

Secretarial Wars  
Screenplay by Marla Cukor

Based on the novel  
"Secretarial Wars" by Linda Gould

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - ESTABLISHING SHOT

It's fall in the nation's capital. Leafless cherry blossoms stand at attention, lining the streets and framing the iconic symbols of the U.S. Government: The Jefferson Memorial, The Lincoln Memorial, The White House.

INT. DUPONT CIRCLE - MORNING

Welcome to the morning rush.

WORKERS, TOURISTS and DIGNITARIES crowd the streets.

A group of TEENS cruise the sidewalk, one has a large boombox on his shoulder.

EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Uniformed COPS enter and exit through a door with a sign that reads: "Third District Headquarters".

INT. JAIL CELL - MORNING

Inside a grungy cell, THREE WOMEN sit squashed together.

MIRIAM COOPER, 27, wears a black cocktail dress and ripped nylons. Her face is smeared with makeup and her hair looks like it lost a fight with a blender.

JOCELYN JONES, 24, wears a tight red dress, and sports a Pat Benatar-style hairdo. One red stiletto dangles from her toes.

CASS PALEY, 35, is clad in a Redskins' football jersey and an old pair of Wranglers. She snores loudly with her mouth open.

A DETECTIVE walks over to the women, opens the cage.

MINUTES LATER

Miriam stands at his same detective's desk, a rotary phone in her hand. Behind her on the wall, a calendar reads, "1983".

The phone RINGS in her ear.

INTERCUT WITH

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

A drab workplace filled with fluorescent lights, microwave-sized desktop computers, and incessantly RINGING phones.

FEMALE SECRETARIES populate this land - most have teased-out hair, neon accessories, and suits sewn with linebacker-issue shoulder pads.

We go in close on an EMPTY desk. Photos of Miriam and her two jailbird friends, in happier times, are posted here.

POLICE STATION

The detective, impatient, taps his foot. Miriam has the phone pressed against her ear, it's still RINGING.

INT. BROADWATER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

ELAINE BROADWATER, 60's, a tall, dog-faced woman with a sharp symmetrical hairdo and a pair of ever-present bifocals, yanks the receiver to her ear.

BROADWATER  
Broadwater, here.

MIRIAM  
Uh... Ms. Broadwater?

BROADWATER  
Who is this?

MIRIAM  
It's Miriam.

Broadwater peers out through her door at Miriam's vacant desk.

BROADWATER  
Miriam? Where are you?

POLICE STATION

As the detective rolls his eyes, and taps his watch, Miriam shifts her body, speaks softly into the phone.

MIRIAM  
I... uh... I don't think I'm going to make it in today.

BROADWATER  
What?

MIRIAM

In fact, I'm not sure when I'll be coming back.

Super: THREE MONTHS EARLIER

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

Miriam, a harried expression, sits at a desk piled high with manila folders.

She's got a phone crunched between her shoulder and ear, and is rifling through a dozen papers on her lap.

MIRIAM

Okay, found it!

She opens up a file.

WHITTLE (O.S.)

Well? Am I accepted?

Her face falls as she sees the bright red "REJECTED" stamp on the paperwork.

MIRIAM

I'm sorry. We aren't supposed to reveal anything until the official announcements have been made.

WHITTLE (O.S.)

Listen, lady, I spent four months putting together that application and I demand to know the results.

MIRIAM

I'm really not at liberty to say.

WHITTLE (O.S.)

Fine! Then get your superior on the line.

MIRIAM

She, uh, doesn't like to be disturbed.

WHITTLE (O.S.)

I pay taxes like anyone else, and I won't be put off by some goddamn incompetent secretary!

Miriam pauses, takes a deep breath.

JOCELYN (O.S.)  
Here, let me.

Jocelyn parks herself on the edge of Miriam's desk, crosses her miniskirt-clad legs and sticks out her arm - it's filled with black gummy bracelets that stretch to her elbow. She tries to grab the phone from Miriam - who resists handing it over.

WHITTLE (O.S.)  
I can't believe I'm getting the  
runaround from some mouthbreather!  
Now are you gonna let me speak to  
your higher-up or not?

Miriam's face hardens.

MIRIAM  
Just a moment, please.

Miriam cups the phone.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
(whispers to Jocelyn)  
I give up.

Jocelyn takes the phone, looks over her shoulder towards Broadwater's office -- making sure the coast is clear -- then drops her voice a few octaves.

JOCELYN  
Deputy Director Broadwater, here.

Miriam also glances towards Broadwater's direction and locks eyes with Cass, who sits at a place of honor -- the desk in front of Broadwater's private office.

Cass silently mouths, "What's going on?"

WHITTLE (O.S.)  
Finally!

JOCELYN  
How may I help you?

WHITTLE (O.S.)  
I demand to know the results of my  
application!

JOCELYN  
So, you're asking if you've been  
awarded a grant?

WHITTLE

No. I'm asking if the Redskins are gonna be in the Superbowl.

Jocelyn looks to Miriam for an answer -- Miriam points to the overflowing "REJECTTEES" bin on her desk. The answer's a big, fat no.

Miriam hands her Whittle's grant application.

JOCELYN

Why yes, I see your application right here, Ms....

WHITTLE (O.S.)

Professor. Professor Pam Whittle.

JOCELYN

Hmmm. I see you've got some glowing letters of recommendation. An impassioned statement of purpose. A heartfelt essay on personal goals.

Miriam stifles a giggle.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

Lots of big words and fancy fonts.

Behind Jocelyn, Broadwater approaches.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, as director of this program, I have to make some hard decisions about who gets accepted.

Broadwater is now RIGHT BEHIND Jocelyn.

Miriam's eyes register "danger!" Jocelyn doesn't get the message.

WHITTLE (O.S.)

I've heard all about the 'hard decisions' this agency makes. They involve 'hard cash,' do they not!

JOCELYN

Look, Professor. I'm a very busy woman. I've got an entire staff to terrorize. I can't respond to your slander.

Jocelyn, ever-so proud of herself, smiles. Miriam drops her head into her hands.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

If you've got problems with how I run this agency, take it up with my boss. He lives on Pennsylvania Avenue. Big white house on the right. You can't miss it.

WHITTLE (O.S.)

I am not done with you, Broadwater!

Just then, Broadwater taps Jocelyn on the shoulder.

JOCELYN

(into phone)

Uh. I have to go.

Jocelyn, with a tiny shrug, hands Miriam back her phone.

BROADWATER

My office. Now.

The entire place quiets as Jocelyn follows Broadwater -- it's the ultimate walk of shame.

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - DAY

Jocelyn, Miriam and Cass are seated at a table inside this smoky, dark and dank watering hole. The place is mostly empty, save a few craggy-faced DRUNKS at the bar.

The walls are decorated with black-and-white photos of rock star NICK NICHOLS, and his band NICHOLS, POWERS AND JUDD, playing gigs on stage way-back-when at the Krammerkeller.

An old photo of Nick and Jocelyn -- her years younger with sky-high hair and thick rings of eyeliner framing her eyes -- hangs on the wall behind where Jocelyn is seated.

Miriam and Cass each have a hamburger, chips and beer in front of them. Jocelyn has a glass of wine. She picks chips off of Miriam's plate and eats them one by one.

Above the counter, a muted TV broadcasts "PUCK'S WATER COOLER" a cheesy cable-access sports commentary show.

MIRIAM

I feel like it's all my fault.

JOCELYN

Well it is.

MIRIAM

What?

JOCELYN

If you hadn't handed me the phone,  
I wouldn't have gone there.

CASS

Don't blame Miriam. You dug your  
own grave.

JOCELYN

Whatever.

Jocelyn downs her beer, holds it up towards the bartender,  
HEINZ KRAMMERKELLER, 30's, his sexy smile leaves them all  
swooning.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

Filler up, baby.

Heinz refills Jocelyn's mug, gives her a kiss on the lips.

CASS

So what are you gonna do now?

MIRIAM

She isn't going to do anything  
because right after lunch I'm  
marching into Broadwater's office,  
and telling her the truth.

Miriam swigs her brew, turns to Jocelyn.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

It is my fault you got fired.

JOCELYN

Why do you always have to be such a  
friggin' martyr.

MIRIAM

What?

JOCELYN

That job was bogus. And you know  
what, that raging reject was right.

MIRIAM

Right about what?

JOCELYN

Oh, come on. Don't pretend.

MIRIAM

(to Cass)

What is she talking about?

Cass shrugs. Jocelyn digs into her burger.

JOCELYN  
The two of you, really? No clue?  
UGH!

Jocelyn makes a WRETCHING SOUND, spits out her burger.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
(yells to bar)  
Heinz? What's up with these  
burgers? The cook get deported  
again?

Heinz holds his spatula up, confused.

HEINZ  
I made them myself.

MIRIAM  
Mine taste fine.

CASS  
Mine too.

Jocelyn pulls out a cigarette pack, takes out a joint. Cass and Miriam give her a curious look.

JOCELYN  
It's medicinal. To settle my  
stomach.

She sparks up her joint, takes a deep hit.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
So as I was saying, every year the  
Peace Council doles out a select  
few teaching and research grants,  
but thousands of applicants get the  
big old heave ho.

MIRIAM  
And?

JOCELYN  
And haven't you drones ever noticed  
that the most qualified candidates  
never win.

MIRIAM  
Win what?

JOCELYN  
The grant. Jesus!

MIRIAM

Well, that's because there's a lot of other qualifying factors.

JOCELYN

Right. A lot of them. Maybe even...  
(beat)  
...*millions* of them.

CASS

You're nuts. I've been there twelve years, if there was weirdness going on, I'd know about it.

JOCELYN

Please. You're so far up Broadwater's ass, you wouldn't know weirdness unless it was written on toilet paper and printed in triplicate.

MIRIAM

Hey! Just because you lost your job, don't take it out on Cass because she's good at hers.

JOCELYN

Whatever. I'm over it. I've already got a new gig.

MIRIAM

But you've only been unemployed for, like, an hour?

Jocelyn smiles at Heinz, he grins back at her.

JOCELYN

Heinz wants me to manage this place. Book the bands and stuff.

Miriam and Cass share a knowing look.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

I know what you're thinking and you're both totally wrong.

CASS

Really? So this *isn't* a ploy to get your old boyfriend back?

Cass stares at the picture of Nick on the wall, Jocelyn turns and acknowledges the old photo with a sly smile.

JOCELYN

Well, I am going to get Nick and his band to play here.

MIRIAM

Totally wrong, huh?

JOCELYN

But it was Heinz' idea.

Miriam and Jocelyn give each other another loaded look.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

Heinz wants to update this place. Make it young and hip. He's hosting some mayoral fund-raiser here, and guess who's running the whole thing?

CASS

Not you, I hope.

JOCELYN

Yes me.

CASS

Who's the candidate?

JOCELYN

I don't know.

MIRIAM

Why would anyone have a fund raiser here? They want the drunk vote?

JOCELYN

See, that's your problem, Miriam. You don't think big. This is why you sit around talking about being some hotshot reporter one day but you never do anything about it.

Jocelyn takes a giant puff of her joint.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

We only go around once, girls.

Cass checks her watch, it has a Redskins' logo.

CASS

Hey Heinz, turn up the TV, will ya?

Heinz aims the remote at the TV, sportscaster PUCK CAVANAUGH'S deep voice suddenly fills the bar.

On the TV:

A low-rent version of Howard Cosell, PUCK CAVANAUGH, 40's, sits behind a news anchor's desk while FOOTBALL GAME highlights play on a video screen behind him.

PUCK

It's time for today's drawing.  
Winner gets an exclusive V-I-P.  
lunch with Redskins wide-receiver  
Larry Longford at the Palm Tree  
restaurant in downtown D.C.

Behind Puck, a photo of a a blond man with a goofy grin wearing a Redskins football jersey flashes on screen. This is LARRY LONGFORD, 30's.

Puck blows an AIRHORN, it signals a GIRL in a bikini to emerge, she wheels out a bingo-cage filled with hundreds of entry forms.

PUCK (CONT'D)

And the winner is...

LATER

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Cass, wearing a Redskins bomber jacket, slowly shuffles down the street. Miriam walks beside her.

CASS

Three hundred ballots! I stayed up  
all night filling them out.

MIRIAM

I'm sorry, Cass. Maybe next time.

On a brick wall behind them, they pass dozens of posters featuring the smiling, slick image of politician LOUIS PALMER, 40's. The posters read: "VOTE FOR A CHANGE! PALMER FOR MAYOR".

CASS

Larry never does promotional stuff.  
This was a fluke.

MIRIAM

Why do you want to meet him anyway?  
Don't you read what they write  
about him? How many wives has he  
had so far? Five? Six?

CASS  
Three. And those women didn't get  
him. Not like I do.

MIRIAM  
You don't even know him.

CASS  
Immaterial.

MIRIAM  
And how many DWI's? Arrests?

CASS  
I never said he was a saint. But  
the way he catches a ball, it's a  
thing of beauty.

Cass looks off in the distance, lost in her own world.

Miriam stares in the window of an elegant restaurant called,  
"The Palms".

Inside the eatery, Miriam ZEROS in on a couple in power  
suits: JEFF MCDANIELS, 30's, sits across from CELIA  
MCDANIELS, a supermodel-esque, stunningly tall, thin blonde.

CASS (CONT'D)  
Hey, isn't that Jeff?

MIRIAM  
(casual)  
Oh, do you see Jeff? Oh, there he  
is.

CASS  
He still at the National Archives?

MIRIAM  
I guess.

CASS  
You don't see him anymore?

