE

Defensive coach, MARTYN O'BANYON, takes a call.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
This is defensive coach O'Banyon.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE (V.O.)  
I'm afraid I have bad news for you, Martyn.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
Can't talk now, I'm still working. I'll call you back.

CUT TO:

INT. LAS VEGAS CHIPS' LOCKER ROOM - ONE HOUR LATER

Coaches and downcast players, still in their uniforms, mill about in silence.

MATT TUMBLER

O'Banyon, call upstairs and find out when that asshole is coming down here.

Martyn picks up the house phone mounted on a nearby wall, then gently replaces it.

Preston Atwater, hand bandaged, enters.

PRESTON ATWATER

"That asshole" is here, asshole.

Tumbler clears his throat; his eyes roll back.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)

Mrs. Atwater is present, so keep your pants on gentlemen. I've also brought along my attorney, TERENCE KUBIAK, who I believe you've all met.

Claire and Kubiak enter. Claire icily nods to those present. Kubiak nervously adjusts his necktie and horn-rimmed glasses.

CLAIRE ATWATER

Preston, don't be concerned about me seeing anybody's balls. I watched the game, your players don't have any.

A PLAYER throws a towel. It misses Claire, hits Kubiak, knocks off his glasses.

KUBIAK

I'll have you know that constitutes assault. The next person who does that will find themselves behind bars.

Moans and groans from the players -- six more towels hit Kubiak.

Preston pounds a metal locker door with his bandaged hand, silencing everyone.

CLAIRE ATWATER

Preston! Your bandaged hand? You know what doc--

PRESTON ATWATER

Claire!

Claire adjusts her platinum blonde wig, steps back.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)

If anyone had told me at the start of our first season in the NFL that the team I built would be winless, I would have twisted their head off and punted it from the fifty yard line of my new \$4 billion stadium into the dolphin tank at the Mirage!

LONG-HAIRED BEARDED PLAYER

A long-haired, bearded player raises his arms.

LONG-HAIRED PLAYER

And the kick is good!

BACK TO SCENE

MATT TUMBLER, beet red, bleeds spontaneously from both nostrils.

PRESTON ATWATER

Tumbler, it's a little late for you to start bleeding for my team -- you're fired.

Another PLAYER hands Tumbler a towel.

MATT TUMBLER

Sweetest words I ever heard, Atwater. See you in hell.

Tumbler wraps the bloody towel around Kubiak's neck, exits. As he passes his ex-boss, Preston sticks out a leg, trips him. Tumbler regains his balance, goes nose-to-nose with Preston, makes a fist.

KUBIAK

Uh-uh-uh... Prison is a terrible place to spend retirement, Matt.

Tumbler relaxes his fist, storms out.

Atwater clears his throat, surveys the crowd of angry, disgusted men.

PRESTON ATWATER

I'm not one to waste my time, or anyone else's. I believe when you see a snake you shoot it. We need a new head coach.

Martyn O'Banyon's phone vibrates in his jacket pocket. He starts to reach for it.

BACK TO SCENE

PRESTON ATWATER

Marty O'Banyon, get your ass over here!

O'Banyon, startled, complies. The broad-shouldered former linebacker slouches, spits on the floor, expecting the worst.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Found another snake to shoot?

Preston puts his arm around Martyn's shoulder.

PRESTON ATWATER

Mad Dog O'Banyon? Hell no! I'm not firing you; I'm hiring you! You're my new head coach, goddamn it!

CLAIRE ATWATER

Preston! Watch your language.

MARTYN O'BANYON

I, uh--

A cheer erupts from the players. Towels and Gatorade cups fill the air.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)

I'm speechless, well, not entirely. Thank you for your confidence in me, Preston. I'll mold these turds into champions, or they'll die trying.

LONG-HAIRED PLAYER

Can I take back my cheer?

PRESTON ATWATER

Preston? It's Mr. Atwater, without exception, Martyn.

Martyn gulps, forces a wan smile.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Of course, Mr. Atwater. I know this team is capable of more, a lot more. It just has to be wrung out of them. Same goes for the coaches; they're certainly--

PRESTON ATWATER

Cut the crap, Marty.

Preston removes his arm from Martyn's shoulder, snaps his fingers.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)

Claire, the list.

Claire opens her white designer purse, pauses.

CLAIRE ATWATER

Kubiak's got it now, dear.

Kubiak fumbles with the folded sheet of paper he retrieves from his suit's breast pocket, hands it to Preston.

Preston gives it a quick glance, hands it to Martyn, who intently and silently reads it.

MARTYN O'BANYON

What's this? There's no heading, just a list of current coaches, assistants and staff.

Preston smiles broadly, shows all his cosmetically perfect teeth.

PRESTON ATWATER

I'll explain. A good head coach has to be decisive. A great head coach has to be decisive and ruthless. As my defensive coach you were good, as head coach I expect you to be great. Now I want you to fire everyone on that list right here, right now. Get to it.

Players shake their heads in disbelief. Star running back, WACKO RUTHERFORD, stands, slams his helmet into his locker door.

WACKO

Jesus, Preston, you gonna make Marty shoot their dogs, too?

CLAIRE ATWATER  
What a clever idea.

KUBIAK  
I'm quite sure that's illegal in  
the state of Nevada, Mrs. Atwater.

Martyn hesitates, scratches his pitch black, two-day beard  
stubble.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
I'll do the firing, but my way...  
Mr. Atwater

LONG-HAIRED PLAYER  
You tell 'em, Marty.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
Who said that? Was it you,  
Kilroy?

The long-haired player, Kilroy, stands.

LONG-HAIRED PLAYER  
Yeah, it was me, coach. You gotta  
assert yourself with--

MARTYN O'BANYON  
Shut up and sit down!  
Twenty-five-thousand-dollar fine  
for telling me what to do! You do  
it again and they'll bury what's  
left of you in a shoe box!

Kilroy sits. Players and coaches mouths are agape.

KUBIAK  
I think you got what you wanted,  
Mr. Atwater.

Martyn puts on glasses, starts reading.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
The following people are fired:  
Roy Shaw, Tom Kenworthy, Keith  
Sansone, Vance Long and Sonny  
Drake.

The named MEN give Preston the finger, leave without saying  
a word.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)  
Happy, Mr. Atwater?

PRESTON ATWATER  
Like a tapeworm in Kevin James'  
colon.

Martyn neatly folds the list, stuffs it into Preston's suit pocket.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)  
See you in my office next Tuesday,  
9:17 a.m., sharp.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
Better start making room for  
trophies over your fire place, Mr.  
Atwater.

Preston, Claire and Kubiak exit.

Players start to remove their uniforms, talk among themselves MOS.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)  
What the hell do all of you think  
you're doing?

KARKOWSKI  
Season's over, coach. I'm going  
home and drinking twenty beers.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
Bullshit! The season's over when  
I say it's over! Get those  
goddamn uniforms back on and get  
out on that field!

Groans fill the room.

LONG-HAIRED PLAYER  
Practice, after a game? That's  
insane.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
Last man out does five extra laps.

FIELD

SERIES OF SHOTS

The following depict the Chips' post-game workout.

A) Exhausted OFFENSIVE LINEMEN in a three-point stance impact a sled, fail to move it one inch, keel over.

B) Weary RUNNING BACKS erratically stomp through tires, trip, collapse.

C) Sweat-soaked receivers sprint downfield, cramp up, fall as ball overshoots them.

D) Wacko Rutherford takes a hand-off, drops it. Repeats error six times consecutively. Martyn observes in silent anger.

WACKO

Coach O'Banyon, you're killin' us, man.

MARTYN O'BANYON

And loving it, Rutherford. Go run a lap.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTYN'S CAR - LATER

Martyn stares at his phone, sighs, sticks it in a cup holder. He grasps the steering wheel with his large, rugged hands, gives it a hard shake, then, disgusted, lets go, picks up the phone and makes a call.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Hello, Doctor Putnam, it's Marty calling back. Sorry I couldn't talk earlier. We were just wrapping up the season.

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.)

Indeed, you wrapped it up in a memorable fashion. I saw the whole thing, unfortunately.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Well, next year will be better; the Atwaters named me head coach.

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.)

Oh?...

Martyn loosens his collar.

MARTYN O'BANYON

So, how were the test results?

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.)

I'll give it to you straight, Marty. It's liver cancer.

(MORE)

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The tumor is ten centimeters wide and located in the center of the right lobe. It's quite highly vascularized, which is going to make the surgery lengthy and complex. It's nothing I would even attempt.

Martyn slams the dashboard with his fist.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Well, if you can't do it, who can?

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.)

There are only two surgeons in this country who are qualified, but they're both swamped. I doubt they would be able to get you scheduled within the next six months. You'd have to miss next season.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Oh, this just keeps getting better and better. I need someone who will do it in the next month or two. I've got to be ready for training camp.

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.)

There's one other possibility. Are you willing to travel to Europe to have it done?

MARTYN O'BANYON

My bags are packed. Who is it?

Martyn's phone signals he has another call coming in.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)

Talia? Shit! Talk about bad timing. Doc, my apologies. Can I put you on hold for a sec? My ex is on the other line.

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.)

Make it brief.

Martyn switches to TALIA.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Yeah, it's me. What's wrong now?

TALIA (V.O.)

Can you pick up a quart of milk and drop it off? I'm out. It's on the way to your apartment and my car's in the repair shop.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Are you out of your mind? Ask what's his name... Kenny. Ask that jag-off! Jesus, Talia, my doc's on the other line!

TALIA (V.O.)

Oh, I'm so sorry, Marty. How the hell should I have known? You okay?

MARTYN O'BANYON

Never better.

Martyn hangs up on her, switches back to Doctor Putnam.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)

I'm back. You were saying?

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.)

Yeah, a colleague of sorts, name's Lars Kelson. Met him at a seminar a few years ago. He's based in Denmark. Affiliated with the Danish Center for Advanced Surgeries.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Well, if you say he's qualified...

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.)

Oh, he is, without a doubt. The only question is his schedule. If you're interested I'll contact him and let you know. Can I send him your files and discuss scheduling on your behalf?

MARTYN O'BANYON

Absolutely. The sooner the better. Thanks.

DOCTOR PUTNAM (V.O.)

Sure thing, Marty. I'll get right on it. Bye.

Martyn puts his phone away, reflects on the moment.

MARTYN O'BANYON

God...

CUT TO:

EXT. HOME OF THE GODS - DAY

(PRESENT)

A pristine, fifty-meter elliptical swimming pool, with a broad, tiled deck has breathtaking mountain vistas in all directions. Above, a clear azure sky hosts a radiant sun.

Seated around the pool, on gilt chairs and reclining lounges, are gods of various religions, present and ancient. Others mill about.

Mounted on columns at intervals around the pool, are massive TV screens displaying a variety of sporting events: professional, collegiate and amateur.

Two ancient Greek deities, HERA (queen of the Greek gods) and POSEIDON (god of the oceans), play pool volleyball.

Hera successfully punches a beach ball over the net. Poseidon skewers and deflates it with his trident. THOTH, an ancient ibis-headed Egyptian god, with a man's body, stands and observes the pool play from the deck.

HERA

Honestly, I don't know why I bother to play you at all, Poseidon. That makes 375 balls you've punctured.

THOTH

I feel like I've been counting since the 5th Dynasty, Hera, it's over 500. You two ever going to give someone else a shot?

Poseidon unskewers the ball, tosses it onto a poolside pile of deflated ones.

POSEIDON

I suppose I should take a break. The Knicks-Cavs game is on in ten minutes and there are some easy layups I want to screw up. Plus, there's a rookie who'll be praying for free throws. I love those situations. Really builds my following and racks up easy points.

GANESH, an Indian deity with the body of a man and the head of an elephant, saunters by, stops to listen to the conversation.

THOTH

Frankly, free throws don't sound terribly exciting or challenging. They're right up there with hitting the head pin in bowling.

Ganesh taps Thoth on the beak with his trunk.

GANESH

Hey, don't knock bowling. I've landed over 12,000 points in the past year, just by responding to pleas to keep balls from landing in the gutter.

The other gods nod approvingly.

HERA

That's a solid number, Ganesh; you should be very proud.

GANESH

Yeah, beats the hell out of curling. How is that even a sport?

All the gods chuckle. Poseidon casually spins his trident, lost in thought.

THOTH

Think we'll ever go back to responding to mortals' prayers for rain, good health or peace?

GANESH

Not since ESPN, baby.

Hera magically produces another beach ball out of thin air. She playfully and repeatedly taps it a few inches above her crowned head.

HERA

I probably shouldn't say anything, but I've got a real honey of a situation brewing.

