

LET'S PLAY BALL

Written by

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Based on the novel by Linda Gould

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FADE IN:

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

October's chill is not felt by the excited, SOLD OUT CROWD. A sea of blue and white fans anxiously await the game's start.

An old-school ORGAN rings ubiquitous over the expensive sound system as a stunning BLONDE (30) sashays to the pitcher's mound.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) Put
your hands together, Filibuster
fans, for D.C.'s own Jessica
Austen, throwing out tonight's
ceremonial first pitch!

The crowd obliges, and the blonde, JESSICA, gives a friendly wave.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - SKY BOX - CONTINUOUS

A small group, overdressed for a ballgame, watches Jessica hurl towards home plate from a luxurious sky box above.

MIRANDA STONE (30), pretty but no bombshell, sips a top shelf martini.

MIRANDA
I'm surprised they let her out
there.

This peaks the interest of Miranda's parents, GEORGE and CAROL (both 60s).

GEORGE
Why not? She's engaged to their
star player.

MIRANDA
One of their star players.

CAROL
And is nothing but a thorn in the
side of the rest.

MIRANDA

Understatement of the century.
It's more like if Woodward and
Bernstein swore in Nixon.

GEORGE

I say let the fox in the hen house.
Keep it interesting.

Miranda's husband, TOMMY STONE (35) has been quiet until
now, completely focused on the laptop computer in front of
him.

TOMMY

Your sister is a fox, Miranda.
I'll give you that.

He smiles at his own comment but doesn't look up from his
work. Miranda doesn't look pleased.

Oblivious, Carol and George clap for their daughter as she
strides away from the mound.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - SKY BOX - LATER

The group is now several rounds of drinks in.

Jessica has joined her family in the box. A SIZABLE
DIAMOND engagement ring glitters on her hand.

They watch as two Filibusters players, PETIE JANSEN (30s)
and WILSON BOYD (late 20s), ham it up for the crowd as
their team takes the field.

They get a chuckle and applause from the crowd but Jessica
is NOT IMPRESSED.

JESSICA

It's like animals at the zoo.

MIRANDA

Come on, Jessie. They're just
having fun.

JESSICA

It's the rubber game of the
National League Championship.
There's more on the line than fun.

Miranda bristles at her sister's tone.

MIRANDA

They've made it this far.

JESSICA

Yeah, with a roster full of men
more professional and more devoted.

(MORE)

JESSICA (CONT'D) And all the hometown press keeps it quiet that they skipped out on practice twice last week. It's shameful.

MIRANDA

Boyd's probably going to be the league's MVP this year.

JESSICA

And no one will care if they're not wearing World Series rings.

Miranda turns back to the game. She sips her drink, silenced and out-played.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - SKY BOX - A BIT LATER

The family is now completely engrossed in the game, except for Tommy - still glued to his laptop.

The Filibusters have off to rough start, with the scoreboard showing the Keys leading the game 4-0.

With two men in SCORING POSITION, they're set up with a great opportunity to chip away at the lead.

Boyd, the likely MVP, steps to the plate.

Miranda is loud with her applause, drawing a look from her sister.

Most of the stadium rises to their feet to show support.

MIRANDA

Come on, Boyd! Hit 'em home!

Boyd wisely TAKES the first two pitches, both wide of the plate.

A THIRD ball follows, pushing the count to 3-0.

JESSICA

He better not swing. Take the walk. We need the runs.

But the fourth pitch is belt high, middle of the plate, and Boyd RIPS it to deep left field.

The left fielder sprints toward the wall, tracking the ball to attempt a catch, but it's too fast and too hard.

Bounding off the back wall, it's a SOLID DOUBLE.

The crowd ERUPTS as Boyd barrels into second base, collecting two RBIs and splitting the run deficit in half.

Even Jessica claps with the crowd, though with more politeness than enthusiasm.

The KEYS' MANAGER trots out to the mound, talking to his pitcher.

The TV commentators, audible from the box's large flatscreen, chatter excitedly.

COMMENTATOR #1 The Keys bench is being very conservative here. Velazquez has only given up two hits tonight, but it looks like Jeffrey Watson is coming in to relieve him.

COMMENTATOR #2 It may not be his performance tonight, but rather his season numbers against the Filibuster's next batter, Manny Chavez. The first baseman was five for ten against Velazquez in interleague play this past June.

COMMENTATOR #1 This'll be a big moment for Chavez. He's a popular player with a solid season behind him, but it was hard not to notice him really being outshone offensively by Boyd this year. Chavez is not getting any younger, and it'll be interesting to see how the Filibusters handle having two high-profile free agents this offseason.

COMMENTATOR #2 That's right, and with Boyd locked in for another four years with a weighty contract, will the older Chavez and Petie Jansen have to jockey for what's left on the payroll?

The umpire moves toward the mound, making clear the manager has had enough time. The Key's manager signals officially for the pitching change.

The new Keys pitcher, WATSON, tosses one last warm up pitch before trotting to the mound.

COMMENTATOR #1 Let's
see if Chavez can tie this game
up.

MANNY CHAVEZ (32), handsome, steps up to the plate.

Jessica's instantly on her feet for her fiancée. She's emotional, exuding excitement.

The other family members, save Tommy, follow her out of their seats.

JESSICA
Come on, baby! You've got this!

The first pitch flies in... A called strike. The second, a DEEP DRIVE to right field...

But it JUST MISSES the home run.

COMMENTATOR #2
Just right of the foul pole.
Almost had a tie game,
there.

JESSICA
You can do it, Manny!

The whole family cheers their support as the next pitch comes in.

Manny coils his body in a big swing...

But it's a ground ball to the shortstop, ending the rally and the inning.

The crowd drops back into their seats. The box is dead quiet except for the television.

COMMENTATOR #1
Oooh, an unfortunate at-bat for
Chavez. With the strength of the
Keys bullpen, the 'Busters may not
get many more chances like that
one.

COMMENTATOR #2

You have to wonder too, if Chavez's highly anticipated testimony in the congressional steroid hearings could potentially interfere with his future on any team.

COMMENTATOR #1 It's really going to come down to what Manny has to say. Rumors are a'flurry - even that Chavez could finger some of his own teammates - but obviously we won't know the truth until he's -

Jessica snatches a remote, clicking OFF the TV.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - SKY BOX - LATER

The game's last inning is about to start, the score holding steady at 4-2. The game's not over yet, though, and the stadium is STILL PACKED.

A WELL-DRESSED MAN (60s) and an equally fashionable STATUESQUE BEAUTY (30s) enter the box.

This is JOHNNY CARTER, the Filibusters OWNER, and his daughter, MADELINE.

Jessica rises to greet them.

JESSICA

Mr. Carter! What a pleasant surprise!

CARTER

Just stopping by to say hello and thank you to all of the players' families. We really appreciate your support.

He smiles warmly. Madeline mimics her father, but fails to look genuine.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Keeps our players happy and healthy, I say.

He shakes Jessica's hand. Indicates her sparkling engagement ring.

CARTER (CONT'D)

And congratulations, again.

JESSICA

Thank you, Mr. Carter.

Carter exits the box, but Madeline remains. She addresses the family politely.

MADELINE

Good evening. I hate to be a bother, but the Senator and I need to borrow Tommy for a little while. Unfortunately the campaign doesn't pause for America's greatest past time.

Tommy rises to follow her. He approaches Miranda first.

TOMMY

You don't mind, do you?

It's not really a question. He's already packing up his computer.

MIRANDA

Of course not. I understand.

Tommy quickly follows Madeline out the door.

Miranda's reaction to her husband's planned departure is a solid poker face. It falters a bit, SOUR, after a few moments.

Her mother DOESN'T MISS this.

CAROL

Do they work a lot of late nights?
(beat)

I don't like the look of her.

GEORGE

Carol!

MIRANDA

It's nothing. Working on Senator Bushnell's campaign is a big step for Tommy. He's got a shot at chief of staff if the election goes their way. Besides, he couldn't care less about baseball.

CAROL

I hope they're giving him a big raise. Maybe you can finally quit that awful job.

MIRANDA

I like working.

CAROL

But you hate your work. It's not a feminist thing, dear. It's about happiness.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tommy and Madeline round a corner together. The hall is empty except for them.

A soft thud as Tommy's cell phone drops to the floor from his pocket.

They both turn back, though Madeline bends down to pick it up, her perfectly tailored pencil dress tightly hugging her curves.

She rises, sliding the phone and her hand ALONG WITH IT into Tommy's pants pocket.

He smiles coyly.

TOMMY

Thanks.

MADELINE

My pleasure.

There's nothing work-like about it. The salacious grins continue as they disappear around another corner.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - SKY BOX - MOMENTS LATER

It's the bottom of the ninth. Manny's at the plate, again with a runner on base, but there are two men out and the count's already worked full at 3-2.

The Filibusters are down to their last strike.

The pitch soars, Manny swings... Foul ball.

Another pitch.... Another foul ball.

Foul ball.

Foul ball.

Sixteen pitches into the at bat. The crowd is behind him with every hurl and Manny is putting up a fight.

It's a duel of patience and precision.

JESSICA Come on,
come on, come on...

Jessica's fingers are tightly interlaced, wishing as hard as she can.

Another heater from the pitcher, a big swing from Manny...

And it's a WHIFF. Manny's struck out.

The season is OVER.

Jessica looks crushed, like she missed the ball herself.

Carol ENVELOPES her daughter in a hug.

CAROL
Don't worry, sweetheart. There's
always next season.

Jessica nods a little but the wound is too fresh.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Besides...

She points to Jessica's engagement ring.

CAROL (CONT'D)
You're only getting married once.

GEORGE
It's nothin' lobster won't cure.
Come on, our reservation's in half
an hour.

Miranda looks on sympathetically, but lets her parents handle the coddling.

INT. FINE DINING RESTAURANT - LATER

Miranda, her parents, Tommy, and Jessica sit around a table with one STILL EMPTY chair. They've already drank most of a bottle of wine, though Jessica's glass is UNTOUCHED.

JESSICA

Manny'll be here. Soon. There was a lot of traffic leaving the stadium.

Carol indicates her daughter's glass.

CAROL

It's sweet, dear, but I'm sure Manny won't mind if you start without him.

Jessica's clearly upset and a little too firm.

JESSICA

No, thank you.

CAROL

Sweetie...

Jessica can't keep it together any longer.

JESSICA

I'm not drinking, okay!

This snaps Miranda out of her haze. She looks at her sister. The silence is so LOADED, it SPEAKS.

MIRANDA

Jessie! Are you...?

JESSICA

(feigning happiness)

Yup!

(beat)

I'm pregnant!

She's on the verge of tears.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Surprise!

She grabs her handbag, digs for her phone, and makes a beeline away from the table.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I'm gonna try him again.

