



The West Wing

Abu el Banat

Episode Nine

THE WEST WING

"Abu el Banat"

Written by
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Episode Nine

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THE WEST WING

"Abu el Banat"

Script Revision History

DATE

10/17/03

COLOR

FULL BLUE

PAGES

1-61

THE WEST WING

"Abu el Banat"

CAST LIST

PRESIDENT JOSIAH BARTLET
LEO McGARRY
JOSH LYMAN
TOBY ZIEGLER
C.J. CREGG
CHARLIE YOUNG
DONNA MOSS
ABIGAIL BARTLET
WILL BAILEY
DEBORAH FIDERER

CAROL
ANGELA BLAKE
ELIZABETH BARTLET WESTIN
DOUG WESTIN
MARGARET
ZOEY
ELLIE BARTLET
THEODORE MONTGOMERY *

JIM

*

REPORTER (ON TV)
GUS WESTIN
ALAN FISK
DONALD RICHTER

*

MOVER
AGENT
STEWARD

THE WEST WING

"Abu el Banat"

SET LIST

INTERIORS

WHITE HOUSE

C.J.'s Office
Oval Office
Corridors
Margaret's Area
Leo's Office
Josh's Bullpen
Josh's Office
Fiderer's Office
Mural Room
Will's Office
Toby's Office
*
Residence/Guest Bedroom
Residence/Corridor
*
Dining Room
Lobby
Residence/Sitting Room *

EXTERIORS

WHITE HOUSE/CAR PORT - MORNING

WHITE HOUSE/ELLIPSE - NIGHT

PORTICO - MORNING *

THE WEST WING

"Abu el Banat"

TIME SPAN

This episode takes place over one day:

Scenes 1-15:	Morning One
Scenes 16-38A:	Day One *
Scenes 39-40:	Evening One
Scenes 41-51:	Night One

"Abu el Banat"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. C.J.'S OFFICE - MORNING

1

TOBY finds C.J. struggling to right a listing, ornament-less Christmas tree. It's a bit of a wrestling match and she's not winning.

TOBY
What are you doing?

C.J.
They brought my tree. Isn't it nice?

TOBY
What are you doing to it?

C.J.
I'm holding it up. The stand isn't--

TOBY
They didn't have anything smaller?

C.J.
Smaller than me is a shrub. I wanted a
real tree this year.

*
*

Toby tosses a press release on C.J.'s desk.

TOBY
This is fine, I just cut some of the
naked gloating.

C.J.
We restarted the government, Toby. There
was a showdown at the OK Corral and we
gunned down the Clantons. We're heroes.

TOBY
And yet self-effacing.

CAROL enters.

CAROL
Excuse me, C.J.--

C.J.
Can we get a bigger stand?

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

CAROL

Yeah. Waterville Crier on two, wants a comment.

C.J.

No comments for anything called the Crier, the Intelligencer or the Breeze.

CAROL

The DEA just suspended a Waterville doctor's drug license for giving a terminal patient enough narcotics to kill her.

C.J.

That's against the law. It's what the DEA does with their time.

CAROL

C.J., Waterville's in Oregon.

C.J. looks up. The tree tumbles toward Toby as she grabs for the phone.

CUT TO:

2 INT. OVAL OFFICE - MORNING

2

FIDERER stands by as BARTLET signs some documents. ABBEY sits on the couch, waiting. A Staffer puts the first trimmings on the Oval's tree.

BARTLET

All three of my daughters in one place for Christmas. You've never seen that, have you.

FIDERER

No, sir I haven't.

BARTLET

She's never seen it.

ABBEY

Maybe next year.

BARTLET

What if she quits before then? She's flighty.

ABBEY

They'll all be here tonight. We'll be grateful for that.

(CONTINUED)

2

BARTLET

I'm grateful. But Debbie thinks one night isn't a visit so much as a pit stop.

Debbie gives Abbey a "that didn't come from me" look. The door opens and CHARLIE sticks his head in.

CHARLIE

Mr. President, Liz is pulling up.

BARTLET

Thank you.

ABBEY

Let's not dwell on it with the kids.

BARTLET

I'm not dwelling. I think it's fine. I think we should all spend Christmas at Liz's in-laws.

ABBEY

We're invited.

BARTLET

Never again. I still have flashbacks.

ABBEY

You didn't sit up all night with Jean, sewing ducklings on stockings.

Abbey and Bartlet make their way out of the Oval into--

3

EXT. PORTICO - CONTINUOUS (FORMERLY CORRIDOR)

A White House PHOTOGRAPHER (JIM) joins them.

