

THE POLITICIAN

“NEW YORK STATE OF MIND”

201

WRITTEN BY
Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk
and Ian Brennan

CLOSE ON FEET, pacing. Reveal PAYTON wearing a hole in the carpet as JAMES, MCAFEE and SKYE sit on the edge of their chairs, mid-argument, ASTRID sitting there, ignored. Fast:

JAMES

When we asked, "Do you believe career politicians like Dede Standish have done a good job representing the 27th district in Albany", it's 33 percent yes, 38 no, 14 undecided, 15 no opinion...

MCAFEE

That's very good --

JAMES

Meaning bad for her. Good for us.

PAYTON

Yeah, gathered that. Totally didn't need to clarify --

JAMES

But when we asked, "Do you believe *Payton Hobart* has the experience to represent the 27th District in Albany", that drops down to 21 percent yes, 44 no, 22 undecided, 13 no opinion...

SKYE

Okay but that's a very different question --

MCAFEE

Hold on, those are the same thing -- 'Undecided' and 'no opinion'.

JAMES

No they're not.

PAYTON

Wait, she's right. Yes they are.

JAMES

'No opinion' means I don't have an opinion. 'Undecided' means I *have* an opinion, I just don't know what it is yet.

MCAFEE

Which means you don't have it.

(CONTINUED)

1

JAMES

YET. But I might later. Am I the only person who understands this?

PAYTON

Just ask 'yes', 'no' and 'I don't know'.

JAMES

'I DON'T KNOW' IS A WHOLE OTHER THING.

PAYTON

GODDAMMIT!!!

EXPLODING, Payton KICKS the water cooler to the ground -- water GLUGGING out of the container. LIVID:

PAYTON (CONT'D)

I've glad-handed the garment workers union, the garbage collectors, both teacher's unions, the liberal jews on the west side and the geriatric's in their rent controlled apartments on the east side. I've done so much glad handing that half of our campaign budget is being spent on hand sanitizer!

SKYE

Are we just going to let that all spill out?

PAYTON

Why are we down ten-something points with a month to go?!

JAMES

Because Dede Standish has thirty years of name recognition...

PAYTON

NO, it's my mother. Her campaign is *completely* overshadowing mine...

ASTRID

It's all about *turnout*.

All heads turn to Astrid as if they were all just at a party and she just scratched everyone's favorite LP of people arguing about polling data.

(CONTINUED)

ASTRID (CONT'D)

Turnout in elections for New York State Senate can be as low as 2%. As few as 6,000 people will even cast ballots. This race could be decided by a hundred votes. You can win this if you just go after those people who answered the poll with 'I don't know.' And we know who they are -- we have their *phone numbers...*

JAMES

There weren't any 'I don't knows.'

PAYTON

RIGHT BECAUSE YOU ASKED THEM THEIR OPINION IN A REALLY CONFUSING WAY!!

ASTRID

(fed up, standing)
Why don't I go get us coffees?

JAMES

Thank you.
(pointed, to Payton)
The reason why you are ten-something points down and not ten-something points ahead is because you have a nuclear bomb with the word "throuple" written on the side of it and YOU refuse to drop it, okay?

PAYTON

Well, that's the thing about nuclear bombs, James. Not really a good look for the party who drops them. We talked about this -- I won't run a dirty campaign attacking my opponent's personal life. I am the *ideas* candidate.

JAMES

Well, then, you should start wrapping your head around the *idea* that you're going to lose.

ASTRID

What if instead of getting coffees I just see you all tomorrow?

No one is listening. Fed up, Astrid is out the door.

2 EXT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- DAY 2

Astrid steps out into the street. She walks out of frame and we FIND HADASSAH, in sunglasses, click-clicking after her.

3 EXT. SOHO -- PRINCE STREET STATION -- DAY 3

Sensing she's being followed, Astrid stops and turns. RACK TO Hadassah stopping and pretending to window shop. Astrid goes down into the subway.

4 INT. SOULCYCLE -- DAY 4

Astrid cycles her heart out to terrible music, mid-class.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S.)
Okay now MODIFY!

The whole class starts doing the same movements. Hearing huffing behind her, she looks over her shoulder to find Hadassah, two rows back. Odd.

5 INT. STORE -- DAY 5

Astrid peruses a basket of pears. She turns to see Hadassah squeezing satsumas.

ASTRID
I know who you are. Why are you following me?

HADASSAH
Can I interest you in lunch?

6 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- RECEPTION -- DAY 6 *

An out-of-focus figure with a walker steps out of the elevator and through the glass doors. Reveal ANDREW.

ANDREW
I wanna speak to Payton Hobart. And don't lie and say he's not here. Tell him it's Andrew.

INTERN
Um. Okay. Andrew...?

ANDREW
No last name. Just Andrew. Like Cher.

7 INT. SOHO RESTAURANT -- DAY 7

Astrid sits mid-conversation across from Hadassah, who sips a glass of Chardonnay.

ASTRID

-- whenever I speak they just don't hear me. And not like it's an accident, they're *actively* not listening...

HADASSAH

I've been dealing with that my whole life. It's called being a *woman*...

8 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- WAR ROOM -- DAY 8 *

Close on Andrew's face.

ANDREW

I hate math. And I spent years at UC Santa Cruz studying Number Theory. You know why? Because I'm *obsessed* with Infinity.

Reveal Payton, McAfee and James.

PAYTON

Do you mean...the *person*?

ANDREW

Yes, dumbass. I can't stop thinking about her. I jerk it all the time and it doesn't help. I've tried everything. Empty affairs, lotta of older women. Effed some guys, too. Some BDSM shit. Nothing works. I'm in love with her.

PAYTON

So -- why are you *here*?

ANDREW

I came to work for you, *asshat*, what do you think? You're campaign's in the toilet.

9 INT. SOHO RESTAURANT -- DAY 9

HADASSAH

Listen. I'll just come right out and ask.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HADASSAH (CONT'D)

Why don't you come and work for us?
But not *officially* work for us...

10 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- WAR ROOM -- DAY 10 *

JAMES

And how are you gonna help?

ANDREW

How thick are you assholes, anyway?
I'm gonna get myself hired by the
Standish campaign. What you need
is --

11 INT. SOHO RESTAURANT -- DAY 11

ASTRID

-- a mole...

(then)

Why would you bother? You're ten
points ahead.

HADASSAH

Shit like this is how you *stay* ten
points ahead.

12 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- WAR ROOM -- DAY 12 *

JAMES

How are you gonna get hired?
They'll know we went to high school
together...

ANDREW

So what? I'll tell them you suck
and I hate you because I do.

13 INT. SOHO RESTAURANT -- DAY 13

ASTRID

But why would I do that?

HADASSAH

All the reasons you just described.
Your talents are being totally
ignored by a strident young
megalomaniac who doesn't know what
he's doing --

14 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- WAR ROOM -- DAY 14 *

MCAFEE

Okay but *why* would you do that?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

AGAIN, Infinity won't return my calls and her texts are like, "I'm really busy" and "please stop texting me it's never gonna happen." All these mixed messages...

INT. SOHO RESTAURANT -- DAY

ASTRID

And what exactly are my *talents*, as you see them?

HADASSAH

Well, by all accounts, you ran a very effective campaign against him. You were his opponent before we were...

ASTRID

I'm surprised you know about that.

