Hail Mary

by

Douglas Pike (c) 2018
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-HAIRERD 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 fireplace, 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.


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.
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.
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 pleasurably.

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
Oooooh.

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, hesitantly 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?
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.

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

Martyn grabs the marker.

What do you want me to sign, pal?

The fan pats his shirt and pants pockets.

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

Huh?

Let him sign your belly.

Tom laughs.

For cryin' out loud! Jeez!

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

Who's it get made out to?

The baby.

And the baby's name?

We ain't picked one yet.

Martyn strikes his forehead with the palm of his hand.

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

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

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.
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?
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, TONATIUGH

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

BACK TO SCENE

GANESH
Ever talk to Tonatiugh?

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.
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're 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.
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
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 INTO CUTTING

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

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

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 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)
(CONT'D)