MIRIAM  
We occasionally bump into each  
other.

CASS  
Who's the slut?

MIRIAM  
His new wife.

Uh-oh. Cass tries to backtrack.

CASS

Did you see her eyebrows? Hello,  
it's called a tweezer.

MIRIAM

Nice try. Let's go.

The women pick up the pace, stopping only when a HOMELESS GUY handing out newspapers gives Miriam a paper called THE WASHINGTON INSIDER.

Miriam opens the paper, turns to the first page and focuses on a column marked "Editor's Corner." On the photo accompanying the story, the dark, probing, eyes of CALVIN MARTINEZ, 45, stare back at her.

CASS

I've never seen anyone so obsessed  
with free newspaper editorials.

MIRIAM

Just because it's free doesn't mean  
it's not valid. Calvin Martinez is  
an agitator.

CASS

He's a broke-ass fool. He can't  
even get advertisers for his rag.

MIRIAM

That's because he writes the truth,  
stuff corporate America won't touch  
with a ten foot pole.

CASS

Right. That's why you're so  
interested in him. Cause he's an  
*agitator*.

MIRIAM

I'm not like you, Cass. I know the  
difference between admiring someone  
for their work, and stalking them  
because they can throw a ball  
across a field.

They stop at a bank. Cass pulls a large envelope out of her bag.

CASS

Just be a minute. Have to do the  
queen's bidding.

As Cass goes into a nearby bank, Miriam leans against the outside wall, reads the free paper. She focuses intently on Calvin's photo.

INT. ELEVATOR - PEACE COUNCIL BUILDING - DAY

As soon as the doors slide shut, Miriam and Cass perform their daily after-lunch ritual: They douse themselves with perfume, spray breath freshener into their mouths, then, tease their hair with picks and hair spray.

MIRIAM

You think she's right?

CASS

Who?

MIRIAM

Josh. About... you know.

Miriam looks up at the security camera in the elevator.

CASS

Broadwater may be a lot of things,  
but she's not a thief.

MIRIAM

I wasn't talking about that.  
(beat)  
She said I have no ambition.

CASS

Don't let her get to you.

MIRIAM

That's not what I asked.

Cass shuffles uncomfortably, looks at the numbers on the panel.

CASS

I don't know. I mean, everyone  
talks about what they'd like to do.  
It doesn't make you a bad person.

MIRIAM

So you agree with her?

Cass shrugs.

CASS

As long as I know you, you've been talking about how you're gonna write some amazing exposé someday and get a job as an investigative reporter at The Post. But, I've never seen you do anything about it.

MIRIAM

Like what?

CASS

I don't know. Write stuff.

MIRIAM

I don't have anything to write about.

CASS

I'm not telling you what to do. I'm just-

The doors slide open.

Broadwater is there, a carton full of files in her arms, a sour look on her face.

BROADWATER

You're late.

She hands Cass her carton.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

You get to the bank?

Cass nods.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Chop-chop.

Miriam watches as Cass disappears with Broadwater.

INT. THE PEACE COUNCIL OFFICE - DAY

Miriam sits down at her desk, her phone rings.

MIRIAM

Peace Council, can I help you?

WHITTLE (O.S.)

This is Professor Pam Whittle. I'm calling about my grant application.

MIRIAM  
Yes, we spoke earlier.

WHITTLE (O.S.)  
And?

MIRIAM  
And I'd like to help you, but I'm  
not the one who makes these  
decisions, it's my boss.

WHITTLE (O.S.)  
The one I spoke to earlier?

Miriam pauses.

MIRIAM  
How about this. I'll take down all  
your information, and I'll speak  
with Broadwater, personally, about  
your application.

WHITTLE (O.S.)  
Fine. My contact info is on the  
grant app. Thank you young lady,  
what did you say your name was?

CUT TO:

INT. MIRIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JEFF (O.S.)  
MIRIAM!

It's dark in here. Two people are on the bed, going at it.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
Miriam!!! Agh..!

With a tiny primal SCREAM, Jeff gives one last thrust, then  
rolls over.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
God, I needed that.

Miriam switches on the bedside light. Jeff sits up. Miriam's  
staring up at the ceiling.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
You okay?

She slips on a sweatshirt, nods.

MIRIAM  
We can't keep doing this.

EXT. FIFTEENTH STREET - DAY

Miriam walks past a towering building - a sign on the door reads: "WASHINGTON POST".

She stops at the door, stares ruefully at it.

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

Standing at Broadwater's door, Miriam musters her courage.  
KNOCKS.

BROADWATER (O.S.)  
Come in.

INT. BROADWATER'S OFFICE - CONT.

Broadwater goes to a locked cabinet, takes out a key that she wears on a chain around her neck, and opens the file cabinet using the key.

MIRIAM  
Um... there's this applicant.

Broadwater sits down.

BROADWATER  
Yes?

MIRIAM  
She keeps calling.

BROADWATER  
And...?

MIRIAM  
She's been rejected. She wants to know why.

Broadwater looks up, takes her bifocals off, tosses an icy stare in Miriam's direction.

BROADWATER  
Well, obviously she wasn't up to par.

MIRIAM

I understand, but, what do I tell her? From the looks of her application, she-

BROADWATER

Miriam, refresh my memory. Who's name is on the door?

MIRIAM

Yours.

BROADWATER

And who's the secretary here?

MIRIAM

I am.

BROADWATER

Excellent. So listen carefully. Your job isn't to worry about who gets chosen for our grants.

MIRIAM

Yes, ma'am.

BROADWATER

Your job, is to type the letters, file the files, and generally speaking, keep things organized. Are we clear?

Humiliated, Miriam drops her head.

MIRIAM

Crystal.

BROADWATER

If she calls again, transfer her to my office.

Miriam hurries out. Cass, seeing the distress on Miriam's face, follows her friend into the...

INT. BATHROOM - PEACE COUNCIL - DAY

Miriam splashes water on her face as Cass enters.

CASS

You okay?

Miriam blows her nose.

CASS (CONT'D)  
What happened in there?

MIRIAM  
Nothing.

CASS  
Come on. What's wrong?

MIRIAM  
I went to college, you know! I graduated with honors!

CASS  
What?

MIRIAM  
This wasn't supposed to be a life sentence. I'm not supposed to be a goddamned secretary my whole life.

CASS  
(insulted)  
Well, sorry.

MIRIAM  
I didn't mean it like that. It's just, I can't stop thinking about what Jocelyn said. How I'm all talk and no action.

CASS  
I don't think she used those words. And besides, she was stoned out of her mind. She's not like, Ghandi.

MIRIAM  
Yeah. I got that.

CASS  
Look, if it means anything. There's a grade seven slot opening. It's still administrative, but on a managerial track. Program Assistant to the Russian director.

MIRIAM  
I love the cold war!

CASS  
And there's a good pay bump.

MIRIAM  
Why are you telling me this?

CASS  
Broadwater had me do a short-list  
of candidates. I put your name on  
it.

Miriam hugs her friend.

MIRIAM  
What would I do without you?

CASS  
Be sober more often? Speaking of,  
don't forget about the game  
tonight.

MIRIAM  
I won't. Go 'skins.

Cass smiles.

CASS  
That's the spirit. Wear red.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

Jocelyn wears a tight dress and heels, Miriam a black jacket,  
and Cass is draped in head to toe Redskins gear. Holding  
beers and popcorn, the three women find their seats in the  
nosebleed section.

JOCELYN  
I think I'm going to throw up.

CASS  
Calm down. These seats are boss!  
Look, we've got a perfect view of  
the 30 yard line.

Jocelyn sparks up a fat doobie. Cass gives her a look.

JOCELYN  
What? My feet hurt.

CASS  
Who wears heels to a football game?  
Put that out will you, there's  
security everywhere.

Jocelyn kills her joint with her fingers.

JOCELYN  
Stop spaszing. Look!

She points.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
There's your boyfriend.

Cass lifts her binoculars, zeros in on LARRY LONGFORD as he runs out on the field, and raises his fists towards the stadium. His presence elicits a mixed bag of BOOS and CHEERS.

Miriam, stares off in the distance. Jocelyn elbows her.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
You're a real chatterbox.  
Wassamatter, Jeff keep you up all night?

CASS  
Jeff?

Alarmed, Cass looks at Miriam.

CASS (CONT'D)  
I thought you ended that?

MIRIAM  
I did. But we started it up again.

Behind them, a group of drunken, LOUDMOUTH fans shout:

LOUDMOUTH FAN  
Longford, you goddamn bum! Put us out of our misery and get the hell off the field!

CASS  
Hey, watch your mouth, there's kids here!

LOUDMOUTH FAN  
What are you, his fan club president? They need to retire his ass and let Spencer take over.

CASS  
So you're blind and stupid! He had no protection. He had to rush the play!

LOUDMOUTH FAN  
Rush the play! He was asleep at the wheel!

Cass stands, faces the men.

CASS  
You guys need to shut up.

LOUDMOUTH

Yo, who the hell do you think you are?

Cass, infuriated, tosses her beer at the men.

CASS

As it turns out. I'm Longford's number-one fan.

The Loudmouth is shocked. Cass looks down, sees SECURITY GUARDS headed up the stairs towards them.

MIRIAM

Great job, Cass.

PUCK (O.S.)

Hold on!

Puck Cavagaugh, who is sitting in the stands a few seats up, stands and rushes over before security can get there.

PUCK (CONT'D)

I like your style, what's your name, kid?

Miriam and Jocelyn, surprised, turn to see he's talking to Cass.

CASS

None of your damn business.

PUCK

Fiesty! Too bad you're rooting for the wrong wide receiver.

CASS

What? Nine championship games, one Superbowl, and a cumulative game average of 390 completed plays, says you're full of crap.

SECURITY has arrived.

LOUDMOUTH FAN

Look what this crazy bitch did to me!

PUCK

Look lady, I'm always looking for ways to jazz up The Cooler. How about you come on, do some color commentary for the show?

Cass stares at Puck, has no clue who he is.

MIRIAM

Oh my god! It's him, the guy from  
that show you always make us watch.

He offers his hand to Cass.

PUCK

Puck Cavanaugh. So what do you say?

CASS

Sorry. I don't do cable access.

JOCELYN

(whispers)

Cass, think of all the hot guys.  
You'll meet.

PUCK

Wear something low cut.

He holds out his card, Cass turns away. Jocelyn snaps it up.

JOCELYN

We'll be in touch.

EXT. STADIUM - NIGHT

The guards drag Cass, Miriam and Jocelyn out of the game.

JOCELYN

Where to now?

CASS

Let's go get hammered. We can catch  
the last half at the bar.

JOCELYN

Cool.

CASS

You coming?

MIRIAM

Nah, I'm beat.

Miriam eyes a "WASHINGTON INSIDER" paper kiosk.

CASS

See you *manana*.

Cass and Jocelyn head off. Miriam takes the paper.

INT. MIRIAM'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Miriam stares at the picture of Calvin. Eyeballs a caption.  
"EXPOSE'S WANTED".

MIRIAM  
(reads)  
Expose's wanted...

There's a KNOCK. She opens the door - it's Jeff. He's wearing a suit and tie, has a six-pack in his hand.

JEFF  
You ready for some football?

MIRIAM  
I told you I was busy tonight.

JEFF  
I can see that.

He glances in the kitchen, notices a glass of wine and a half-eaten Lean Cuisine on the table.

MIRIAM  
We got kicked out of the game.

JEFF  
Again?

He reaches around, hands her a dozen red roses.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
I saw these on the street, thought  
of you.

MIRIAM  
Thorny?

JEFF  
Beautiful. Can I...

She opens the door. Lets him in.

Without any hesitation, he takes a wine glass from the cabinet, pours himself a glass of wine, refills her glass.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
You always did like the cheap  
stuff.

MIRIAM  
What do you want, Jeff?

JEFF  
I think Celia knows.

MIRIAM  
Knows what?

He just stares at her, waits until it sticks.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Oh.

JEFF  
I felt like I should tell you.  
She's from the south and all.

MIRIAM  
So?

JEFF  
So, she's been firing guns and  
hunting since she was old enough to  
walk.

MIRIAM  
I'm not scared of her, Jeff. But,  
we have to end this. For real.

JEFF  
Okay. You're right.

CUT TO:

INT. MIRIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They've just finished making love. Naked, they lie in bed,  
the sheets pressed under their arms.

MIRIAM  
Now. We're really finished.

JEFF  
Right.

He gets up, starts getting dressed.

MIRIAM  
Jeff, what do you know about the  
Peace Council?

JEFF

What do you mean?

MIRIAM

What do people say about it? At the Archives?

He sits on the bed, slips on his socks.

JEFF

A while back. Years ago. I heard some rumors.

MIRIAM

What kind of rumors?

JEFF

Crazy stuff.

MIRIAM

Like?

JEFF

Like that the grantees were really CIA operatives being trained to infiltrate hostile governments under the guise of peace.

MIRIAM

You're kidding, right?

JEFF

That's why I never told you. It's too crazy. But recently, there's been more rumors.

MIRIAM

More?

JEFF

Pay to play.

MIRIAM

Like, bribery? Are you sure?

JEFF

All I know is that these grants are considered pretty plum gigs.

MIRIAM

So?

JEFF

So, it wouldn't be the first time some mid-level bureaucrat pocketed a little chump change in exchange for doling out a juicy appointment.

MIRIAM

Why didn't you ever tell me any of this before?

JEFF

One, because I don't know if any of it is true. And two, because sometimes in Washington, things are the way they are.

MIRIAM

No, Jeff. That's not right.