INT. FINE DINING RESTAURANT - LADIES ROOM - LATER

Miranda pushes into the bathroom. Only one stall is occupied, muffled sob coming from inside.

Miranda locks the outer door and approaches where its clear Jessica is hiding.

MIRANDA

Jessie. Come on. Come on out.

Silence. Then a long CREAK as the door swings out and her sister emerges.

Jessica's cried off most of her makeup, bluish-black smears streaking down her cheeks.

Miranda gives her a soft smile, then a hug.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

He's not coming, is he?

Jessica chokes out a few more sobs.

JESSICA

I don't even know what's going on.
He won't answer my calls. It just
keeps going straight to voicemail.

MIRANDA

There's always a fall guy for the
loss. It sucks right now, but
Manny will get over it. And Mom's
right. He's made it pretty clear
that his family is more important
than baseball.

Jessica pulls out of the hug. She EXHALES a heavy sigh.

JESSICA

You're right. Maybe he went to see
Bobby at his parent's house.

Miranda nods encouragingly, but it doesn't quite stick the landing.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

It's just... he never acts
like this. He never ignores
me.

MIRANDA

He's probably embarrassed. This
isn't how he wanted to see his
fiancee's entire family tonight.

JESSICA

What if he's mad at me? What if dinner tonight was just too much pressure and he didn't say anything and-

MIRANDA

Jess. You're the perfect couple. You never even fight.

JESSICA

Everyone fights, Miranda.

Miranda SWALLOWS. She doesn't have a simple answer for this.

MIRANDA

How about this: if Manny makes it, he makes it. If not, well, we still need to order some food, because you are eating for two now. Sound good?

Jessica relents with a nod and the sisters leave the bathroom together.

INT. MIRANDA'S HOME - MORNING

Miranda and Tommy are both dressed professionally, busily zigzagging across their kitchen. The space is beautiful, if a little sterile.

TOMMY

Can't be okay, that he didn't show up to dinner for his pregnant fiancée last night. You should give her a call today.

MIRANDA

Yeah, I know. I will. You just can't tiptoe your way around Jessie. She'll strain her ears that much harder.

Miranda loads dirty dishes from the sink into the washer. When the sink's empty, she turns the machine on.

TOMMY

He should've called her.

MIRANDA

You can't judge a relationship from the outside. They'll be fine.

TOMMY

Your typically bad-ass sister is knocked up and crying in public. You sure about that?

MIRANDA

He had a bad night.

TOMMY

That's not an excuse to ignore her.

MIRANDA

You disappear sometimes. I don't get upset.

This slows their exchange.

TOMMY

You used to.

Miranda looks apologetic but Tommy's phone CHIRPS before she has a chance to respond.

Tommy deposits his empty coffee mug in the clean sink.

TOMMY (CONT'D) It's work. I've gotta get out of here.

MIRANDA

That's fine. I'm leaving too.

They're both quickly out the door. There's no kiss good-bye.

INT. JESSICA'S TOWNHOUSE - MORNING

Dark circles and a distinctly vacant look eviscerate any possibility Jessica slept last night.

She's cross-legged on her sleek, modern couch - sweats contrasting the apartment's expensive urban aesthetic.

Her television BLARES with the morning news but ALL EYES are on her cell and home phone, both in arms reach.

She's rewarded when one of them finally RINGS.

She can't answer fast enough.

JESSICA
 (into phone)
 Manny?

Her expression says it's not him. Her disappointment shifts to something worse.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 I'm sorry... what?

She fades from tired to terrified.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 I'll be right there.

INT. PETIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Miranda's hair is ruffled and her blouse is hanging open to expose a lacy bra.

She's decidedly not at the office.

Petie Jansen, Manny's teammate who provoked Jessica's ire the night before, lies nearby on a bed in a similar state of disarray.

MIRANDA
 Sorry about the season.

PETIE
 Don't matter. I got my big moment in. And now pretty boy Manny won't be in my hair next year. Net positive, I say.

He lazily points to her skirt. She reaches for the zipper.

Petie props his head up to watch her undress.

MIRANDA
 What makes you so sure?

PETIE
 Nobody re-signs the face of defeat, darlin'. But, come on, now.

His lips curl in a RATHER CHARMING smile.

PETIE (CONT'D) You
know we don't talk shop in
here.

He points to her heels. She kicks them away and sways her hips as she makes for him.

MIRANDA
I'm gonna make you forget all about
last night.

PETIE
I got half a handle of vodka that
already took care of that.

She feigns offense; then grins. She's surprisingly
CAREFREE.

MIRANDA
Good. More space to remember
this...

Their game is finished as smiles are left behind for languid kisses.

Near the bed, Miranda's cell LIGHTS UP and VIBRATES.
Jessica's NAME is on the screen.

If Petie or Miranda can hear the phone, they make no move to answer it.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

TWO POLICE DETECTIVES, DETECTIVE ADAMS and YEE, lead Jessica inside. A LUXURY SUV is cordoned off with police tape. The driver's side window is SMASHED IN.

From her reaction, it's definitely MANNY'S CAR.

JESSICA
Oh, my God.

DETECTIVE ADAMS
Ms. Austen, I'm Detective Adams and
this is my partner, Detective Yee.

He gestures to the slender Asian woman at his side who gives a polite, if curt, nod.

JESSICA
What happened? Where is he?!

DETECTIVE ADAMS I understand this must be overwhelming, but right now we're just gathering information. When was the last time you spoke to Mr. Chavez?

Jessica almost ignores him, moving to approach the car, but Detective Yee steps in her way.

JESSICA
Last night, before the game. He didn't come home. When did they find his car?

He ignores her question.

DETECTIVE ADAMS
Does he not come home often?

Jessica's fear gives way to anger.

JESSICA No, and how dare you suggest otherwise.

DETECTIVE YEE Ma'am, I understand this may be upsetting, but-

JESSICA
No one can get in or out of this parking lot without an electronic key card-

DETECTIVE ADAMS We know about the key cards. The scan information goes directly to the security firm's national database, so it'll be a few days before we have all of the in and out information from last night.

Jessica heaves a sigh, but she's a bit more calm.

For the moment.

JESSICA
Has he been declared missing?

DETECTIVE YEE
Yes, he has.

DETECTIVE ADAMS The physical evidence suggests a kidnapping. External damage to the security cameras...

He points to a SMASHED SURVEILLANCE CAMERA nearby.

DETECTIVE ADAMS
(CONT'D) ...leads us to believe Mr. Chavez was forcibly taken last night.

JESSICA
Last night! What took you so long to get here, to call me?

DETECTIVE YEE Building security called us this morning after they found Mr. Chavez's vehicle still in the lot.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE YEE (CONT'D)
Many of the player's stayed as late as 3AM. No one knew anything was wrong until this morning.

DETECTIVE ADAMS
Except for you. Do you know of any enemies your fiancée may have had? Anyone who might have wanted to cause him harm?

JESSICA
How about an extortionist? Or his crazy ex-wife? Or the juicers he's ready to testify against in front of Congress?

She's shaking now.

DETECTIVE ADAMS
Sounds like a start. Let's get you back to the station.

INT. PETIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Petie climbs out of bed while a dressed Miranda reapplies her smudged eyeliner.

PETIE
Got a lotta free time with the season being over.

MIRANDA

Mhmm. I'm sure I'll see you
around.

Petie looks surprised at her nonchalance.

PETIE

You blowin' me off? Just a wham,
bam, and gone?

His tone is genuine but his expression reveals he's TEASING.

MIRANDA

I have a feeling you won't be
lonely.

He grins. Definitely not.

PETIE

Coffee for the road?

MIRANDA

I'm alright. I can get some at
work.

They smile but the flirtation has run its course. There's
not much to say.

As she turns to go, there's a FIRM KNOCK at the door.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Tightly booked today?

Petie shakes his head.

PETIE

I was only expecting you.

Petie heads toward the door, Miranda lingering in the
bedroom.

INT. PETIE'S HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Petie swings the front door open to reveal TWO UNIFORMED
POLICEMEN.

POLICEMAN #1

Mr. Janssen?

PETIE

Yes?

POLICEMAN #1 We'd
like you to come with us,
please.

The policeman steps aside, gesturing toward the waiting
patrol car.

PETIE
What the hell for?

POLICEMAN #1
We have a few questions we'd like
to ask you in regards to the
disappearance of Manny Chavez.

Off Petie's reaction, the second cop tries to temper him.

POLICEMAN #2
It's all routine, but quite urgent.

Miranda appears behind him in the foyer, clearly surprised
at both the police presence and Manny's name.

PETIE
This is some kinda prank, right?

Their faces remain serious.

PETIE (CONT'D)
I didn't do shit.

POLICEMAN #2 Then
you shouldn't mind
accompanying us to the
station.

MIRANDA
I'm coming too.

POLICEMAN #2
Ma'am? I'm sorry, but -

MIRANDA
I'm Jessica Austen's sister.
Manny's fiancée?

POLICEMAN #2
Oh, yes. Miss Austen.

EXT. PETIE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY

Miranda follows the policemen and Petie toward the patrol car.

One of the policemen turns to her.

POLICEMAN #1 It would
best if you followed in your
own vehicle.

INT. POLICE STATION - OFFICE - A BIT LATER

Jessica paces in Detective Adams' office, alone. He joins her inside.

Jessica is immediately on him, EXPECTANT.

DETECTIVE ADAMS
Janssen's here. Uniforms picked
up him and his girlfriend about
twenty minutes ago.

JESSICA
Girlfriend? Why?

DETECTIVE ADAMS
Sounds like she wanted to come in.

This sparks Jessica's interest. Detective Adams turns as Petie becomes visible on the other side of the glass.

Behind him trails Miranda. Jessica just stares at her through the window.

JESSICA
That's not his girlfriend.

DETECTIVE ADAMS
You recognize the woman?

JESSICA
Yeah. I do.

Jessica marches out of the office, Detective Adams on her heels.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Detective Adams approaches Petie. Detective Lee sidles up from the other side.

But Jessica aims right for her sister.

JESSICA

(to Miranda)

What are you doing here?

Detective Adams watches them expectantly.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Detectives, this is my sister,
Miranda Stone.

DETECTIVE ADAMS Ms.
Stone. Why don't we leave you
with Ms. Austen while we speak to
Mr. Janssen.

Petie rolls his eyes at the formality.

PETIE

Can we hurry this up?

DETECTIVE LEE

Certainly, Mr. Janssen. Right this
way.

As they walk off down the hall, Jessica is left with a
REDFACED Miranda.

JESSICA

Him? Really?

Miranda blushes harder but can't find words. Finally, a
response, if half-hearted.

MIRANDA

He's not a bad guy.

JESSICA Oh no? Then
it's just a coincidence then the
police are talking to him in
relation to Manny disappearing?
Someone took him, Miranda.