Thoth sits on the edge of the pool, sticks in his bird feet, sighs pleurably.

THOTH

Interesting, go on, I'm all ears.

POSEIDON

You don't have ears, Thoth.

THOTH

You're hilarious, Poseidon. At least I don't have barnacles on my ass.

GANESH

Why don't you two give it a rest and let Hera tell us about her hot, hot prospect?

HERA

Thanks, Gannie.

Hera holds onto the beach ball.

THOTH

So, what are we talking about here?

Hera's eyes dart back and forth, wary about outsiders hearing. She lowers her voice.

HERA

Football... professional football.

GANESH, THOTH AND POSEIDON

Ooooooh.

HERA

Keep it down; I don't want you-know-who barging in on this one. You know how she is. She thinks she owns the sport.

GANESH

Well, her and her son, to be exact.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Did someone say football?

Collective moans from all save the newcomer. The VIRGIN MARY, aglow from her golden mandorla and attired in layers of satin robes, floats to poolside, joins the others.

HERA

Oh, Mary, nice to see you. You must be sweltering in that getup. Why don't you find a nice cabana and cool off?

Mary shrugs.

HERA (CONT'D)

And you know this sun isn't any good for that pale skin of yours.

VIRGIN MARY

Don't snow me, Hera. I heard you say you have a football situation brewing and I want to hear about it. That's all.

Hera, peeved, looks away.

VIRGIN MARY (CONT'D)

C'mon don't be that way. We've all agreed not to keep secrets. Do the right thing and share your story, girl.

HERA

Oh, all right. Everybody, gather round.

The deities draw together.

HERA (CONT'D)

Like I said, it's professional football -- the Las Vegas Chips.

GANESH

Yeah-yeah, the expansion team. The owner's name is uhh... uhh... It's right on the tip of my trunk.

THOTH

Preston Atwater.

VIRGIN MARY

Ugh! That guy is such a dick.

THOTH

His wife's no prize, either.

HERA

No argument there. Anyway, he's got this new head coach who's taking over an 0-and-16 team.

GANESH

Bingo!

Hera raises her hand to silence him.

HERA

That's just the tip of Mount Olympus. This coach, Martyn O'Banyon, within minutes of getting the job finds out he's got cancer of the liver.

Thoth splashes the water.

THOTH

Holy cannoli!

Everyone stops and stares at Thoth.

THOTH (CONT'D)

What?! I picked that phrase up from Minerva, the goddess of wisdom.

VIRGIN MARY

Really? It doesn't sound terribly wise to me.

HERA

Can I finish my story?

THOTH

Sorry.

HERA

So, this Martyn O'Banyon has to leave the country for his operation, keep it a secret from his jerk of a boss and be ready for the opening day of training camp.

POSEIDON

Unreal! Makes the Pirates' 1960 World Series win over the Yankees look like a rain-out. There could be hundreds of pleas for divine intervention, worth thousands of points!

Virgin Mary feigns indifference, adjusts her robes.

VIRGIN MARY

Well, good luck with that, Hera. Sounds like fun. I've got to run. Got to meet with Jehovah in five minutes.

THOTH

Name dropper.

Virgin Mary gives Thoth a nasty look.

VIRGIN MARY  
Something about the upcoming  
heavyweight boxing match in Miami  
and an associated road rage  
incident by the contender. It  
needs an expert's touch.

Virgin Mary gives the peace sign, floats away.

POSEIDON  
Kind of full of herself, isn't  
she?

HERA  
Well, she is popular.

GANESH  
So, was that the whole story?

Hera tries to suppress a smile.

HERA  
Nope.

THOTH  
You going to tell us?

HERA  
...Maybe.

POSEIDON  
I gotta run.

Poseidon submerges, swims away.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESTON ATWATER'S OFFICE - DAY (TUESDAY)

Decorated with Puritan-themed art, Preston's plush office, atop the 40-story office building adjacent to his new stadium, sports a panoramic view of Las Vegas and its suburbs.

Seated at his massive, hand-carved, buffalo-shaped desk, Preston measures the distances between his desk accessories. Claire, standing behind him, feigns interest. Attorney Kubiak stands by the window, stares out.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Claire, look at this, would you?

Claire moves to his side. Preston repeatedly taps the end of his jewel-studded titanium ruler against the edge of the desk.

He points to the ink blotter.

INK BLOTTER

The blotter's lower edge, parallel to the edge of the desk, is an inch or two away from it.

BACK TO SCENE

CLAIRE ATWATER  
What seems to be the problem?

The intercom light on Preston's phone console flashes.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
Mr. Atwater, sir, Martyn O'Banyon  
is here for his scheduled  
appointment. Shall I send him in?

Preston slams the palm of his bandaged hand on the desktop.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Most certainly not! Have him  
wait! I'm in the middle of  
something vitally important.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Preston, you had a question?

PRESTON ATWATER  
Damn it, everything all at once!  
Yes, I was about to say, in your  
opinion, how far from the edge of  
the desk is the blotter, in  
centimeters?

Kubiak takes a step back from the window, looks over his shoulder at his boss, incredulously.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Off hand... If I had to guess...  
I'd say about five centimeters.

Preston nods, nervously runs his tongue over his teeth and gums.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Uh-huh, uh-huh. Five centimeters,  
aye?

He brandishes the one-foot ruler in the air.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)  
I've measured it exactly seven times, Claire. Believe it or not, it's six centimeters from the edge, not five, the way I've repeatedly instructed it to be.

KUBIAK  
My god.

Claire condescendingly pats Preston on the shoulder, like a compliant pet.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
How dare the maintenance staff ignore your instructions, dear! I will make a note to contact their supervisor and find out specifically who is to blame. We can't tolerate such insolence, can we, Preston?

Preston breathes a sigh of relief. Claire and Kubiak exchange wide-eyed glances.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Absolutely not. It undermines the entire organization I've built. Attention to detail means everything.

KUBIAK  
You pull out one stone from an arch, the entire Roman Colosseum collapses.

Preston puts away his ruler in a desk drawer.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Don't know what I'd do without you, Claire. I need to put your tireless support on the company's balance sheet, under intangible assets.

Claire kisses Preston on the cheek.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)  
All right then, let's lay down the law with Coach O'Banyon. Terence, go and fetch him.

## WAITING AREA OUTSIDE PRESTON'S OFFICE

Seated on a hard, uncomfortable chair, Martyn squirms, scratches his scalp, as he waits for his appointment.

MARTYN O'BANYON (V.O.)

What am I going to tell him?  
 Doctor Kelson said I'll need three  
 months at least for recovery, and  
 that's if there aren't any  
 complications.

## HOME OF THE GODS

Hera, seated poolside, senses a vibration. She reaches inside her robes, pulls out a gold-and-diamond-encrusted messaging device.

DEVICE SCREEN shows text: Priority Level Two, Coach O'Banyon prays for excuse.

HERA

Fantastic! This alone should earn  
 me one hundred points. Let's  
 see... Let's see...

BUDDHA, gnawing on a turkey leg, saunters by, stops, sees Hera deep in thought, her eyes closed.

BUDDHA

Pondering the infinite, Hera?

She opens one eye, then the other.

HERA

Sort of, and it's not easy when  
 I'm under pressure. I've got a  
 Priority Level Two.

BUDDHA

Bummer. Can I be of any help?

HERA

Oh, that's so sweet of you,  
 Buddha. I've got a new NFL head  
 coach who needs an excuse that  
 will get him out of work for three  
 to four months, before the new  
 season starts.

Buddha whistles, acknowledging the level of difficulty.

HERA (CONT'D)

As if that isn't enough, he needs his boss to accept that he'll be completely unreachable during that time.

BUDDHA

Wow, glad I'm not in your sandals. Hey, wait! How about this?...

BACK TO SCENE

MARTYN O'BANYON (V.O.)

I've got it. But how the hell did I think of that?

The door to Preston's office opens. Kubiak, unsmiling steps out, approaches Martyn, sticks out his hand.

Martyn stands, hesitatingly shakes Kubiak's hand, reacts to its clammy weakness, then wipes his hand on his pants leg.

KUBIAK

Hello, Martyn, the Atwaters are ready to see you.

INT. PRESTON ATWATER'S OFFICE

Martyn enters, then stops. Kubiak enters, closes the door, walks and stands to the right of Preston's desk. Claire stands to the left. Preston, seated with hands folded, sucks his teeth.

MARTYN'S POV

The combination of the panoramic city view, the opulent office and the awaiting stone-faced triumvirate is overwhelming.

Martyn hears his own heavy breathing.

PRESTON ATWATER

Marty, you going to stand by the door all day, or are you going to take a seat and enlighten us with your brilliant plan to turn this POS team of mine into a contender?

BACK TO SCENE

Martyn approaches the desk, parks himself in the sole chair before it. Upon sitting he instantly recognizes how low it is.

MARTYN'S POV

Martyn looks up Preston's nostrils.

BACK TO SCENE

CLAIRE ATWATER

First off, Martyn--

PRESTON ATWATER

I'll ask the first question, Claire.

Claire, taken aback, steps away, stares at her shoes. Preston opens a folder on his desk, reads from the notes he pulls out, while Kubiak peers over his shoulder.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)

I trust you've done a thorough analysis of the offense and defense, based on the statistics I provided.

MARTYN O'BANYON

I have, Mr. Atwater.

PRESTON ATWATER

And?

MARTYN O'BANYON

Assuming no major changes in the offensive roster, I think we should place greater emphasis on the running game. Karkowski doesn't have the greatest arm, but he is big enough to carry the ball more, and he does have decent speed. As for Omar Rutherford, he still has good legs, even though he didn't prove it this year.

Preston leans back in his seat, looks at the ceiling, attentively listens. Claire sneaks a glance at her watch. Kubiak silently yawns.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)

I think we need to make that second-year-man, CHET CLARKE, our starting fullback. He did well the few times Matt played him.

CLAIRE ATWATER

And how about the offensive line? You want to emphasize the run, but they didn't exactly avail themselves.

MARTYN O'BANYON

True enough, no one mistook them for the '66 Packers. We may need to get two new guards, or at least push the ones we've got to their limit, to see what they're really capable of.

KUBIAK

The latter remedy should be pursued. We're already over the salary cap. Two new guards and we'll have to charge ten dollars for a bag of peanuts.

CLAIRE ATWATER

We're already getting eleven.

Kubiak shakes his head in disbelief.

Loud snoring fills the room. Preston is asleep. All eyes are on him.

CLAIRE ATWATER (CONT'D)

You must forgive my husband, Martyn. His new heart medication tends to make him drowsy.

Claire kicks the base of Preston's seat.

CLAIRE ATWATER (CONT'D)

Preston! Preston! The hand towels in your private washroom were hung unevenly!

Preston coughs, sputters. His eyeballs bulge as he lunges forward and regroups.

PRESTON ATWATER

Unevenly hung towels! Where's my ruler? Fire all the janitors!

KUBIAK

It's okay, it's okay, Preston.  
The towels are perfect. You just  
dozed off.

PRESTON ATWATER

Bullshit! Heard every word!  
Let's move on.

Preston stands, comes around to the front of the desk, upon  
which he half sits, close to Martyn.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)

Okay, so you've got an offensive  
plan that I can live with, at  
least for the first half of the  
season. And you were the  
defensive coordinator before I  
promoted you, so I assume you have  
that part of the game thought out,  
as well.

MARTYN O'BANYON

I do. I'm ready to go over that  
next, and the special teams.

Preston places his hand on Martyn's shoulder.

PRESTON ATWATER

That's okay, not now. You can  
e-mail your plans to Kubiak here,  
later on.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Is there something else you want  
to talk about?

Preston draws closer, as do Claire and Kubiak.

PRESTON ATWATER

In a word, yes. In addition to  
our high expectations regarding  
your coaching abilities on the  
field, we have equally high, or  
even higher expectations for  
your--

CLAIRE ATWATER

Off-field life.

OFFICE DOOR

The office door opens. In enters a tall, thin, grim man sporting a gray crew cut. He wears wire rim glasses and a suit worthy of an undertaker.

BACK TO SCENE

PRESTON ATWATER  
Martyn, do you know OTTO STEPP?

Martyn stands, shakes hands with Stepp.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
No, I don't believe I do.

OTTO  
Nice to meet you. Please, sit.

Martyn returns to his chair.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Otto here is quite the local media mogul and entrepreneur.

OTTO  
Well, I--

PRESTON ATWATER  
No, no, don't be modest. He owns a piece of the Chips and he has considerable interests in old media and new.

KUBIAK  
All of them frighteningly conservative, according to the Left.

Martyn snaps his fingers, realizes who Otto is.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
Now I remember. I read an article somewhere a few months back. It described you as making Barry Goldwater look like Stalin.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Actually, that article was describing me, Martyn.