JEFF

Maybe not right. But that's life.

He's all dressed now.

JEFF (CONT'D)

I gotta fly.

She walks him to the door. Hands him back his roses.

MIRIAM

Make peace with your wife. Tell her it's over. Cause it is.

He takes the flowers, kisses Miriam on the forehead.

JEFF

Monday night football won't be the same without you.

EXT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

Miriam is about to enter when she spots PROFESSOR PAM WHITTLE, 50's, outside the building. She has a crazy bee's nest of curly red hair, and wears a large moo-moo.

MIRIAM

Professor Whittle?

WHITTLE

How did you....?

MIRIAM

I recognized you from the picture  
on your application.

She holds out her hand to Miriam.

WHITTLE

You must be Miriam.

She stares at Miriam.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)

Not quite as pretty as I'd  
pictured. Little older, too. I told  
you I'd come for answers.

Miriam looks down.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)

I've been rejected haven't I?

Miriam hedges.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)

Come on, I can take it.

Miriam can't look Whittle in the eyes.

MIRIAM

I'm sorry.

WHITTLE

So that's it? The great Oz has  
spoken?

MIRIAM

You can always file a complaint  
through your congressman.

WHITTLE

That's your best answer?

MIRIAM

There's really nothing I can do.  
I'm just a secretary.

WHITTLE

There's no such thing as 'just a  
secretary,' Miriam. There's people  
who effect change in this world,  
and people who let life walk all  
over them.

Miriam goes to leave. Whittle grabs her arm.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)  
You'd tell me, right Miriam? If you  
suspected things weren't on the up  
and up.

Miriam yanks her hand free.

MIRIAM  
I have to go.

WHITTLE  
Here.

She offers Miriam a business card. Miriam snaps it away,  
drops it into her bag.

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

Still rattled from their conversation, Miriam is in a daze as  
she exits the elevator, Cass nearly tackles her.

CASS  
Great news!

MIRIAM  
What!

CASS  
Broadwater wants to meet with you!

MIRIAM  
Really?

CASS  
I bet it's about the job!

MIRIAM  
No way!

Miriam hugs her friend. Cass steps into the elevator.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Where you going?

CASS  
Lunch date.

MIRIAM  
It's only ten o'clock?

CASS  
I'll tell you about it later.

Cass blows her friend a kiss as the doors slide shut.

INT. BROADWATER'S OFFICE - LATER

Miriam fiddles nervously in her chair as Broadwater ends a call.

BROADWATER  
(into phone)  
Fine. I'll have my secretary  
arrange the details.

She hangs up the phone. Adjust her glasses, opens a file.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)  
Well then, Miriam.

Miriam smiles, folds her hands on her lap.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)  
You've been here, what? Three, four  
years?

MIRIAM  
Five, actually. I started right out  
of college. Originally, it was my  
intention to help put my husband  
through law school.

BROADWATER  
Right. And how'd that work out?

MIRIAM  
Well, he graduated. He's over at  
the National Archives now.

BROADWATER  
I see.

MIRIAM  
We're no longer together. But it  
was for the best.

Miriam smiles brightly - too brightly - refolds her hands  
neatly across her lap.

BROADWATER  
Miriam, do you know why I've called  
you here today?

MIRIAM  
I have an idea. Cass told me that  
there is a new job opening and-

BROADWATER

Let me stop you right there. This isn't about a job opening, Miriam. It's about your job, and how badly you want to keep it.

MIRIAM

What do you mean?

BROADWATER

I've been watching you, Miriam. And I have to say, I am not impressed.

Miriam sits back, shocked.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Your attitude is... at times apathetic, other times, surly. You rarely, if ever, go above and beyond. I can't remember the last time I saw you here past the stroke of five.

MIRIAM

Well, yes, but...

BROADWATER

You seem to have difficulty completing the simplest of tasks, such as properly screening callers or keeping confidential council business on a need-to-know basis...

MIRIAM

Well, that's not exactly true-

BROADWATER

But most troubling, Miriam, is your penchant for, how do you call them, liquid lunches. You can't really think that dousing yourself in Lysol and Binaca can disguise the fact that you smell like a brewery when you return from your break.

Deflated, Miriam slumps in her chair.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

As I'm sure you know, these are not the kind of qualities we look for in our secretaries here at The Peace Council.

Broadwater takes off her glasses, peers deeply at Miriam with a dark grimace.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)  
Consider yourself warned.

Miriam exits the room. Her eyes shine with tears as she holds her head high, and makes a b-line for the the elevator.

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - DAY

Miriam's at the bar, she has an untouched burger and chips in front of her. Heinz sets down a beer, she waves it away.

MIRIAM  
I'm good with water.

She lifts her water glass.

HEINZ  
That's a first.

She sighs.

HEINZ (CONT'D)  
Rough day?

MIRIAM  
Something like that. Josh here?

He shakes his head.

HEINZ  
She wasn't feeling good. She went home a while ago.  
(beat)  
Miriam, you're her friend, right?

MIRIAM  
Yeah?

HEINZ  
What am I doing wrong?

MIRIAM  
I don't know, Heinz. Maybe you should ask her yourself.

HEINZ  
I have. She never gives me a straight answer.

MIRIAM

Heinz, you want love advice, write to Dear Abby. I'm a total screw-up in that department.

HEINZ

Whatever happened between you and Jeff? Whenever you guys use to hang here, you seemed happy.

MIRIAM

We were, I guess. It wasn't like we divorced because we hated each other.

HEINZ

So why did you?

MIRIAM

We just bored each other.

She finishes her drink.

HEINZ

Some guys just don't know how good they got it till it's gone.

He flashes his killer smile at her, it unnerves her.

MIRIAM

Hey, can I use your phone?

INT. HEINZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Heinz flips on a light.

HEINZ

Sorry about the mess.

She checks out the room: There's a desk covered in papers, a couch covered in beer cartons, and a drum set in the corner.

MIRIAM

Do you still play?

HEINZ

Not so much.

He clears the papers, unearths his phone. She stares at an old photo of Nick's band, but in this picture, Heinz is on the drums. She points to the photo.

MIRIAM

How come you want him back here for the fund-raiser? I mean, from how I heard it - he kind of screwed you, didn't he?

HEINZ

It's because I need a big act to bring in the crowds for Palmer.

She gives him a look. That's bullshit and he knows it.

MIRIAM

All I know is if someone kicked me off the band I helped found, then went on tour and became like a world-famous rock star, I'd be pissed.

Hurt, Heinz looks away.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Sorry. God, I'm a jerk sometimes.

HEINZ

It's okay. That's ancient history now.

MIRIAM

So why do you want him to play here?

HEINZ

Josh is still totally hung up on the guy. I'm just hoping that maybe, he'll come back and she'll realize what a total ass-hat he is.

He finds the phone, hands it to her.

HEINZ (CONT'D)

I'll be outside if you need me.

He exits. She dials Whittle's number from the card in her purse.

MIRIAM

Professor?

WHITTLE

Who is this?

MIRIAM

It's Miriam. From The Peace Council. Look, I shouldn't be calling you.

WHITTLE

And yet you are.

MIRIAM

Can you meet me tonight?

MINUTES LATER

Back at the bar, Miriam picks at her chips.

She steals a glimpse at Heinz as he wipes dishes behind the bar, a BLONDE BIMBO flirts unsuccessfully with him.

Miriam's eyes are suddenly drawn to the TV above the bar. Puck's show is on, but today there's someone sitting next to him - IT'S CASS. Miriam leans in, flabbergasted.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Heinz! Check this out!

Heinz comes over, raises the volume.

On the TV:

PUCK

I'd like to introduce today's hottie of the week, football groupie Cass Paley. So tell me, what are the best dressed gals in town wearing to football games this season?

Cass looks at Puck - ready to kill - then composes herself.

CASS

I couldn't tell you. But I'll tell you what the smartest gals who watch football are thinking. Let's talk about last night's game. I'm gonna go out on a limb and say it, Longford had nothing to work with.

Heinz stares at Miriam, who just shrugs, speechless.

PUCK

Nothing to work with! Jesus, lady. That guy's had his bell rung so many times he don't know which way is up!

CASS

Did you watch the same game I did?  
Longford ate yardage like it was a  
turkey dinner.

PUCK

You mean he dropped passes like  
they were a bad habit!

Puck puts his hand to his ear.

PUCK (CONT'D)

We'll be right back, folks.

The show cuts to a commercial.

HEINZ

What was that?

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - NIGHT

The place is packed. A painfully bad HAIR BAND plays in the  
B.G. on the venue's tiny stage. Miriam shares a table with  
Jocelyn and Cass - watches the door.

Jocelyn takes a sip of her beer - makes a sour face.

JOCELYN

Ugh! It's flat... Heinz, the beer  
tastes like shit.

CASS

It always tastes like shit. That's  
why we drink it.

Miriam's spots Whittle strolling through the door.

MIRIAM

I'll be right back.

The professor waddles over to the bar.

WHITTLE

Bourbon on the rocks. With a twist.

Heinz gives her a drink as Miriam sits down.

MIRIAM

Thanks for coming.

WHITTLE

You've got five minutes.

MIRIAM

What?

WHITTLE

I've got papers to grade.

Whittle opens her bag, takes out a medicine vial and pops a pill in her mouth.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)

You want one? It's just a val.  
Keeps me calm.

Miriam shakes her head.

MIRIAM

I think you're right. There is something going on at The Peace Council.

WHITTLE

Well, no shit, Sherlock. What other revelations have you unraveled? Washington is corrupt? Politician's lie?

Whittle downs her drink. Gets up.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)

Jesus, this wasn't even worth the cab fare.

MIRIAM

You're leaving?

WHITTLE

What? You want to play footsies under the table?

MIRIAM

But! I thought...

WHITTLE

Look, kid. The fact that the Peace Council is merely a front for some high-level money grab is the worst kept secret in town. But unless someone on the inside has the balls to do something about it - nothing's going to change.

She picks up her purse, heads out the door. Miriam follows.

EXT. KRAMMERKELLER - CONTINUOUS

MIRIAM

I do want to do something. I just don't know how.

WHITTLE

Start with your attitude. And your hair. That look is not working for you.

Whittle hails a cab. Miriam is momentarily stunned.

MIRIAM

(to herself)

But I just got a new perm.

Miriam runs her fingers through her hair, turns, a cab rushes by and COVERS HER IN MUD.

She cries out, turns and BUMPS into someone.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Sorry. I've gotten you full of mud.

She looks up. Can't believe her eyes: It's CALVIN MARTINEZ.

CALVIN

No problem. I enjoy a good mud bath every now and again.

He smiles at her and she's taken aback.

MIRIAM

You're... Calvin Martinez, right?

His dark eyes sparkle back at her.

CALVIN

Well this isn't fair. You know my name, but I don't know yours.

She sticks her hand out, smiles flirtatiously.

MIRIAM

Miriam Cooper.

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - LATER

It's late. The band is long gone and the place is practically empty. Near the jukebox, Miriam and Calvin sit at a private table covered in glasses - a nearly empty bottle of Jack Daniels between them.

Heinz comes over - he shoots Calvin a not-so-friendly look - empties the last of the whiskey into their shot glasses.

Miriam giggles like a school girl, holds up her shot glass and tosses back the firewater.

MIRIAM

All my life, I've been dreaming of doing what you do. Righting wrongs, exposing corruption, and here I am, all this going on right under my nose and I'm too chicken shit to do anything about it.

CALVIN

What are you talking about?

She leans in, looks over her shoulder, tries to focus on Calvin's blurry smile.

MIRIAM

The Peace Council. It's a sham.

CALVIN

How so?

MIRIAM

You name it. Bribery. Under the table recruitments. Politically motivated appointments.

CALVIN

You don't say.

MIRIAM

I shouldn't be telling you all this. But I'm pretty sure it goes all the way up to the top.

CALVIN

The top?

MIRIAM

Yes. The top.

Bingo! His eyes spark with interest.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

I'd like to do something about it. But, what? I mean, I'm just an ordinary secretary.

He puts his hand under her chin, looks deep into her eyes.

CALVIN  
Miriam, you are anything but  
ordinary.

MIRIAM  
You think so?

CALVIN  
What they're banking on, is that  
you're just going to be one of  
their good little worker bees,  
totally incapable of any kind of  
analytical thought. But I have a  
feeling about you. You're  
different.

She leans back, loses her balance, falls over. Heinz rushes  
over. He helps pick her up.

HEINZ  
Miriam, you want me to get you a  
cab home?

Calvin stands.

CALVIN  
I can give her a lift.

MIRIAM  
No, I'm okay.

She stands, steadies herself on the table.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
I'm good. See?

She tries to walk, stumbles again into Calvin's arms.

HEINZ  
I think you should call it a night.

She straightens up.

MIRIAM  
I'm a big girl. I'll call it a  
night when I'm ready.  
(to Calvin)  
I'm ready.

EXT. KRAMMERKELLER - NIGHT

Miriam stands against a cab, Calvin leans in towards her.

CALVIN

I'd like to discuss this some more.

She closes her eyes -- waits for the inevitable kiss. He bends in -- but instead of a kiss, he presses a card into her hand.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Call me.

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

Miriam, in dark sunglasses, and barely able to function, winces in hangover-agony as her intercom BUZZES.

Her voice is gravely and hoarse at the same time.

MIRIAM

Hello?

BROADWATER (O.S.)

I'd like to see you in my office.

MIRIAM

(mutters)

Of course you would.

BROADWATER (O.S.)

What's that?

MIRIAM

Be right there.