MIRANDA

I know.

JESSICA

Yeah, and now I know why you
weren't taking any of my calls this
morning.

Miranda stiffens.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

How could you do this to Tommy?

Miranda shakes her head.

MIRANDA

Come on. You know he checked out long before I did.

JESSICA

Great excuse.

MIRANDA

Judge away. But you're wrong about Petie. There's no way he had anything to do with Manny's disappearance.

JESSICA

That's interesting, because you were also sure last night that there was nothing to worry about. That Manny was fine. Right, Miranda?

Jessica's steely and this STINGS.

MIRANDA

I'm sorry. I was wrong. But you were so upset... I was just trying to help.

Jessica maintains a stellar POKER FACE.

JESSICA

Yeah, great job.

Her voice is SLICK with sarcasm.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Manny was going to out the super great guy you've been sleeping around with for using. I think Petie knew it and decided to do something.

MIRANDA

Petie's not using steroids. If he had a beef with Manny, it'd end with a black eye, not a kidnapping.

Jessica shakes her head, UNCONVINCED.

JESSICA

This is what I do, Miranda.
Something's up. I can feel it.

MIRANDA

You sniff out backroom deals and
leak trades. Leave this to the
police.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - A BIT LATER

Jessica and Miranda sit together, but SILENTLY.

They both look down the hallway as Detectives Adams and Lee
appear, walking Petie back towards the foyer from the
interview room.

DETECTIVE YEE

We appreciate your cooperation, Mr.
Janssen. We'll get in touch if we
have any further questions.

Jessica shoots to her feet and straight at the detectives.

JESSICA

You're letting him go?!

DETECTIVE ADAMS

Ms. Austen...

JESSICA

This is a joke! He's a racist
bully who hasn't liked Manny from
day one!

DETECTIVE ADAMS

That's enough, Ms. Austen.

Petie just ignores her, dialing his cellphone and pushing
through the front door.

EXT. POLICE STATION - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Phone to his ear, Petie's walking away, but Jessica follows
right after him.

Miranda follows a few seconds later, though not nearly as
quickly or closely as Jessica.

JESSICA

Enjoy your freedom while you can!
 You have a reputation and it's
 about to catch up with you! Your
 old teammates, ex-girlfriends, that
 assault charge you got conveniently
 dropped in college.

Petie wheels around, taking a few steps back towards her.
 Jessica holds her ground but Petie TOWERS over her.

PETIE

Go to hell, you prissy bitch! You
 know nothin' about me!

Jessica's seething - SHAKING with anger. She opens her
 mouth to bark back but STUMBLES.

She grasps at a car next to her, her knees giving out from
 underneath her.

Miranda closes the gap now, moving quickly to her sister.

MIRANDA

Jessie?

Jessica goes pale as she cradles her stomach. Even Petie's
 anger dissipates to human CONCERN.

Jessica looks AFRAID.

JESSICA

Something's wrong.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Jessica lies in a hospital bed.

It's difficult to tell if she looks any better, the
 fluorescent lights paint her fair skin ghostly shades of
 blue and green.

Miranda enters, cellphone at her side. She sits tentatively
 at the edge of the bed.

MIRANDA

Hey.

JESSICA

Hey.

They both smile softly.

MIRANDA

Mom and Dad are on their way over.

JESSICA

I told them I'm fine.

MIRANDA

But you almost weren't.

Jessica looks away.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

They just want to make sure
you don't overdo it again.

JESSICA

I know. The doctors won't even
tell me when I can leave. Which
I want to talk to you about...

(beat)

I need a favor.

Miranda's surprise paints this as a rare request.

JESSICA (CONT'D) Senator

Bushnell is holding a press
conference in a few hours to
comment on Manny's disappearance.

(MORE)

JESSICA (CONT'D) I have

some questions that need to be
asked, but there's no way they'll
let me out of here by then. I'd
like to send the next best thing.

It takes Miranda a second to catch on.

MIRANDA

Me?

JESSICA

If you're up for it.

Jessica pushes ahead like she's already agreed, rifling a
few items out of her purse.

She hands Miranda her press badge, a mini-recorder, and a
tube of high end lipstick.

Miranda looks overwhelmed, but there's a hint of EXCITEMENT
as well.

MIRANDA

I guess I can.

(beat)

What do you want me to do?

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - LATER THAT DAY

Miranda stands in a MOB of excited reporters. The group jockeys for position as SENATOR BUSHNELL(40s), All-American and handsome in his blue suit, glides to the podium and calms the crowd to a silence.

Miranda, draped in the press badge and dolled up with red lipstick, pushes ahead with the best of the them.

BUSHNELL

Last night, as you know, our own Washington Filibuster Manny Chavez went missing after the team's unfortunate loss in the National League Championship. First, I'd like to extend my sympathies to his friends and family, especially his son, Bobby. We are all hoping for Manny's swift and safe return and I have the upmost confidence in our fine state's law enforcement to do just that.

A polite, brief applause. Miranda pushes herself closer to the front of the crowd.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

Lastly, I'd like to address concerns related to the upcoming hearings on steroid use in professional baseball. I can personally promise that this unfortunate event will have absolutely no affect on the proceedings. I will now take any questions.

A dozen of HANDS fly into the air, Miranda's a bit slow to fire but compensating with an emphatic wave. She grips the MINI-RECORDER firmly in her other hand.

Bushnell calls on a MALE REPORTER at the front of crowd by his first name.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

Yes, Phillip?

MALE REPORTER As we've yet to receive any official information from the police, what, if anything, can you tell us about the Chavez investigation thus far?

BUSHNELL

Very little. I can tell you Manny was last seen in the Filibuster's clubhouse and that the investigation has been made a department priority.

Hands shoot into the air again. Miranda's faster this time, and just as EMPHATIC.

Miranda's enthusiasm captures Bushnell's attention. He points to her.

MIRANDA

Is there anyone Mr. Chavez was set to implicate in his testimony that may be involved in his disappearance?

BUSHNELL

I'm sorry, I can't speculate or comment further on the congressional hearings.

Bushnell selects another MALE REPORTER.

MALE REPORTER #2

Have the police identified any suspects yet in Mr. Chavez' disappearance?

BUSHNELL

The investigation into Manny's disappearance is ongoing. Any statements regarding suspects or charges will be made by the police chief.

Miranda reaches upward again, hoping for a second shot at Bushnell. She gets lucky.

MIRANDA

Has any connection been made between Mr. Chavez' disappearance and the rumors he hired Cuban

mercenaries to help extract his son
from the country?

INT. HOSPITAL - JESSICA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jessica, watching the press conference on her TV with
parents, GAPES at Miranda's question.

This wasn't one of hers and she's LIVID.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - CONTINUOUS

Bushnell doesn't look happy with the question either.

BUSHNELL

Mr. Chavez' rescue of his son was
an internationally accepted and
heroic act and any suggestion
otherwise is entirely unfounded.

A few more hands raise, but Bushnell's done.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

Thanks, everyone. No further
questions.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Miranda moves swiftly toward the exit. Dozens of curious
eyes follow her, only making her more uncomfortable as she
flees.

Her escape is unsuccessful as one of Bushnell's AIDES stops
her right in her path.

AIDE

Senator Bushnell would like a word
with you.

MIRANDA

I really need to be on my way.

AIDE

He's waiting for you. It'll only
take a few minutes.

Miranda's reluctance is clear, but so is the aide's
persistence.

AIDE (CONT'D)

This way, please.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Senator Bushnell is seated at his desk. Miranda sits across from him in an expensive leather arm chair.

They're ALONE.

BUSHNELL

Ms. Stone. I had no idea there was another budding journalist in the family.

MIRANDA

I- Jessica couldn't -

She can't quite string together a sentence.

BUSHNELL

Your sister's proven she can be in two places at once. Very impressive.

Miranda doesn't appreciate the sentiment.

MIRANDA

She's in the hospital.

BUSHNELL

I'm sorry to hear that. Is she alright?

He seems genuine, but Miranda is reluctant to share.

MIRANDA

She should be fine.

BUSHNELL That's good to hear. But it doesn't mean she should be sending family out to impersonate the press. Especially someone inexperienced enough to ask harmful questions.

MIRANDA

I'm sorry, I didn't-

BUSHNELL

You didn't mean to imply Manny's compliance in a government investigation that may have risked his life? You didn't mean to

drudge up the one ugly rumor he's ever faced in the press?

Miranda is SPEECHLESS.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)
Don't you work for the
Department of Homeland Security,
Ms. Stone? I'm genuinely
surprised you've taken such a
long leash.

Miranda's surprised by the non-sequitur. Then WORRIED.

MIRANDA
Are you threatening me?

Bushnell stops. Then LAUGHS.

BUSHNELL
Of course not! I'm just asking a
few of my own questions.

A silence falls. Miranda's first to grow uncomfortable.

MIRANDA
It was a favor, for my sister. I
understand it wasn't my place, but
she couldn't be here-

Bushnell holds his hands up in protest. Any irritation or worry has dropped from his expression.

BUSHNELL
Please, calm yourself. I'm not the
enemy here.

He gives that winning politician smile again.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D) Your
sister and I have very similar
interests - sniffing out the bad
guys and exposing corruption.
Perhaps it would be best if she
chose to leave the investigation
in capable hands and turn her
attention toward becoming a
mother.

Miranda can't hide her surprise.

MIRANDA
You know about the pregnancy?

BUSHNELL

I know a lot of things, Ms. Stone.
After all, it's my job to stay
informed on my constituents and my
community.

He rises from behind his desk and walks over to lead Miranda
to the door.

He extends his hand for a shake.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

Please pass along my
congratulations.

Miranda forces a smile of her own and makes for the door.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)

And Ms. Stone?

She turns back to face him.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D) Be

careful. In politics, sometimes
you don't know you're in over your
head until you're drowning.

INT. HOSPITAL - JESSICA'S ROOM - LATER

Jessica's anger from the press conference has not blown over
and Miranda's on the DEFENSIVE.

JESSICA

What were you thinking?! Do you
have any idea how embarrassing this
is going to be for me?

MIRANDA

It seemed relevant. I wanted to
hear what he'd say.

JESSICA Besides

being completely fabricated,
those rumors have absolutely
nothing to do with Manny's
disappearance.

MIRANDA

I was just trying to help! That's
what you asked me for.

JESSICA

Well, you didn't. However, you did manage to cast suspicion onto the character of a missing person, national sports figure, and key congressional witness.

Her tone seeps with sarcasm.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

My heartfelt congratulations.

Miranda won't take the assault willing.

MIRANDA

You have no idea who took Manny! The police had no reason to hold Petie and you don't seem to have any other convenient people you dislike up your sleeve. Who's to say someone from his past, someone from before the great Jessica Austen, isn't involved?

Jessica is taken aback.