HADASSAH

I'm surprised you're surprised. It's my job to know that. I flew your old Principal into town. She had a lot to say about Payton Hobart. None of it good.

Hadassah leans in.

HADASSAH (CONT'D)

I'm curious about your relationship with your father, Astrid...

ASTRID

(suddenly anxious)
Why?

HADASSAH

I mean, I know he's in prison -- but what about *before* that? Was he an egoist? A little cruel?

ASTRID

That's none of your business.

HADASSAH

He was a bit of a megalomaniac, wasn't he? He'd ignore you, wouldn't he? That's how he'd pull you in -- so you'd feel grateful when he showed you attention...

15

ASTRID

I'm not going to sit here and
listen to this...

HADASSAH

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? A
sociopath who's only in it for
himself, who makes you feel exactly
as small as you believe yourself to
be? Funny how we do that, isn't it?

Astrid stands to leave.

ASTRID

I'm telling them you approached me.
And *don't follow me again.*

HADASSAH

You won that election, Astrid.

Astrid stops dead in her tracks. She turns, gobsmacked.

HADASSAH (CONT'D)

Your Principal told me. They
counted the ballots and you won.

Astrid stumbles back to the table and sits.

HADASSAH (CONT'D)

That should be *you* running against
us. I mean, no it shouldn't, it's
an *INSANE* thing to do. But still.
You were robbed...

16

INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- WAR ROOM -- DAY

16

*

PAYTON

So let me get this straight. Your
price for helping us is setting you
up with Infinity?

ANDREW

That's my price, dick.

Payton considers this.

17

INT. SOHO RESTAURANT -- DAY

17

Astrid leans in, vibrating with rage.

ASTRID

Did he know? Did Payton know that
he lost?

18 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- WAR ROOM -- DAY 18 *
Payton shakes away the thought, then storms out.

PAYTON
No way. That's not how we're doing
this.

19 INT. SOHO RESTAURANT -- DAY 19

HADASSAH
Yes, Astrid. He did.

Astrid sits back, looking out the window, blood at full boil.

20 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- WAR ROOM -- DAY 20 *
Payton gone, McAfee and James share a look, then:

MCAFEE
It's a deal.

21 INT. SOHO RESTAURANT -- DAY 21

Astrid looks back to Hadassah.

ASTRID
I'll think about it.

SMASH TO TITLES.

22 INT. 92ND ST Y -- DAY 22

DEDE and Payton sit in overstuffed chairs onstage as ELVIS MITCHELL moderates a discussion before an audience -- Hadassah in the wings. ALICE, McAfee and James in the audience... * *

DEDE
-- so in a way, it's *refreshing* to see an independent candidate like Mr. Hobart running. And no matter what the polls say, he should stay in this race to the end. I think history has shown, single-issue candidates are good for democracy... *

PAYTON
Wasn't this supposed to be a *civil* conversation, Elvis? Because I'm *hardly* a one-issue candidate -- *

(CONTINUED)

DEDE

Well, if I were to be *uncivil*, I'd mention how I'm not even sure you're qualified to be *in* this race. You enrolled at NYU, what? 3 years ago...?

PAYTON

Well, Senator, if you bothered to read my election filing, you'd know that I've actually been a legal resident of New York since age 14.

DEDE

And how did you manage that?

Payton swallows. He just fell into her trap.

PAYTON

Well. My father's LLC was headquartered in New York, and my family's owned a home in Montauk for generations. As a matter of fact, I got a New York State *driver's license* the summer I turned 16...

DEDE

A driver's license you then took back to your high school in Santa Barbara. Sounds like a *real* New Yorker to me.

A few coos from the audience register the brilliant right hook to his jaw. Hadassah is almost levitating with joy.

ELVIS MITCHELL

We have five minutes left. Payton, are you a single-issue candidate?

*

PAYTON

Of course not. And the idea that Senator Standish would characterize a platform centered around revitalizing mass transit, converting to an all-electric Uber and taxi fleet, making green energy this city's *highest* priority by making New York City carbon neutral in four years -- to suggest that's some kind of out-of-left-field-pie-in-the-sky pipe dream?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAYTON (CONT'D)

It just shows how out of touch she is and underlines the need for a new generation of leaders who, forgive me, aren't going to be dead in 20 years, but *living* in the midst of a climate catastrophe that threatens *all* of civilization as we know it. It's *young people* -- people who've never cast a ballot before -- who *KNOW* this is the biggest threat we face as a species and who *KNOW* we have the solutions to act *now*.

DEDE

Trillions of dollars.

ELVIS MITCHELL

Say that again, Senator, not sure everyone heard --

*

DEDE

The plan you just outlined, Payton? Doing the quick math in my head? That's what it'll cost. That's trillions with a 't'. Thousands of billions of dollars. So that's great lip service, Payton -- I'm sure it'd play great out in California on your mother's campaign, but this is New York and we know better.

PAYTON

Well -- for a start, we should be raising taxes on the top 1% --

DEDE

Like people with mansions in Montauk? Sure. These are not serious proposals, Payton. And if you'd done *YOUR* research, you'd know I just co-sponsored a bill that passed into law mandating 2.4 gigawatts of offshore wind power by 2030 and no cost solar energy for 10,000 low income residents, all *without* raising taxes on a *single* resident of this state. Those are *real* results from a *real* candidate, who's been working her ass off for the last 35 years and doesn't have the time for stunt candidacies launched by unserious people.

(CONTINUED)

Applause as we push in on Payton, knowing he's been spanked:

23 INT. SERENDIPITY -- DAY 23

Payton and Alice with Two GIANT ICE CREAM SUNDAES.

PAYTON

I should have brought up the
throuple. It was right there on the
tip of my tongue.

ALICE

I'm glad you took the high road.
Now eat your sundae. The only thing
more depressing than a hopeless
politician is a melted ice cream
sundae.

PAYTON

I'm not four years old. Ice cream
won't solve my problems.

ALICE

(placing items on table)

I know. Which is why I also brought
you marijuana gummies, this
miniature margarita kit and I'm
wearing very provocative
undergarments if you think sex is
what it's going to take to relax
you.

PAYTON

You're so good to me.

ALICE

I love you. I didn't run out on my
wedding just to be with you for the
good times. For better or worse, in
sickness and in health and all of
that.

She smiles. Subtly hinting at something.

PAYTON

I know you've been anxious for me
to propose.

ALICE

The last thing I want to be is a
distraction.

(CONTINUED)

PAYTON

You're the opposite of that.
Without you I'm like a man without
his glasses. You put my whole world
in focus -- and we are going to get
married. As soon as this campaign
is over. Assuming you still want to
marry a loser.

ALICE

Stop that right now. And stop
listening to James and McAfee and
their poll tested ideas. I've been
doing some of my own polling, your
climate change ideas really
resonate with new voters. Young
voters. They're the key.

PAYTON

They're a mirage. The white whale
of politics. Campaigns chase them
but the stats don't lie -- young
people don't vote. They don't know
how to register, they move, they
get distracted. Twenty percent of
eligible voters from 18-25 vote.
They get all fired up about guns
and climate change and economic
inequality but then sit around
drinking lattes on Wednesday
morning and say "oh, was the
election yesterday?"

ALICE

Stop making things complicated. One
issue -- the climate. Dede and her
generation are destroying it. You
want to save it. Hit it hard over
and over. That's how you're going
to win.