INT. BROADWATER'S OFFICE - DAY

As Miriam sits down, Broadwater snaps at her.

BROADWATER

Take those off.

Miriam obediently removes her shades, revealing bleary-eyed peepers.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Cass just called. She has a family emergency and has to fly home to Utah.

Miriam's eyes open in surprise.

MIRIAM

Utah?

Broadwater gets up, takes her key, opens the locked cabinet.

BROADWATER

I have no idea how long she'll be gone, so I'll need you to put together a list of temporary replacements.

Miriam steals a peak at the WASHINGTON INSIDER she has hidden on her lap.

MIRIAM

I could do it.

BROADWATER

You?

MIRIAM

Why not? I'm good at dictation and great with a steno pad.

BROADWATER

This job requires a fair amount of writing.

MIRIAM

That's perfect! In college, I was the editor-in-chief of the school paper. I have a shelf full of awards.

Broadwater thinks this over. She picks up a bin filled with files stamped CONFIDENTIAL, pushes them towards Miriam.

BROADWATER

I'll need a dozen rejections typed before noon.

Broadwater pushes a second box of folders at her.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

These need to be copied and ready for my signature by end of day.

MIRIAM

Okay.

BROADWATER

I'll also need you to set up a luncheon for the latest grant recipients. Can you handle that?

MIRIAM

No problem.

BROADWATER

This is only temporary, Miriam. One screw up, and it's back to the main floor.

MIRIAM

I'll take care of it.

Miriam goes to take the files, she accidentally knocks them over, along with Broadwater's coffee cup.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Sorry.

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - DAY

Miriam, wearing her sunglasses, and Jocelyn are at the bar.

JOCELYN

Family emergency! What kind of bullshit is that?

MIRIAM

Where'd she get Utah? She's from Jersey.

JOCELYN

Did you try calling?

MIRIAM

A thousand times. You?

JOCELYN

Same.

Heinz puts on the TV. Cass is back on the Puck Cavanaugh show. The two of them are going at it, again.

On the TV:

PUCK

Longford's a punk! If I was running the shots over there, he'd of been benched five seasons ago...

CASS

If you were running the shots, they'd have the worst running game since the seventy-nine season.

PUCK

What are you talking about? That was a classic year.

CASS

Are you nuts?

Jocelyn and Miriam gaze at the screen as Cass and Puck continue throwing barbs at each other.

JOCELYN

Those two need to have sex and get it over with.

MIRIAM

I can't believe she thinks she can get away with this.

JOCELYN

Why wouldn't she? It's not like Broadwater is ever gonna watch some backwater cable sports show.

Heinz comes over.

HEINZ

You guys want drinks?

Miriam groans.

MIRIAM

I'm never drinking again.

Heinz taps a copy of THE WASHINGTON INSIDER that's on the bar.

HEINZ

What's up with you and that leech?

MIRIAM

Calvin happens to be a great guy.

HEINZ

He's total user. Always shows up with a different skank on his arm. Never leaves a decent tip.

MIRIAM

He's a struggling journalist. He's taken a vow of poverty to right the wrongs.

HEINZ

Well I don't the trust the guy.

She shoots him a look.

MIRIAM

How's it any of your business who I  
date, anyway?

A DELIVERY GUY walks in pushing a hand truck filled with beer  
cartons, Heinz excuses himself.

JOCELYN

So?

MIRIAM

So, what?

JOCELYN

I left at one and you and your  
Latin boy toy were still hot and  
heavy in the corner. Tell me all  
the sordid details.

MIRIAM

Nothing happened. He gave me his  
card, said to call him.

JOCELYN

Did you?

Miriam shakes her head.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

What are you waiting for? If Nick  
called me, I'd show up naked with a  
bag of chips.

MIRIAM

I was drunk. I have no idea what I  
even told him.

JOCELYN

No offense, Miriam, but sometimes  
you're a lot more fun with a couple  
of stiff ones in you.

Miffed, Miriam looks off. Jocelyn bends in, whispers.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

I have a problem.

MIRIAM

What's wrong? Your dealer go on  
vacation?

Jocelyn looks around, suddenly nervous.

JOCELYN

Not here.

BATHROOM - DAY

Jocelyn leans against the sink.

MIRIAM

Okay, what's the big secret?

JOCELYN

One second.

Jocelyn rushes into the bathroom, shuts the stall - vomits.  
A moment later, Jocelyn emerges.

MIRIAM

Is it Heinz'?

JOCELYN

Probably.

MIRIAM

Have you told him?

Jocelyn shakes her head, digs in her cigarette package,  
lights up a splief. Miriam grabs it and tosses it down the  
sink before Jocelyn can get a hit off it.

JOCELYN

Hey!

MIRIAM

You can't do that anymore.

JOCELYN

The moral majority has spoken.

MIRIAM

You didn't answer me. Have you told  
him?

JOCELYN

No. And I'm not going to. I've got  
a meeting scheduled next week with  
Nick. If all goes according to plan  
- Heinz won't ever have to know.

MIRIAM

What are you saying? You're gonna  
pass off that baby as Nick's?

JOCELYN  
It should be Nick's. So why  
shouldn't I?

MIRIAM  
That's messed up. Even for you.

Miriam storms out of the ladies room.

Heinz turns back to the bathroom, sees Jocelyn exit.

HEINZ  
Everything cool? It sounded like  
someone was getting sick in there.

JOCELYN  
You know how it is.

She cocks her head towards Miriam as she heads for the exit.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
Some people simply can't hold their  
alcohol.

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

Miriam, now sitting at Cass' desk, picks up the RINGING  
PHONE.

MIRIAM  
Director's office.

CALVIN (O.S.)  
Miriam?

INTERCUT WITH

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Calvin, shirtless, lies in bed. Smokes a cigarette.

MIRIAM  
Yes? Who's this?

CALVIN  
You never called.

MIRIAM  
I didn't know I was supposed to.  
How did you get this number?

CALVIN  
You should know I don't give up my  
sources that easily.

She smiles.

CALVIN (CONT'D)  
Luckily, there are ways to make me  
talk.

MIRIAM  
Really?

CALVIN  
If you meet me for dinner tonight,  
you might get me to divulge my  
secrets.

She puts the phone down, lets out a silent scream of  
happiness.

CALVIN (CONT'D)  
How's eight o'clock sound?

INT. THE PALMS - DAY

Miriam enters the upscale restaurant, the snotty HOSTESS  
gives her a nasty look.

MIRIAM  
I'm meeting a friend here.

HOSTESS  
You sure you're at the right place?

Miriam is about to answer when Cass walks over. Miriam  
examines her friend with shock - Cass has had a complete  
makeover. She's wearing a sexy outfit, has had her hair and  
makeup professionally done.

MIRIAM  
Sorry. I'm supposed to meet my  
friend Cass here.

Moments later, the two are seated at a table in the back.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
A family emergency? In Utah?  
Really? That was the best you could  
come up with?

CASS  
Under the circumstances, yes.

A waitress places two large shrimp appetizers in front of them.

MIRIAM  
Are you sure about this?

CASS  
It's my treat, dig in.

They start to eat their apps. A nearby DINER comes over.

DINER  
Hi. I'm a big fan, would you mind...?

He hands her a napkin, Cass signs it.

MIRIAM  
Does that happen a lot?

CASS  
It's starting to.

MIRIAM  
So what's going on with this show?

CASS  
The first time I did it, it was sort of a fluke, but then, the numbers went up, and Puck and I sort of hit it off.

MIRIAM  
Hit it off? On TV it looks like you want to kill each other.

CASS  
We do. The man's an idiot. Does Broadwater suspect anything?

MIRIAM  
Not really. She's asked me to take over for you. Until you come back. You are coming back, aren't you?

Cass looks off.

CASS  
Oh god.

MIRIAM  
What?

Larry Longford has entered the restaurant with two beefy BODYGUARDS. All eyes turn as he struts by like he owns the place.

CASS  
What's he doing here?

MIRIAM  
Remember that meet and greet you didn't win. It was supposed to be here, today.

CASS  
What?

MIRIAM  
I was hoping we'd run into him. I know how much it'd mean to you.

She looks back at Cass - who's already lost in a dreamlike fog, staring at Larry.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Well, go say something.

CASS  
I couldn't.

MIRIAM  
So you're just going to stare like some lovesick teenager?

CASS  
Yes I am.

Miriam calls the snobby hostess over.

MIRIAM  
Send a bottle of your best wine to Mr. Longford's table. Tell him it's courtesy of his biggest fan.

Cass opens her mouth to protest.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Don't worry. It's on me.

A moment later Larry walks over.

LARRY  
I came to thank you for the...

He looks at Cass.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
Hey. You're the chick from Puck's  
show.

He takes Cass' hand, raises it to his lips.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
I liked what you said about me the  
other day.

Cass, completely tongue-tied, can barely stammer out a reply.

MIRIAM  
Her name's Cass.

LARRY  
Mind if we join you for lunch,  
Cass?

MIRIAM  
Don't you have to have lunch with  
the winner?

LARRY  
He can wait.

Just then, the CONTEST WINNER, a nerdy-looking guy in  
suspenders and floodwater pants, rushes over and slams his  
menu down in front of Larry.

CONTEST WINNER  
This contest was a gyp!

He marches out.

LARRY  
Looks like I'm free for lunch.

Larry signals his two bodyguards to join him at the table.

MOMENTS LATER

Miriam is squashed between the bulky bodyguards while Cass  
and Larry bond over their mutual love... of Larry.

INT. MIRIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miriam, dressed in a sexy black cocktail gown, is applying  
mascara when her doorbell rings.

She opens the door - it's Jeff. His jaw drops to the ground  
as he takes in her hotness.

JEFF

Wowsa.

He enters her apartment.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Hot date tonight?

MIRIAM

None of your business. What are you doing here?

JEFF

Celia's away at a conference. Thought I would stop by.

MIRIAM

Well, I have plans. Besides, I told you, Jeff, we're done.

JEFF

I know. I know you said that. And we agreed. It's just...

He sits down.

JEFF (CONT'D)

I miss you.

MIRIAM

Don't do this. We don't work as a couple. We never did.

He acknowledges this with a nod. Rises.

JEFF

I did some snooping.

MIRIAM

Snooping?

JEFF

About your boss.

MIRIAM

Really?

JEFF

She had lunch with him on Wednesday.

MIRIAM

With who?

JEFF

Who do you think? The big man.

MIRIAM

Why?

JEFF

There's definitely something going on over there. Their budget is classified, like seriously, balls out, on a need-to-know basis.

MIRIAM

Thanks for telling me. I'm going to look into it.

JEFF

Just be careful, okay? The Peace Council has eyes and ears everywhere.

She turns, kisses him gently on the cheek.

He pulls her close.

JEFF (CONT'D)

You sure you won't change your mind? I can run down and rent us a video?

She smiles, shakes her head.

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - NIGHT

Miriam is seated at a private table with Calvin. Over at the bar, Jocelyn, Cass and Heinz watch them like hawks.

CASS

Look at her, it's like he's put her in a trance.

JOCELYN

Maybe she's stoned.

CASS

Miriam doesn't smoke.

HEINZ

I don't like him.

CASS

If I didn't know you better, I'd say you sound jealous.

Jocelyn, annoyed, turns to Cass.

JOCELYN

Really, Cass. Now why would he be jealous?

Over at Miriam and Calvin's table, Miriam listens - enraptured - as he rambles on.

CALVIN

... so after I left the Post, I knew there needed to be a way for me to make my way in the world. Uproot all the subversive elements in Washington.

MIRIAM

That's amazing.

CALVIN

It took months before I could convince anyone to come work with me. But eventually, things took off.

MIRIAM

I think what you're doing is courageous and brave. Fighting the power.

CALVIN

You're embarrassing me, Miriam. I'm just following my heart, not trying to destabilize the entire U.S. Government.

He looks around, checks over his shoulder.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Even if that's what needs doing.

MIRIAM

Really?

CALVIN

It's not like those thugs haven't tried to stop me. The President himself has sicked his dogs, the FBI, the CIA, on me. My phone's been tapped. Strange sedans follow me down the street.

MIRIAM

Is that why you wanted to meet here?

CALVIN

Exactly. They can't bug all of Washington. And a grungy place like this...

Heinz comes over, he's heard the last sentence, frowns.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

... it's the last place on earth they're worried about as a breeding ground for political descent.

Calvin dumps the rest of the wine bottle into their glasses.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

So, about the Peace Council.

MIRIAM

I shouldn't have said anything the other night. Right now, all I have to go on is hunches and innuendo.

CALVIN

Where else would you start?

He smiles seductively at her.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

I can tell you have good instincts. You're a muckraker at heart.

MIRIAM

Ever since I was a kid, I've wanted to be an investigative reporter. You know, like Barbara Walters or Diane Sawyer.

CALVIN

So what happened?

MIRIAM

Life sort of got in the way.

CALVIN

It's not too late.

He takes her hand.

CALVIN (CONT'D)  
If your heart is telling you  
something's not right. You have to  
ride that wave - see where it takes  
you.

MIRIAM  
I don't know where to begin.

CALVIN  
Find the smoking gun. Start with  
the grantees. Check out their  
political affiliations,  
contributions, connections, in  
other words, follow the money  
trail.

MIRIAM  
The money trail?

CALVIN  
One thing I've learned about  
bureaucrats, they always think  
they're smarter than they actually  
are.

Heinz comes with the check. Calvin and Miriam reach for it at  
the same time.

MIRIAM  
Here. Let me.

She hands Heinz her credit card.