OTTO  
And, politically, I'm to the right of Preston.

Everyone laughs. Martyn's is half-hearted, forced.

PRESTON ATWATER

Seriously, Marty, you've got to live a squeaky clean life while you work for me. There can't be even a hint of impropriety. It would be inconsistent with my values, which some would say are old fashioned.

CLAIRE ATWATER

We're talking biblical.

PRESTON ATWATER

You must set an example for the rest of the staff, players, the league, the community and the nation! And you must reunite with your ex-wife.

Martyn chuckles.

MARTYN O'BANYON

With all due respect, Mr. Atwater, do you want me to be your head coach, or a saint?

CLAIRE, OTTO AND PRESTON

Both.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Matt Tumbler was certainly no saint.

OTTO

That's right. He couldn't handle living righteously, which caused a disastrous season and his departure.

CLAIRE ATWATER

Sinners seal their own fate.

Preston walks to the window, takes in the view of Las Vegas, taps the glass.

PRESTON ATWATER

Look at it, Martyn, the most godless, amoral city in the U.S.A... maybe the entire world.

OTTO

Sodom and Gomorrah with all-you-can-eat buffets.

Preston turns, faces Martyn, sticks his hands in his pockets. He rocks gently on his heels.

PRESTON ATWATER

You're probably wondering why someone with my demanding set of values owns a football team in this godforsaken place.

MARTYN O'BANYON

The thought did cross my mind.

PRESTON ATWATER

Well, I'll tell you. Like all driven men, I have a goal. Mine is to transform the image of Las Vegas from one of sin, to one of virtue and traditional values.

MARTYN O'BANYON

With a team called the Las Vegas Chips?

KUBIAK

The league forced it on us. We're in the process of changing it. The paperwork's been submitted.

MARTYN O'BANYON

And the new name?

Claire proudly throws her head back, raises her voice.

CLAIRE ATWATER

The Las Vegas Puritans!

MARTYN O'BANYON

Isn't that name already taken?

KUBIAK

Very funny.

OTTO

It's all part of a not-so-gradual plan. As I'm sure you noticed, we ended this season by suspending alcohol sales and dressing our cheerleaders as bible-reading Puritans.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Just going to ram all this down the fans' throats. Don't you think there'll be pushback?

PRESTON ATWATER

I never said this was going to be easy. They'll come around when you give them a team with a winning record.

MARTYN O'BANYON

How about those two loose cannons on the team, Wacko Rutherford and Coma Kilroy? They're already three-quarters of the way to hell. You think they're going to buy into this miraculous transformation of yours?

PRESTON ATWATER

Absolutely, because you'll impress it upon them. Team discipline is part of your job description.

Martyn mulls it over.

MARTYN O'BANYON

And you, Mr. Stepp, how do you fit into all this?

Preston and Otto exchange a quick glance.

OTTO

It's my job to get the word out, help shape public opinion. Tell the story in an upbeat and inspiring way. You know, get everyone 'stepping' in the same direction.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Otto 'Goose' Stepp!

OTTO

I beg your pardon.

MARTYN O'BANYON

That's what I read about you! You have backers and partners who are, to put it politely, extremists.

Otto laughs, cleans his glasses.

OTTO

You need to be more selective in your reading. The Left always jumps to the conclusion that anyone who disagrees with them is the next Mussolini.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 Sorry, I didn't mean to--

OTTO  
 As I was saying, my radio and TV  
 stations, websites and publishing  
 companies will, on a very personal  
 level, tell how living a moral,  
 principled life leads to success.  
 Your life will be the prime  
 example.

Otto paces, raises his arms, as if leading a tent revival.  
 His voice strengthens.

OTTO (CONT'D)  
 Together, we'll create a  
 rejuvenation of the American  
 spirit that has so sadly retreated  
 into the shadows. It will begin  
 here in Las Vegas and spread to  
 both coasts -- a spiritual  
 wildfire--

CLAIRE ATWATER  
 That will sweep Preston into the  
 White House!

PRESTON ATWATER  
 What have you got to say to all  
 this, Martyn?

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 Are you really getting eleven  
 dollars for a bag of peanuts?

Kubiak coughs, gags.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
 Do we have your cooperation or  
 not, Martyn? The ink on your  
 contract is not dry.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 Mr. and Mrs. Atwater, I'm on  
 board. I look forward to the  
 challenge.

Preston pounds his desktop.

PRESTON ATWATER  
 Atta-boy! I knew it! You, sir,  
 are a force of nature!

KUBIAK  
So is bubonic plague.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
But I do have one request. And...  
it's a bit unusual.

KUBIAK  
Uh-oh.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Just what would that request be?

Martyn stands, moves behind his seat. He tightly grabs the back rest for support.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
I'm going to need a few months  
off, starting in a week or two,  
and lasting until camp opens in  
late April.

Preston leans back, pinches the bridge of his nose. Otto mockingly chuckles. Kubiak is thunderstruck.

CLAIRE AND PRESTON  
What the hell for?

MARTYN O'BANYON (V.O.)  
Here we go.

OTTO  
This better be good.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
Any of you ever hear of Tautra  
Abbey, in Frosta, Norway?

PRESTON ATWATER  
No, anyone else?

The other three shake their heads.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
It's a religious retreat. Goes  
back to the 13th century.

KUBIAK  
You thinking of becoming a nun?

MARTYN O'BANYON

Hardly. I anticipated that you wanted me to be more than a coach -- that you wanted someone to set a moral and even spiritual example. And I knew that I came up short in that regard. The remedy for that, and I know you'll agree, is to spend three or four months intensely working on a soul makeover, so to speak. It's the only way to prepare myself through and through, for the demands of the upcoming season.

Kubiak walks up to Martyn, looks him directly in the eye.

KUBIAK

And why do you have to go all the way to Norway for this 'soul makeover?'

PRESTON ATWATER

That's right. There are plenty of spiritual retreats right here in the U.S.

OTTO

Yeah, there's probably a few right here in Nev-- well, states bordering Nevada.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Tautra has been around for over seven hundred years. They have the experience down to a science. No one here can match that. And then, there's the absolute isolation. Once I am there, there won't be any distractions whatsoever. I can be completely focused on my renewal.

Silence permeates the office.

PRESTON ATWATER

It's a bit out of the ordinary, to say the least.

Kubiak checks his phone.

CLAIRE ATWATER

It's a lot out of the ordinary.

KUBIAK

Here it is; the place does exist.

MARTYN O'BANYON

I'm overwhelmed by your trust in me, Terence.

KUBIAK

Just doing my job, Marty.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Do I have your permission, Mr. Atwater?

Preston drums his fingers on his desktop, thinks. He looks at Claire, who shrugs.

PRESTON ATWATER

Yes, yes you can, Martyn. In fact, it's a very good idea. I should have suggested it myself. You'll come back a better man. The press will eat it up, right, Otto?

Otto nods unconvincingly.

HOME OF THE GODS

Hera checks her messaging device. Buddha looks over her shoulder.

Device reads: Excuse accepted, two hundred points earned.

HERA

Yes! Two hundred points, just like that!

BUDDHA

Am I good, or what?

BACK TO SCENE

MARTYN O'BANYON

Thank you for understanding. I'll give you the return date, before I leave for Norway.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING LOT, ATWATER OFFICES - MINUTES LATER

Martyn gets into his car, drives off. The car next to Martyn's starts, follows Martyn.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTYN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ONE WEEK LATER

BEDROOM

Two half-filled suitcases and piles of clothes litter the unmade bed. Martyn opens and closes furniture drawers, pulls out garments, hastily throws them into one of the suitcases.

TALIA (O.S.)

No, I can't find your blue sweater.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Well, keep looking, it's my favorite one.

TALIA (O.S.)

It was easy finding things when we were living together. I had everything in perfect order. This place looks like a tycoon hit it.

Martyn pauses.

MARTYN O'BANYON

A what?

Talia enters, all five-foot-one-inch of her, holding a blue sweater. She holds it up to her slim body, revealing that two of her could easily fit inside.

TALIA

A tycoon... you know.

Martyn approaches, gently takes the sweater, lightly kisses her on the forehead.

MARTYN O'BANYON

You mean typhoon. Preston Atwater is a tycoon.

TALIA

He's a jerk who believes women should be kept barefoot and pregnant, and that it should be a crime to use the word 'gay' to mean anything other than happy.

Martyn carelessly folds the sweater, places it in the suitcase, then closes it.

MARTYN O'BANYON

I'm surprised you feel that way about him, especially after he stipulated in my contract that we had to go back to living together.

From behind Martyn, Talia puts her arms around his waist, then releases.

TALIA

I guess I should give him credit for that, but I won't. Kenny was becoming unbearable anyway. The man has all the ambition of a doorknob. I'm glad he's out of my life.

Martyn struggles to close the second, overstuffed suitcase. Talia sits on it, facilitates its closure, then stands.

TALIA (CONT'D)

I know I can't join you on your retreat, but can I at least take you to the airport?

Martyn hugs Talia, kisses her.

MARTYN O'BANYON

No, but thanks anyway. I've arranged for a car, should be here any minute. It's ironic; we get back together only to be separated again for three months.

TALIA

Then don't go. Can't you just go to confession a couple hundred times?

MARTYN O'BANYON

It wouldn't be the same. Well, I've got to leave now.

(MORE)

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)  
 Keep thinking about the new me  
 you'll be living with and how  
 wonderful it's going to be when I  
 get back.

Talia turns away.

TALIA  
 You're still going to be on the  
 road half the year once the season  
 starts.

Martyn grabs her shoulders, spins her back towards him.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 There's an immediate opening for a  
 roadie. Interested?

Talia nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCCARRAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - LATER

A sedan pulls up to the Scandinavian Airlines drop-off,  
 stops. Martyn steps out, retrieves baggage from the trunk.  
 The vehicle departs. As Martyn takes his bags to curbside  
 check-in, the same car that followed Martyn from the garage  
 stops at the curb, pauses, moves on.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL

Martyn passes a sign pointing the way to TSA security. He  
 takes the up escalator, continues walking.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
 Martyn, just a text? Couldn't you  
 at least call?

Martyn stops in his tracks, drops his carry-on, takes a  
 deep breath. He turns, forces a smile.

MARTYN'S POV

A balding MAN with a salt-and-pepper goatee, ten years  
 Martyn's senior, advances towards him. He wears a tailored  
 lavender suit, with a flamboyant bow tie. The man embraces  
 Martyn.

BACK TO SCENE

MARTYN O'BANYON

Tom... I just didn't know how to say goodbye.

Tom kisses Martyn on the cheek.

TOM WITHERS

Tell me something I don't know. After secretly sharing you with Talia for nearly ten years, I can honestly say you're at a loss for words for most things that have nothing to do with football.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Let's walk towards security, Tom; I'm running late.

TOM WITHERS

Oh, certainly. Let's run, run, run.

The two men walk together. After a few steps, an overweight middle-aged MAN wearing a tight, plaid shirt, and his pregnant young WIFE step in front of Martyn and Tom, stopping them. He pokes Martyn in the chest.

MAN

Ain't you the new head coach of the Chips? Uh, Martyn O'Banyon, right?

Martyn nods, looks away, starts to take a step.

MAN (CONT'D)

Wait, hold up a sec, man.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Really, I'm sorry, fella, I have a flight to catch.

MAN

That's cool, man. Just want an autograph. We're really big fans.

Martyn grimaces.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Sure, what do you want me to sign? Wait, I don't have a marker.

With two fingers, Tom instantly produces and waves a wide, black marker from his jacket's breast pocket.

TOM WITHERS

As a graphic designer, I must  
always be prepared. Here you go,  
Martyn.

Martyn grabs the marker.

MARTYN O'BANYON

What do you want me to sign, pal?

The fan pats his shirt and pants pockets.

MAN

Damn, I got no blank paper. Baby  
doll, pull up your blouse.

PREGNANT WIFE

Huh?

MAN

Let him sign your belly.

Tom laughs.

MARTYN O'BANYON

For cryin' out loud! Jeez!

The pregnant woman blushes, smiles, bats her stripper  
eyelashes, then complies, revealing an enormous belly with  
a protruding navel.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)

Who's it get made out to?

MAN

The baby.

MARTYN O'BANYON

And the baby's name?

PREGNANT WIFE

We ain't picked one yet.

Martyn strikes his forehead with the palm of his hand.

MAN

We'd be real honored if you named  
it, coach.

The man and wife are wide-eyed, star struck.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Fine!

Martyn scribbles, the woman giggles. Martyn steps away, caps the marker, sticks it back in Tom's jacket pocket. Hands on hips, Tom steps back, reads the autograph.