He takes her hands.

PAYTON

You are so smart and I'm so in love
with you. But I know what I have to
do to win this race -- go to LA and
get my mom to drop out of hers.

GEORGINA on the deck. In CHIC but RUGGED MARITIME GEAR.

24

PAYTON (V.O.)

My mother returned from Bhutan with a new sense of purpose. She was penniless after the divorce but found a renewed purpose as the top fundraiser and de facto leader of a program called Oceana 2.

A SCIENTIST walks up next to her. Goes over CHARTS on a CLIPBOARD. Another CREWMAN to her left shows her a map. She points to different places on the map and charts. Taking charge. We hear the SOUND OF DOLPHINS chattering, drawing Georgina's immediate attention.

25

INT. OPERATING ROOM -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

25

A DOLPHIN, ANESTHETIZED on the OPERATING TABLE. Georgina is scrubbed in with a team of VETS and NURSES. She strokes the Dolphin's head.

PAYTON (V.O.)

Their mission is to catch dolphins one by one and carefully operate to remove plastics from their digestive tracts.

A HUGE CHUNK of debris is removed and plunked on a tray. PAN up to reveal INFINITY standing over the PLASTIC BLOB.

PAYTON (V.O.)

My mom found out about Oceana 2 from Infinity.

Infinity takes the CHUNK of DEBRIS. Places it in a BAG.

26

INT. ART STUDIO -- DAY

26

Infinity creates a SCULPTURE using the PLASTIC DEBRIS.

PAYTON (V.O.)

Infinity had become quietly passionate about the environment during her book tour. She even considered changing her last name to Degrees to bring attention to the ever warming climate.

Infinity finishes. It's terrible but she's very proud.

(CONTINUED)

26

PAYTON (V.O.)

Her and my mom had been Instagram buddies for a couple of years so when my mom was looking for a way to get involved with fighting climate change, Infinity was happy to make all of the necessary introductions.

27

INT. DOUBLE FLANNEL RANCH -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

27

A very FANCY GAME OF THRONES FINALE VIEWING PARTY. Movie stars and the uber rich gather to watch the final episode.

PAYTON (V.O.)

It was in her capacity as fundraiser that she found herself at billionaire Allison Mendelson's Malibu mansion for a Game of Thrones finale viewing party. Allison was a huge Game of Thrones fan. Her opinion of the final episodes was less than enthusiastic.

We see ALLISON SCREAM AT THE SCREEN like a toddler and STORM out of the SCREENING ROOM. Georgina watches her. Follows.

28

EXT. DOUBLE FLANNEL RACH -- NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

28

Georgina finds Allison, alone. FURIOUS.

ALLISON

(venting)
Bran? Bran???

GEORGINA

He does give Westeros the best chance for peace -- and maybe he can find that dragon.

ALLISON

He shouldn't have to find the dragon! Khalisi should be riding the dragon bringing peace and freedom to the seven kingdoms with her beautiful sailor wife from the Iron Isles! Do you know why she should be? Because she's not a bad guy! She's never been a bad guy! She is the breaker of goddamn chains!

(CONTINUED)

GEORGINA

She did burn the Tarleys alive. And a bunch of other people. And she kind of liked it. Oh, and she crucified hundreds, locked a couple in a safe to starve to death. She watched her brother's head get melted and didn't really care. Sounds kind of bad to me.

ALLISON

(calming down)

It's a misogynistic conspiracy! The creators hate women!

GEORGINA

Then how do you explain Sansa?

A beat. Allison starts to really calm down. Georgina has broken the fever of her rage. Then, sad --

ALLISON

I just want it to be the way I want it to be.

Georgina gives her a sympathetic look. Poor thing. Allison looks at her for the first time. Notices her beauty. Offers her hand.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

I'm Allison Mendelson. I'm a billionaire. Well, my dad is. He invented the internet.

GEORGINA

I'm Georgina Hobart.

ALLISON

Are you an actress? I make movies. Art house stuff.

A beat. There are sparks between them.

GEORGINA

I work with Oceana 2. We've been removing plastics from marine mammals but now we are starting a new project where we place tombstones on the sites of glaciers melted by climate change.

(CONTINUED)

ALLISON

That's beautiful and pointless.
Which makes it totally on brand for
me. I want to sponsor you. One
hundred percent. You'll never have
to fundraise again.

GEORGINA

Oh my. What will I do with all of
my free time?

Georgina smiles. Allison never stood a chance.

INT. DOUBLE FLANNEL RANCH -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Georgina and Allison -- now a couple. Smoking hash. Hanging
out. Allison is playing with Game of Thrones action figures.

*
*

PAYTON (V.O.)

Mom falls in love almost as easily
as she falls out of it. She and
Allison became inseparable.

ALLISON

...I understand that she had lost
everyone important to her when Sir
Jorah and Millisandre and the other
dragon died. So are they saying
that every woman who is going
through a hard time goes completely
psycho?

*

GEORGINA

Can't we talk about something else?
We are in a climate emergency. The
California emissions standards are
being threatened. Our agri-
businesses can't find workers, the
wildfire season is year round and
manufacturers are abusing the lax
rules about labeling organic!

*

ALLISON

You're constantly complaining about
all of this stuff. Why don't you
just run for Governor?

A beat. She takes a BIG HIT off the hash pipe.

GEORGINA

You know what, I will.

30 INT. DOUBLE FLANNEL RANCH -- GARAGE -- DAY (FLASHBACK) 30

Surrounded by EXPENSIVE CARS. Georgina has turned the garage
into her CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS. Tables manned with
volunteers. Posters. Buttons. People working the phones.
Georgina is holding court with a gaggle of REPORTERS.

PAYTON (V.O.)

All it took were a few words from
her billionaire lesbian lover to
launch my mom's political career.

GEORGINA

...and then I told Secretary
Kissinger -- that's ok, Princess
Margaret and I aren't wearing
underwear either.

The reporters HOWL with laughter.

PAYTON (V.O.)

She was ahead in the polls within
moments of announcing her
candidacy. Men loved her, women
loved her, rich, poor,
conservative, liberal. When my
mother shines her light on you it
feels like all is right in the
world -- and at the moment she was
shining that light across the
entirety of the great state of
California.

31 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- PAYTON'S OFFICE --DAY 31

Payton GOOGLE SEARCHES his name. The first three pages are
all about his MOM. This is bad. Alice arrives with Payton's
LUGGAGE.

ALICE

Between her natural abilities and
Allison's bottomless pockets, your
mom is sucking up all of the Hobart
political oxygen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALICE (CONT'D)

It isn't just the press or the
pundits -- the people love her.

PAYTON

Every time I talk to a reporter,
they just ask me about her. Every
time we send a get out the vote
email more than half the responses
are -- why am I getting this since
I can't vote in California?
She's stealing my thunder!

(then)

Am I a terrible son for doing this?

ALICE

Get going. You're going to miss
your flight. And don't worry, when
has she ever denied you something
you've asked of her?

Payton makes his way down the aisle to the front row just
behind the moderators before a debate stage with 5 podia and
a large sign: CNN CALIFORNIA GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE. Payton
sits next to Allison. He looks deeply anxious. Suddenly, the
lights change and we hear an announcer:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Welcome to the first California
Gubernatorial Debate from CNN.