EXT. KRAMMERKELLER - NIGHT

CALVIN  
Your exposé is going to be front  
page stuff.

MIRIAM  
Really?

CALVIN  
Definitely.

He leans in, kisses her good night.

CALVIN (CONT'D)  
You want to come back to my place -  
we could go over the details?

She debates this, shakes her head.

CALVIN (CONT'D)  
Okay, then. Rain check.

MIRIAM  
Rain check.

He hails a cab, drives off.

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - NIGHT

Miriam walks back in - she's floating on air.

HEINZ  
What a gentleman. He didn't even  
take you home.

MIRIAM  
It's not like he didn't offer.

JOCELYN  
Good riddance. Now we can party.

She reaches into her bag, pulls out a joint. Miriam shoots  
her a loaded glare.

MIRIAM  
Maybe you should call it a night.  
Get some rest?

JOCELYN  
Party pooper.

MIRIAM  
Well, I'm outta here. I need to go  
home and get to work.

JOCELYN  
On what?

MIRIAM  
My exposé.

CASS  
See, I knew this was a bad idea.  
You with your crazy conspiracy  
theories and him - with his  
ridiculous scandal sheet. This is  
either gonna get you fired or  
arrested.

Miriam turns away, ignores her.

CASS (CONT'D)  
Can't you see what he's doing? He's  
strumming you along.

MIRIAM  
This from a woman who's sleeping  
with a guy because the way he  
throws a pigskin gets her hot.

CASS  
Larry's not perfect but at least he  
pays for dinner. And, he respects  
my opinion.

MIRIAM  
So you're saying what? Calvin  
doesn't respect my opinion?

CASS  
I didn't say it, you did.

MIRIAM  
So there's no way he'd actually be  
interested in my writing? My ideas?

Cass doesn't answer.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Any of you care to chime in?

Jocelyn and Heinz both look away.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Great. Nice friends I have.

She heads for the door.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
I'm out of here.

INT. MIRIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miriam is at a desk in the corner of her room. She's on her  
computer. She types:

"The Peace Council - Front for an elaborate money laundering  
scheme or CIA operative breeding ground?"

Just then, her phone rings. She picks it up.

MIRIAM  
Hello?

Silence.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Hello?

More silence. Somewhat spooked, she hangs up the phone. Looks out her window, the driver of a parked sedan looks up at her - then drives off.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Don't be crazy.

INSERT MONTAGE

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

- Miriam at her desk, snooping through files marked "classified" and making surreptitious notes. Broadwater walks over, she quickly closes the file - a close call, averted.

- Miriam having lunch with Calvin at the Krammerkeller.

- Miriam stays late at the office. The place is a total ghost town. She works studiously, makes notes of files.

- Miriam eats dinner with Calvin at The Palms.

- During the day, Miriam watches as Broadwater exits her office, then Miriam sneaks in and tries to jimmy open the locked cabinet using a letter opener. It won't budge. She exits the office with seconds to spare as Broadwater returns.

- Miriam double dates with Calvin, and Cass and Larry. Cass and Larry make out like teenagers the whole time.

END MONTAGE

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

Miriam is pouring through one of Cass's notepads when Broadwater walks up behind her.

BROADWATER

Miriam?

Miriam jumps.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Jittery Janie. Maybe tone down the coffee a bit, eh?

She notices Cass' notebook open on Miriam's desk.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

What are you doing looking through  
Cass' transcription notebooks?

Miriam's frozen.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

That's confidential.

MIRIAM

I... uh... she has all these half  
transcribed notes. I was trying to  
finish them. I thought you might  
find them useful.

Broadwater raises a suspicious eyebrow.

BROADWATER

We need to talk.

INT. BROADWATER'S OFFICE - DAY

Miriam sits across from Broadwater.

BROADWATER

Everything set for the luncheon  
tomorrow?

Miriam reads from a clipboard, her voice is crisp, efficient  
and professional.

MIRIAM

The menu's been finalized. The  
responses have been received, filed  
and noted. And the programs have  
been printed. I need to pick them  
up by noon.

She looks at her Timex.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

I have forty-three minutes.

BROADWATER

Excellent.

MIRIAM

Will that be all?

Miriam starts to rise.

BROADWATER

No. I suppose you've heard. Cass  
tendered her resignation this  
morning.

MIRIAM

What?

BROADWATER

Until I hire a replacement, I'll  
need you to continue picking up the  
slack.

MIRIAM

She quit?

Broadwater stands up and dangles a key.

BROADWATER

This is the key to my personal file  
cabinet.

She pushes the key across the desk towards Miriam.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

It goes without saying, that key is  
not to leave your person.

MIRIAM

Of course.

BROADWATER

I'll need you to clear out Cass'  
personal items. I've arranged to  
ship her things to her home in  
Utah. You'll need to get the  
address.

LATER

Back at her desk, Miriam grabs the phone's receiver and  
punches a number into the keypad.

CASS (O.S.)

Hello?

MIRIAM

So what's the address in Utah?  
Where I'm sending your stuff.

CASS (O.S.)

About that.

A long pause.

CASS (CONT'D)

I should have told you first. I just didn't know how. They hired me to be a regular anchor and it seemed like the right move.

MIRIAM

You've really quit?

CASS (O.S.)

I did. All that stuff Jocelyn was saying, about living life to the fullest, I guess it got to me.

Long pause. Silence.

CASS (CONT'D)

Miriam? You there?

Miriam hangs up the phone, grabs an empty mail bin, and starts filling it with Cass' personal items and tchotchkes -- mostly everything has a Redskins' logo.

A photo on Cass' corkboard catches her eye. Miriam stares the picture: It's her, Jocelyn and Cass - all smiles in Santa hats. She drops it in the bin.

Miriam's phone RINGS.

MIRIAM

Peace Council.

JOCELYN (O.S.)

It's me.

MIRIAM

Are you calling about Cass?

JOCELYN (O.S.)

No. I need a favor.

MIRIAM

How much this time?

JOCELYN (O.S.)

No, it's not money. Can you run down to the printer and get the flyers for the fund-raiser? I got hung up.

MIRIAM

Sure, which printer?

JOCELYN (O.S.)  
The one downtown near the Mickie  
D's.

MIRIAM  
No problem, I have to go there for  
something anyway. This afternoon  
work?

JOCELYN (O.S.)  
Perfect. What were you saying about  
Cass?

MIRIAM  
She quit.

JOCELYN (O.S.)  
No shit. So you're the last woman  
standing?

MIRIAM  
I guess.

In the B.G., Miriam hears a MAN'S voice beckoning.

MAN (O.S.)  
Come on, baby. Say goodbye.

Miriam is confused.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

A guitar leans against the bed. Jocelyn, half naked, hangs up  
the phone, turns and kisses her companion - NICK NICHOLS.

JOCELYN  
I gotta motor.

Jocelyn hangs up.

INT. PRINTER - DAY

Miriam picks up both orders. They are in identical packages.

INT. THE PALMS - DAY

Miriam has lunch with Calvin. He hands her a tiny lock pick.  
She smiles deviously.

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - NIGHT

Miriam waits for the office to clear out. Broadwater walks by Miriam.

BROADWATER

Remember to shut the lights. We don't need to stick the taxpayers with unnecessary electrical bills.

MIRIAM

Will do.

Broadwater leaves. The place is completely deserted.

Miriam goes to Broadwater's office, using the lock pick, she opens the door.

INT. BROADWATER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Using her new key, Miriam goes to the locked file cabinet, snoops around. She opens the cabinet, shoves a handful of files into her bag.

Suddenly, behind her, a LIGHT in the hallway flips on.

Miriam panics.

She hears the CLICKITY-CLACK of a woman's heels on the floor outside the room.

She gingerly closes the file. The CLICKING HEELS sound louder. Miriam freaks. She can see Broadwater barreling down the hall like a stormtrooper, there's no time to escape.

The door handle jingles. Broadwater, suspicious, turns the lock.

BROADWATER

That's weird. Thought I locked this.

Broadwater sits down. She doesn't notice that...

Miriam is crouched, hidden under the desk.

Broadwater turns on a light, goes to her file cabinet.

Miriam crawls on all fours towards the door.

Broadwater turns around...

Miriam rises... she's got her hand on the door.

From Broadwater's POV, it looks like Miriam has just arrived.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)  
Just the woman I was looking for.  
Have a minute?

MIRIAM  
I was kind of in the middle of-

BROADWATER  
Please. Sit.

Miriam drops the lock-pick down her pants.

MIRIAM  
Okay.

Miriam sits down -- winces in pain -- the pick is stabbing her.

Off Miriam's face...

BROADWATER  
You okay?

MIRIAM  
Just a cramp.

Broadwater turns, takes out a bottle of scotch, puts it on her desk next to two tumbler glasses, and pours drinks.

While Broadwater isn't looking, Miriam reaches back, grabs the pick, and quickly drops it into another pocket.

Miriam raises the glass to her lips, hesitates.

BROADWATER  
It's okay. We're off the clock.

Miriam takes a sip.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)  
I've been watching you, Miriam.

Miriam sinks down in her chair.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)  
And I don't want you to think I haven't been paying attention.

MIRIAM  
I can explain!

BROADWATER

Let me finish.

Miriam settles back in her chair.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

I've decided that you are no longer going to fill in as my personal assistant.

MIRIAM

(defeated)

Okay.

BROADWATER

I want you to have the job.

MIRIAM

What!

BROADWATER

You've really come around, Miriam. Everything about you has changed over the last few weeks. Your attitude, your work ethic, even your professional attire.

MIRIAM

I don't know what to say.

BROADWATER

There's nothing to say. You realize there's a three-grade pay bump that comes with being my personal secretary.

Miriam digests this.

MIRIAM

If you don't mind, I prefer the term, assistant.

BROADWATER

Very well, assistant.

Broadwater clears her throat.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

There's just one thing. I've received word that someone in this office is a subversive.

MIRIAM

A what?

BROADWATER  
Someone here is trying to undermine  
what we do.

Miriam does a spit-take of her scotch.

MIRIAM  
You mean, like a spy?

Broadwater nods.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
How do you know?

BROADWATER  
Because that's what I do, Miriam. I  
keep tabs.

MIRIAM  
Oh.

BROADWATER  
I'm going to need you to find out  
who.

MIRIAM  
Me?

BROADWATER  
I want you to be my roving eyes and  
ears.

Broadwater downs her scotch. Pours another.

MIRIAM  
So you want me to, snoop around?

BROADWATER  
Not officially, of course. But, off  
the record, consider yourself  
knighted.

Miriam smiles.

INSERT MONTAGE

Miriam's stealth campaign kicks into high gear.

-- Alone in the office during the evening, she goes through  
the desks and files of her coworkers.

-- She copies files marked "confidential" on a Xerox machine.

-- During the day at her desk, Miriam lifts her phone and eavesdrops on the private calls of her coworkers.

SHEILA (O.S.)

... besides the fact that my mother-in-law, the old witch, is in town for a week, don't tell anyone, I think I maxed out my credit card again.

-- Miriam steps from the elevator, says goodbye to SHEILA, 30's, a fellow SECRETARY.

MIRIAM

Bye, Sheila. Take it easy on the Diners Club this weekend.

Sheila, perplexed, stops in her tracks. *How did she know that?*

-- Miriam has a late night meeting with Calvin. Crunched over a table, they pour over her pilfered documents together.

INT. MIRIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A digital clock reads "4 AM." Miriam, wide awake, ferociously types away at her computer as she finishes her exposé.

She smiles, types, "The End," and hits print.

She collapses on her bed, falls asleep instantly as her dot-matrix printer churns out page after page of her exposé.

EXT. THE PALMS - DAY

Miriam does a double-take as she sees Whittle at the door of the restaurant, about to enter. Miriam grabs her arm.

MIRIAM

Professor, what are you doing here?

WHITTLE

Isn't it obvious? Having lunch.

MIRIAM

But this is a private party honoring the grantees.

WHITTLE

So I'm crashing it.

MIRIAM

You can't!

WHITTLE

She got to you, didn't she?

MIRIAM

Who?

WHITTLE

You know who. Attila the bun.

She motions inside the restaurant, Broadwater, her hair fastened into a tight bun, stands nearby.

MIRIAM

That's not it at all! I don't want to raise any flags. My story's almost all done. If she catches wind of it -- everything will fall apart.

WHITTLE

Don't get your panties twisted in a knot. I'm not going to do anything. I'm just curious to see the calibre of candidate who beat me out.

Whittle opens the door, walks in, looks over her shoulder.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)

Besides. I love an open bar.

INT. THE PALMS - DAY

Miriam hands the unopened programs, still in the printer's packaging, to the snotty hostess.

MIRIAM

We'll need these put on every table.

The hostess starts to protest, then, opens the bag, looks at them.

HOSTESS

Are you sure?

MIRIAM

I'm running this party, aren't I?

HOSTESS

Okay.

Soon, the invited guests start to arrive. The bar quickly fills.

Miriam's eyes open in shock as she sees Jeff march in with Celia.

MIRIAM

Jeff?

JEFF

Miriam?

*Awkward.* Celia stares down Miriam.

JEFF (CONT'D)

This is my wife, Celia.

Miriam's confused.

CELIA

I go by my maiden name, Barnes.

MIRIAM

Oh, Celia Barnes, of course.  
You're with the President's liaison  
on terrorism. Nice to meet you,  
I've heard all about your agency.

Celia's hard glare puts Miriam off-kilter.

JEFF

We should make our way in. Come,  
darling.

He gives Miriam a halting glance over his shoulder as he pilots his wife away.