TOM WITHERS

"To Carl: already an all-pro kicker. Good luck. Martyn O'." How sentimental.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Tom, let's get going. Nice meeting you folks.

Martyn and Tom run towards the TSA line. The man and woman look at each other. Their smiles evaporate.

PREGNANT WIFE

Think he believed we're married?

MAN

C'mon, let's find a quiet place. They're expecting my call.

TSA CHECK-IN ENTRANCE

MARTYN O'BANYON

This is where we part, so I'll say so long.

TOM WITHERS

Yeah. You sure you're okay? You'll be gone an awfully long time. Is there anything else going on? I'm worried.

Martyn hugs Tom.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Don't let your imagination run away with you. I'm going to a religious retreat. You'll see, I'll come back a new man.

GATE SITTING AREA

Waiting for his flight, Martyn takes out his phone, calls his mother, MARGARET.

MARTYN/MARGARET O'BANYON

The following conversation intercuts between Martyn at the airport and Margaret in her apartment.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Hello, Ma?

Margaret's tiny apartment borders Newark International Airport. Ear-splitting noise from planes flying overhead causes teeth-rattling vibration. A billboard, visible outside an open window, welcomes passengers to the airport.

MARGARET

What? Who?

MARTYN O'BANYON

Ma, it's Martyn, your son!

Margaret picks up a large bowl, stirs its contents.

MARGARET

Martyn's not here! He lives in Vegas! Try there!

MARTYN O'BANYON

No, Ma, this is Martyn calling! I want to--

The apartment shudders, as if in an earthquake.

MARGARET

Can't hear ya! Must be another 747; they've been coming in all day!

MARTYN O'BANYON

Okay, okay. Take care, Ma. I love you.

MARGARET

Hugh? There's no one named Hugh here, either! But my late husband's name was Herbert!

MARTYN O'BANYON

Goodbye, Ma.

Martyn ends the call, puts the phone away.

CUT TO:

INT. KATSRUP AIRPORT, COPENHAGEN - DAY

Martyn, luggage in hand, walks through the airport.

EXT. TERMINAL

Martyn exits, hails a taxi.

CUT TO:

EXT. DANISH CENTER FOR ADVANCED SURGERIES - LATER

As rain falls, the taxi stops in front of the Danish Center for Advanced Surgeries. Martyn exits the taxi.

INT. DANISH CENTER FOR ADVANCED SURGERIES

WAITING ROOM

Martyn, alone in the waiting room, idly flips through a European fashion magazine.

A matronly NURSE opens the door next to the receptionist's window, waves Martyn in.

CORRIDORS

The nurse leads Martyn to a door bearing the name Dr. Lars Kelson, shows him in, departs.

INT. DOCTOR KELSON'S OFFICE

The surprisingly small office is sparsely furnished. No one else is present. Martyn takes the one available seat next to a sleek metal desk. The room is dead silent. Martyn's eyes flutter, begin to close.

The office door flies open. Short and rotund, Dr. Kelson's presence instantly fills the room. He vigorously shakes Martyn's hand while preventing him from standing with the other. Dr. Kelson's brilliant blue eyes and broad smile put Martyn at ease.

DR. KELSON

No need to get up, Martyn. May I call you Martyn?

MARTYN O'BANYON

Certainly. It's a pleasure to finally meet you, Dr. Kelson.

The thick file folder under the doctor's arm slides out, hits the floor, disperses its contents.

DR. KELSON  
My, my, the gravity in this room  
is dreadful, is it not?

Both men laugh, scoop up the papers. Dr. Kelson takes his seat.

DR. KELSON (CONT'D)  
Your Doctor Putnam's timing could  
not have been better.

Martyn nods approvingly.

DR. KELSON (CONT'D)  
I met him at a symposium in Boston  
a few years ago. It's lucky for  
you our paths crossed.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
I'd be even luckier if I didn't  
have liver cancer. How soon can  
you cut it out of me?

Dr. Kelson leans back in his seat, picks up and reads a report.

DR. KELSON  
I completely understand your  
impatience, but it's not as though  
I can pull out a pocket knife and  
do it on my desktop right here and  
now. There are tests to be done  
-- blood work, scans and so forth.

Martyn anxiously runs his hands along the chair's metal armrests. Kelson observes, strokes his sparse brown beard.

DR. KELSON (CONT'D)  
Americans, so-o-o demanding. As  
serious as your condition is, a  
few more days won't make a  
difference.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
Two days? Three days? Thirty?  
If you can just tell me that much,  
it'll give me something to look  
forward to, if such a thing is  
possible.

Dr. Kelson pulls out a tablet computer from his desk, taps it feverishly, stops, reviews the screen. He clears his throat.

DR. KELSON

I've scheduled your tests and a meeting for myself, with my team, for this week. If all goes well... This is Monday... I'd say surgery would be Friday.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Okay, that's good to hear. Also, I just wanted to know...

DR. KELSON

Your chances? Likelihood of success and the recovery period?

MARTYN O'BANYON

All of the above, Doc.

DR. KELSON

Based on the information Doctor Putnam forwarded to me, and what I can see with my own eyes, you appear to be in good enough physical condition to weather the surgery and recover in two to three months. Of course, that assumes no complications.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Such as?

Dr. Kelson stands, paces, wrings his hands. Martyn sinks in his chair.

DR. KELSON

It's a six-hour surgery, Martyn. When you are open that long the chance of infection runs high. Also, besides losing half your liver, we'll be removing your gall bladder. You'll lose a great deal of blood and transfusions have their own unique set of risks.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Is that all?

DR. KELSON

Sadly, no. We'll also be looking to see if the cancer has spread to any surrounding organs. It's a standard procedure.

Martyn forces back tears, tries to respond, but can't get any words out.

Dr. Kelson takes his seat, leans forward.

DR. KELSON (CONT'D)

There are positives, too. First, this facility is renowned throughout Europe. We perform remarkable surgeries here every single day, in all areas of medicine. Second, my team has been with me for more than five years. They're unequaled. Surely someone in your line of work can appreciate the value of a committed, cohesive team.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Yes, absolutely; it's the bedrock of success.

DR. KELSON

All right then. Keep all that in mind, Martyn.

Dr. Kelson stands, walks towards the door.

DR. KELSON (CONT'D)

I take it you've checked in and have been assigned a room.

Martyn stands, walks to the door.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Yes, I have a room and I assume my bags are waiting for me.

DR. KELSON

Excellent. You'll see, everything will fall into place. It's much like the Swiss assembling a fine watch.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTYN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - THURSDAY NIGHT

The room is dimly lit. Martyn, in a hospital gown, sits, stunned, on the edge of his bed. His feet dangle and aimlessly sway above the polished floor. Patches and tubes adorn his arms.

O.s. two MEN in the hallway vehemently argue in Danish.

An uneaten light meal sits on a portable, adjustable table adjacent to the bed.

A Danish game show plays, silently, on the wall-mounted TV.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTYN'S ROOM - FRIDAY MORNING

(4 A.M.)

An ORDERLY carrying a small tray and clipboard enters, turns on the light. Martyn, only half awake, moans.

ORDERLY

I'm giving you this injection to relax you. The transport team will be in shortly, to transfer you to a gurney. They'll take you to pre-op. From there you'll go to the O.R.

The injection is given. The clipboard is placed at Martyn's feet. Martyn mumbles, falls back asleep. The orderly exits.

THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Two ATTENDANTS enter, arguing in Danish. Martyn remains asleep. They transfer him and the clipboard to the gurney, wheel him out.

CORRIDOR

Still arguing in the empty corridor, the attendants stop. One shoves the other. A second gurney, bearing a PATIENT and clipboard, tended by two OTHER ATTENDANTS, stops due to the commotion. The gurneys bump, knocking the clipboards to the floor. An attendant from the second gurney picks them up, replaces them without checking.

As the arguing intensifies, an ADMINISTRATOR appears. He listens to the heated chatter, then signals for all to cease, directs his attention to Martyn's attendants.

ADMINISTRATOR

(in Danish)

I've had it with you two sniping at each other! Completely unprofessional. If I had the authority, I'd fire both of you. Since my hands are tied, I'm reassigning you -- splitting you up.

The administrator points to the bespectacled arguer.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)  
 (in Danish)  
 Lukas, you will switch partners  
 with Liam here -- at once!

Liam and Lukas trade places.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)  
 (in Danish)  
 Now get these patients to their  
 operating rooms!

The sullen gurney teams proceed.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - LATER

An ANESTHESIOLOGIST checks his equipment, places a mask over Martyn's face. A NURSE places a towel over Martyn's forehead and eyes. A second folded towel goes over his chin.

Masked SURGEONS enter. The nurse wheels a tray of gleaming operating instruments next to the operating table.

The surgeon turns to the anesthesiologist, nods.

CUT TO:

MARTYN'S DREAM

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

It's night time on the Las Vegas Strip. Cleared of all vehicular traffic, the street's sole occupants are Martyn and the Atwaters. Claire and Preston, dressed as Puritans, sit astride massive black horses.

Between them, sitting upon a sleepy-eyed Shetland pony, is Martyn in his hospital gown. Martyn is dazed and confused. Margaret, his mother, appears, stands at his side wearing an NFL referee's garb. She holds a starter's pistol, approaches Martyn.

MARGARET  
 Couldn't become an accountant like  
 your father, could you?

She raises the pistol over her head.

## MARTYN O'BANYON

I--

She fires the pistol. The amassed THRONG, crowded on the sidewalk and also attired as Puritans, cheers wildly. The Atwater's horses bolt. Martyn's pony dawdles. With energetic spurring it eventually turns down a close-by alleyway.

The noise of the crowd fades away as the alley transcends to a cool, quiet, dense forest of mature oak trees and shrubs.

The pony stops, Martyn dismounts. Ten feet ahead stands Dr. Kelson wearing a bloody operating gown. He also wears a surgeon's mask and cap. Leaning against a stout tree next to the doctor is an eight-foot-tall rusted, two-man tree saw.

DR. KELSON

Jeez! Where on Earth have you been, Martyn? Let's go! I haven't got all day.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Sorry, doc, lately I don't quite feel myself.

Martyn picks up one end of the saw, Dr. Kelson the other. They proceed deeper into the forest.

HUGE OAK TREE

A giant oak, twenty feet around, stands in the middle of a well-worn path. Martyn and Kelson stand at its base, admire its grandeur.

DR. KELSON

It's remarkable, unique, perfect--let's cut it down.

Martyn produces a small pen knife from his gown's pocket.

MARTYN O'BANYON

I want to carve my initials into it first.

Kelson nods approvingly. Martyn adroitly carves in the letters M and O, steps back. The men pick up the saw and go to work.

Blood-red sap flows from the cut in the oak. Though horrified, the men increase the pace. The tree silently topples. Sweaty, exhausted, Martyn and Kelson step away.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)  
 I'm beat and starved. Any place  
 to eat around here?

Kelson points.

DR. KELSON  
 Behind those azalea bushes. I  
 think you'll find it to your  
 liking.

AZALEA BUSHES

Martyn leads the way through the bushes.

MARTYN'S POV

A large, bustling restaurant, designed like a log cabin,  
 awaits. It's bold neon sign reads: Balzac's.

INT. BALZAC'S

Martyn and Dr. Kelson wend their way through crowded  
 aisles, occupy a small booth. Country music blares, as  
 WAITERS bearing steaming plates of food whiz by.

A young, lanky, red-headed WAITER, vigorously chewing a  
 toothpick, stops at the booth.

WAITER  
 Yo, I'm Zeke! I'll be your  
 waiter. What'll you have?

DR. KELSON  
 What have you got?

The waiter rolls his eyes, stops chewing.

WAITER  
 Balls.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 That's it?

Annoyed, the waiter places his hands on the edge of the  
 table, lowers his head, glares at Martyn.

WAITER  
 Fried, baked or boiled! How do  
 you like your balls, buddy?

MARTYN O'BANYON

Attached.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESTON ATWATER'S OFFICE - DAY

Preston, seated at his desk, places paper clips into a small silver box, one at a time. Behind him, at the window, stands Claire. Otto, seated next to the desk, fidgets with his shirt collar.

PRESTON'S POV

His withered hand has meticulously trimmed and polished nails. Preston delicately picks up gold paper clips individually, carefully arranges them within the box.

BACK TO SCENE

PRESTON ATWATER

Eighty-four, eighty-five,  
eighty-six...

Preston turns his attention to Otto.

PRESTON ATWATER (CONT'D)

I'll be curious to see if there  
are exactly one hundred paper  
clips, as marked on the package.

OTTO

Oh?