The audience cheers as Georgina takes the stage along with
two WHITE MALE LAWYER TYPES and an AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN.

JAKE TAPPER

Welcome, everyone. We've got two
hours, but still I want to get
right to it. Assemblyman Andrich,
I'd like to start with you. 45% of
state revenue in California comes
from the top 1% of earners. You're
proposing a 30% tax cut on that top
1%, creating, by your own math, a
budget shortfall of \$500 billion
dollars. How do you close that gap?

RANDY ANDRICH

Well, first of all, Jake, it's a
tax cut on all earners, okay?

(MORE)

RANDY ANDRICH (CONT'D)
Californians are some of the most
taxed human beings on the planet,
and I want to lower taxes on middle
class families who are the true
engine of the state's economy. We
expect the economy to generate far
more than that \$500 billion dollars
within three years...

ANGLE ON: Allison leans into Payton.

ALLISON
Did you sign the petition?

PAYTON
No. What petition?

ALLISON
My petition. To remake the final
season of Game of Thrones.

JAKE TAPPER
Ms. Hobart? Would you care to
respond?

GEORGINA
To him? No. He's a creep, and his
poll numbers reflect that.

JAKE TAPPER
Well, Ms. Hobart, let's stay with
you. This week, you stated at a
fundraiser that you thought
Californians should take time out
of their day to quote, "hug a
tree." How do you respond to voters
who think your campaign is just not
serious?

GEORGINA
Look -- first of all, it was not a
fundraiser, it was a *BAKE SALE* at
the Santa Barbara County Fair. And
what I *said* was that people who are
fortunate enough to live in
California -- have you *seen* a
Redwood, Jake? In person? Because
literally *every* human being who
ever *has* seen a Redwood has gone up
to that tree and hugged it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GEORGINA (CONT'D)

And for one fleeting moment felt more grateful to be alive and humbled to be standing in the State of California, one of the most beautiful places on this Earth.

A beat. Georgina grips the podium with both hands. She takes a deep breath.

GEORGINA (CONT'D)

Frankly, I don't care what people think of my candidacy. As I travel around this state, I have not met *ONE SINGLE PERSON* who has told me that I shouldn't be in this race or that my campaign is a *joke* -- not *ONE*, Jake. The people who call my campaign unserious are dishonest journalists who do not know me and have made no attempt to *contact* me, and right-wing news organizations who have been engaged in a decades-long propaganda effort to divide this country along any number of cultural lines because they make a *TON* of money doing it. It's that simple. And they're good at it! They've won! Abraham Lincoln, that great *REPUBLICAN*, once said, "A house divided cannot stand." Well, he must be spinning in his extra-tall grave because now, this country *IS* divided. Right down the middle. 50-50. And we *hate* each other, we call each other *Communists* and *Nazis*, we don't just deny each other's grievances, we deny each other's *HUMANITY*. We can't agree on policies in this country because we can't agree on *FACTS!*

JAKE TAPPER

Okay, I'd like to move on --

GEORGINA

That's why I believe the State of California should secede from the Union.

A collective gasp flutters through the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE TAPPER

I'm sorry, would you care to elaborate?

GEORGINA

California should be its own independent country.

(then)

Most of our Federal Tax dollars go out of state, to people who think we're all libtard pot-smoking Satan-worshipping abortion doctors or something. Who can't *SHUT UP* about how our taxes are too high which is strangling the private sector yet somehow that California is *THE WORLD CAPITAL* of growth and innovation and industry and culture as well as having the best public University system in the history of humankind. So *maybe -- just MAYBE --* we're doing something *right* and at a certain point, you have to ask yourself, are we ever going to change those people's minds? Are we ever gonna change *them*? The answer is no. This country is in a bad marriage and what do you do when you're trapped in a bad marriage? You get a divorce. *That's* what I propose. Sorry, Texas, Alabama, West Virginia, I'm sure you're beautiful deep down inside, but we're moving on. And, hey, New York? If you're listening, maybe we could team up. That'd be an awesome country. Illinois? Totally down with that. And to everyone watching at home, if this sounds like something you could get behind, go to my website or use #letsgettheCaloutthere. Thank you.

The audience ERUPTS in raucous, deafening applause. Payton sits, stunned.

JAKE TAPPER

Okay. Okay. Comptroller Annika Reynolds, the next question -- quiet down, please everybody...

Allison leans into Payton.

(CONTINUED)

32

ALLISON

Seriously, though, sign the petition. It's important. I need 50,000 signatures by midnight so tell all your friends.

The CHEERING CONTINUES as we:

33

EXT. DOUBLE FLANNEL RANCH -- DAY

33

Allison's horse ranch. Very chic. Payton sits on a covered patio overlooking the grounds. MARTIN and LUTHER enter. Mid conversation.

MARTIN

Dude, no one is going to go see a movie that's just two hours of Sia silently making snacks.

PAYTON

I'd actually watch that movie.

They turn to notice him but don't say hi.

PAYTON (CONT'D)

So mom got you two jobs at Allison Mendelson's movie company.

LUTHER

She didn't mind that we don't have college degrees.

MARTIN

Don't judge us -- we're actually making a difference. Also, I hear you're ten points down.

PAYTON

For the moment.

*

LUTHER

Yeah. Good luck with that.

They crack up as Georgina enters with a GRILLED CHEESE and SOUP for Payton.

GEORGINA

Aren't you three bored with poking at each other? After all we have been through. How nice that we've all come out on the other side better than before.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GEORGINA (CONT'D)

Payton in another campaign, you boys actually employed and me with a new love and purpose.

MARTIN

Can't say the same for dad.

GEORGINA

Your father was always drawn to tradition and ritual. Maybe this new phase will be the move that finally makes him feel settled.

PAYTON

Becoming an orthodox jew?

GEORGINA

I hear he's happy and remarried to a lovely jewess who wears a wig. Now run along boys. Payton and I need to catch up.

They head out. As they go --

MARTIN

She never makes us sandwiches.

Georgina turns her attention to Payton. So happy to see him.

GEORGINA

You look wonderful. Don't you love Allison? She's a bit single minded but all great women are.

PAYTON

Mom, I need you to end your campaign.

GEORGINA

But I'm going to win.

PAYTON

And I'm going to lose. Your candidacy is killing my dream.

GEORGINA

I've got nothing to do with you being down ten points.

PAYTON

I love you Mom but you're a distraction. I'm a big bright star standing next to the sun in broad daylight.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGINA

Then the answer is to shine
brighter, not ask me to dim.

PAYTON

I've tried everything. I'm at the
point where I'm going to need to
start playing dirty and I don't
want to do that.

GEORGINA

You haven't tried being yourself.

PAYTON

I'm a politician, I have no *self*.

GEORGINA

Then find one that feels authentic
enough for the voters to believe
you do. People don't believe you
because you don't believe you. I
know my ideas are a little
eccentric, some say insane, but I
believe in them. I know in my heart
and mind that they are the right
path forward.

PAYTON

I feel so lost. Maybe I'm not
actually that good at this. Maybe
my privileged upbringing gave me a
false sense of confidence. What if
I'm not different from the twins?

GEORGINA

Those two are Ferraris with golf
cart engines. You're the real deal,
you're just driving in the wrong
direction.

PAYTON

How can you be so sure?