Within minutes, the place is packed. Broadwater breezes through the crowd, she nods at Miriam, pleased.

Miriam goes to the bar, orders a drink. Allows herself a smile - takes a sip.

Then - spits it out - *Whittle has cornered Broadwater.*

Miriam's face fills with panic as she watches Whittle gesture wildly to Broadwater.

Miriam drops her head. This is not good. *She's so screwed.*

Suddenly, the CHEF runs out, he has a large BUTCHER'S KNIFE in his hand, and he's waving it angrily at another MAN in cooking whites. All action stops, everyone watches the men argue in FRENCH.

Broadwater saddles over to Miriam. Barely moving her lips, she asks:

BROADWATER  
What's going on?

MIRIAM  
It's... uh... performance art. Part of the show. Excuse me.

Miriam rushes over to the hostess.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
What's going on?

HOSTESS  
Chef Robard just quit. He's very temperamental.

MIRIAM  
He can't quit! We've invited a hundred people for lunch! What am I going to do?

The hostess just shrugs - throws Miriam's words back at her.

HOSTESS  
You're running this party, aren't you?

LATER

The guests are all seated, enjoying their lunch. Polite conversation buzzes throughout the room.

Miriam goes to the...

KITCHEN

Heinz is there. He's dressed in chef's white. A team of busboys bustle around him.

HEINZ  
How's it going out there?

MIRIAM  
Amazing. Everyone is loving those tiny burgers.

HEINZ  
I call them sliders.

MIRIAM

Sliders? What kind of a name is that?

HEINZ

I'm hoping it catches on.

MIRIAM

Where did you learn to cook like this?

HEINZ

Culinary school.

MIRIAM

You're a chef?

HEINZ

I trained to be one.

MIRIAM

You never fail to amaze me, Heinz. How can I ever repay you?

HEINZ

I'm just happy I could help.

She moves closer. He moves closer. They bend in towards each other.

BROADWATER (O.S.)

MIRIAM!

Broadwater's shrill cackle shatters the mood. Miriam whips her head to see...

Broadwater, in the doorway, a sour look.

MIRIAM

What's wrong?

BROADWATER

This is what's wrong! They were put on all the tables!

She holds out the flyers - it's not the luncheon program - it's the invite to the Mayoral fund-raiser at the Krammerkeller next week.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

We're a bipartisan agency! We can't distribute politically motivated propaganda!

MIRIAM

I'm so sorry!

BROADWATER

Are you responsible for this!

Miriam stutters, she's at a complete loss.

MIRIAM

I... I...

BROADWATER

Do you even realize what kind of a colossal fuck up this is!

JOCELYN (O.S.)

Don't blame her, it was all my doing.

All eyes turn towards the back door - Jocelyn's there.

She saunters over.

BROADWATER

What are you doing here! This is a private event.

JOCELYN

Didn't mean to rain on your parade. I'm running this event next week, and thought some of your grantees might be interested in attending.

BROADWATER

Well you thought wrong!

MIRIAM

It's not her fault, really.

Broadwater inches closer to Jocelyn, narrows her eyes.

BROADWATER

Luckily for you, I caught this little prank before any of your pathetic little flyers were distributed among my guests.

Broadwater takes the flyers in her arms, tosses them in the trash.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me, I have a party to attend to.

Broadwater exits. Miriam exhales with relief, she turns towards Jocelyn.

MIRIAM

Oh my God, Josh thank you so-

She stops, caught off-guard by the anger and hurt raging on Jocelyn's face. Jocelyn's voice is hard as stone.

JOCELYN

I came to give you these.

She drops the box of luncheon flyers into Miriam's hands.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

You must of mixed them up by mistake.

MIRIAM

How long were you standing there?

JOCELYN

Long enough.

Jocelyn looks at Heinz, her eyes fill with tears.

Jocelyn rushes out. Heinz follows her.

HEINZ

Josh!

Miriam goes to the garbage, takes out the flyers.

The image on them is an amateurishly cut and pasted composite of Nick Nichols and his band, standing next to Louis Palmer. The caption reads: "PALMER FOR MAYOR FUND-RAISER NEXT WEEK".

INT. BATHROOM - THE PALMS - DAY

While seated in the stall, Miriam hears the CLICKITY-CLACK of Broadwater's heels.

Peeking out through a crack in the door, she sees Whittle enter behind her.

WHITTLE

As discussed.

Whittle produces a check from her handbag. Broadwater snaps it up.

Miriam sits back - stunned.

MOMENTS LATER

Miriam storms through the party. Broadwater notices her bulldozing her way through the crowd.

BROADWATER

Miriam? Where are you going?

She ignores the questions, grabs her bag from behind the bar.

Jeff, perplexed, watches her storm away.

CELIA

What are you looking at?

INT/EXT. CAB - DAY

A cab stops in front of an elegant brownstone.

Miriam double checks the address handwritten on the back of Calvin's business card. She leans towards the driver.

MIRIAM

You sure this is right?

EXT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

She stands on the stoop, rings the doorbell.

Calvin opens up the door. As soon as he sees her, a smile lights up his face.

INT. CALVIN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Miriam's eyes are wide with amazement as she follows Calvin through his oversized bachelor pad. The place is filled with expensive-looking art and stereo equipment.

A big-screen TV sits on a stand near a black leather couch.

MIRIAM

I thought you took a vow of poverty.

CALVIN

I did, but I'm not good at keeping vows. Why do you think I've been married twice.

Baffled, she takes in the place.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

You want a beer? Wine?

MIRIAM

No. I need to talk to you.

Moments later, they're sitting on the couch.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

All this time I've been reading files, doing research, you know, looking for the smoking gun. And what do I come up with? Nothing. No hard proof. But to see it go down like that, right before my eyes.

CALVIN

Crazy, huh?

MIRIAM

It just sort of validated everything.

CALVIN

It's a rush, isn't it?

He inches closer to her.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Seeing corruption at play.

He swings his arm around her.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

A real turn on.

Oblivious to his come on, she inches away, digs into her bag, hands him the exposé.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

What's this?

MIRIAM

What do you think it is? My exposé! I'll have to change the ending now, but, I think it's good to go.

He takes it, flips casually through the pages, sets it down.

CALVIN

Looks good.

He moves closer. She moves away.

MIRIAM

Don't you want to read it?

CALVIN

Read what?

MIRIAM

My story! The story I've spent every night for the past month working on!

CALVIN

Of course, I can't wait.

He suddenly turns and falls on her, pinning her beneath him.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

But first, I want to do an in-depth investigation about what's going on elsewhere...

She pushes him off.

MIRIAM

Are you kidding me!

CALVIN

What?!

MIRIAM

Oh my god. Heinz was right.

CALVIN

The bartender?

MIRIAM

You don't even care about this story.

CALVIN

Of course I do. But Miriam, the story will wait. My passion won't!

He lunges at her, she jumps up, slides out of his way.

He comes at her again, but this time she knees him in the groin. OWWW! He cries out in pain, goes down for the count.

MIRIAM

I can't believe I trusted you!

CALVIN

Don't be so naive, Miriam! You think you can bring down a giant government agency just because you see a check pass hands in the crapper! That's not how it works.

She picks up her exposé, shoves it in her bag.

MIRIAM  
Maybe not in your world, anyway.

She opens a door -- marches through it. It's a closet.

Backing out, she goes through another door, the exit.

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - NIGHT

Miriam and Heinz sit next to each other at the bar, each with a beer in front of them. A Redskins game plays on the TV.

MIRIAM  
What a fool I've been.

THWAPP! THWAPP! She smacks her forehead into the bar.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Everyone tried to warn me. I didn't want to hear it.

HEINZ  
Don't be so hard on yourself, it's not your fault.

MIRIAM  
I can't believe he played me like that.

HEINZ  
Can I ask you something?

MIRIAM  
Sure.

HEINZ  
Why are you so upset that he made a move on you? I mean, I thought you had the hots for the guy?

MIRIAM  
I did, I guess. But that was before I knew him for what he really is.

She takes her exposé out, strikes a match on the bar, and sticks the flame under her paper.

HEINZ  
Hey! Are you crazy!

He grabs the document, blows out the match.

MIRIAM

I never want to see this again!

HEINZ

You spent months writing this thing, it means something.

Suddenly, the loud ROAR of the crowd on the TV gets their attention.

HEINZ (CONT'D)

What the...

The TV ANNOUNCER'S voice blasts.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And there's a flag down! Longford is arguing with the referee... He's... OH MY GOD he's attacking the referee!

Heinz and Miriam, shocked, watch as Larry pummels the ref.

Within seconds, a small army of TRAINERS, COACHES and REDSKINS FOOTBALL PLAYERS are trying to pull Larry off the ref. Larry swings wildly at everyone.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

He's fighting his own teammates! Jesus! I've never seen anything like this!

Behind them, someone SHUTS off the TV.

They turn, Jocelyn's there. With a nasty smirk, she tosses the remote at Heinz, picks up a carton overflowing with her personal things, and storms towards the exit.

She SLAMS the door behind her.

The force of it knocks the photo of Nick and Jocelyn off the wall.

Heinz picks it up, examines the now-cracked glass frame.

HEINZ

If it makes you feel any better, I knew she was sleeping with him.

He taps the broken photo of Nick.

MIRIAM

Why didn't you say anything?

HEINZ

This is gonna sound lame.

MIRIAM

Go on, I can take it.

HEINZ

I knew if we broke up, sooner or later you'd stop coming around.

MIRIAM

What are you saying?

HEINZ

Miriam. I have feelings for you.  
I have for some time.

She's taken aback.

HEINZ (CONT'D)

I tried to ignore them. On my mother's life, I swear it. I mean, I know I was dating your good friend and I didn't want to cross that line. But....

MIRIAM

She's pregnant.

HEINZ

What?

MIRIAM

She's pregnant. It's your baby.

HEINZ

Oh my God! Why didn't she say anything?

As the news sinks in, his face comes alive with excitement.

HEINZ (CONT'D)

How far along is she? Does she know what she's having? When is she due?

MIRIAM

You're gonna have to ask her.

Miriam rises, moves towards the door.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Take care of yourself, Heinz.

INT. PEACE COUNCIL OFFICES - MORNING

Miriam sits at her desk - stares out vacantly at the thick pile of papers in front of her. Her phone RINGS and RINGS, finally, she answers it. Her voice is flat.

MIRIAM  
Peace Council.

WHITTLE (O.S.)  
Miriam? It's Professor Whittle.

Silence. Miriam doesn't say a word.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)  
What happened to you yesterday? One minute you were there, the next, gone?

MIRIAM  
What happened to me?!

Miriam's eyes burn with rage.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
I thought you were on my side! I thought that under that gruff, sub-human exterior, there was a decent person in there!

WHITTLE (O.S.)  
What are you talking about?

MIRIAM  
I saw you! I saw you pay her off!

WHITTLE (O.S.)  
What are talking about?

MIRIAM  
You're just like the rest of them. Only worse because you pretended to want to change the system. But all you really wanted was to find a way in.

Miriam's intercom BUZZES.

BROADWATER (O.S.)  
Miriam. Can you come in here?

MIRIAM  
(into phone)  
I have to go.

She slams down the phone.

INT. BROADWATER'S OFFICE - CONT.

Miriam sits down, slumps in her chair.

BROADWATER  
Can you explain this?

She pushes the latest issue of THE WASHINGTON INSIDER towards Miriam. A headline screams: "PEACE COUNCIL BRIBERY SCANDAL".

MIRIAM  
Oh my god.

Miriam takes the paper, examines the story.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
I... I don't know what to say.

BROADWATER  
I told you there was a spy in our office! And now, look! Look what's happened!

It slowly dawns on Miriam that she's not taking a direct hit on this - just collateral damage.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)  
This is exactly the kind of subversive, right-wing nonsense that could destroy everything.

Broadwater drops the paper into a loud paper shredder.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)  
When I find out who did this. Let's just say there's going to be hell to pay.

Miriam, nervous, takes a deep breath.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)  
In light of this, the President has asked us to purge our office and move the agency under the aegis of the White House.

MIRIAM  
I'm sorry?

BROADWATER

We're being consolidated into a new program. I've been tapped to run it. Effective immediately.

MIRIAM

I suppose you'll be wanting me to pack my bags.

BROADWATER

Yes. Effective immediately.

Miriam starts to get up.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

MIRIAM

You just terminated me.

BROADWATER

I told you to pack your bags. I want you to come with me. I've chosen you, Miriam. To be my sec... personal assistant.

Miriam is flabbergasted.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Close the door.

Miriam does as instructed.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

I was just like you when I started here. Ambitious. Smart. Eager to move ahead.

MIRIAM

You were a secretary?

BROADWATER

No one typed faster. Took better dictation. Had keener steno skills.

MIRIAM

I had no idea.

BROADWATER

But you have one advantage over me.

MIRIAM

What's that?

BROADWATER

To get ahead, you won't have to  
sleep your way to the top.

MIRIAM

What?

Broadwater comes over, sits on the edge of her desk.

BROADWATER

Don't look so surprised. Back in  
the day, I had some game of my own.

Miriam doesn't respond.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

The point is, I want us to be a  
team. You have my back, I have  
yours.

MIRIAM

A team?

BROADWATER

This agency is about world peace  
and promoting democratic ideals.  
Working together, we can effect  
massive change on a global level.  
What do you say?

MIRIAM

Can I have the weekend to think  
about it?

BROADWATER

(miffed)

And while you're mulling it over,  
keep in mind this job offers a  
substantial pay grade bump.