JESSICA

Manny's trip to Cuba, his rescue of Bobby... that was my story.

(MORE)

JESSICA (CONT'D) I

would know if there were any loose ends.

MIRANDA

Just like you know who Manny's going to out as juicers in his testimony?

It's an ACE. Jessica's glowers, defeated.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Manny doesn't tell you everything. And the Senator took it pretty seriously. Why else would he ask to speak with me in private afterwards? He basically told me to back off and stop asking questions.

JESSICA

Wait. What are you talking about?

MIRANDA

After the press conference. One of Senator Bushnell's aides approached me and insisted on-

JESSICA

What did he say to you?

Jessica's riveted, and impatient.

MIRANDA

He basically just-

JESSICA

No, no, no. I want to hear it.
The recorder.

Jessica extends a hand for it as Miranda digs into her purse.

She finds the recorder but is reluctant to hand it over.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

What?

Miranda shakes her head.

MIRANDA

I didn't- I turned it off after
the press conference.

Jessica can't believe it. She sighs.

JESSICA

Of course you did.

Miranda ignores the jab.

MIRANDA

Do Mom and Dad still have all the
media coverage on Bobby's rescue?

JESSICA

Yes. Why?

MIRANDA

I think I might look into a deadend.

INT. STONE HOME - NIGHT

Miranda sits crossed legged on her living room floor, two large cardboard boxes in front of her. Both boxes are nearly overflowing with newspapers and VHS tapes.

Miranda organizes a stack of the tapes, then pushes one into her VCR.

A FEMALE NEWSCASTER, her attire dated back almost a decade, appears on the television screen.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER Manny Chavez, offensive power house and fan favorite, has made waves this year as a new addition to the Washington Filibusters.

Video highlights of home runs and defensive gems play under the narration.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER
(CONT'D) However, Chavez's life is not as sunny as it seems. Though finding much success on the bases and in the field, the ballplayer has been struggling in his private life after his ex-wife, Guadalupe Jallero, illegally removed their son, Roberto, to Cuba after Chavez was awarded full custody by the courts.

Photos of a younger Manny, and his first wife, stunning GUADALUPE appear.

Another photo of Manny, Guadalupe, and their then infant son BOBBY.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
Since then, Chavez has been on a tireless quest to rightfully regain his son despite opposition posed by the Cuban government. The story jumped to national news this week after a piece written by Jessica Austen, an up and coming sportswriter and college acquaintance of Chavez, hit the press.

Miranda lifts the remote, fast-forwards a few minutes of the tape.

A different network's MALE NEWSCASTER reports from a newsroom.

MALE NEWSCASTER

But now, the latest on the Manny Chavez rescue. While Chavez' young son, Roberto, has been recovered from Cuba, extradition laws have made any legal ramifications for Chavez' ex-wife and Cuban national, Guadalupe Jallero, a difficult challenge. U.S. officials have promised legal ramifications if Jallero attempts to re-enter the United States, but any movement at this time outside of Cuba seems highly unlikely.

Some old footage of Manny and Guadalupe when they were still married rolls.

MALE NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

However, there's a silver lining for Chavez. The gossip mill suggests that Chavez, now two years divorced, has begun dating Jessica Austen, the sportswriter who first broke his story.

Miranda sighs as a STUNNING HEADSHOT of her sister appears.

MALE NEWSCASTER (CONT'D (CONT'D)

Though no confirmation has been given to the press, it's unlikely to be argued that Austen stands up even to Chavez' beauty queen ex.

She clicks the television OFF.

Reaching back for the stack of articles, Miranda's cell phone RINGS.

PETIE JANNSEN's name lights up the screen. Not what Miranda expected.

MIRANDA

(into phone)

Little late for a booty call, don't you think?

INT. PETIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Petie's draped over his leather couch at an odd angle, though oblivious to any discomfort.

PETIE

(into phone)

'S not. I wanna talk to you.

MIRANDA

(into phone)

Petie... you're drunk. What's going on?

PETIE

(into phone)

I wanna know what you thought you were doin' today, running your mouth on TV.

MIRANDA

(into phone)

You saw the press conference.

PETIE

(into phone)

That's right! I watch the fucking news. Big men pay us big checks, and part of that exchange is keeping your hole shut. Manny should know to mind his own damn business about who needs a little enhancement and who doesn't. I thought you were better than that. But no, you're just a "my body, my choice" hypocrite. You should know better, Miranda. You need to be careful.

MIRANDA

(into phone)

What are you talking about?

PETIE

(into phone)

I'm sayin' if Manny weren't such a boy scout maybe his teammates wouldn't hate his guts. Maybe he wouldn't be the guy everyone doesn't wanna see re-signed to the 'Busters. Maybe he wouldn't be on the floor of some dirty basement right now.

This catches Miranda's attention.

MIRANDA

(into phone)

Petie... Do you know something about what happened to Manny? Do you know where he is?

A BEAT passes.

Complete SILENCE at the other end of the line.

PETIE

(into phone)

You really think... You really think I could do something like that?

MIRANDA

(into phone)

I-- Petie-

PETIE

(into phone)

I thought you were special... not a dumb slut like the rest of 'em. Maybe not.

The line clicks off. He's HUNG UP on her.

A RUSTLING is heard in the other room, then a quiet door closing.

Miranda scrambles up off the floor, nervously setting aside her cellphone.

Tommy walks into the living room. He's JUST AS SURPRISED to see her there.

TOMMY

What are you doing still up?

MIRANDA

What are you doing getting home at 3am?

It would be more of a stare down if they both didn't look so exhausted.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Must be something important.

TOMMY

The Carters are giving me more and more work on the campaign, but it's more and more responsibility, Miranda. This could be really important for my career.

MIRANDA

So you're on the campaign full-time now?

TOMMY

It's all the same family.

MIRANDA

Or you just do whatever Madeline Carter tells you to.

Tommy pretends this isn't a VEILED ACCUSATION. Miranda lets him.

TOMMY

How's Jessica?

MIRANDA

She's better. Desperate to get out of the hospital, but that's probably the same reason they're keeping her there.

TOMMY

And nothing on Manny yet?

MIRANDA

No. You'd probably hear before me.

Tommy shrugs.

TOMMY

Maybe. You want to watch a little TV before going to bed? Unwind a little?

Miranda shakes her head, turning off the TV and the VCR.

MIRANDA

I'm exhausted. Let's just get some sleep.

She turns toward their bedroom and walks away.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY - DAY

Miranda's at her desk, looking MISERABLE. She scrolls through a spreadsheet on her computer, lazily taking notes as she goes.

A YOUNG ASSISTANT approaches her desk.

YOUNG ASSISTANT
Miranda? Mr. Peters would like
to speak to you.

It takes a moment for the assistant's words to even register.

MIRANDA
I'm really swamped. We have a
department meeting in a few hours.
Can it wait?

YOUNG ASSISTANT
He'd like to speak to you now.

INT. STATE DEPARTMENT - PETERS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Miranda sits across from her boss, MITCHELL PETERS (50s). He leans towards her from behind his desk.

PETERS
I need you to know, Miranda, this
isn't easy for me. But it's coming
from a place outside of my control.

Miranda looks at him like he's speaking in code.

MIRANDA
I'm sorry, sir. What's going on?

PETERS
You're being placed on leave for
the following two weeks, without
pay.

MIRANDA
That's not funny, Mitchell.

PETERS
I'm not making a joke. That stunt
you pulled on TV? You impersonated
a member of the press, not to
mention violated the Hatch Act.
Behavior like that from a member of
our office cannot go unpunished.

MIRANDA

I went on my sister's behalf! The questions I asked, they weren't even political!

PETERS

Well, according to the higher ups, they were. I'm sorry.

His attempt at sincerity falls flat.

MIRANDA

The "higher ups" who?

Miranda suddenly looks EVEN MORE upset.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Bushnell. He knew I worked here. Did this come from him?

PETERS

This had nothing to do with the Senator's office.

Miranda doesn't bother to protest.

MIRANDA

There's no alternative to the suspension?

PETERS

No.

(beat)

Resignation, I guess.

He laughs, not taking his own suggestion seriously, but Miranda DOES.

MIRANDA

Alright, then. I quit.

She rises, leaving his office before he can even respond.

He can't see it, but Miranda is SMILING.

INT. HOSPITAL - JESSICA'S ROOM - DAY

Miranda stands in the doorway of her sister's hospital room, a bouquet of GERBER DAISIES in one hand while the other raps at the frame.

The TV news is still a constant in Jessica's room.

MIRANDA

Thought you could use a little
color in here.

As Miranda steps into the room she notices a much more
elaborate and EXPENSIVE display of fresh flowers.

And their deliverer: JOHNNY CARTER.

CARTER

Aren't those lovely.
(to Jessica)
Your sister, if my memory serves
me?

He reaches out to shake Miranda's hand.

MIRANDA

Miranda Stone.

CARTER

Of course. You were at the box the
other night. A very handsome
group.

MIRANDA

Thank you.

Carter studies Miranda for a moment before SOMETHING CLICKS.

CARTER

And that press conference! I knew
I'd seen you before.

Jessica's embarrassed.

JESSICA

Mr. Carter, please don't be
offended by my sister's questions.
I sent her in my absence and things
got lost in translation.

Carter shakes it off and smiles warmly.

CARTER

Not a worry - I completely
understand.

He turns to Miranda.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Looking out for your family first.
I greatly respect that.

He moves toward the door.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Pleasure to see you both. Jessica,
please take good care of yourself
and let me know if there's anything
we can do for you.

A polite nod to both of them before he leaves.

MIRANDA

I thought he didn't like you.

JESSICA

He hasn't liked a few stories
I've scooped. It's different.
He's very dedicated to the
players.

MIRANDA

That's nice. He did steal my
thunder though.

She indicates the large floral arrangements.

JESSICA

Not at all. But what are you
doing here? It's only 12:30. You
playing hooky?

MIRANDA

Not exactly.

Miranda's purposely VAGUE, drawing Jessica's interest. The
pregnant sister's eyes narrow.

JESSICA

Out with it.

MIRANDA

I quit my job.

JESSICA

You didn't!

The broad smile on Miranda's face says otherwise. Even
Jessica's spirits lift a notch.

JESSICA (CONT'D) Oh my
god, you did! I'm so happy for
you. I thought you'd never do
it.

The moment is broken when the latest headline on the TV catches Miranda's attention.

Petie's FACE is full screen, "BREAKING: MLB PLAYER IN MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT" just below.

Miranda CRANKS the volume on the TV.

MALE NEWSCASTER

The Washington Filibuster's Petie Janssen is on his way to Memorial Hospital after a violent motorcycle accident this morning only a few miles from his home. No information yet as to the severity of his injuries or the involvement of additional parties. Updates to follow as the story progresses.