GEORGINA

Because I'm your mother and I see
you and know you better than anyone
ever will. And because I saw a
highly recommended gypsy psychic
when you were a baby and she told
me you were destined for greatness.
Really. She predicted Andy Warhol
getting shot as well.

He smiles. Leans into her.

(CONTINUED)

33

PAYTON
I always feel better when I'm with
you.

GEORGINA
Authenticity is the key, Payton.

She pulls him close as he thinks on her advice.

34

INT. STANDISH OFFICES -- DAY

34

CLOSE ON ANDREW'S FACE.

ANDREW
I'm here to see Hadassah Gold.

REVEAL SHERRY DOUGAL, in the process of giving zero fucks.

SHERRY
And who are you?

ANDREW
Andrew. I want to be an intern.

SHERRY
Okay, *WELL*, if you want to fill out
an application, why don't you go
someplace else because we're not
hiring interns.

ANDREW
I saw the way you looked me up and
down. You "othered" me. Are you
aware that the width of the doorway
I just walked through is not
compliant with the Americans with
Disabilities Act?

SHERRY
Well, you managed just fine, so
congratulations. You're not letting
any obstacle get in your way...

Andrew pulls out a piece of paper.

ANDREW
Let me read to you from the
subchapter on *employment*...

SHERRY
Great! And while you do that, I'm
just going to rub the side of my
nose here with my middle finger!

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Just hold right there -- I'm going to take a picture of you and then tweet it with the word "BIGOT" to the American Association of People with Disabilities!

SHERRY

(already up)

Okay Holy FUCK you little shit -- I'm actually gonna get you in to Hadassah right now. *Bitch is gonna tear you a new one...*

INT. HADASSAH'S OFFICE -- DAY

Hadassah sits across from Andrew. She's already in love.

ANDREW

...so I graduated in June with a B.A. in Mathematics...

HADASSAH

I'm gonna stop you right there. I don't know what you said to Sherry, but she *HATES* you, which brightens my day immensely. You're hired. You're gonna be my Sherry whisperer, okay? And by whisperer, I mean tormenter. WHAT a bitch.

ANDREW

Okay, great!

HADASSAH

And math major, huh? Fantastic. We're bringing in all this new IT bullshit. Brand new computers, a whole data team -- that's what campaigns are all about these days, evidently...

ANDREW

Thank you, Ms. Gold. This is a dream come true.

HADASSAH

(as she goes)

I *LOVE* you. You're adorable. Find a desk somewhere.

36

EXT. STANDISH OFFICES -- LATE AFTERNOON

36

Hadassah walks out onto the street. A beat, as Astrid strides up beside her.

HADASSAH

Oh, hello.

ASTRID

I thought about it and I'm in.

HADASSAH

Ooo I LOVE the cloak and dagger routine.

ASTRID

I'll do it on one condition. When I run for office, whenever that may be, you run my campaign.

HADASSAH

Sounds fun. I like that.

ASTRID

Good. You have a problem. Your candidate is in a throuple.

HADASSAH

I beg your pardon.

ASTRID

A three-way relationship. And Payton knows about it. You should get on that.

37

INT. UPTOWN RESTAURANT -- DAY

37

*

Dede and TINO sip drinks at an upscale restaurant.

TINO

So how's the campaign going? I see you're well ahead.

DEDE

That's what Hadassah tells me. Honestly, it's old hat at this point. This is something like, my twelfth, thirteenth campaign?

*

TINO

But you've got a primary challenge this time. That's new.

Dede's ears perk up. She plays it off.

(CONTINUED)

DEDE

Yeah, some rich kid with a BA in Theatre or something.

TINO

But the kid is only ten points behind you.

DEDE

(back-footed)

Sure -- yes -- I mean, look. There's a lot of people in my district who aren't that *engaged*, who haven't taken a goddamn civics class in their life so they don't know the first thing about how government actually *works*, and they only ever want to lodge a protest vote saying eff the system. And then here's this fetus, and there's some young people who find the idea of somebody like that exciting. You know how it is. That just part of the landscape.

TINO

But see, that's what worries me.

A beat. Dede covers her rush of panic...

DEDE

Wait. Senator. You're *worried*?

TINO

Those people you're talking about. The ones who get excited about voting for a kid, every election, that slice of the pie is getting bigger and bigger. Your voters -- ones who've cast a ballot every election for the past 40 years -- hate to say it, but they're dying off. And half of 'em end up switching parties towards the end because culture is scary and they cast their ballot to say 'get offa my lawn'...

DEDE

I'm sorry -- are you suggesting that I'm too old? Because I *thought* that was what drew you to me in the first place. My experience. My pragmatism.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DEDE (CONT'D)

To make up for the fact that you
haven't been doing this very long --

TINO

(nailing it down)

*I'm saying it could be used against
us.*

(then)

When I look at your campaign, who's
running it, the slogans, YOU -- it
reeks of old politics. And it's not
me who's smelling it -- it's the
20% of your constituency who say
they'd rather vote for a kid than
vote for you. The Presidency isn't
won by 20 points anymore. Or ten
points. Now you win it by two. And
these days a Democrat winning by
two means you actually lose.

(then)

You can't let this kid get closer
to you than ten points. If he
does...I'm going to have serious
questions about your viability as a
running mate.

As Dede opens her mouth to respond:

HADASSAH (O.S.)

Dede. We have a family emergency --

Reveal Hadassah racing over.

HADASSAH (CONT'D)

Hi, Senator. So sorry to interrupt.
(to Dede)

You need to come with me.

DEDE

(as they go, sotto)

Where are we going?

HADASSAH

To your house.

DEDE

Hadassah, what is going on here?

HADASSAH

*Shut your fucking mouth I know
about the throuple.*

38

INT. STANDISH TOWNHOUSE -- DAY

38

*

Hadassah paces the room mid-screed as MARCUS and Dede sit, chastened, WILLIAM hovering in the corner.

HADASSAH

HOW DID YOU THINK YOU WERE GOING TO GET AWAY WITH THIS? I don't know whether to feel furious or betrayed, and then I'm like, "Hadassah, why should you have to choose?!"

MARCUS

Can we just lower the temperature here a second?

HADASSAH

YOU LOWER THE TEMPERATURE, MARCUS. OR IF IT'S TOO HOT IN HERE WHY DON'T THE THREE OF YOU ALL TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES?

DEDE

And you're sure that they know.

HADASSAH

Yes, I'm sure. It was one of their staffers who *told* me. That's how I found *OUT*, instead of from one of the *actual MEMBERS* of the *trouple* which is what *should* have happened.

WILLIAM

Okay but as far as we know no one else knows.

HADASSAH

Yeah and how long do you think that's gonna last?
(to Dede, wounded)
Why didn't you tell me...

DEDE

Hadassah, this was always a personal, private matter. We thought the best way for this to remain a secret was if only the three of us knew about it.

MARCUS

Honestly, Hadassah, I thought that you knew.

(CONTINUED)

HADASSAH

You *what?* NO, I DIDN'T KNOW! I thought he was your *great friend* and that you were a little gay or whatever, maybe YOU two had a thing going on on the side but never in my LIFE did I think that the three of you -- what -- pushed two queen-sized beds together every night and daisy-chained each other to sleep?