Shell-shocked, Miriam rises.

MIRIAM

Will that be all?

Broadwater hands Miriam a small bottle of perfume.

BROADWATER

I met a woman at the luncheon, a  
friend of yours, Whittle something  
or other.

(MORE)

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

We got to talking, and she asked me to pick up a bottle of perfume at a little shop near my house. See that it gets mailed to her residence.

MIRIAM

That's what she paid you for?

BROADWATER

Excuse me?

MIRIAM

Right away.

Miriam, in a daze, goes to her desk. Her phone is RINGING.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Peace Council.

CASS (O.S.)

It's Cass. I need your help. Can you meet me at the bar?

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - DAY

The place is abuzz with activity. Political banners and miles of red, white and blue tinsel have transformed the dark club into a lively party room. Dozens of workers scurry about, cleaning and prepping.

Cass sits hunched over at the bar, crying, while Miriam listens intently.

CASS

Ever since he got suspended, he's become unbearable!

She downs her drink, refills it.

CASS (CONT'D)

He won't stop drinking, he won't leave the house. All he does is watch soap operas all day.

More sobs. Miriam puts her arm around her friend.

CASS (CONT'D)

I hate friggin soap operas!

Cass gives her a look.

MIRIAM

Why don't you just leave?

CASS

Don't you understand! I love him! I can't desert him in his hour of need.

MIRIAM

I don't know what to tell you, Cass. Sometimes you have to make the hard decisions about love.

Cass' mood sours.

CASS

Like you did? Sleeping with your ex.

MIRIAM

We ended that.

CASS

Just in time for you to get down and dirty with your tabloid king!

MIRIAM

That's over, too.

CASS

So now there's nothing holding you and Heinz from consummating your relationship?

Miriam gasps.

MIRIAM

How do you know about that?

CASS

Jocelyn told me.

MIRIAM

Well she's wrong. Nothing happened between us.

CASS

Sure.

MIRIAM

It's true. I've tried calling Josh to explain, but she won't answer my calls.

Cass downs one more shot, smiles at her friend.

CASS

Don't worry about it. This is Josh we're talking about. She's always got a backup waiting in the wings.

Cass stands up.

CASS (CONT'D)

I gotta run. I told him I was going out for chips and beer and if I don't get back soon, he might do something crazy.

The women hug.

INT./EXT CAB - DAY

Miriam arrives at a busy college campus. She walks amongst the kids, heads for a building marked "POLITICAL SCIENCE".

INT. WHITTLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Holding the bottle of perfume Broadwater gave her, Miriam knocks on a door with a nameplate marked, "PROFESSOR PAM WHITTLE" on it.

A grungy FEMALE STUDENT with dreadlocks answers the door, she holds a box of packing tape in one hand.

MIRIAM

Is Professor Whittle here?

Miriam looks inside the office, it's empty. Only a few moving boxes remain.

FEMALE STUDENT

You just missed her.

MIRIAM

Did she say where she was going?

FEMALE STUDENT

Yeah, man. I think she said the admin building.

EXT. COLLEGE - DAY

Miriam races towards a large ivy-covered building. She spots Whittle exiting.

MIRIAM

Professor! Professor wait!

Miriam jogs over. She leans over to catch her breath.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Here.

She hands the professor the bottle of perfume. Whittle examines it.

WHITTLE

So you got demoted to the mail room, huh?

MIRIAM

Look, I came to apologize. I shouldn't have jumped down your throat like that.

WHITTLE

Hmmpf.

MIRIAM

Look. Let me make it up to you. My friend is having a fund-raiser tonight for mayoral candidate Louis Palmer, I'd love it if you could come. Drinks on me.

Whittle, stone-faced, walks off. Miriam follows.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Don't blow me off.

She gets in front of Whittle, holds out the folded up flyer.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Maybe you could bring some of your students. Let them see political graft in action.

WHITTLE

Can't make it, sorry.

Whittle walks off. Miriam struggles to keep up with her.

MIRIAM

Why not? Why won't you come?

Whittle stops.

WHITTLE

I'm too busy.

MIRIAM

Doing what?

WHITTLE

If you must know. I've quit my job,  
and I'm going on a trip. Leaving  
tonight.

Whittle heads towards the parking lot. She waves at the  
dreadlocked student who was in her office earlier.

Dreadlocks stands by Whittle's beat-up Subaru. Six taped-up  
cartons are piled on street near the car.

MIRIAM

Where are you going?

WHITTLE

As it turns out, I'm going on a  
peace mission to Africa.

Miriam is shocked.

Whittle opens the trunk, starts loading boxes.

MIRIAM

A peace mission? With the Peace  
Council?

WHITTLE

Technically, no. It's part of a new  
pilot program.

MIRIAM

The one being headed by Broadwater?

WHITTLE

I have no idea. After I spoke to  
her at the luncheon, she  
reconsidered my candidacy and  
recommended me for a slot in this  
new program.

MIRIAM

That's... that's great.

WHITTLE

Well. I owe a good part of it to  
you and your doggedness.

She shuts the trunk.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)

Take care of yourself, Miriam.

The Professor reaches over, hugs Miriam goodbye, whispers.

WHITTLE (CONT'D)

... and don't let the bastards get  
you down.

EXT. KRAMMERKELLER - NIGHT

Miriam, now changed into a tiny black dress, walks to the club, she's surprised to see HUNDREDS of clubgoers standing outside, waiting to get in.

Two large spotlights dance in the sky and a BOUNCER stands in front, holds a clipboard.

Miriam walks over to him.

MIRIAM

I'm Miriam Cooper. I'm a guest of  
Jocelyn's.

He looks at his list. Shakes his head.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Are you sure?

BOUNCER

Ma'am, you're gonna have to wait in  
line like everyone else.

Across the street, Miriam notices an over-sized "Nichols,  
Powers and Judd" TOUR BUS pull up and park.

A minute later, a small caravan of black limos pull up and stop in front of the club. A BODYGUARD in a dark suit and glasses opens the door for LOUIS PALMER. The slick politico emerges wearing a dark three-piece suit.

Palmer flashes his pearly white veneers at the crowd, then raises his hand and does a beauty-pageant wave at his CHEERING admirers.

The bodyguard opens the rope, lets Palmer and his thick entourage of BODYGUARDS and ADVISORS pass through.

Miriam taps the bouncer on his shoulder.

MIRIAM

Can you please look again?

BOUNCER

I already told you.

JOCELYN (O.S.)

It's okay. She's on the list.

Miriam looks over. Jocelyn's there. She's decked out in a sexy red dress and sky-high heels.

With a grunt, the bouncer unlocks the velvet rope, lets Miriam pass.

Miriam hugs her friend.

MIRIAM

Josh, I'm so sorry. Nothing happened between me and Heinz - you've got to believe me!

JOCELYN

I do. I do believe you.

Miriam looks over to the tour bus.

MIRIAM

I can't believe you actually made this happen!

JOCELYN

You should have more faith in your friends. Look, I have to go, I told Nick I'd help him 'get in the mood' before his show.

MIRIAM

But what about Heinz?

JOCELYN

What about Heinz?

MIRIAM

How can you do this to him?

JOCELYN

Look, Miriam. I love you, but you have to face facts.

MIRIAM

What are you talking about?

JOCELYN

Heinz is a great kid. But the only reason I stayed with him for so long was because he's loaded.

MIRIAM

He's loaded?

JOCELYN

Well, duh. His parents own like half of Alexandria. This bar is just one of his dumb hobbies. Like cooking and playing drums. He can't be serious about anything.

MIRIAM

He seemed pretty serious about you.

JOCELYN

Whatever. Nick's way richer. And he's famous. So me and Heinz, we're history.

Jocelyn hikes up her skirt and flips her hair.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

How do I look?

MIRIAM

Like you always do.

Jocelyn takes this as a compliment and smiles at Miriam.

JOCELYN

Thanks.

She confidently strides across the street towards the bus.

She's just about to knock on the door when it swings open. One by one, a dozen skanky GROUPIES exit the bus.

The last GROUPIE hands Jocelyn her bra.

GROUPIE

Be a peach and give this to Nick.  
Tell him it's a souvenir from  
Candy.

Jocelyn screws up her face, enters the tour bus.

A moment later, Nick storms out of the bus holding a pair of drum sticks in one hand, a leather motorcycle jacket slung over his shoulder.

He barrels across the street, hands Miriam his drumsticks.

NICK

Here you go love, won't be needing these.

He jumps in a cab, it heads off.

JOCELYN  
And good riddance!

She takes off her shoe - tosses it at the back of the cab as it drives away.

Still fuming, Jocelyn hobbles inside the club.

BOUNCER  
Damn!

Miriam retrieves Jocelyn's shoe from the street.

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - NIGHT

The place is packed. Red, white and blue decorations adorn every inch of space, a large net filled with hundreds of balloons hangs from the ceiling, paper placemats printed with the image from the flyer line the tables and the bar.

Miriam searches the crowded space for Jocelyn, but can't see past the sea of people mobbing the place.

She bumps into a TALL WOMAN wearing DARK GLASSES and a large trenchcoat.

MIRIAM  
Sorry.

The woman doesn't move, Miriam's tries to get past her.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Excuse me!

CHANTING begins.

CLUB GOERS  
We want music! We want music!

Jocelyn rushes over to Miriam, grabs her by the shoulders.

JOCELYN  
You've got to help me! Nick's taken off and his idiot bandmates won't go on without him.

MIRIAM  
What do want me to do?

JOCELYN  
I don't know!

Suddenly, Councilman Palmer walks over.

PALMER  
Are you Jocelyn?

JOCELYN  
Yes.

PALMER  
I only agreed to show up at this  
shithole because Nichols, Powers  
and Judd were on the bill. So where  
the hell are they?

Jocelyn, panicked, doesn't answer.

PALMER (CONT'D)  
If you don't get that band up there  
in five minutes, by midnight, I'll  
have this place condemned, boarded  
up, and ready for the wrecking  
ball.

Miriam jumps in.

MIRIAM  
Don't worry about it.

Palmer turns to Miriam.

PALMER  
And who are you?

MIRIAM  
I'm... I'm Jocelyn's...I mean, Ms.  
Jones' assistant. Don't worry,  
we've got everything under control.

Jocelyn shoots her a look: *We do?*

PALMER  
You better.

CROWD  
We want N-P-J! We want N-P-J!

Miriam runs off. Palmer crosses his arms and stares at  
Jocelyn, who returns his gaze with a feeble smile.

Miriam searches the club. Whoever she's searching for - she  
can't find him.

INT. HEINZ'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Miriam walks in, Heinz is on his couch, staring at the ceiling, an empty bottle of Jack Daniels is in his hand. Beyond the door, VIBRATIONS of MUFFLED MUSIC reverberate.

He smiles drunkenly at her.

MIRIAM

What are you doing in here?

HEINZ

Hiding.

MIRIAM

From who?

HEINZ

Everyone.

She pulls him up, sits down next to him.

HEINZ (CONT'D)

Did you see what they did to my place? It looks like the Kennedy Center in there.

MIRIAM

That's a bit of a stretch.

CROWD (O.S.)

We want N-P-J! We want N-P-J!

HEINZ

What's going on out there?

MIRIAM

Everything's falling apart.

HEINZ

Let me guess. Nick never showed.

MIRIAM

He showed. But they had a fight and he split.

HEINZ

Groupies?

She nods.

HEINZ (CONT'D)

It figures.

MIRIAM

Look. I know you and Josh aren't on  
the best of terms. But you can't  
let this night be a total disaster.

He turns away, stews.

HEINZ

Why can't I?

MIRIAM

Because that's not who you are.

HEINZ

What do you want me to do about it?

She looks over to his abandoned drum set.

CUT TO:

A GRUNGY ANNOUNCER stands on a darkened stage.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, Nichols,  
Powers and Judd!

The lights flash on, the heavily made-up lead singer, VINCE  
'MOTOR' NYLES takes the stage. The rest of the stage is dark.

MOTOR

Let's hear it for Councilman  
Palmer, our next mayor!

The room bursts into APPLAUSE as a spotlight finds Palmer.  
The politician gives the crowd the double-thumbs up. He winks  
at Jocelyn and Miriam.

Jocelyn smiles back, her confidence has returned - in spades.  
She puts her hands on her hips, gives the politico a come-  
hither look - he raises an eyebrow in her direction.

MOTOR (CONT'D)

We have a special treat for you  
folks tonight. Our founding member,  
the best damn drum smasher we've  
ever had, is here tonight. Man oh  
man, is he gonna blow you away...

A spotlight zooms down on Heinz -- he's seated behind the  
drums.

MOTOR (CONT'D)

Heinz Krammerkeller!

The crowd goes WILD. Heinz locks eyes with Miriam, grins. He beats out a show-off riff on the skins -- more CHEERS follow.

More lights flash on. The band -- an old-school HAIR BAND -- starts SHREDDING IT. Palmer keeps a plastic-grin affixed to his face as the loud GUITAR RIFFS and HEAVY METAL MUSIC fill every square inch of the club.

LATER

The crowd is hushed as Palmer, now center stage, holds a microphone in his hand, wraps up his speech.

PALMER

... and in closing, I'd like to thank everyone at the Krammerkeller for putting this little shindig together and helping to support my campaign. Together, we will clean up this city!

WILD APPLAUSE breaks out as the ceiling net drops, hundreds of red, white and blue balloons tumble from the sky.

THE NIGHT WINDS ON

A DJ spins tunes on the stage, partiers DANCE. The place is still packed ass-to-elbow.