INT. HOSPITAL - PETIE'S ROOM - LATER

Miranda stands over hazy, but conscious, Petie. His leg's SLUNG UP in a cast and a dozen cuts and bruises are scattered across his body.

Petie's eyes crack open as he looks up at Miranda.

PETIE

You're cute, but I was hopin' for
Scarlett Johansson.

His voice is slurred by the morphine drip.

MIRANDA

God, Petie. What happened?

PETIE

They told me it had been too long
since my bike's been serviced, but
it's bullshit. I do all the work
at home. She's perfect.

MIRANDA It's
just good you're okay.

She offers a smile, but he shakes his head.

PETIE

You don't get it. I'm not.
Somebody did that to me.

MIRANDA

What are you talking about?

PETIE

Someone sabotaged my bike.

MIRANDA

Petie... You're on a lot of heavy
medication...

PETIE

Don't you dare call me crazy. I'll
kick you right out of here.

Miranda struggles to take him seriously, especially in his
state.

PETIE (CONT'D)

You know I like you, but you're not
exactly the only horse in the
Janssen stable.

She's clearly OFFENDED.

MIRANDA

Nice.

PETIE

No, no, that's not the point.

He's struggling to be coherent.

PETIE (CONT'D) What's
important is you're not the only
married woman. And most men do
not take well to being a cuckold.

MIRANDA

You think this was a retaliation?
Isn't that a little... extreme?

PETIE

Not if you have the resources, the
power.

Miranda DOESN'T FOLLOW.

PETIE (CONT'D)

Someone like the honorable Senator
Bushnell.

Miranda REELS.

MIRANDA

You're sleeping with Miranda
Carter?!

PETIE

Now's not the time to turn green,
darlin', because I don't think I
was meant to make it out alive.

Miranda backs away from the hospital bed.

MIRANDA

I have to get out of here.

PETIE

And do what?

MIRANDA

And do something.

INT. SENATOR BUSHNELL'S OFFICE - RECEPTION - DAY

Miranda, in crisp business attire, approaches the
RECEPTIONIST (20s) with a smile.

She presents her HOMELAND SECURITY CREDENTIALS.

MIRANDA

Miranda Stone, from the Department
of Homeland Security. I know he's
swamped, but I need to speak to the
Senator. It'll be brief.

The receptionist looks reluctant, but the badge and ID carry
the necessary weight.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I show you to his office?

She remains in her seat behind the desk. It's a TEST.

MIRANDA

Oh, no. I know where I'm going.

Miranda strides away firmly, though only luck points her in
the right direction.

She spots Bushnell is the distance and heads straight for him.

As soon as she's in shouting distance:

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Senator Bushnell.

BUSHNELL
Ms. Stone. Hello. Are you looking for Tommy? I believe he's out of the office.

MIRANDA
No, I'm not. I actually just had a few follow-up questions for you regarding-

BUSHNELL
Ms. Stone, I'm sorry, but I thought I made it very clear: you're not a journalist. Besides, shouldn't you be with your family right now? Everyone here is overjoyed by Manny's safe return.

Miranda BLANCHES and teeters on her narrow pumps. She has NO IDEA what he's talking about.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Manny is seated in an armchair across from a NETWORK NEWSCASTER.

He's dressed in a fine DESIGNER SUIT, but the well-applied makeup can't cover all of his SCRAPES AND BRUISES.

The red sign is illuminated "ON THE AIR."

NETWORK NEWSCASTER Let me start by saying how glad we all are to see you safe and sound. I understand the investigation into your kidnapping is still in progress, but is there any way you can share about your experience?

MANNY
I'm afraid you've said it right there. As long as the investigation is active, I've been

asked by the district attorney's office to refrain from sharing any information with the public.

The newscaster nods smoothly even if this wasn't the response they were hoping for.

NETWORK NEWSCASTER

Of course.

MANNY

What's most important right now is enjoying the offseason and spending as much time as I can with my family.

NETWORK NEWSCASTER Is there anything you'd like to say to your fans?

MANNY

Yes, absolutely. They've been fantastic.

Manny looks DIRECTLY INTO the camera.

MANNY (CONT'D) For everyone who's reached out to me and my family, I cannot express just how much I appreciate your support and your letters. Thank you so much.

NETWORK NEWSCASTER Can you comment on your status for next season?

MANNY

I can say I'm already looking forward to it.

He smiles broadly for the camera, even if it is heavily rehearsed one.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - GREEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miranda and Jessica watch Manny on a backstage monitor. Miranda turns to her sister when the feed goes to a commercial.

MIRANDA

He looks good, Jessie. How's he doing at home?

JESSICA

He's been pretty quiet, spending a lot of time with Bobby. He's excited about the baby, though.

A hand subconsciously drops to her slightly protruding belly.

MIRANDA

I'm so happy for you. For you both.

Miranda, however, cannot subdue her curiosity.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) What have the police told you? Do they have any new leads?

Jessica gives a solemn nod.

JESSICA

Yeah, they do.

She seems reluctant to share, but continues.

JESSICA (CONT'D) Petie. You remember the security card from the parking garage? The security company ID'd it with a timestamp as Petie's serial number.

Miranda's surprised, but says nothing.

JESSICA (CONT'D) They found more evidence at his house after the accident. Now they're just waiting until he's released from the hospital tomorrow to make the formal charges.

Jessica touches Miranda's shoulder. She tries for comforting but it plays equally condescending.

JESSICA (CONT'D) I'm sorry, Miranda. I know you really didn't want it to be him.

INT. HOSPITAL - PETIE'S ROOM - DAY

Petie's looking MUCH BETTER. He's inhaling his dinner, though it looks suspiciously not like hospital food.

Miranda knocks on the door and he waves her inside.

PETIE

Visiting your sister's fiancée's kidnapper? Ballsy.

MIRANDA

Shut up, Petie. That's not funny.

PETIE

I know it ain't. But there's nothin' I can do, so I gotta laugh at it.

MIRANDA

I believed you when you said you didn't kidnap Manny. I still believe you.

PETIE

Thanks, darlin'. That's sweet.

She bulldozes right through.

MIRANDA

That's why I need you to come clean with me right now. If you have any sort of involvement, any sort of knowledge at all, I need you to tell me.

Petie sobers up when he sees just how serious she is.

PETIE

No, ma'am. I give you my word. But there's nothing you can do about it.

INT. MIRANDA'S HOME - NIGHT

Miranda's calmly seated at the kitchen table. She's nursing a glass of red wine, waiting.

Tommy enters and her eyes meet his with a determined, borderline steely, resignation. She warms then with a small smile.

MIRANDA

It's time for us to talk. Have a seat.

Tommy silently obeys. She offers him her wine glass, pushing it in his direction.

He takes a long sip.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) I know you're having an affair. Maybe you know I'm having one too.

TOMMY

Miranda-

MIRANDA

It's okay. We both fucked up.

He just stares at her. The silence is AWFUL.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) Do you love her?

TOMMY

No.

Miranda allows this to be a RELIEF.

TOMMY (CONT'D) Do you? Love him?

She shakes her head.

MIRANDA

Do you want a divorce?

This hurts.

TOMMY

No. I'm so sorry, Miranda. I don't even really like her, it's just- I don't know. It was just... different. She paid attention to me.

It's Miranda's turn to grimace.

MIRANDA

I'm sorry too.

He rises from his chair, pulling Miranda up as well and up against him.

TOMMY

I promise you, it's over. Right now.

MIRANDA

No. Not that easy.

Tommy doesn't understand.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) I think Senator Bushnell was involved in Manny's kidnapping.

TOMMY

What?

MIRANDA

I know it sounds crazy, but I'm almost sure of it. And I do know it wasn't Petie.

Something's unspoken here, but it's water under the bridge.

TOMMY

Why would he do that? What does he possibly have to gain from losing his star witness?

MIRANDA

I'm not sure why. Not yet. But he freaked out after that press conference, Tommy. He made sure I didn't leave, and then he threatened me. He went as far as to making sure I was embarrassed, suspended from my job. You've been working for him for months now. Do you really believe he's a good guy?

Tommy thinks this over.

TOMMY

I think he's a good politician.

MIRANDA

And?

TOMMY

And not much else.

Miranda smiles a little. There's a SPARK.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

What do you need me to do?

INT. U.S. CAPITOL - DAY

Senator Bushnell stands confident, FRONT AND CENTER, before the Congressional panel on steroid use. The room is PACKED, not an empty seat.

He looks to the back of the room at the overflowing press. He's CONFIDENT.

Manny, perfectly groomed and handsome in a crisp suit, sits patiently at the microphone.

BUSHNELL

Mr. Chavez, could you please state your full name and profession for the record?

MANNY

My name is Manuel Chavez. I'm a professional baseball player with the Washington Filibusters.

A few stray CHEERS from the back are quickly silenced.

BUSHNELL

Thank you. And how long have you been playing at the major league level?

MANNY

Nine years.

BUSHNELL

During that time, nearly a decade, would you say that steroid use has increased exponentially among players?

MANNY

It would be difficult for me to make an estimate as to the entire profession.

Bushnell's SURPRISED.

BUSHNELL

Of course. That's very prudent,

Mr. Chavez. Allow me to rephrase. What can you tell us about the steroid use you've personally witnessed, both on your previous teams and with the Washington Filibusters?

MANNY

I can say that I understand and agree with the concern for the use of steroids and illegal performance enhancers among professional athletes. Also, on a more personal level, I find their use both immoral and an unnecessary health risk.

Bushnell gently nods along in agreement, but there's a hint of IMPATIENCE.

MANNY (CONT'D)

However, while there are always rumors and guesses circulating, I have never witnessed the use of steroids or illegal performance enhancers by another professional baseball player.

The room is SILENT, then the murmurs begin.

Bushnell just STARES.

INT. BUSHNELL'S OFFICES - PRIVATE OFFICE - LATER

Bushnell's designer shoes are blazing a trail as he paces back and forth across his office.

His only companion is Madeline, sitting calmly with perfect posture on the couch.

BUSHNELL

What the hell was that?! We've been going over this for months! How could he do something like this?!

MADELINE

Sweetheart...

He's not comforted by this.

MADELINE (CONT'D) The man was kidnapped - missing for three days. Maybe it was a mistake to ask so much of him so soon.

BUSHNELL

He said it was fine! That he wanted to do it!

Madeline considers this.

MADELINE

And why might he have said that?

BUSHNELL

To ruin my damn career?!

She raises an eyebrow and waits for his rage to downgrade.

MADELINE

Because he's scared.

Madeline rises from the couch and approaches her husband. She touches him gently as if calming a wounded animal.

MADELINE (CONT'D) I know he looks fine, but he was in two hours of makeup this morning. Those wounds are still fresh. You have to give him time.

Bushnell shakes her off a bit, not ready to forgive the betrayal.