WILLIAM

Okay, if you're going to be *rude* --

HADASSAH

Get used to it, pal. Shit's gonna get *real* rude when this is a blind item on Page Six one day and the next it's splashed across the front page of every newspaper on Earth!

DEDE

Hadassah, this is *manageable*.

HADASSAH

UM, NO, *VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER* is manageable. *THIS?* Is *BATSHIT*.

DEDE

That's what I mean.

(off her look)

If it *does* get out, and we don't even know if it *will*, we deny, deny, deny, because honestly, it sounds like some cockamamie far-right Republican talking point that oozed its way out of the lunatic fringe! Like a pedophile ring being run out of a DC pizza parlor! Or Antonin Scalia getting *murdered!* You and I know just about every political journalist in New York City by name and if any ONE of them got a blind item that Dede Standish was in a throuple -- that a woman over 40 had even an ounce of sexual allure or desire, which they don't think we do and they are WRONG -- they'd die laughing before they could even run it by their editor!

(CONTINUED)

HADASSAH

Wrong. You're dead wrong, Dede. This is salacious, it's sticky, it's -- forgive me -- sooo fucking *bizarre* -- any *ONE* of those hacks at the Times or the Post or the Daily News will take this and have a goddamn field day looking into every *inch* of it...

MARCUS

(defiant)

So let them look. They won't find anything. We've been out in public a few times together, sure. That's it. You asked how we thought we could get away with this, well, because we've *BEEN* getting away with this for almost *ten YEARS!* We've been careful with phone calls, texts, we thought this all through. We've kept it airtight, for this very reason.

*

DEDE

Well, do they have *proof*? A salacious photo? A video?

HADASSAH

Oh, *GOD*, you do videos? No. This staffer, she saw you all kissing. Which. Just the mental image...

MARCUS

We made *one* mistake. *ONCE*. And we *knew* it. We talked about it in the limo ride home as we were all making out --

HADASSAH

Oh Jesus Christ --

MARCUS

-- we swore we'd never do it again. And *that's* the night we get caught.

WILLIAM

But it's just an image in some girl's head! A memory of what she *thinks* she saw. She has no proof. It'll just be her word...

Silence. Hadassah heaves an exasperated sigh. Dede breaks the silence, gentle and genuine:

(CONTINUED)

DEDE

Look, this is not ideal. I get that, Hadassah, and I am so sorry that we kept this from you. I understand that you feel like a trust has been broken, and I'm going to do whatever I have to to gain your trust back...

HADASSAH

No.

(re: William)

It's me or him. You two end this with him right now, or I walk and I walk forever. Like a fucking Jewish Highlander. That's what has to happen.

A moment. They all share a heavy look.

DEDE

We'll discuss it and get back to you.

HADASSAH

No, Dede, *that is what has to happen. ALL* contact. It ends tonight. You never see him again, you never speak to him again.

(to William)

I'm sure you're a nice pivot man, but it's over now, 'kay? It's *OVER*.

DEDE

(flaring, emotional)

NO, Hadassah! I'm not throwing away the best part of my life -- something that is *deeply important* to Marcus *AND* I -- because of some 22-year old rich kid who thinks he has something on us --

HADASSAH

JESUS CHRIST, DEDE! I DON'T CARE ABOUT PAYTON HOBART! You can beat him blindfolded with both arms and a leg tied behind your back and a strap-on jammed in your ear!

(vehement)

It's *TINO*, Dede. I care about *Tino*. If he catches wind of this, *what do you think he's gonna do?*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HADASSAH (CONT'D)

*You will not become vice president
of the United State, Dede. The
dream will be over.*

Dede's heart drops into her stomach. Silence. Without a word,
William walks out of the room. They let him go.

HADASSAH (CONT'D)

Good. This is what you'd call
"coming to your senses." Keep it
up.

39 INT. TAXI -- DAY -- DRIVING 39

Payton stares out the window, despondent.

PAYTON

So what is this?

MCAFEE

Infinity's thing. Rally for climate
action...

JAMES

This is a waste of time. Climate
Change ranks dead last on
priorities for voters in the 27th
and Dede already spanked you on
it...

MCAFEE

Don't listen to him. It's a great
photo-op.

JAMES

I don't get it. What's Infinity's
deal? I thought she was a best-
selling author or something. Now
she's a climate activist?

MCAFEE

(withering)

Yeah, what a bitch, right? How dare
she use her notoriety to raise
awareness about the *greatest long-
term threat to human civilization.*
You're an ass.

(handing to Payton)

Here's your speech...

40 EXT. HIGH LINE -- CLIMATE CHANGE RALLY -- DAY 40

CLOSE ON Payton as he looks around, overwhelmed at a CROWD OF A THOUSAND TWENTY-SOMETHINGS, bristling with enthusiasm. Photographers snap photos and Infinity speaks at a podium.

INFINITY
...and it is now my pleasure to
introduce a dear friend of mine...

Payton looks down at the speech, then hands it to McAfee.

PAYTON
I don't need this.

INFINITY
...Payton Hobart!

Payton bounds up to the podium, feeling the pulsing energy.

PAYTON
Thank you, Infinity. You know,
Infinity and I went to high school
together -- she was my running-
mate, actually, and you know what
my *first* act as student body
President was? It was real simple.
To ban plastic straws on campus. I
thought it was a total no-brainer.
A concrete solution we could
implement overnight that would make
a significant environmental impact
and show the world my generation's
commitment to protecting the
environment. But when I presented
my plan to the school board, I was
laughed out of the room. They
called me naive, called my plan
outlandish -- they admitted it was
the right thing to do, but it just
couldn't be done. *THIS IS WHAT OUR
GENERATION IS DEALING WITH,
FRIENDS.* These are the "adults in
the room" and they don't have the
backbone to take on *STRAWS*...

The audience erupts. James and McAfee share a look. A twinkle
in his eye, Payton rides the growing wave of support:

PAYTON (CONT'D)
Every one of us here knows we are
engaged in a *generational* fight
that will determine our species'
future on this planet.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAYTON (CONT'D)

And politicians like Dede Standish can't accept our urgency to clean up this mess because if they *did*, they'd have to admit that *THEY'RE THE ONES WHO MADE IT*. Launched illegal foreign wars -- put it on a credit card. Passed tax cuts for people who don't need them -- put it on a credit card. Gave subsidies to this country's biggest polluters -- put it on a credit card and *they are sticking us with the bill*. *NOW* when Dede Standish hears that the broad consensus of scientists say this nation must be at net zero carbon emissions by 2030 she has the audacity to throw up her hands and says, "Too expensive. We can't do it." Well, Senator Standish, if you're listening --

(into camera)

I don't want my children and grandchildren living in a New York City with 20 foot sea walls holding back a dying ocean on a scorching planet of tens of millions of climate refugees and fascist governments around the globe committing wholesale genocide as we fight over dwindling supplies of food and water. That's where this world is headed if we *continue* to do nothing, Dede Standish, and when you say we can't afford to take action? I say *THIS*: it's because of *your* generation's policies that *MY GENERATION DOESN'T HAVE ANOTHER CHOICE*.

The audience roars. Payton shouts over them.

PAYTON (CONT'D)

The *ONE* choice we have is on election day. *YOU* -- *everyone of you here who have voted with your feet today to show the world where YOUR priorities lie* -- *YOU have a chance on November 6th to preserve humanity's future on this planet and in this city. YOU are the solution. OUR generation will save this planet and I'm gonna help you do it!!!*

(CONTINUED)

The crowd explodes. Infinity embraces Payton, ecstatic, then:

INFINITY

Let's hear it for Climate Action!
Let's hear it for Payton Hobart!