PRESTON ATWATER

Yes, precisely ninety-four days  
ago I went through this same  
ritual and was appalled when I  
discovered that the package  
contained a mere ninety-eight.

CLAIRE ATWATER (O.S.)

Didn't you hear about it, Otto?  
It went viral on the internet.

PRESTON ATWATER

Mock me if you will, Claire; my  
attention to detail is the secret  
of my success. Speaking of which,  
Otto, how successful was the tail  
you put on Martyn before he left?

Otto gulps, takes out and checks his phone.

OTTO  
We'll find out in about thirty  
seconds. He's on his way up.

Preston continues processing clips.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Ninety-nine, one hundred... It  
better not be disappointing, Otto.

OFFICE DOOR

The polished mahogany door opens. A SECRETARY in Puritan clothing escorts Otto's spy in. He's the same unkempt man, wearing the same attire, who asked Martyn for his autograph at the airport. The secretary exits, closes the door.

BACK TO SCENE

Otto stares at the man, frowns.

OTTO  
Walter, is that the only set of  
clothes you own?

OTTO'S POV

Walter, in his plaid shirt and faded jeans, smirks, blows a huge pink gum bubble, then pops it.

WALTER  
With what you're payin' me, Mr.  
Stepp, I'm lucky to stay supplied  
in gum.

Walter approaches the others.

BACK TO SCENE

OTTO  
You'll excuse us if we don't break  
out in tears. Now, what have you  
found out?

WALTER  
Well, he got back together with  
his wife, Talia. That's for sure.

Claire steps behind Preston's chair.

PRESTON ATWATER  
And did you follow him to the  
airport?

Walter blows another bubble, pops it with his finger.

WALTER  
Like March follows February. Saw  
him headin' towards Scandinavian  
Airlines.

OTTO  
Encouraging.

Walter grows pensive, takes the gum out of his mouth,  
massages it between his thumb and index finger.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Ecch! Disgusting.

WALTER  
That's where things get  
interesting.

PRESTON ATWATER  
How so?

WALTER  
He wasn't walkin' alone. There  
was this guy... older. Wore a  
flashy suit, not my taste.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
What taste?

Walter puts the gum back in his mouth.

WALTER  
Almost like he was a retired  
fashion model, or somethin'.

Otto and Preston exchange a look of concern.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
But that's not his profession. I  
heard him say he was a graphic  
designer, whatever that is.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Now, you didn't actually see  
Martyn board a flight to Norway,  
did you?

Walter blows a bubble, pops it.

WALTER  
 Course not. I'm not allowed past  
 security. Any boob knows that.

OTTO  
 Find out anything additional since  
 then?

WALTER  
 Uh-uh, zip.

Otto turns to Preston.

OTTO  
 What do you think?

With the back of his hand, Preston blasts the silver box of  
 neatly arranged paper clips from his desktop.

CUT TO:

INT. RECOVERY ROOM ENTRANCE - EARLY EVENING

INT. RECOVERY ROOM

Martyn awakes to the grumbles and groans of another  
 PATIENT. He opens one eye, looks to the left, opens the  
 right eye, looks to the right, sees he is in a semi-private  
 room.

The other patient wearily raises a hand, waves.

OTHER PATIENT  
 Hey, buddy, you alive?

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 Barely.

Martyn, startled by the strangely high pitch of his own  
 voice, clears his throat repeatedly.

OTHER PATIENT  
 What were you in for, pal?

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 Liver... liver cancer.

OTHER PATIENT  
 Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.  
 That's rough. Hope they got it  
 all.

MARTYN O'BANYON

I can't believe the pain -- head to toe. Jesus, even my crotch. I feel like that time I took a helmet to the nuts in the Cotton Bowl. And my chest feels heavy.

OTHER PATIENT

I'm not exactly feeling like I could run a marathon myself. It's weird. I expected pain in the crotch, but it's mostly in the gut.

MARTYN O'BANYON

What were you in for? And what did you say your name is?

OTHER PATIENT

Chris. Chris Sorenson, all the way from Queens, New York.

More grousing by both patients.

MARTYN O'BANYON

And you're in for?

Martyn tries to raise his hands, realizes they're restrained.

CHRIS

Uh... Well... I guess I better get used to saying this... I'm here... for a sex change operation.

Not a sound from either patient for thirty seconds.

Martyn screams. Chris screams louder.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOME OF THE GODS - DAY

A crowd of gods, seated and standing, attentively watch a college basketball game on a billboard-sized TV. Villanova and Duke battle it out.

Villanova's guard fouls Duke's guard. A whistle sounds. The gods cheer. At the back of the crowd, Thoth and Ganesh bump beers, high-five.

THOTH

Perfect-o! Watch the first free throw.

## TV SCREEN

The clock: two seconds remain. Scoreboard: Duke is down 91-90. Foul line: Duke's guard steps to the line, wipes away sweat, pauses, looks up for divine help.

## THOTH

THOTH  
Watch... Watch...

## BACK TO SCENE

The Duke player puts up his free throw. It sails over the top of the backboard. The crowd groans. The player gets the ball back. Ref blows his whistle, signals time out.

GEICO commercial plays.

## CROWD OF GODS

The gods object to the commercial interruption, throw debris.

## BACK TO SCENE

Ref blows his whistle, ends the time out. Duke guard crosses himself, attempts second free throw. The shot is an air ball, sinks two feet short of the rim.

Villanova's ball. The throw-in is successful. Buzzer sounds, game over. Golf tournament comes on.

Most of the gods disperse, head for other TV screens.

## GANESH

Well done, Thoth! How many points did you get for causing that abortion of an ending, my man?

## THOTH

Believe it or not, only one hundred twenty-five.

Ganesh, drinking beer, gags, sprays it out of his trunk, soaks another nearby god. Ganesh, embarrassed, waves.

## GANESH

Sorry, Tonatiuh, my bad.

AZTEC SUN GOD, TONATIUH

The sun god gives Ganesh a dirty look, shakes his fist, walks away.

BACK TO SCENE

GANESH  
Ever talk to Tonatiuh?

THOTH  
Can't say I have.

GANESH  
He's a sun god -- okay once you get to know him. Bit of a hothead though.

THOTH  
What's his sport?

GANESH  
Water polo.

Ganesh and Thoth mockingly smirk, snort, chuckle.

Sobbing o.s. Ganesh and Thoth look for its source. Hera, handkerchief in hand, joins them.

GANESH (CONT'D)  
Hera, Hera, what's all this about?

She composes herself. Thoth pats her on the back.

HERA  
Oh, nothing; just the plum NFL situation I had lined up is now completely blown to hell!

THOTH  
N-n-no! Oh, my god!

GANESH  
Thoth, really? You can't say, "Oh, my god!" when you are one.

THOTH  
Okay, okay. So what happened, Hera?

Hera blows her nose.

HERA

Things were falling into place,  
and the next thing I hear, Martyn  
O'Banyon accidentally gets a sex  
change operation in Denmark.

She winces, sobs, pulls herself back together.

GANESH

There, there, Hera; it can't be as  
bad as all that.

HERA

No, it's worse. He'll never pray  
for anything again!

THOTH

Any idea who pulled the prayer rug  
out from under you?

HERA

Of course I do! Little miss  
perfect!

THOTH

Aw-w-w, c'mon, Virgin Mary?

HERA

Yes! Remember? She barged in  
when I was telling the story by  
the pool. She said she had to go  
see Jehovah about some boxing  
match.

Thoth thinks, scratches his beak.

GANESH

Yeah? So?

Hera defiantly places her hands on her hips, shakes back  
her blonde tresses.

HERA

She didn't see him about a boxing  
match! She saw him to get a  
Universal Sports Intervention  
Pass!

Thoth strikes the side of his head. Ganesh stomps his  
feet.

GANESH

A U-SIP! No friggin' way!

Hera gives Ganesh a light shove.

HERA

Yes way!

THOTH

That's like only the third U-SIP that's ever been given out. You need real pull to get one of those.

HERA

Well, she's got it all right -- in spades.

GANESH

Who?

HERA

Who do you think? J.C., of course. If you can't help out your own mom, who can you help?

Thoth sniffs, paws the ground, snaps at and misses a passing flying insect.

THOTH

It's like what they say: it's not what you know, it's which god you know.

GANESH

So, you going to tell Zeus?

HERA

Zeus? No, my dear husband is currently in Helsinki, 'judging' the women's 500-meter breast stroke. Couldn't pry him away from that with a crowbar.

GANESH

Then you're going to back down?

HERA

You know me better than that.

CUT TO:

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Martyn and Chris are awake, but silent. Uneaten meals reside on bedside trays. A nurse removes Martyn's restraints, exits.

DOOR

The door to the room slowly reopens. Only the hand holding it open by its edge is visible. The two entrants hesitate, mumble to each other.

One of the two loudly exhales. Heads down, Dr. Kelson and a BALD MAN in a blue suit reluctantly enter.

DR. KELSON

Mr. O'Banyon, Mr. Sorenson, this is MICHAEL IVAN, the administrative head of the hospital.

MICHAEL IVAN

Gentlemen, on behalf of the entire staff, I just want to convey our sorrow and deep embarrassment over--

Martyn grabs the danish from his tray and hurls it at Michael, hitting him in the forehead. Michael, expressionless, splattered with blueberry jam, quietly picks up the pastry, places back on the tray.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Where's my dick?!

DR. KELSON

Martyn, Chris, please let us explain. This has been every bit as trying for us, as it has been for you.

CHRIS

Trying? For you? I have no gall bladder and only half my liver -- and I'm still a dude!

Dr. Kelson raises shaking hands, searches for the right words.

DR. KELSON

Please, please, if you'll please allow me to explain. There is some good news to report, too.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Good news. Did you hear that, Chris? Doc and suit-boy have good news to brighten our day!

CHRIS

The only good news could be that this is all a nightmare and we're about to wake up.

MICHAEL IVAN

I'm sorry to say it is not that.

MARTYN

Martyn defiantly folds his arms, winces, gently squeezes his new, ample breasts.

BACK TO SCENE

DR. KELSON

Martyn, at the time you were on the operating table, and the 'error' was finally realized, the surgeons opened the site of your liver cancer.

MARTYN O'BANYON

And?

DR. KELSON

And... it was plain to see that the tumorous growth was not cancerous. What you had and what was removed and biopsied, turned out to be a relatively rare non-cancerous growth known as an angiomyolipoma. The surgeon never saw one that large.

Michael Ivan blushes, nods in agreement.

MARTYN

Martyn's eyes bulge like two hard-boiled eggs. He clasps his hands over his feminized face.

BACK TO SCENE

MARTYN O'BANYON

Pardon me for not getting up and dancing a jig over that oh-so-great news. Wait a minute! Why did you refer to yourself that way just now? You said, "The surgeon never saw one that large."

Michael Ivan turns away.

DR. KELSON

I, uh...

MARTYN O'BANYON

Weren't you even there?

DR. KELSON

I, I had an emergency family obligation. It conflicted. I was available to my team, by phone, at all times.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Well that's reassuring! What exactly was the emergency family obligation?

DR. KELSON

My youngest daughter, Katrina. She is very persistent. She had never gone fishing before, and... Look, my team is highly skilled.

CHRIS

Sure, when they're operating on the right patient!

Michael steps closer to Chris' bed.

MICHAEL IVAN

Chris, in six months you'll totally recover. Your liver will completely regenerate by then. And, as for your gall bladder, millions of people get along perfectly well without one.

CHRIS

But I was here for a sex change operation.

MICHAEL IVAN

Correct. And that's is exactly what we will do once you've recovered.

Michael smiles, raises an index finger straight up. With his other hand he pulls a contract from his jacket pocket.

MICHAEL IVAN (CONT'D)

And it will be for no charge whatsoever.

(MORE)

MICHAEL IVAN (CONT'D)  
 We will even cover your travel  
 expenses. It will be done to your  
 complete satisfaction -- free!  
 What do you say to that?

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 Be careful, Chris. You give these  
 butchers another shot, you're  
 liable to end up with two hearts.

Michael places the contract in front of Chris, produces a  
 pen.

MICHAEL IVAN  
 Free!

Chris takes the pen, hesitates, glances at Martyn for a  
 second.

MICHAEL IVAN (CONT'D)  
 Free, Chris.

Chris capitulates, signs.

MICHAEL IVAN (CONT'D)  
 Excellent, you can even keep the  
 pen, it's a good one.

Michael snaps his fingers. Two ORDERLIES enter, wheel  
 Chris' bed towards the door. Chris looks back at Martyn.

CHRIS  
 Goodbye, Martyn, or maybe it  
 should be Mary now. Listen, when  
 they get my operation done right,  
 maybe we can get together  
 sometime, you know, for lunch...  
 or something.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 When amoebas drive snowmobiles,  
 Chris.