BUSHNELL

But, the campaign-

MADELINE

Is doing just fine. We've been running numbers all morning and there have been no signs to indicate any negative affects on your re-election chances.

Bushnell is surprised to hear it. He drops back in his chair, deflated.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Don't worry.

She smiles, and heads for the door.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Everything is going to be fine.

INT. BUSHNELL'S OFFICES - BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Madeline closes the door behind her and steps STRAIGHT INTO TOMMY.

She lingers against him before they both take a few steps back.

TOMMY

Afternoon.

MADELINE

Tommy. Hello.

TOMMY

I have a few things to run by you and a bunch of paperwork I need for the weekend. You have a minute?

She returns him polite smile with a slightly more suggestive one.

MADELINE

Of course I do.

She turns, and Tommy follows her toward her own office.

INT. BUSHNELL'S OFFICES - MADELINE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Madeline closes the door behind them. The shades are ALREADY DRAWN for privacy.

MADELINE

So, Tommy. What can I do you for you?

Her face is straight but her voiced is LOADED with innuendo.

TOMMY

Legal needs to start logging all of the petty cash and credit expenses. We've gotten behind while focusing on the more important stuff, but I want to be prepared in case we're audited.

MADELINE

Tommy, I appreciate it, but the more important stuff is just that.

She steps towards him.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Infinitely. More. Important.

...and touches his chest.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
You do enough.

TOMMY
Sorry. I have to. Boss' orders.

MADELINE
What do you need from my office?

TOMMY
Every last expense receipt you
have.

Madeline grabs a PAPER-CLIPPED PILE off the corner of her desk. She walks the stack over to him, resting the collected papers against TOMMY'S CHEST.

He takes them from her, immediately flipping through the receipts and noting the dates.

TOMMY (CONT'D) This is
a great start, but there should
be a lot more - preferably
everything up to today.

MADELINE
I can check the Senator's office
for you right now.

She studies him for a moment.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Tommy, are you alright?

TOMMY
I'm fine.

He's a little too fast to convince her.

Tommy takes a deep breath and places a hand on the small of her back.

His smile is all charm.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I'm fine. Just stressed.

She smiles back, convinced. She heads for the door and cracks it open, now audible to the rest of the offices.

MADELINE

Let me get those other receipts for you.

She shoots him one last FLIRTATIOUS GRIN and then closes the door back behind her.

Tommy immediately moves behind her desk.

One eye on the door, he rifles through folders and drawers. Dozens of pages and not nearly enough time to read any of them.

Nothing... Nothing... SOMETHING.

A small sticky note on the inside of her address book reads "Password: df4ighdj4hed5."

Tommy digs his cellphone from his front pocket, capturing the password in a grainy but CLEAR phone picture.

As footsteps outside the office GROW LOUDER, Tommy repositions the address book, closes the drawer, and darts back out from behind the desk.

He's slipping his phone back into his pocket as Madeline REENTERS.

She hands him several THICK FOLDERS.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

I think this is everything.

TOMMY

Great. Thank you.

They swap positions as he moves toward the door.

MADELINE

You're very welcome.

She splays her fingers across his chest.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Gimme a call this weekend? You know, if you need any help. Her fingers forge downwards.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

With paperwork.

TOMMY

I might take you up on that.

She's pleased.

MADELINE

You better.

One last look and he's out the door, though Madeline can't see his GRIN FALL as soon as he's out of her view.

INT. MIRANDA'S HOME - NIGHT

Miranda and Tommy pour over documents and receipts, a halfeaten pizza between them.

They're working separately, both perched behind laptops, but there's nonetheless an unprecedented sense of COLLABORATION.

Tommy's computer displays Madeline's EMAIL ACCOUNT. He's backlogged as far back as TWO MONTHS.

TOMMY

There's nothing here. It's all work related.

MIRANDA

Well...

Miranda trails off, RELUCTANT.

TOMMY

Well, what?

MIRANDA

Does she have another account? I mean, how did she... and you...

Tommy looks away despite his wife's gentle prodding.

TOMMY

Never email.

They return to silence, but not before Miranda gives Tommy's hand a GENTLE SQUEEZE.

As Tommy reads emails, Miranda compares a TIMELINE of Bushnell's receipts with his EXCEL CALENDAR.

She looks just as frustrated as he does until -

Her face LIGHTS UP. She checks, DOUBLE CHECKS... Flipping through a stack of receipts and cross-referencing the computer screen in front of her.

MIRANDA

Tommy! October 16th. The night before Petie's accident. I think I've got something.

She excitedly hands him the receipts and gestures to the monitor.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Bushnell was completely overbooked: a coffee, a brunch -

Tommy sorts out the COORDINATING RECEIPTS as Miranda goes through the DAY.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) Taxis

to and from meals, two interviews, and a dinner with his mother at the Wyndmore.

Tommy's already RUN OUT of receipts.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) But

there's nothing for dinner or any related car service.

TOMMY

That's a little suspicious, but it doesn't give us anything.

MIRANDA

By itself, no. But I'm thinking dinner at The Wyndmore with your mother? That place hasn't been fine dining for fifteen years. I looked it up - they're closing in two months.

TOMMY

Which means?

MIRANDA

They're not making any money. No one goes there. Unless they want to be alone.

Tommy CATCHES ON.

TOMMY

Unless they don't want to be noticed. Or seen.

MIRANDA

So I looked on his calendar, a week earlier - also a dinner scheduled at The Wyndmore. Also allegedly with his mother. And this one has a receipt.

Miranda lifts the receipt from a different pile. It's ITEMIZED: salads, steaks, and a LENGTHY LIST of SCOTCHES and BURBONS.

TOMMY

He wasn't there with his mother.

MIRANDA

I don't think so. And -

She flips over the receipt to show Tommy and a PHONE NUMBER and NOTE on the back.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

- I doubt Mrs. Bushnell knows Ricky.

Tommy pours it over: "Ask for Ricky - 555-7621."

Tommy's smile FADES to something MORE SERIOUS.

He lifts his cell and they BOTH WATCH as he dials...

EXT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - LATER

A RUN DOWN street in a less affluent and darkly lit D.C. neighborhood.

Tommy's LUXURY SEDAN CAR is a red flag as it pulls up to the curb a block and a half away.

The engine QUIETS as the car turns off.

INT. TOMMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Miranda sits beside her husband in the passenger seat. He turns to her with an expression she RECOGNIZES IMMEDIATELY.

MIRANDA

You want me to wait in the car.

MIRANDA

TOMMY

Yeah. I do.

And you know there's absolutely no way I'm going to do that.

TOMMY

Yeah. I do.

(beat)

But you know the only reason I'm not gonna fight is that you're the most stubborn person I know.

MIRANDA

Yeah. I do.

She shoots him a smile, albeit a NERVOUS one.

Both doors CLICK unlocked.

TOMMY

Let's go.

INT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

The shop's interior is no more impressive than the outside. RICKY (40s), his name EMBROIDERED on his jacket, sits behind the counter watching ESPN's "Baseball Tonight."

Ricky doesn't look up.

RICKY

Evening. What can I do ya for?

Tommy steps up the counter, doing his best to position Miranda behind him.

TOMMY

I'm looking for Ricky.

Ricky still doesn't look away from the television - just points to his NAME on his jackets.

RICKY

What can I do ya for?

TOMMY

I'm a friend of the Senator's.

MIRANDA

RICKY

Ah.

Ricky doesn't turn to look at them until "Baseball Tonight" goes to a commercial break.

Ricky glances them over, shakes his head.

RICKY (CONT'D)

What is it with you guys?

Tommy doesn't have an answer, but tries to keep his cool.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Is the Senator unhappy with my work
or does he have a new job for me
already?

Ricky gives Tommy a scrutinizing once-over.

RICKY (CONT'D)

You don't look like I'm in trouble.

Tommy's a deer in headlights. Miranda steps up to his side.

MIRANDA

The Senator is neither ecstatic or
disappointed with your work.

Ricky looks at her cock-eyed. Then grins.

RICKY

I see. Well then you can tell him
that I only do what I'm paid for.
If the Senator wants an extra
special job, he pays for an extra
special job.

He gestures to the interior of the body shop.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Does my
joint look like it does a lotta
work for charity?

MIRANDA

Of course.

RICKY

Good, then. You understand.

"Baseball Tonight" returns to the airwaves and they lose
Ricky's full attention.

A few beats pass as ALL THREE watch highlights from the
ongoing World Series.

RICKY (CONT'D)

That all?

TOMMY

Yes. Thank you very much.

RICKY

Sure. Welcome back any time.

INT. TOMMY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy's locking the doors and pulling away before Miranda can even lock her seatbelt.

TOMMY

This is crazy.

MIRANDA

I know he didn't say it, but-

TOMMY

He didn't have to say it. You were right, Miranda. Bushnell found out that Madeline was sleeping around with Petie and hired this guy to sabotage his bike.

Tommy looks terrified.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

What about, what if he knows-

MIRANDA

I don't think he does. You're a little more... subtle than Petie Janssen.

Miranda's still not satisfied.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) And

if it's just the affair, how does it connect to Manny's kidnapping?

Tommy's quiet for a moment.

TOMMY

I don't know if it does.

He continues before she can begin to protest.

TOMMY (CONT'D) But

it doesn't matter. This is dangerous, Miranda.

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D) These are powerful people and, at the end of the day, Manny's okay and we're gonna be okay and that's all that matters.

Miranda's quiet in the seat next to him, not convinced.

INT. BUSHNELL'S OFFICES - TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Tommy's buried in paperwork when his phone lights up and lets off a loud BUZZ.

A young, female VOICE chimes in on the INTERCOM.

VOICE (V.O.)

Mr. Stone? The Senator would like a moment with you in his office.

Tommy looks surprised. He presses a button to respond.

TOMMY

Right now?

VOICE (V.O.)

Now would be perfect. Thank you, Mr. Stone.

INT. BUSHNELL'S OFFICES - BUSHNELL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A rapid KNOCK precedes Tommy's quick entrance into Senator Bushnell's office.

The slightest sheen of SWEAT has already moistened the nervous man's forehead.

TOMMY

You wanted to see me?

BUSHNELL

Yes, yes, Tommy. Have a seat.

Tommy's fast to obey but slow to find a comfortable leg cross. He fidgets a bit as Bushnell watches him from across the desk.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D) You ever consider cutting down on the joe, Tommy? Madeline's got me on

this green tea with lemon kick.
Tastes alright but she tells me
it's a super food.

Drawing attention to Tommy's discomfort does nothing to calm him.

TOMMY

I didn't know that. Maybe I'll
give it a whirl sometime.

BUSHNELL

You should, you should. But on to
the matter at hand.

Tommy SWALLOWS.

TOMMY

Yeah. About that.