41 INT. TAXI -- DAY -- DRIVING 41

Payton stares out the window, now smiling, oddly serene as James and McAfee look at their phones.

JAMES

This was good.

MCAFEE

This is gonna go viral.

Payton turns to them, a renewed sense of purpose.

PAYTON

I liked that. We should do *more* of that...

42 EXT. DOUBLE FLANNEL RANCH -- DAY 42

A big pre-Oscar party. Georgina out on the deck. Looking at the sky. Alone. Allison charges out.

ALLISON

Can't you at least pretend not to hate everyone here?

GEORGINA

Why pretend for a room full of fakes? They're never going to tell you what they think anyway.

ALLISON

These are voters -- from every Hollywood guild and academy. Why are my voters so awful and yours so perfect?

GEORGINA

The difference isn't them -- the difference is that I want to help my voters, you want them to help you.

Allison shakes her head. Exits. A beat, then Tino walks out on the deck. Hands Georgina an OLD FASHIONED.

(CONTINUED)

TINO

Old fashioned, not too sweet,
right?

GEORGINA

That or...

He pulls another drink from behind his back.

TINO

Martini up, extra olives.
(off her confusion)
I have the top oppo researchers in
the game.

She takes the martini.

TINO (CONT'D)

My name's Tino McCutcheon. I'm the
junior senator for the great state
of Texas.

GEORGINA

I saw you on TV. Competing in a
triathlon for charity.

TINO

Between you and I, I'm positioning
myself to run for president next
year. My advisors feel it's wise
for me to lean into my virility and
sex appeal. A shirtless politician
produces millions in free
advertising.

GEORGINA

I'll have to consider that. What
are you doing here? Fundraising?
Good luck. These limousine liberals
have endless passion -- until you
ask them to write a check.

TINO

Not exactly. I have a proposal for
you.

GEORGINA

I'm seeing someone. I think.

TINO

Not that kind of proposal.

He winks at her. She likes it.

43 EXT. BEACH -- DAY (LATER)

43

Georgina and Tino walk on the beach.

TINO

My wife slipped into a coma two years ago. Complications from a case of severe trichinosis. They don't know if she'll ever wake up -- and even if she does, there will most certainly be brain damage.

GEORGINA

You're a good husband to stay by her side. My husband fell into a coma for a week and I don't think I would have made it more than a few more days before moving on.

TINO

I hate to say it but it's been great for me politically.

(then)

I've been paying attention to your campaign. You have the gift.

GEORGINA

People have always found me to be interesting. My father told me -- you can't teach charisma. And he would know. He was a great, big fat man and still the ladies could not get enough of him.

TINO

Ideas don't win campaigns anymore. Values certainly don't. Nowadays, the guy who gets elected is the guy who gets the most attention. P.T. Barnum would be our next president if he were alive.

GEORGINA

I never liked the circus. Those poor elephants.

TINO

I'm looking to make a splash, set myself apart from the other candidates by announcing my running mate early. And I'd like to offer the position to you.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGINA

Oh lord, that sounds like a terrible idea. I don't think I'll play very well in Iowa or Wisconsin. I'm a water sign.

TINO

We don't need them. Do the electoral college math. If we win Texas, California, New York, Florida and Michigan we can cobble together enough of the forever blue states to get to 270.

(she's interested)

The VP is a real job now. You can spearhead my environmental agenda.

GEORGINA

And what is that?

TINO

I don't have one yet, that's why I need you.

GEORGINA

Why else? Do you need me?

TINO

Honestly, I don't know exactly. I just know that I saw you at that debate and I have not stopped thinking about you since.

GEORGINA

(smiles)

Why don't we go get some tacos?

TINO

I'd like that.

They walk off. A romance brewing.

LOBSTERMEN pull up POTS. Wearing WATERPROOF GEAR. Behind them another LOBSTERMAN, his back to us. He pulls a pot on board. Searches it. REVEAL that it's WILLIAM. He's disappointed by what he finds in the pot. To William --

LOBSTERMAN

(thick accent)

It doesn't exist. The Albino lobster. It's a legend.

44

William throws the pot back in.

LOBSTERMAN #2
(also thick accent)
They say it's one in a hundred
million chance that you find one.
Better chance of winning the mega-
millions.

WILLIAM
Which one is it? Does it not exist
or is it a one in a hundred million
chance?

LOBSTERMAN #2
Can I give you some advice? Maybe
it's not the white lobster you're
looking for? Maybe it's something
else.

LOBSTERMAN
Like a blue lobster?

LOBSTERMAN #2
No. Like maybe the white lobster
represents something you really
want but can't have. But you're
looking for the lobster so you
don't have to think about the real
thing.

LOBSTERMAN
I've actually seen a blue lobster.
They're pretty rare.

WILLIAM
I love someone. Two someones. And I
can't have them. That's why I ran
away to work on a lobster boat. So
I don't have to think about them.
So I don't have to think about
anything. So please, stop talking
to me.

45 INT. LOBSTER BOAT OFF THE COAST OF GLOUCESTER -- DAY 45

William stands on the deck as they drive towards the DOCK. He
sees something in the distance -- standing on the DOCK --
DEDE and MARCUS! They're bundled up. She's in a FUR.

46 EXT. DOCK -- GLOUCESTER -- DAY 46

The boat pulls in and William jumps out. An awkward beat.

(CONTINUED)

DEDE

We tried it without you.

MARCUS

It was like clapping with one hand.

DEDE

We love you William.

WILLIAM

I love you -- which means I would never get in the way of all of your dreams coming true. I'm miserable without you but if I end up taking away this opportunity, I'm going to hate myself. And eventually, you're going to hate me, too.

DEDE

I'm tired of having my personal life judged on different criteria because I'm a woman. If a man came out and proudly proclaimed that he was in a polyamorous relationship with two beautiful and brilliant women the press and the public would call him a hero. Remember Warren Buffett?

MARCUS

Are you saying you want to go public?

DEDE

No. Not yet -- but I refuse to live in fear. I need you both to be my best self and I need to be my best self to win.

She goes to kiss William.

WILLIAM

I stink of lobster.

DEDE

Then kiss me and melt me like butter.

He smiles. Kisses her. Then he kisses Marcus. The Lobstermen watch. Emotionless. Stoic. Then Dede and her men walk off the dock ARM in ARM. As they do, they pass another LOBSTER BOAT unloading their catch. In one of the BINS, on top of the pile of lobsters -- a SINGLE WHITE LOBSTER.

47

INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

47

Payton enters, robust, as his staffers mingle. A beat, he understands updated polling has just come in.

PAYTON

What's Morning Consult say?

JAMES

You've dropped another 9 points.
48% her, 19% you, the rest
undecided...

*

PAYTON

Okay, I want *IDEAS*. RIGHT now.

At that, Andrew shuffles in the door.

JAMES

Ah -- this is not a good time.

ANDREW

What the fuck? You said I had "walk-
in" privileges!
(beat)
I have dirt.

PAYTON

Sit. I want to hear it.

ANDREW

First, I want your office.

PAYTON

What?