Chris and the orderlies exit, the door closes.

Martyn raises his bed, draws the food tray close. Kelson  
 and Michael take a wary step back. Martyn picks up half a  
 sandwich, pauses, takes a bite. The other two men sigh in  
 relief.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)  
 So, one down, one to go, aye,  
 boys?

DR. KELSON

I wish we could make you a similar offer, Martyn.

Martyn puts down the partially eaten sandwich, forces down the bite taken.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Then, uh, you don't have another contract tucked away there, in your jacket pocket, Mikey?

Michael takes a deep breath, lets it out slowly.

MICHAEL IVAN

No, I'm afraid not.

MARTYN O'BANYON

I see. Tell me, doc, just how much of... I mean, how far did they get before, um...

DR. KELSON

You have no penis, or testicles -- none. They're gone. Your junk, as you Americans so quaintly refer to genitalia, is in a jar.

MARTYN O'BANYON

Jesus Murphy. What else?! What else?!

HOME OF THE GODS

Hera, alone, ponders her course of action.

HERA

I'm just going to have to go down there and see if the situation can be salvaged.

BACK TO SCENE

Hera, invisible and inaudible to mortals, appears in a corner of the recovery room.

DR. KELSON

You had artificial breasts inserted, size 34D. You received a series of female hormone injections and your lips were plumped.

(MORE)

DR. KELSON (CONT'D)  
 They also worked on your vocal  
 cords. I guess you've noticed  
 your new delicate voice?

Martyn coughs, rolls his eyes.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 Heavens yes, I have noticed. I  
 was hoping that is was just  
 laryngitis. Did you say 34D? My  
 boobs are bigger than my wife's!  
 ...my wife...

Martyn reflects, chokes up, catches himself being  
 emotional.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)  
 This isn't like me. I don't get  
 choked up, and did I just say  
 'heavens yes?' The hormone  
 injections?

DR. KELSON  
 That would explain it.

HERA  
 A mess only humans could make.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 How am I going to yell at my  
 players, my staff? They'll laugh  
 in my face, bring me flowers to  
 get on my good side, take me  
 dancing.

MICHAEL IVAN  
 Women can be assertive, too,  
 Martyn.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 Oh, stick it in your bonnet,  
 Mikey. "Stick it in your bonnet?"  
 That's not me! Martyn would  
 never say, "Stick it in your  
 bonnet." Oh, peaches! Peaches?

Martyn cries, tugs his hair.

VIRGIN MARY

The Virgin Mary, also invisible and inaudible to mortals,  
 appears in the corner opposite Hera.

VIRGIN MARY'S POV

Hera's gaze moves from the men to Mary. Her eyes meet Mary's and widen.

BACK TO SCENE

The men talk MOS.

HERA'S CORNER/MARY'S CORNER INTERCUTTING

HERA

Mary, what are you doing here?

VIRGIN MARY

Just checking the situation. It could be a good source of prayers to me and some decent points. You know, I only need another 500 to win the dishwasher.

HERA

Um, excuse me, Your Holiness, but when I originally brought this project up, you said you had no interest in it.

Mary produces a scroll from under her robes.

VIRGIN MARY

All that was before I got my U-SIP. Now that I have it, I'm perfectly within my rights to poach Martyn, for good, or ill. I'll get points either way.

Hera scowls, harrumphs.

VIRGIN MARY (CONT'D)

Don't be so cross. Martyn's last name is O'Banyon. Why would he ever pray for help from a Greek goddess of... what is it again you're the goddess of, dear?

HERA

I am the queen of the Greek gods and the goddess of the family, I'll have you know, dear little Mary. As for Martyn, his father was Irish, but his mom is as Greek as stuffed grape leaves.

Hera rolls up her toga sleeves.

HERA (CONT'D)

And another thing: when it comes to accruing points, I can rack them up just as good as you any day of the week. Two years ago I won the patio furniture and the hibachi.

VIRGIN MARY

Aren't you wonderful.

BACK TO SCENE

Martyn sobs, dabs the corner of his eye with bed linens.

MARTYN O'BANYON

So, I'm still a bit fuzzy about my... my...

DR. KELSON

Vagina. Yes, you have a vagina now. The more you say it, the easier it will be to say it, and accept it. You'll see.

Martyn is speechless.

DR. KELSON (CONT'D)

What did you want to know about it?

MARTYN O'BANYON

Accept it? I don't think I ever will. But while I have one, I want to know a few things about it.

DR. KELSON

Well, there's no instruction manual. What did you want to know?

MARTYN O'BANYON

When am I going to get my first period?

Dr. Kelson shakes his head. Michael Ivan nervously checks his watch, winds it.

DR. KELSON  
 You won't; it's not fully  
 functional. Here, let me show  
 you.

As Dr. Kelson draws near, lifts the linens, Martyn recoils,  
 crosses his legs.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
 No, no! Keep away. You can just  
 describe how it works.

Dr. Kelson retreats.

DR. KELSON  
 As you wish. It's simply a  
 pocket. It is natural in  
 appearance, but that's where the  
 realism ends.

MICHAEL IVAN  
 You don't have to worry about some  
 man getting you pregnant, or  
 experiencing the agony of  
 childbirth.

HERA

HERA  
 Any of this striking a familiar  
 chord, Mary?

VIRGIN MARY  
 You are insufferable, Hera. I'm  
 leaving right now and getting an  
 injunction. You've crossed the  
 wrong virgin.

Mary evaporates.

Hera closes her eyes, concentrates.

HERA (V.O.)  
 Martyn, I'm here for you. I'm  
 Hera; I can help, but you need to  
 ask, to receive.

BACK TO SCENE

Martyn, distracted, looks away from Dr. Kelson and Michael.  
 Dazed, he blinks rapidly, shakes his head.

DR. KELSON  
Feeling faint?

MARTYN O'BANYON  
No-no, I'm fine. So, what are my options?

MICHAEL IVAN  
They're limited, Martyn. Very limited.

DR. KELSON  
Surgically, the breast implants can be removed, but the skin has been stretched to the limit. If removed, it will look dreadful. The same thing applies to your new lips. As for your genitals, that is irreversible. Also, you would face serious health risks if we attempted to counter female hormones with injections of male hormones. In all candor, you'r stuck.

MARTYN O'BANYON  
I can still sue your Danish asses.

Michael Ivan produces documents from his back pocket.

MARTYN O'BANYON (CONT'D)  
I thought you didn't have a contract for me to sign.

The papers are placed before Martyn.

MICHAEL IVAN  
You've already signed these, Martyn, the day you were admitted. The contract has a 'hold harmless' clause. You also agreed not to sue and limit yourself to arbitration, with very specific restrictions. The agreement also limits our liability to ten thousand euros, under any circumstances. I can have a check prepared in one hour. You can use the money to buy yourself some nice dresses in the hospital's gift shop.

Martyn glances at the documents, hand them back to Michael. Dr. Kelson places his hand on Martyn's shoulder.

DR. KELSON  
 Complete your recuperation,  
 physically and psychologically, as  
 long as it takes. Then go home  
 and make the best of it.

CUT TO:

INT. MCCARRAN AIRPORT - DAY

(4 MONTHS LATER)

SECURITY AREA, EXIT FOR ARRIVING PASSENGERS

Tom Withers holds a box of cigars and a homemade sign reading: Welcome Back. A stream of PASSENGERS files through the exit. Excited, Tom squints, weaves back and forth trying to get a glimpse of Martyn.

WALTER

Otto's spy sits in the back row of nearby seats, strains his eyes for the same purpose.

BACK TO SCENE

Exiting passengers thin out; the stream slows to a trickle. The last person, a woman of solid build, stops a few feet from Tom. Tom, concerned about not seeing Martyn, approaches the woman.

WALTER

Walter, having not seen Martyn, heads for a secluded corner, makes a call.

WALTER

It's me, Mr. Stepp. I'm at the exit. The flight came in and everybody got off. No, I didn't see him. I don't know how I could have missed him.

Walter blows a pink bubble, pops it. He holds the phone farther from his ear. Indistinguishable ranting by Otto is audible.

WALTER (CONT'D)

I'll try to pick up the trail, Mr. Stepp. I'll find him.

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)  
 One other thing: that same  
 fruity-looking dude I saw on  
 drop-off day was here.

Walter blows a small bubble, sucks it back in, chews  
 furiously.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
 No, he didn't pick up anyone,  
 either. He's just talking to some  
 broad. I gotta go.

Walter departs.

BACK TO SCENE

From this point on, Martyn will be referred to as Mary  
 O'Banyon.

TOM WITHERS  
 Excuse me, madam. Were you the  
 last passenger off the  
 Scandinavian Airlines flight?

MARY O'BANYON  
 As a matter of fact, I was.  
 Looking for someone?

TOM WITHERS  
 Yes, perhaps you saw him.

MARY O'BANYON  
 Can you describe him?

Tom pauses, knots his brow. Mary raises eyebrows, waits.

TOM WITHERS  
 He is, no offense intended, built  
 a bit like... you are...

Tom drops the box of cigars, goes weak in the knees. Mary  
 catches Tom, drags him to a nearby seat, stands in front of  
 him, takes off her wide-brimmed hat and fans him.

MARY O'BANYON  
 Can I get you anything, Tom?

Tom leans forward, head to his knees, rears back, laughs  
 raucously.

TOM WITHERS  
 You son of a bitch! You nearly  
 fooled me!

MARY O'BANYON  
Fooled you?

MARY'S POV

TOM WITHERS  
With that getup.

Tom plucks the paisley handkerchief from his jacket, mops his brow.

TOM WITHERS (CONT'D)  
I mean, Halloween is still months away, dear boy. You did this as a gag, didn't you?

BACK TO SCENE

MARY O'BANYON  
No, I didn't, and quit staring at my boobs -- they're real, well, really fake.

TOM WITHERS  
What the hell happened to you? Didn't you go to Norway on a spiritual retreat?

Mary puts her hat back on, tips it back, places her hands on her hips.

MARY O'BANYON  
Do I look like I was away on a spiritual retreat?

Tom, thunderstruck, shakes his head.

MARY O'BANYON (CONT'D)  
Listen, I've got a meeting at Preston Atwater's office in an hour. If you can drop me off there, I'll fill you in on the way. And, oh, by the way, my name's now Mary.

Tom picks up the cigar box, looks down, opens it, then closes it.

TOM WITHERS  
They're your favorites. Had I known, I would have brought chocolates.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESTON ATWATER'S OFFICE - DAY

ROUND SILVER TRAY

Two, shaky, white-gloved hands place the tray, holding a glass of water and a small crystal ice bucket, on Preston's desktop. With delicate precision, three ice cubes are lowered into the glass, one a time.

OFFICE

The butler, the same one Preston tossed out of the skybox, silently heads for the door, his leg in a cast.

Preston sips, coldly looks at his three standing guests: Claire, Kubiak and Otto Stepp.

KUBIAK

Four months at a Norwegian religious retreat. After that, he must be the most spiritually pure person outside of the Vatican.

OTTO

If he fails at coaching the Chips, he can run for archbishop.

CLAIRE ATWATER

I didn't feel good about that trip of his from the start, and I still don't.

The secretarial intercom on Preston's desk buzzes. Preston lowers his mouth to it and presses a button.

PRESTON ATWATER

Yes, Cynthia?

OFFICE DOOR

Before he can hear CYNTHIA's reply, the door opens. Mary struts in, followed by a short, slim bearded MAN holding a briefcase, who immediately steps to the side of the door.

Mary wears a dark tailored women's suit. She has a short, stylish, feminine hairdo and wears simple jewelry. She carries a matching handbag and wears conservative makeup complimentary to her attire.

Mary approaches within three feet of Preston's desk and stops. The room is as quiet as a crypt.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Who the hell are you?

MARY O'BANYON  
I'm Mary O'Banyon, the head coach  
of the Las Vegas Chips.

Otto shrieks. Preston drops his glass of water, reels back in his seat. Kubiak pulls a prescription vial from his pocket, opens it, gulps its contents.

Claire dashes around from behind Preston's chair, comes within inches and inspects Mary, as if she was an exhibit at Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, then retreats back behind Preston.

PRESTON ATWATER  
Martyn, are you out of your  
fucking mind?!

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Preston! Such language!

Preston, embarrassed, slaps his hand over his mouth.

OTTO  
Why are you made up like... this?

KUBIAK  
What the hell kind of religious  
retreat did you go to?

MARY O'BANYON (V.O.)  
Hera, if you're listening, I'm  
going to need your help go get  
through this.