BUSHNELL

A lot of people in the office are
big fans. I've been impressed with
how you've come in and really won
the staff over. How you've won my
wife over. And let me tell you
Tommy, she is not an easy nut to
crack.

Tommy's really struggling to hold it together.

TOMMY

Oh, I- I wouldn't say that I-

BUSHNELL

You don't need to be modest, Tommy.
Madeline loves you.

Tommy's rigid in his chair.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D) And so
do I. It's very important for me
that everyone on the campaign
feels like a part of something
bigger. And I know you were one
of the last people to join the
team, but I need to let you know
personally that you are just as
much a part of this as the people
I've had since day one.

Bushnell gives a broad smile and Tommy looks like he's just
passed a kidney stone.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D) With your work ethic and dedication, there could very well be a permanent place in this office for you.

Bushnell lifts a large folder off his desk, extending it to Tommy.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D)
Here's the latest round of major contributions. Can you make sure these get properly logged and reported before they go in for deposit?

Tommy rises, staggering without his sea legs. A quivering hand grasps the folder.

TOMMY
Of course. Sure thing.

BUSHNELL
Thanks, Tommy.

INT. BUSHNELL'S OFFICES - BULLPEN - A BIT LATER

Miranda walks quickly down the hallway, her head tucked down as she's aimed straight for Tommy's office.

She carries a paper BAKERY bag and a LARGE BINDER under her other arm.

She's almost to Tommy's office when Bushnell stops DIRECTLY IN HER PATH.

BUSHNELL
Mrs. Stone. You're just becoming a regular aren't you.

His tone is impossible to read.

Miranda does her best to smile and raises her hands up in FAUX SURRENDER.

She gives the bakery bag a shake.

MIRANDA
Just meeting Tommy with some lunch. Chicken salad on wheat. Used to be a little tradition of ours and I thought he could use a treat.

BUSHNELL
That's so nice.

The sentiment doesn't meet his facial expression.

BUSHNELL (CONT'D) Will
I be seeing you at the
fundraising dinner tomorrow
night?

MIRANDA
Of course! I wouldn't miss it.

A moment passes before he clears her path to Tommy's office.

He turns back over his shoulder after she moves away.

BUSHNELL
Enjoy your lunch.

INT. BUSHNELL'S OFFICES - TOMMY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy's still finishing up the pile of checks Bushnell gave him when Miranda walks through the door.

He eyes the bakery bag knowingly and SMILES as she closes the door behind her.

TOMMY
Chicken salad on wheat.

She pulls his sandwich from bag, extending it across the desk.

MIRANDA
Mhmm. And a cookie.

TOMMY
Thank you.

Tommy tears open the wax paper and bites right in.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I really needed this.

She bites into her own sandwich.

MIRANDA
Me too.

She opens the binder on her lap.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) I've
been going over everything and I
just can't piece it together.

A BIG DROP of mayo leaks out the bottom of Tommy's sandwich
onto the pile of checks.

TOMMY
Crap!

Miranda's quick to grab napkins, deftly slicking the
condiment off the piece of paper.

She holds it up to examine it.

MIRANDA
Don't worry, it's fine.

She studies the check - only a small stain. She's about to
give it back when something else CATCHES HER EYE.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Tommy...

TOMMY
I know. You could buy a house with
some of these.

MIRANDA
No. No - look at the handwriting.

She hands him the check while she digs into her binder,
pulling out the receipt inscribed "ASK FOR RICKY."

She puts them next to each other on Tommy's desk - it's the
same tightly spaced, slightly scratchy scrawl.

JOHNNY CARTER'S scratchy scrawl.

TOMMY
Oh my God.

MIRANDA
I know. Tommy...

She looks up into her husband's terrified expression.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
I know what happened.

TOMMY
We have to get out of the office.

INT. TOMMY'S CAR - A BIT LATER

Miranda and Tommy sit in a Starbucks parking lot, both clutching large cups but neither bothering to drink.

TOMMY

This is nuts. We don't have any real proof.

MIRANDA

I know... but it actually makes sense. Manny's kidnapping, his testimony... Carter's one of the most hands-on owner's in baseball. He knows everything that goes on in his organization and he knew Manny was ready to name names. He arranged the kidnapping and terrified Manny without losing one of his strongest players while shutting him up about whoever is using on the team. Probably someone-

TOMMY

Miranda. We have to stop this right now.

Her mind is already a runaway train.

MIRANDA And Petie was a necessary sacrifice. He's good, not great. A utility player and a wildcard personality. Expendable.

Tommy reaches across the front seat and gives her a gentle SHAKE.

TOMMY

Listen to me. This is big and dangerous and we both need to get away from these people. I'm going to tell Madeline it's over and finish out the campaign, but then I'm gone.

He finds her eyes with his.

TOMMY (CONT'D) I

love you. And I need you to stop.

His emotion palpable, Miranda can't protest.

INT. JESSICA'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Miranda and Jessica sit together on the couch, Miranda's binder resting on the coffee table in front of them.

MIRANDA

I don't know what to do. There's an innocent man in jail right now. But Tommy's right, we have to protect ourselves...

Miranda gestures to the binder.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) That's everything I have. I was thinking... well, you're the real reporter, Jess. Maybe you can make something more of it.

Jessica SHAKES HER HEAD.

JESSICA

I can't do that. The whole idea that Carter is behind Manny's kidnapping is crazy. And on the off chance that it's actually true...

Jessica's hand cradles her stomach.

JESSICA (CONT'D) You're not the only one who has to stay safe, Miranda.

MIRANDA

But what about Petie? He doesn't deserve this.

JESSICA

I'm sorry, but I can't bring myself to feel bad for Petie Janssen. I'm sure if there's even the slightest doubt of his responsibly, his multimillion dollar defense attorneys will be able to get him off. You need to let this go.

As Miranda goes quiet, the faint sound of JINGLING keys echoes from the other room.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Manny?

No response. A few seconds later Manny enters the living room.

JESSICA (CONT'D) Hey,
love. Did you and Bobby have a
nice time at your parents?

Manny pauses but doesn't move to his fiancée.

MANNY
Yeah.

Jessica pushes for more.

JESSICA
I'm guessing he decided he wanted
to spend the night there?

MANNY
Yeah.

Manny raises a hand to give Miranda a small wave hello.

MANNY (CONT'D) Jess,
I'm wiped out. I'm going to bed.

He's quickly out of their sight.

JESSICA Of
course. Love you.

If he hears her, he doesn't respond.

This has all made Miranda quite UNCOMFORTABLE.

MIRANDA
One more thing before I go. How
would you feel about maybe taking
me on as a writer at the magazine?

Jessica looks GENUINELY SURPRISED by this.

JESSICA
I... I don't know. I'd love to
help, and I know you always liked
writing, but a few half-finished
screenplays leftover from college
don't add up to a professional
writing portfolio.

MIRANDA

I know. Maybe I could just start on a trial basis... You wouldn't have to pay me unless it works out.

Jessica thinks it over for a minute. Glances down the hallway where Manny disappeared.

JESSICA

How about you write me something new and we go from there?

MIRANDA

Sure.

Miranda gets up to leave. She turns back to her sister.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Hey Jess?

JESSICA

Yeah.

MIRANDA

This? With Manny? It's not your fault. And it'll get better. Okay?

JESSICA

Yeah. I know. Thanks.

INT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - DAY

Just like the last time, Ricky's behind the counter, alone and glued to the sports network.

He's SURPRISED to see Miranda stride into the shop, especially when she's the only one to march through the door.

She's feigning confidence, but without much success.

RICKY

Lady. You should not be here. Did you not catch on to that the other day?

Miranda squares her shoulders, drawing to her full, if average, height.

MIRANDA

I'm perfectly willing to leave as soon as you'll tell me how you're

connected to Senator Bushnell and Johnny Carter.

Two for two, Ricky's surprised again.

RICKY

How about they're both assholes I won't work for anymore.

Miranda's not convinced.

MIRANDA That's not how it sounded yesterday. You basically admitted to cutting Petie Janssen's brakes.

RICKY

There's a lotta flexibility in the word "basically," isn't there?

He smiles.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Besides, you weren't offerin' me any work to say no to.

MIRANDA

So what happened? You have a big moral crisis?

Ricky GUFFAWS.

RICKY

You're funny.

(beat)

And no. I'm no man of morals. But what I am is loyal. And I am particularly, one-hundred percent loyal to the Washington Filibusters. Been a fan since I was a kid.

MIRANDA

I don't think Petie would believe you.

RICKY

That's my point. I would never knowingly hurt a 'Buster.

(MORE)

RICKY (CONT'D) Keyword there is "knowingly." In my

business, it's need to know -
usually the less the better. If
I'd had a name, even a face - it
never woulda happened.

Miranda nods in understanding.

MIRANDA

What if I could stop them from ever
messing with our favorite team
again?

RICKY

I would be happy to help.

They smile at each other, both a little EXCITED.

MIRANDA

What can you tell me?

RICKY

How about the email address they
always used to contact me?

MIRANDA

That's a start.

INT. MIRANDA'S HOME - NIGHT

Miranda STARES DOWN the internet browser on the laptop
directly across from her.

The email address Ricky gave her, a generic yahoo account,
is typed in with an EMPTY PASSWORD BOX below it.

She loses the staring contest with the blinking cursor.

Frustrated, she tries a password off the top of her head.

INVALID.

A different password guess.

INVALID.

She pushes the computer away, pulling her binder back into
her lap. Flipping through it, she stops at a sticky note
with the ALPHA-NUMERIC PASSWORD Tommy found in Madeline's
office.

Back on the laptop, she copies the letters and numbers into
the password box.

Fingers crossed, Miranda punches the enter key.

WELCOME BACK!

She's in.

INT. JAIL - DAY

Miranda sits across from Petie at a small visitors table. He looks a little rough around the edges, but better than he last did at the hospital.

MIRANDA I'm so
sorry you're in here.

PETIE
Don't worry about it. You know
this isn't my first vacation in a
concrete resort.

Miranda looks at the numerous weathered and ARMED guards.

MIRANDA
This isn't exactly the drunk tank,
either.

Petie just shrugs.

PETIE
You do know I'm not eligible for
the special lady sleep-overs yet,
right?

Miranda laughs.

MIRANDA
That's not why I'm here. But,
you're not gonna need those. You
are going to be out of here before
you know it.

PETIE
Thinking positive. I like that
attitude.

He thinks it over for a minute and his lips curve into that
CHARMING SMILE.

PETIE (CONT'D) Were
you a cheerleader in high
school?

She shakes her head.

MIRANDA

No, Petie... I'm trying to work things out at home.

PETIE

Good for you, darlin'. Not the best time to disappoint a man, though.

Guilt washes over her face, but Petie puts up a hand before she can respond.

PETIE (CONT'D)

Don't. I'm a big boy.
(beat)
Why're you really here?