ANDREW

Your office. I want it.

*

PAYTON

FINE.

ANDREW

First of all, I don't know what
happened, who they hired, but the
Standish campaign is not stuck in
the 90s anymore. They've installed
state-of-the-art IT, they've hired
a K-Street consulting firm who's
rented out a whole floor for social
media and another for the new data
team -- they're doing a *huge* social
media push that goes live on
Monday.

(CONTINUED)

47

PAYTON
(wilting)
We're fucked...

JAMES
How is that *dirt* -- ?

ANDREW
PATIENCE...
(then)
But I've gotten in deep. I gave
Hadassah and Dede each one of those
little waving cats you get in
Chinatown --

48 INT. HADASSAH'S OFFICE -- DAY (FLASHBACK) 48

CLOSE ON a little waving-hand cat holding a campaign sign
that says, "Dede!" as Hadassah natters on the phone MOS. She
sees the cat and flicks its hand so it waves.

ANDREW (V.O.)
-- but the little cats are holding
campaign signs...

49 INT. STANDISH APARTMENT -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 49

The little cat sits on a bookshelf as Marcus and Dede argue
MOS in the background.

ANDREW (V.O.)
They loved them. Hadassah's on her
desk and Dede took two, one for her
office and one for her bookshelf at
home...

BACK TO:

50 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- DAY (RESUME) 50

McAfee is agog.

MCAFEE
Oh my god you *didn't*...

ANDREW
Yes I did. Inside each cat is a
wireless transmitter. I'm bugging
them. And with the help of my
little Chinese kitten friends, I've
learned two things.

(CONTINUED)

50

PAYTON

Hold on. So we're actually *bugging* our political opponents now? Remember how well that worked out for Richard Nixon? Whatever you found out, I don't want to know...

ANDREW

Oh, quit pretending you're not as slimy as the rest of them. Do us all a favor and just embrace it.
(then)
Hadassah broke up the throuple but they're secretly still boning. Also, Dede Standish doesn't care about this race. Tino McCutcheon is running for President and is considering her for VP.

Silence as Payton sits, stunned, the campaign suddenly turned upside down.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Also I'd like \$5,000 in cash by the end of the day.

OFF PAYTON, wheels turning, an idea brewing...

51

INT. RECORD STORE -- DAY

51

Payton browses the stacks.

RIVER (O.S.)

Which one is most you?

Payton looks up to see RIVER holding two albums -- KISS and BOB DYLAN.

RIVER (CONT'D)

Spectacle over substance or integrity uber alles?

PAYTON

Which one sells more albums?

They share a smile. Keep moving. Browsing.

PAYTON (CONT'D)

Is this going to be my eternal question? Who am I? Shouldn't I have that figured out by now? Am I jazz, hip-hop, opera?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAYTON (CONT'D)

My mother said I need to be my authentic self to win but I still have no idea what that means.

RIVER

Are you winning?

PAYTON

No.

RIVER

Then you're not being your authentic self.

PAYTON

I shouldn't have to rely on poll numbers to judge if I'm being true to myself. That would make me a terrible person. Empty, unable to have any sense of self without being dependent on outside influences.

RIVER

Or it would just make you a true politician. Do you want to do good in the world? Is your motivation to govern because you want to empower the powerless?

PAYTON

Definitely. That's what my subway initiative is all about. Dede won't fix the transit system thus helping millions of people daily while lowering carbon emissions, I will.

RIVER

That doesn't sound like a terrible person. You just have to stop being ashamed of wanting to win. I think it's time you stop seeing the world as binary -- good and bad -- right and wrong.

PAYTON

That doesn't sound like you.

RIVER

I'm just the voice in your head that helps you be truly you. That true you changes over time. As you get older. The world gets more complicated, you have to as well.

(CONTINUED)

Payton's face lights up.

PAYTON

I can't change the world if I don't win. So how is not doing everything in my power to win the decent thing to do? How could it be a sin to destroy the powerful in order to lift up the powerless? *I'm a winner.* That's my authentic self.

EMPLOYEE

Excuse me?

A HEAVILY PIERCED EMPLOYEE is standing where River was. Payton smiles.

PAYTON

Nothing. I have to go.

He runs off. REBORN.

52 EXT. 5TH AVENUE -- THE NEXT DAY 52

Payton walks down the street towards a stretch limousine. He walks up and steps in.

53 INT. LIMOUSINE -- THAT MOMENT 53

Payton sits opposite Dede and Hadassah.

PAYTON

Thanks for doing this, ladies -- I'm gonna dive right in. There was a *manner* in which I intended to run my campaign, you know? I had an idea of the candidate I wanted to be. Polite, stick to the issues, no dirty politics. But then I realized something -- that's just not me. The *authentic* me had something fall in my authentic lap. A lurid little story about a candidate and her throuple. *Old* Payton would have buried it. But *authentic* Payton is going to release it. I have a press release ready and a call in to Page Six.

DEDE

(interrupting)

Payton, this "throuple" thing, I guess that's what they call it? To call it '*outlandish*' doesn't even --

(CONTINUED)

PAYTON

Uhp-uhp-uhp. *Liar*. She saw you kissing and you know it's true --

HADASSAH

What agreement can we come to to make it go away?

PAYTON

THAT'S more like it. Senator, I know you have visions for a larger political career. I know you want to be the Vice President.

Dede and Hadassah's eyes widen, too cornered to share a look.

PAYTON (CONT'D)

Now that can still happen if you drop out of this race, citing medical reasons.

(as she opens her mouth)

Your husband will have a "*heart attack*" -- there's a cardiologist at Columbia who has already drawn up the paperwork -- and you and I will do a joint press conference where you drop out of the race citing Marcus' health, you will endorse me to replace you, the throuple story dies and you're still well on your way to the VP slot. How's that sound?

HADASSAH

You unbearable little prick.

PAYTON

Reminder -- *you were in a throuple*, and I have evidence.

DEDE

No you don't.

PAYTON

Yes I do. And Page Six will have it first thing tomorrow if you don't agree.

DEDE

You really *are* an evil little troll.

(CONTINUED)

PAYTON

No, really I want to win. Give me
what I want, and you get to win,
too.

He slams the door. Off Dede and Hadassah, shell-shocked:

54 INT. HOBART CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS -- PAYTON'S OFFICE --DAY 54 *

Payton on the phone. INTERCUT with -- INT. HOTEL SUITE.

Georgina. IN BED. Sipping coffee. NEWSPAPERS laid out all
around her like that famous photo of Robert Evans.

GEORGINA

Are you sure, darling. Because I
really would drop out if it meant
that much to you.

PAYTON

I know you would. But it's not
necessary. We're both going to win
these things. I love you, Mom.

GEORGINA

I love you.

They hang up. Stay with Georgina. A MAN steps out of the
bathroom, in a ROBE. Fresh from the shower. It's TINO.

TINO

Everything ok?

GEORGINA

Couldn't be better.

55 EXT. STANDISH OFFICES -- DAY 55

The limo pulls up. Dede races into the building, Hadassah
close behind. She sees something and stops -- a sunglass-ed
Astrid window-shopping 20 feet away. She walks over. Astrid
turns, removing her sunglasses.

ASTRID

I imagine that was rough. But don't
pack it in just yet. Payton was in
a threesome, too.

Off Hadassah's astonishment --

END EPISODE