#### HOME OF THE GODS

Hera picks flowers in a perfectly manicured garden. Every flower picked is instantly replaced by two equally beautiful specimens.

She pauses, hears Mary O'Banyon's plea o.s. About to speak, she hesitates when Virgin Mary appears next to her, holding a parchment bearing the word 'injunction' in bold letters.

VIRGIN MARY  
I'll take care of this, Hera.

Hera wilts.

VIRGIN MARY (V.O.)  
It's the Virgin Mary, Martyn, uh,  
Mary. Just tell them the truth.

Virgin Mary turns to Hera.

VIRGIN MARY  
Yes, yes, yes! That should be  
good for two hundred points.

BACK TO SCENE

PRESTON ATWATER  
Well, what have you got to say for  
yourself? Speak, damn it!

MAN BY THE OFFICE DOOR

MAN  
My client will speak when she is  
ready, Mr. Atwater.

BACK TO SCENE

OTTO  
And who in this madhouse are you?

The man by the door approaches, stands by Mary.

KUBIAK  
He's SHELDON KINNISH, an attorney  
and p.r. agent -- and he's damn  
good at both.

OTTO  
You know him?

KUBIAK  
From Temple.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
You're Jews?

KUBIAK  
No, the university.

PRESTON ATWATER  
I'm still waiting, Martyn.

Mary straightens her suit jacket, takes a deep breath.

MARY O'BANYON

Mr. Atwater, despite all the other people present, I want to say that what I am about to tell you is between us. You put your confidence in me when you hired me to be the coach of the Chips. I do not intend to betray that confidence.

Preston leans forward, removes his glasses, deliberately folds them, sets them gently on the desk.

MARY O'BANYON (CONT'D)

I never went to that retreat in Norway.

Claire slaps the headrest on Preston's seat, startles him.

CLAIRE ATWATER

I knew it!

OTTO

You spit on our trust in you.

MARY O'BANYON

Trust? Really? You had me tailed by that balloon-blowing slob-of-a-spy of yours. You really ought to tell him to change his look from time to time, Otto, and his underwear.

Otto indignantly looks away.

MARY O'BANYON (CONT'D)

I didn't go to the retreat because I was diagnosed with liver cancer at the end of last season. The retreat was a cover story.

Kubiak slowly pulls a small note pad and pen from his pocket, takes notes.

KINNISH

Hoping to find a loophole in Mary's contract, Terry, or are you just practicing your penmanship.

Kubiak ignores the remark, keeps writing.

MARY O'BANYON

The only qualified surgeon who could get the job done in time for me to be ready for the new season was in Denmark.

CLAIRE ATWATER

Offhand, I'd say you overestimated his abilities.

Otto smirks.

PRESTON ATWATER

Then how in God's good name did you end up this way?

MARY O'BANYON

I was sedated before I was taken from my room. Orderlies took me to the wrong operating room and I got the sex change operation that another patient was scheduled for at the same time.

OTTO

And what about your liver cancer?

Mary bites her lower lip, cringes.

MARY O'BANYON

Never had it. I was misdiagnosed. It turned out to be a benign growth, which they removed after the sex change procedure. I was still on the table when they realized their mistake.

CLAIRE ATWATER

But your makeup, your wardrobe, the whole way you carry yourself -- even your voice. To my horror, you seem to embrace your mutilation enthusiastically.

PRESTON ATWATER

Our horror.

MARY O'BANYON

I didn't, at first. But, eventually, I came to realize I had no choice. I was no longer male and there was no way to reverse the operation. That left accepting being female.

Kubiak stops writing.

KUBIAK

How can you expect us to swallow  
this outrageous story of yours,  
Martyn--

MARY O'BANYON

It's Mary.

KUBIAK

Whatever. You come in here  
looking like Bill Belichick's  
sister, if he has one, tell us  
some cock-and-bull story and we're  
supposed to just--

Mary opens her purse, removes and holds up a Zip-loc bag  
containing her male genitals and tosses it to Kubiak, who  
swoons, inspects it, gags and drops it.

Claire, Preston and Otto howl, recoil with disgust.

MARY O'BANYON

My souvenir from Denmark. Try not  
to step on it; it's got  
sentimental value.

OTTO

How did you ever get that through  
customs?

MARY O'BANYON

I told them it was my lunch.

Otto desperately tries to squelch upchucking.

Kinnish retrieves the bag, gives it to Mary, who returns it  
safely to her purse. He then opens his briefcase,  
retrieves a one-page document, places it in front of  
Preston.

Preston looks at it askance, tosses it aside. Kubiak gives  
it a closer look.

PRESTON ATWATER

You expect me to sign that?

KINNISH

My client does.

KUBIAK

He already has a contract.

PRESTON ATWATER

Had. Get with it, Kubiak. I offered a contract to someone named Martyn O'Banyon. Now he, or she, goes by the name Mary.

CLAIRE ATWATER

We'll be damned before we give a freak the honorable job of coaching our soon-to-be Las Vegas Puritans.

MARY O'BANYON

Excuse me, but--

Kinnish places his hand on Mary's shoulder, stopping her.

KINNISH

Preston, let me paint you and your lovely wife a verbal picture, if I may. The picture portrays the interior of your spotless, new multi-billion-dollar stadium on game day. In it we see that the hot dog and beer vendors exceed the number of paying fans. Where, might you ask, are the missing fans? They are outside the stadium, Mr. and Mrs. Atwater, holding placards and blocking the entrances. The placard's verbiage is highly in my client's favor and mercilessly derogatory of the two of you. Now add to this fine picture the image of your phones ringing without letup and your polished marble hallways jammed, with a multitude of activists, journalists and politicians all quite eager to see your miserable hides nailed to a wall for the unspeakable wrongs you've committed against my pitiable client, the victim of medical malpractice.

KUBIAK

KUBIAK

I told you he was good.

BACK TO SCENE

Preston picks up the document, gives it a second look.

KINNISH

All we're asking for is that you honor the contract with Martyn O'Banyon, with Mary O'Banyon.

Otto jumps to his feet.

OTTO

This is tantamount to blackmail!

Preston picks up a pen. Claire rushes over, grabs it out of his hand.

CLAIRE ATWATER

Don't do it, Preston! Do you want to eternally bear the stigma, the mockery, associated with having the first and only female coach in the league?!

OTTO

You mean pseudo-female. At best, 'Mary' is a sexual Frankenstein. Her lawyer threatens he'll turn the public against you. I control the media, Preston! I can just as easily get the public back on your side.

Preston sweats heavily, looks to Kubiak.

KUBIAK

The line is drawn in the sand, Mr. Atwater. Only you can decide which side of it you want to stand on. Just keep in mind, sir, you are weighing your fortune against your reputation.

PRESTON ATWATER

You're not worth half of what I pay you, Kubiak.

Preston picks up another pen, dashes off a quick signature. He tosses the signed document to Kinnish, who glances at it, then promptly stows it away.

Claire picks up a Mayflower-shaped paperweight from the desk, throws it at a framed photo on a nearby wall.

PHOTO

The photograph of Claire and Preston on their wedding day sustains a direct hit. Smashed, it falls to the ground.

BACK TO SCENE

Satisfied, she turns to Preston.

Preston's head is down on the desk.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Preston! Don't you dare die  
without my permission!

She runs to his side, puts her arm around his shoulder. Everyone present crowds the desk. Kubiak produces his phone.

KUBIAK  
I'll call 911.

Otto checks for a pulse, heart beat, steps away. Head in his hands, he walks towards the window.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI CAB - LATER

Mary O'Banyon, stunned, pulls out her phone, calls Talia.

MARY O'BANYON IN CAB/TALIA AT HOME INTERCUTTING

MARY O'BANYON  
Talia? It's me; I've missed you  
beyond words.

TALIA  
My god, Martyn, where are you?

MARY O'BANYON  
In a cab, here in Vegas, on my way  
home to you. I'm finally back; I  
can't wait to see you.

TALIA  
You okay? Everything all right?  
Your voice sounds different.

MARY O'BANYON  
Just a cold coming on.

Mary clears her throat.

TALIA

Before you left, you said you'd  
come back a new man. Are you?

Mary, taken aback, searches for the right words.

MARY O'BANYON

I'm new in every way, my love.  
See you soon. Bye.

CUT TO:

EXT. TALIA'S HOME - DAY

(MINUTES LATER)

The cab bearing Mary stops one house short of Talia's residence. In front of her home, numerous press cars and vans take up all the available space. CAMERAMEN and REPORTERS stir about, crowd the front entrance.

The cab's passenger door flies open. Mary, in low heels, carrying a small suitcase and a purse, makes a mad dash for the home's unpatrolled side door.

MARY'S POV

The side door opens a crack. Fingers flutter on Talia's raised hand, motioning for Mary to make haste. Talia looks perplexed.

Three reporters, recorders in hand, block the way -- one on Mary's left, two on her right.

BACK TO SCENE

Mary swings the suitcase in a high arc that catches the reporter on her left under the chin, sends him sailing back. Mary pivots right, lowers her shoulder, bowls over the closer reporter, who tumbles back, upending the reporter behind him.

Other reporters, cameramen in tow, race to catch up with Mary. Mary surges, lunges in through the now wide open side door.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE

Mary, safely inside, stumbles. Talia slams the door shut, bolts it.

MARY'S POV

Talia breathes heavily, as if she had been the one running from the journalists. Looking down at Mary, her face displays disappointment, astonishment, tinged with anger.

BACK TO SCENE

Mary stands, stumbles from a broken shoe heel, hobbles to Talia.

TALIA

I am so angry, I don't know where  
to even begin.

Mary extends a hand, touches Talia's arm. She brushes it away.

MARY O'BANYON

It's still me.

Talia derisively snickers.

O.s. fists pound on the side door.

TALIA

No, it isn't. You didn't say  
where you were really headed, or  
why. You come back here months  
later and don't call me first?  
And... and just look yourself!

Mary looks at her own attire, then back at Talia.

MARY O'BANYON

Not a fan of tweed?

Talia gives Mary a shove.

TALIA

Not a fan of what you've become,  
or that I found out about it all  
second hand.

Mary's brow gnarls.

MARY O'BANYON

Listen, Talia, I didn't ask for a gender change, but it happened and now I accept it. It didn't make me any less human and it didn't take away my right to a certain amount of respect.

O.s. side door pounding intensifies. Front door pounding, o.s., chimes in.

MARY O'BANYON (CONT'D)

I don't expect those bozos out there to treat me with any compassion, but I do expect it of my wife.

TALIA

Why, so you can keep your coaching contract with Claire Atwater? That's the only reason you want us to stay together. It's all over the news!

MARY O'BANYON

There's no denying that if you kick me out, I lose the job, by breach of contract. But my love of you is separate from that. As a fellow woman--

Talia slaps Mary's face.

TALIA

You're not a woman!

Mary rubs her reddened cheek, reflects. She takes off the shoe with the damaged heel, breaks it off, discards it. She does the same with the other shoe, puts them back on.

MARY O'BANYON

Going to throw me to those wolves out there?

Talia nods, folds her arms.

MARY O'BANYON (CONT'D)

All right then. But will you grant me one final, small favor, a little later on?

Talia bites her lower lip.

TALIA

Possibly.

Talia places her hand on the doorknob, undoes the dead bolt. Mary gathers her possessions, steps toward the door and the crowd of rabid reporters behind it. When Talia turns the handle, they go silent.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - THAT EVENING

A pink, 1976 Cadillac El Dorado convertible cruises up the Las Vegas Strip. Following it are a half dozen crowded, exotic vehicles, their horns blaring.

Farther back, a stream of media vehicles attempt to keep pace.

INT. PINK CADILLAC

Driving, and not happy about doing it, is Talia. Attorney Kinnish, his few wispy strands of hair dancing in the wind, sits next to her, fumbling through documents. He tries to make written corrections to the fluttering papers.

BACK SEAT

Tom Withers wears a peach-colored tuxedo. He smiles from ear to ear, sips champagne from a gold-filigreed, crystal glass.

TOM WITHERS

It may be a marriage of convenience, Mary, but I'm still ecstatic that you asked. Care for some champagne? I've been saving this bottle for this occasion since the Reagan administration.

MARY O'BANYON

Sure.

Mary raises her glass. Tom fills it. They clink glasses, sip.

FRONT SEAT

KINNISH

Talia, Mary's already signed. As soon as we get to our destination, I'll need your endorsement to complete the agreement.

TALIA

This is one hell of a big 'small'  
favor.

BACK TO SCENE

The El Dorado accelerates. At the Elvis-adorned, world famous, Little White Wedding Chapel, the car wildly turns in. Other cars follow.