MIRANDA

I need you to tell me who was using. Who everyone was afraid Manny was going to testify against.

Petie shakes his head.

PETIE

That don't matter anymore. Besides, look where the meddling got me and where it got Manny. I know my place now.

MIRANDA

It's not worth ruining your life over.

PETIE

Why do you care so much?

MIRANDA

Because it's wrong. And because I'm the last person they're going to expect to kick their legs out from under them.

INT. MIRANDA'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Miranda stands in front of a mirror, zipping herself into a black, floor length FORMAL DRESS.

A GLAZE of burgundy lipstick puts the final touches on a flawless, but not overdone, face.

Tommy enters as she's sliding on stilettos.

He pauses in the doorway, quietly admiring her.

TOMMY

You look fantastic.

She looks up, a demure smile spreading in response to the look in Tommy's eyes.

MIRANDA

Thank you.

TOMMY

I have some disappointing news, though.

Her happiness FALTERS.

MIRANDA

What's that?

TOMMY

We're not going to the dinner.

MIRANDA

What? Why?!

TOMMY

Madeline didn't take the... news very well. She told me to pack up my things and they'd mail out my last check at the end of the week.

MIRANDA

She can fire you?

TOMMY

She did fire me.

MIRANDA But I have to go tonight.

Tommy doesn't like the sound of that.

TOMMY

You've been busy, haven't you?

Miranda can't deny a thing.

MIRANDA

I'm sorry Tommy, but I'm going.

She picks up a JEWELLED CLUTCH PURSE and heads toward the door.

He sighs heavily - and then FOLLOWS RIGHT AFTER HER.

TOMMY

And I'm driving.

INT. TOMMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Tommy's sedan rolls up to the valet line outside Filibuster Stadium.

Ahead of them, well-dressed DONORS sashay into the private EVENTS FOYER.

MIRANDA

So on a scale of upset to blind with rage, Madeline would fall around a...

TOMMY

I may have a security escort in my future.

MIRANDA

Gotcha.

Miranda nervously checks her makeup in the pull-down mirror.

TOMMY

It is my marital obligation to point out one more time that this is crazy and I'd much prefer to go home and order in some Chinese.

She unlocks her door.

MIRANDA

Maybe tomorrow night.

Miranda leans across the front seat, giving Tommy a DEEP KISS before stepping out the passenger door.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - VALET - CONTINUOUS

Tommy's car rolls to the front of the valet line as Miranda makes her way toward the check-in table.

She INTENTIONALLY DROPS her purse, stalling as Tommy climbs out of the sedan and passes his valet key to the YOUNG DRIVER.

As Tommy walks toward the parked cars and dialing his cellphone, Miranda nears the front of the line.

A WELL-DRESSED OLDER WOMAN speaks with the ATTENDANT at the CHECK-IN TABLE.

OLDER WOMAN

Ruth Haverford. That's H - A -
V...

The attendant scans the lengthy ADMISSION LIST, then reaches for a highlighter.

ATTENDANT

I have you right here, Ms.
Haverford. You've been seated at
table 27. Have a wonderful
evening.

The attendant strikes the older woman's name with a blue highlighter.

OLDER WOMAN

Thank you.

As she leaves the table to go inside, Miranda begins to follow her toward the foyer - bypassing the attendants table all together.

Before the attendant looks up -

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

TWO SEPARATE CAR ALARMS blast their horns.

The attendants, as well the valets and guests, throw their hands over their ears at the NOISE.

A closer look reveals one of the cars is Tommy's, and the other one he stood by to make his call.

As the staff scrambles to find keys and turn off the alarms, Miranda slips inside the building UNNOTICED.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - DINING HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Inside, the dining hall is lavishly decorated. Servers carry trays of champagne and delicate appetizers through the cocktail patrons.

Floor to ceiling windows look out onto the night sky and the pristine field.

The display of wealth is extravagant.

Miranda scans the crowd for familiar faces to avoid, lifting a champagne fluke off a passing tray to blend in.

Snippets of conversations are audible as she mills through the crowd.

Sports. Travel. Politics, though all in Bushnell's favor.

Then she spots MADELINE.

Even across the room, painted in a steely light blue sheath, the blonde is stunning.

She's the focal point of her small group, each member hanging on every carefully selected word.

Miranda turns her face away when Bushnell appears behind his wife, retreating in the opposite direction to avoid the Senator's gaze.

Glancing back over her shoulder, Miranda can see Madeline excusing herself from her circle and walking away.

Miranda follows her with her eyes, double-checking to make sure the Senator has remained behind.

When Madeline disappears out of the dining room down a hallway, Miranda is safe to follow her.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - DINING HALL - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miranda steps inside the equally lush two stall bathroom. The dim, warm lighting casts an even lovelier reflection of her in the mirror.

Empty, except for Madeline in the one closed stall, Miranda waits.

She reapplies her lipstick, primps her lipstick. She's prepared for battle.

CRREEEEAK.

The stall door groans as Madeline emerges.

Miranda's CALM SMILE is the first thing she sees.

MIRANDA

Good evening, Madeline.

Something registers with Madeline before she forces a pleasant expression in response.

MADELINE

Good evening. I'm sorry, have we met before?

MIRANDA

I'm Miranda Stone. You know who I am.

MADELINE

Oh, Miranda. Of course. I didn't think Tommy was able to make it tonight.

MIRANDA

You mean after you fired him.

MADELINE

It's just business and politics. The campaign would happily serve as a reference for him. I know it's difficult to understand, but please don't take it personally.

MIRANDA

No, of course not. He thought he was going to have to stay out the duration before leaving, so if anything you did him a favor.

Madeline's left without a REPLY.

MADELINE

Well then. I should be going.

Madeline turns toward the door...

MIRANDA

I think I deserve some answers.

This stops her in her tracks.

Madeline HUFFS and turns, the facade of civility shaken.

MADELINE

I'm sorry, but really? It's over, you've reclaimed your suburban droll. Is it really necessary to

attempt to shame me over your marital shambles?

Miranda shakes her head.

MIRANDA

I'm sorry, allow me to clarify.
I'd like to ask you some questions
about your involvement in the
kidnapping of Manny Chavez.

An unnatural LAUGH shakes out Madeline's throat.

MADELINE

You're a crazy person.

MIRANDA

No, I'm not. But you'd be
much better off if I were.
(beat)

I guess I can just tell you what
happened and, if you're feeling
generous, you can add the color
commentary.

Miranda pulls a STAPLED PACKET of paper from her clutch,
extending it to Madeline.

She drops it to the floor when Madeline doesn't accept them.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) You
used what you thought was an
untraceable email account to hire
a private security firm to kidnap
Manny. You detailed how he was to
be cared for, or rather,
brutalized for several days, what
specific threats to make to his
career and his family.

Madeline's eyes can't help but BURN HOLES into the pile of
papers on the floor.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) I
bet you thought you'd be
protected by that email
account, but technology is
awfully impressive these days.
Are you aware I used to work
for the
Department of Homeland Security?

Madeline doesn't respond. She's barely holding it together.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) A lot of stuffy pricks in that office, so I've moved on, but it was an educational ten years.

(MORE)

MIRANDA (CONT'D) I bet it's safe to say you didn't know that with a warrant, the police would be able to track your email's IP address right to a certain Senator's office. Cool, huh?

Madeline finally breaks, reaching for the pile of printed emails. It only takes her a few seconds to realize Miranda is NOT BLUFFING.

MIRANDA (CONT'D) Not so cool for you, though. You'll be going to prison and that's definitely not par for the course for a Senator's wife. Though, I have to say, I think you'll be tanking his re-election chances come press tomorrow morning. I wonder if all those nice people out there will be able to void their checks in time...

Madeline begins to cry.

MADELINE

Please. You don't have to do this. Tommy can have his job back! I can- I can... my family is very powerful-

MIRANDA

I know, I know. Besides being a condescending tightwad, I was surprised how innocent your husband was in all this. On second thought, maybe his political career still stands a chance. After all, you were protecting Daddy, you were protecting number one - your lifetime bankroll. I bet, at some level, he'd be proud. You kept Manny from testifying against Boyd, your star player.

MADELINE

Why are you doing this to me?

MIRANDA

You were protecting your family.
I'm protecting mine.

MADELINE

I should've let them kill him. A team is a family too and Manny will always be a fucking rat for jumping at the opportunity to sell out his.

Miranda turns for the door.

MIRANDA

I'm gonna go now. If you don't make too much of a scene, maybe not everyone at the fund-raiser tonight will know you're being arrested.

On her way out of the bathroom, Miranda reaches into her clutch and clicks stop on JESSICA'S MINIRECORDER.

The door swings shut, leaving Madeline alone in tears.

They fall faster as whirling RED and BLUE LIGHTS flash in from the window.

INT. BASEBALL STADIUM - DINING HALL

As Miranda exits the bathroom, she locks eyes with TOMMY across the room.

They smile at each other as Johnny Carter places his hands behind his back, a POLICE OFFICER cinching his wrists in a pair of cuffs.

INT. MIRANDA'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Jessica slides a stack of magazines across the kitchen table to her sister.

The headline reads "Filibusters Owners Found Responsible in Manny Chavez Kidnapping" with Miranda's name emblazoned just below.

Jessica adds a sharpie to the pile.

JESSICA

I'd like these signed, please.

Miranda laughs, but obliges.

JESSICA (CONT'D) You
know they're calling this the
sports story of the century.

Tommy joins them at the table, handing Miranda a glass of wine.

TOMMY

One of those better be for me.

(to Jessica)

You know, I've been fielding jobs
offers for this one all week.

He jabs an indicative thumb in Miranda's direction.

JESSICA

I should've snatched her up while I
had the chance.

Bobby, Manny's son, RUNS into the kitchen.

BOBBY

Hurry up! You're gonna miss it!

Miranda gives him a smile.

MIRANDA

Don't you worry. We're right
behind you.

INT. MIRANDA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Manny's already seated on the couch, watching the pre-game
show. Bobby retakes his place next to his dad.

Bobby shouts towards the other room.

BOBBY

You're gonna miss it!

Tommy, Miranda, and Jessica soon file in.

TOMMY

It's three hours. I think I'll be
okay.

Miranda elbows her husband.

MIRANDA

You promised. It's game seven.

TOMMY

Okay, okay.

Tommy settles into an arm chair while the sisters sit together.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(to Manny)

So, I'm curious, do you root for the team that beat you or do you want to see them lose?

MANNY

Off the record? I hope the Yankees slaughter them.

JESSICA

(to Miranda)

So you gonna come work for me or do I have to play hardball against Sports Illustrated and Time?

Miranda purses her lips in contemplation but it quickly morphs into a smile.

MIRANDA

I don't know, Jess. I think I might try free agency.

The women trade laughs as the family settles in to watch the game.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Let's watch some ball.

FADE TO BLACK