Miriam watches from the bar as Jocelyn and Palmer, looking cozy, are huddled at a private table in the back.

MIRIAM

You were amazing tonight.

HEINZ

I owe it all to you.

She smiles. Suddenly, she feels a tap on her shoulder.

She turns around.

MIRIAM

Jeff?

Jeff wobbles, smiles drunkenly at her.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

JEFF

I need to talk to you.

MIRIAM  
I'm kind of busy.

JEFF  
I've left her.

MIRIAM  
What?

He lifts up his hand, there's no wedding band on it.

JEFF  
See? I'm a free man now.

MIRIAM  
Are you drunk?

She leans in, takes a whiff.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Whoa!

JEFF  
I'm not in love with her. I'm in  
love with-

She puts her fingers to his lips.

MIRIAM  
You need coffee.

She turns to Heinz, signaling him to get some java. Heinz  
heads towards the coffee pot.

Jeff sees Calvin.

JEFF  
It's because of him, isn't it?

MIRIAM  
Who?

Miriam turns, her eyes pop open as Calvin approaches.

Beyond disgusted, she swivels away.

CALVIN  
Hear me out! I was wrong. I care  
about you, Miriam. I have feelings  
for you!

MIRIAM

Leave me alone, Calvin. Whatever we had -- and I don't even know what that was -- it's over.

CALVIN

Please! Don't be like this!

MIRIAM

We're done.

JEFF

You heard the lady. Now beat it.

Calvin blows Jeff off, moves towards Miriam.

CALVIN

Miriam!

JEFF

Look, pal, we're in the middle of a conversation here.

CALVIN

Who the hell are you?

JEFF

I'm her husband.

MIRIAM

Ex-husband.

JEFF

You heard her. Get lost.

CALVIN

Don't tell me what to do, Poindexter.

Calvin reaches forward and shoves Jeff.

JEFF

Back off bozo.

Jeff shoves Calvin back.

The two men get into a shoving match.

MIRIAM

Guys, cut it out.

Their beef turns physical, soon they're throwing punches, rolling on the floor, beating the crap out of each other.

Jocelyn grabs Miriam's arm and whispers in her ear.

JOCELYN  
You always did have a way with men,  
Miriam.

Jocelyn sparks up a joint.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
This is gonna be fun.

BOOM! Suddenly, a GUN BLAST explodes!

The woman in the cape and glasses throws her sunglasses down and whips off her wig. Jeff gasps.

CELIA  
You bitch!

Using both hands, Celia holds her weapon straight out - aims it dead on at Miriam.

CELIA (CONT'D)  
You thought you could steal my  
husband!

Miriam stands her ground.

MIRIAM  
I did NOT steal your husband!

CELIA  
Right. You just borrowed him for  
Monday night football.

Miriam backs up to the bar.

CELIA (CONT'D)  
I'll be damned if I let some nobody  
of a secretary ruin my life.

Reaching behind her, Miriam's fingers stretch towards an empty bar tray. She's just inches from grabbing it.

MIRIAM  
News flash, secretaries are what  
make this world go round!

SUCCESS! Miriam grabs the tray, flings it like a giant frisbee at Celia -- who goes down!

Her gun BLASTS again.

MAYHEM ERUPTS!

CALVIN  
HELP! I'VE BEEN SHOT!

Calvin is on the ground, bleeding.

The crowd flees in a mad panic.

Within seconds, COPS storm the place.

JOCELYN  
Here, hold this.

She gives Miriam her joint, runs off. Miriam, still dazed, absentmindedly takes the simmering joint.

The COP notices it in her hand.

COP  
Hey you, what's that?

Miriam looks at her hand. *Uh-oh.*

Jocelyn tries to run out the back door. Another COP grabs her.

COP NUMBER 2  
What's the rush...

He reaches in her pocket, pulls out a bag of weed.

JOCELYN  
Shit.

EXT. KRAMMERKELLER - NIGHT

As the cops drag Jocelyn and Miriam, now handcuffed together, past the front door, an EMT CREW rushes out - they've got Calvin on a gurney.

He babbles on deliriously.

CALVIN  
It's a conspiracy! They're out to get me!

As the cops usher them towards a waiting cherry-top, Miriam watches as Palmer's bodyguards quickly escort him across the street towards his waiting limo.

But just then, an OUT OF CONTROL Mercedes careens down the street...

CRUNCH!

The car nails Palmer!

The runaway Mercedes swerves and hits a nearby brick wall. Inside the vehicle, two airbags deploy.

Cops rush towards the smoking car, pull the driver from the wreckage: It's Larry. Next to him in the passenger seat, Cass.

SUPER: THE NEXT MORNING

INT. JAIL CELL - MORNING

Squashed together on the cell's tiny bench, Cass, Miriam and Jocelyn are all fast asleep. A FEMALE COP comes over.

FEMALE COP  
Wakey, wakey.

The three women rouse.

FEMALE COP (CONT'D)  
You made bail.

EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

The three women squint at the bright light of the sun as they emerge from the station house. Jocelyn hobbles on one shoe.

A large limo is waiting for them on the street.

A door opens, and to their collective surprise, Heinz exits.

Jocelyn angrily marches up to him.

JOCELYN  
This is all your fault!

She slaps him on the cheek, grabs Cass' arm, turns.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
(to Miriam)  
You coming?

Miriam shakes her head.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
Fine! Let's go, Cass.

Offering an apologetic shrug, Cass heads off.

CASS  
(to Miriam)  
I'll call you.

Miriam and Heinz watch them go.

HEINZ  
What's with Josh?

MIRIAM  
She's in a bad mood. Got her period  
this morning.

He acknowledges this with a slight nod.

HEINZ  
So I guess it's okay if I do this,  
then.

MIRIAM  
Do what?

Heinz takes Miriam in his arms and kisses her. She kisses him  
back, things get hot and heavy. The LIMO DRIVER clears his  
throat - they break away.

The driver opens the door to the limo. Miriam, looks at Heinz  
with surprise.

HEINZ  
I figured you might want to leave  
in style.

MIRIAM  
This is your car?

HEINZ  
My family's. They let me borrow it  
for special occasions. Weddings.  
Bar Mitvahs. Jail bail-outs.

MIRIAM  
You bailed us out?

HEINZ  
You're not gonna skip town are you?

She's about to get in the car when something RINGS.

HEINZ (CONT'D)  
Miriam, wait. Here.

He digs in his pocket, produces a brick-shaped device.

HEINZ (CONT'D)  
Go on, take it.

She gingerly picks up the odd-looking appliance.

HEINZ (CONT'D)  
It's a phone, Miriam.

He presses a button, she slowly lifts the device to her ear.

MIRIAM  
Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

GLORIA STARK, 60's, who wears bifocals on the top of her head and is surrounded by a mountain of paperwork and WASHINGTON POST newspapers, barks into the phone.

GLORIA  
Is this Miriam Cooper?

MIRIAM  
It is. Who is this?

GLORIA  
Gloria Stark, I'm managing editor here at the Post.

Miriam's eyes widen in surprise. Gloria holds up a document.

GLORIA (CONT'D)  
I received a copy of your investigative report on the Peace Council.

Alarm flashes in Miriam's eyes.

MIRIAM  
What?

GLORIA  
I'll give you this, it's way better than the typical unsolicited shit I get around here.

MIRIAM  
How did you get it, anyway?

GLORIA  
Let's just say a friend sent it in.

MIRIAM

A friend?

Miriam, confused, looks at Heinz, he smiles mysteriously at her. She looks at him quizzically.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter because you can't publish it. It's not accurate.

GLORIA

Don't worry. We're not going to. Unsubstantiated claims against the government only means the whole staff gets audited, again. But, I like your style, kid.

MIRIAM

Really?

GLORIA

We could use someone with your talents here at the Post.

A grin explodes across Miriam's face.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Can you come in for an interview today?

MIRIAM

As a secretary?

ONE MONTH LATER

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

Miriam is at her new desk, answering phones, taking notes.

A brass nameplate on the desk reads: "MIRIAM COOPER, INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER". Besides the nameplate, there is a framed, smiling picture of her and Heinz.

A MAILROOM CLERK pushing a cart drops a copy of THE WASHINGTON INSIDER on her desk.

CLERK

For your birdcage.

She lifts the paper. Calvin is on the cover, a headline screams: "THE GOVERNMENT TRIED TO ASSASSINATE ME, BUT I SURVIVED!"

Miriam drops the paper in the trash.

EXT. DOWNTOWN AREA - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Miriam strides confidently down the street. There's a newfound spring in her step, all eyes fall on her as she moseys along. No doubt about it, she owns this town.

INT. KRAMMERKELLER - DAY

The place has been renovated to resemble the sunny, corporate interior of an Applebee's. It's crowded with diners.

Miriam enters, kisses Heinz, who is behind the bar, then waves hello to Cass and Jocelyn, who are seated at a table with salads and wine glasses in front of them.

MIRIAM

I still can't get used to how  
bright it is in here.

JOCELYN

I miss the old days. When you could  
have a smoke, a beer, and a quickie  
in the bathroom.

An OLD LADY dining nearby hears this, gives Jocelyn a dirty look.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

(to the old lady)  
Like you never did.

CASS

Hope you don't mind that we  
ordered.

MIRIAM

No, I'm starved.

Miriam sits down.

JOCELYN

Okay, about the bridemaids'  
dresses. First off, way too long. I  
don't do below the knee. Secondly,  
lavender? Really?

CASS

Leave her alone, Josh. It's her  
wedding.

JOCELYN

Whatever. Palmer says he's going to try his hardest to fit both the ceremony and the reception into his schedule.

Miriam and Cass give each other a *here-she-goes-again* look, Jocelyn ignores them, rambles on.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

Well he is a very busy man. Being Mayor and all. By the way, have you heard? We're moving in together.

MIRIAM

Of course I've heard. You two can't stay out of the tabloids for five minutes.

CASS

Well, I have some exciting news.

JOCELYN

Let me guess. You've bought a pair of heels and some mascara.

CASS

(ignoring her)

Puck's show is going national! And I've been asked to go with them.

MIRIAM

No way! That's awesome.

CASS

We're gonna be on an actual network! One of the big four!

MIRIAM

That's so great!

Heinz comes over.

HEINZ

How's lunch?

MIRIAM

Wonderful as always.

He bends over and gives Miriam a kiss.

HEINZ

Don't you have an appointment?

MIRIAM

Oh my goodness. The wedding planner  
at The Palms! I almost forgot!

EXT. THE PALMS - DAY

Miriam is about to enter the restaurant when a gaggle of  
SECRET SERVICE agents emerge. They momentarily commandeer the  
street, hold the door, clear the sidewalk.

A long black limo covered in tiny American flags drives up.  
An AGENT opens the door, holds it as, THE PRESIDENT, walking  
with Broadwater at his side, exit.

Broadwater, noticing Miriam, stops. She turns to the  
President.

BROADWATER

I'll just be a second.

He gets in the car, shuts the door. It idles by the curb.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Miriam, what a pleasant surprise.

MIRIAM

Is he actually waiting for you?

Broadwater smiles mysteriously.

BROADWATER

He doesn't mind. We're old friends.

Miriam nods knowingly.

MIRIAM

Old *friends*.

BROADWATER

I hear you're getting married.

MIRIAM

In June.

BROADWATER

Congratulations. I've also heard  
you're doing a bang up job at the  
Post. One of their most promising  
young reporters, I'm told.

Miriam's caught off guard.

MIRIAM

Who told you that?

BROADWATER

Gloria Stack and I are old friends.  
We were college roommates,  
actually.

MIRIAM

What?

BROADWATER

You didn't really think you could  
do a hatchet job on the Peace  
Council, and it wouldn't get back  
to me, did you?

MIRIAM

I...

BROADWATER

My dear girl. When I told you I saw  
much of myself in you, I wasn't  
joking. You're every bit as smart  
and ruthless as I am. I've always  
liked that about you.

Miriam sucks in air, she can't respond.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, you're also a bit  
too smart for your own good. If I  
hadn't leaked that ridiculous story  
about rampant bribery at the  
council to Calvin, you might have  
single-handedly destroyed sixty  
years of covert operations with  
your nosing around.

MIRIAM

You're the source? His spy?

BROADWATER

It's called the distraction  
technique. It's how we throw the  
dogs off the real scent.

MIRIAM

But Whittle paid you? I saw her.

BROADWATER

You honestly didn't think I  
couldn't see those K-mart shoes of  
yours hiding in the stall?

Miriam is shocked.

MIRIAM

You knew I was there?

BROADWATER

Of course. And, like I told you,  
she paid me for a bottle of  
perfume.

MIRIAM

But...

BROADWATER

But because of your meddling, I had  
to have her shipped off to go dig  
wells in some god-forsaken country.

Broadwater leans in, narrows her beady eyes.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

Quite frankly, she's lucky to be  
alive.

MIRIAM

Why are you telling me all this?

BROADWATER

Because, despite what you may have  
thought, I've always liked you.

Broadwater drops her voice.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

I wanted to make sure you  
understood that I genuinely wish  
you a long and exciting career, and  
a happy life. But from this point  
on, the Peace Council is off  
limits. You see, it's one of the  
President's pet projects.

Broadwater moves in, hugs Miriam, whispers in her ear.

BROADWATER (CONT'D)

And trust me, you don't want to get  
on his bad side.

Flashing a tepid smile, Broadwater breaks away. She smooths  
her skirt, gets into the President's limo.

Stunned, Miriam stands frozen in the street. She watches as  
the limo pulls out, drives off, and eventually disappears.

FADE TO BLACK.