HOME OF THE GODS

Exterior of small, free-standing, ornate marble building bears the sign: restrooms. One door is marked 'Gods', the other 'Goddesses.'

The Virgin Mary exits the goddesses' room, adjusts her hair, robes. Hera exits the Gods' room, walks over and stands next to her.

VIRGIN MARY

Well, speak of the devil; I was just thinking that I needed to have a chit-chat with you. By the way, what were doing in there?

HERA

Oh, nothing, there weren't any stalls available in the goddesses'.

Thoth exits the gods' room, pauses, adjusts his belt, walks away.

HERA (CONT'D)

Actually, I wanted a word with you, too. So, what's on your virginal mind?

VIRGIN MARY

It's the whole O'Banyon situation.

Hera coyly smiles.

HERA

Problems?

VIRGIN MARY

What with his medical mishap and his marital and contractual problems, I'm not sure he's worth pursuing anymore.

(MORE)

VIRGIN MARY (CONT'D)  
Frankly, now I just don't think  
enough points are there.

HERA  
Did a little input-output  
analysis? Bit off more than you  
can chew?

Virgin Mary sighs, nods in agreement.

VIRGIN MARY  
A bit of both. He's a nice guy,  
or gal, as the case may be, and I  
wish him well, but I find his  
situation exhausting.

HERA  
And what about your injunction?

Mary produces the injunction, flicks it with her index  
finger. The document disintegrates.

VIRGIN MARY  
O'Banyon is all yours.

BACK TO SCENE

TALIA'S POV

A spot-lit sign points in the direction of the drive-thru  
wedding window.

KINNISH (O.S.)  
Just follow the arrow around to  
the side, we're scheduled for a  
drive-thru wedding. Before you  
do, sign this divorce consent.

TALIA  
A drive-thru wedding -- every  
girl's dream.

TALIA

Kinnish hands her the document and a pen.

O.s. car horns honk.

KARKOWSKI (O.S.)  
 C'mon, Talia, move your tail! I  
 don't want to miss the cocktail  
 hour!

WACKO (O.S.)  
 Yeah, move your butt, girl! Love  
 can't wait!

Talia quickly signs, tosses the document to Kinnish.  
 Defiantly, she raises her arm, gives her hecklers the  
 finger, hits the gas.

Kinnish hears a buzz, checks his phone.

PHONE SCREEN

Text message from Kubiak: Urgent! Contact me immediately!

BACK TO SCENE

SIDE OF CHAPEL

Behind the drive-thru wedding window, the robed,  
 gray-haired MINISTER waves as the Cadillac pulls up.

The entire side of the chapel is protected by a massive  
 canopy whose ceiling displays a swarm of winged cherubs  
 playfully flying in blue skies, punctuated by puffy clouds.

Wedding music softly playing in the background is quickly  
 drowned out by the clamorous press corps and football  
 teammates who exit their respective vehicles and surround  
 the El Dorado. Photo flashes abound.

KARKOWSKI  
 So, which of you dudes is the  
 bride?

Wacko punches Karkowski in the arm.

WACKO  
 It's coach, of course, you idiot!  
 Don't you see? He's the one  
 wearing white.

KARKOWSKI  
 But he ain't wearin' a dress.

MARY O'BANYON

They'd need a month to make one with my measurements, or sew two together. A white tux had to do.

Attorney Kinnish motions to the minister, passes him the signed divorce consent.

KINNISH

You'll see the papers are all in order, as I described, in our earlier phone conversation.

The minister checks the document, sets it aside. He checks his microphone.

MINISTER

I will need everyone's silence, please, before I begin.

Two men dressed like Elvis place elaborate floral bouquets on either side of the car.

BACK SEAT

Tom grabs Mary's hand.

MINISTER (O.S.)

As requested by Mr. Kinnish, I will make this quick.

TOM WITHERS

Some people just lack heart.

KINNISH (O.S.)

I'm practical, speaking of which... here.

Tom extends his hand, takes a gold ring from Kinnish.

MINISTER (O.S.)

Do you, Mary O'Banyon, take Tom Withers to be your lawfully wedded husband?

MARY O'BANYON

Yep.

MINISTER (O.S.)

Tom Withers, do you take Mary O'Banyon to be your lawfully wedded wife?

TOM WITHERS  
Totally, eternally.

TALIA (O.S.)  
Incredibly.

FRONT SEAT

Talia lowers her forehead to the steering wheel.

TALIA  
I can't believe I agreed to this.

Kinnish checks his phone, frowns.

BACK TO SCENE

MINISTER (O.S.)  
By the powers vested in me, by the  
great state of Nevada, I now  
pronounce you man and wife. You  
may now kiss the bride.

FRONT SEAT

KINNISH  
There's no time for that! We've  
got an emergency meeting with  
Claire Atwater! Talia!

Talia, shocked, springs to attention.

KINNISH (CONT'D)  
Floor it, Talia! We've got to get  
to the Atwater Building!

PINK CADILLAC

The car comes to life; Talia revs the engine. The crowd  
steps back.

KARKOWSKI

KARKOWSKI  
What about the cocktail hour?

BACK TO SCENE

The car speeds away before anyone can pursue.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LATE PRESTON ATWATER'S OFFICE

Claire sits in the seat formerly occupied by Preston, though it is far too large for her. Kubiak stands by her side. Otto stands by the window, behind her.

The office, with a minor exception, looks as it did when Preston was alive.

PICTURE ON THE WALL

The smashed wedding photo has been replaced by a picture of Claire happily participating in a book burning.

BACK TO SCENE

OFFICE DOOR

The door opens. The receptionist leads Mary, Kinnish, Talia and Tom into the room, exits. The four approach, take seats in front of the desk.

CLAIRE ATWATER

Mr. Kinnish, I take it you  
received the message I instructed  
Mr. Kubiak to send.

KINNISH

I did, but I did not convey it to  
my client. I felt he should hear  
it directly from you.

Mary gives Kinnish a sour look. Tom affectionately pats and holds Mary's hand, drawing Otto's attention.

OTTO

Oh, please, save that disgusting  
demonstrative crap for someplace  
private.

Fists clenched, Mary springs to her feet.

TOM WITHERS

Mind your temper, dear. Have a  
seat and let's hear what the  
narrow-minded bigots have to say.

Mary thumps her chair to the floor, takes her seat.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Fill them in, Mr. Kubiak.

KUBIAK  
Martyn, or Mary, the moment the divorce decree was signed, technically, you were in breach of your contract with the Chips and subject to release. Certainly, your attorney would contest that on the grounds you remarried moments later. We would be willing to take this to court, but that would jeopardize a smooth and seamless start to the season--

KINNISH  
By which you really mean it might hurt your bottom line.

Kubiak clears his throat, shuffles the papers he holds.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Get back on topic, Kubiak!

KUBIAK  
As a way of avoiding an unpleasant legal conflict, Mrs. Atwater is prepared to offer Mary a challenge that should appeal to her competitive spirit.

OTTO  
Providing her surgeon didn't cut that out, too.

Claire pounds her fist on the desk.

CLAIRE ATWATER  
Shut your trap, Stepp!

Otto retreats back to the office window.

MARY O'BANYON  
Let's hear it.

KUBIAK  
It's quite simple: a preseason game, in one week, here in Vegas. You coach the Chips. You win, you keep your job. You lose, you politely and quietly step aside and never sue, for anything... ever... ever!

MARY O'BANYON

Interesting, but no other team in the league would ever agree to it.

KINNISH

He's right. From a legal and public relations standpoint it would be disastrous, too controversial.

CLAIRE ATWATER

I never said it would be against another NFL team.

MARY O'BANYON

Then who?

KUBIAK

Through a subsidiary based in Bermuda Preston secretly owned a controlling interest in the Edmonton Eskimos.

Mary laughs.

MARY O'BANYON

They're in the Canadian Football League!

OTTO

And damned good! They've won Canada's equivalent of the Super Bowl fourteen times.

CLAIRE ATWATER

Plus, we have God on our side. So, are you game, Ms. O'Banyon?

CUT TO:

INT. CHIPS' STADIUM - NIGHT

(ONE WEEK LATER)

The packed stadium is eerily quiet.

UPPER DECK

Fans are transfixed on the game. Vendors and patrons are motionless, all eyes on the field.

## SCOREBOARD

Fourth quarter. The game clock is stopped -- time remaining, seven seconds. Fourth down. Chips' timeouts remaining: 0. Score: Eskimos 20, Chips 15.

## FIELD

OFFICIAL places the ball on the Chips' own 23 yard line.

## CHIPS' SIDELINE

Hatless, Mary wears jeans and a white, low-cut blouse emblazoned with the Chips' logo on the back. Headphones are draped around her neck. In her hands, an open playbook.

Mary is surrounded by the offensive squad and assistant COACHES.

## TIMEOUT CLOCK

Timeout clock is running down, fifty-five seconds and counting.

## ASSISTANT COACH

They'll be guarding against the deep pass. I say, go medium and lateral it back to Rutherford. Let him run it in.

## MARY O'BANYON

No way! Peaches! We've got to bet the farm and go deep.

## KARKOWSKI

Peaches? I love it when you talk dirty, coach! Turns me on!

Mary playfully bumps Karkowski in the gut with the playbook.

## WACKO

Really, Karkowski? For me it's the lipstick. What color is that, coach, Temptation Pink?

## KARKOWSKI

You gonna shower with us after the game, coach? Show us your new end zone?

MARY O'BANYON  
Enough! Hail Mary, on three! Now  
get out there!

The players break, jog onto the field.

FIELD

The offense goes into a pro set formation: three wide receivers, a tight end set back from the line and a solo running back (Wacko) two yards behind quarterback Karkowski.

The Eskimo's defense sets up with four deep defenders guarding against the long pass.

MARY O'BANYON

Mary steps away from her staff, takes a deep breath, looks up.

MARY O'BANYON (V.O.)  
Hera, if you're listening...

BACK TO SCENE

Karkowski steps up to the center, takes the snap just as the timeout clock hits zero.

GAME CLOCK

The game clock kicks in -- six seconds remain... five...

BACK TO SCENE

Karkowski stumbles, regains his balance, fakes a hand-off to Wacko, who accelerates towards the line, taking out the blitzing middle linebacker.

Wide receivers sprint downfield towards the end zone.

Karkowski rears back, throws so hard it lifts him off the ground. The ball arcs high, sails, as he is pounded by two oncoming defensive linemen.

## DOWNFIELD

Ten yards shy of the end zone, a DEFENDER, close to a sprinting RECEIVER, leaps into the air, his muscular taped arm outstretched, his eyes fixated on the incoming ball.

## HOME OF THE GODS - DAY

In a garden, Hera and Virgin Mary sit on a marble bench. They intently watch the Chips' game on a TV mounted atop a five-foot-high Ionic column.

HERA

Well, I must say, I am pleasantly surprised my assistance was requested.

VIRGIN MARY

I had a little something to do with that. As luck would have it, this is the hot game here today. Five hundred points for manipulating the outcome, the last time I checked.

HERA

Seriously? I had no idea. I mean that, honestly.

Virgin Mary nods, focuses on the TV. Hera adjusts her robes, pauses.

HERA (CONT'D)

Listen, Mary, I've been doing a little soul searching about the O'Banyon situation and, well, I was way too aggressive right from the start. How about you decide the fate of the final pass? After all, they did call a Hail Mary.

VIRGIN MARY

Hera, that's so sweet of you. I don't quite know what to say.

Hera takes a quick glance at the TV screen.

HERA

You don't have to say anything -- but you better decide right now!

VIRGIN MARY

You're a sweetheart, Hera, and I'm going to cut you in for half the points.

HERA

You can do that?

VIRGIN MARY

Sure, I've got pull. It's not what you know, it's which god you know.

BACK TO SCENE

The descending ball hits the defender's arm, ricochets into the receiver's arms.

END ZONE

The receiver strides into the end zone, triumphantly raises the ball over his head. The ref signals touchdown. The final gun sounds o.s. A swarm of players and coaches, including Mary, inundate the receiver, celebrate.

CROWD IN GRANDSTANDS

Wild celebration by fans, vendors.

INT. ATWATER'S SKYBOX

Claire, Otto and Kubiak, the sole occupants, watch the festivities, dumbfounded.

KUBIAK

Still going to change their name to the Puritans, Claire?

OTTO

The Village People might be more appropriate.

CLAIRE ATWATER

Oh, suck it, Stepp.

BACK TO SCENE

The celebration continues. Mary is raised onto the players' shoulders.

GRANDSTANDS

Women, bras in hand, throw them onto the field.

BACK TO SCENE

Mary and the players, jubilant, are bombarded with bras.

FADE OUT.

THE END

(CONT'D)

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