JIM

Good morning, sir, Mrs. Bartlet.

BARTLET

Good to see you, Jim.

ABBEY

We're not doing photos now, are we?

JIM

A couple candids. Nothing serious 'til the Tree Lighting.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

BARTLET
You should get a few before dinner of the whole family together.
(off Abbey)
I'll be there.

ABBEY
I know you will.

BARTLET
I will.

ABBEY
I just don't think you should crucify Ellie for telling you she may be late--

BARTLET
How hard could it possibly be?

ABBEY
--when there's a fair to middling chance you won't make it yourself.

BARTLET
I'm not asking her to stay a week, it's one meal.

CUT TO:

4 INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

4 *

ANGELA BLAKE rushes down the hall, looking slightly concerned. She squeezes past a cluster of Staffers...

ANGELA
Excuse me.

She ups it to an almost jog, and enters

5 INT. MARGARET'S AREA - CONTINUOUS

5

She rushes past MARGARET into

6 INT. LEO'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

6

LEO's at his desk. The TV's on in the background.

ANGELA
Are you watching CNN?

LEO
No.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

Angela turns up the TV.

CONGRESSMAN RICHTER (ON TV)
...allowing themselves to get mired down
in red tape, when we've basically got a
hostage situation here, this is--

REPORTER (ON TV)
Congressman, you're saying these young
Americans are hostages?

CONGRESSMAN RICHTER (ON TV)
Americans, jailed on trumped up
proselytizing charges by a fundamentalist
Islamist regime...

LEO
Margaret!

Margaret's in the doorway.

LEO
Where's the President?

CUT TO:

7 OMITTED (INCORPORATED INTO SCENE 8) 7 *

8 EXT. CAR PORT - MORNING 8 *

Abbey, Bartlet and the photographer blow through the doors and
down toward the driveway. *

BARTLET
I don't want to sit next to Doug tonight.
I don't want to hear about his putter.

ABBEY
Show up on time, you sit wherever you
like.

BARTLET
Tell Ellie if she's late, she has to sit
next to Doug.

At the driveway two black sedans with flashing blue lights on
top pulled up just a moment ago. Amid Drivers unloading
luggage and milling Secret Service Agents, we find, DOUG
WESTIN, ELIZABETH BARTLET WESTIN (LIZ), GUS WESTIN, 4, and a
SWEDISH NANNY. *

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

Of the three girls, Liz is the most obviously Bartlet. She knows how to work a crowd, and she greets her parents with a huge smile.

A lot of the following happens at the same time.

BARTLET
Lizzie.

LIZ
Daddy.

And he hugs her.

ABBEY
There's my guy.
(hugging Gus)
Douglas, how was the trip?

DOUG
Great.

She gives Doug a peck on the cheek.

DOUG
Hey there, Jed--

BARTLET
Was there a stowaway in the car? A
monster?

Bartlet scoops Gus up under his arm, swings him, "catching the fearsome monster."

*
*

CUT TO:

9 INT. CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

9

C.J. and Leo enter from opposite directions.

C.J.
Leo, we have a--

LEO
I saw it. Hostages.

C.J.
No, the DEA.

LEO
What's their problem?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

C.J.
We have a hostage situation?

They exit to--

10 EXT. CAR PORT - CONTINUOUS

10

Bartlet's still with Gus.

BARTLET
We have a very serious job to do tonight.

LIZ
Leo!

LEO
Hiya sweetheart.

Liz waves to C.J.

LEO
Mr. President.

GUS
Do you want to see something?

Gus holds a quarter up to Bartlet.

BARTLET
Oooh, that's great.

Bartlet puts a hand on Gus's shoulder but listens to Leo.

LEO
Twelve relief workers in Sudan got thrown
in jail. Congressman's on CNN calling
them hostages.

Gus taps the quarter on Bartlet's arm.

GUS
I have a quarter with New Hampshire on
it.

BARTLET
You sure do.
(to C.J.)
You talk to State?

C.J.
I just heard myself, I was-- there's a
problem at the DEA.

(CONTINUED)

Bartlet sighs and turns to Liz and Gus. *

BARTLET

Five minutes ago we were having a quiet morning. I gotta take a look, but I'll catch up with you in a few minutes. We've got all sorts of good stuff lined up! *
*
*

Gus nods. He watches Bartlet and his staff disappear into the building. Abbey notices Liz's face just barely harden as she picks up Gus. *

Jim, the photographer, takes the lens cap off his camera and trains it on Liz and her son. Abbey turns to Jim--

ABBEY

No.

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

11 INT. CORRIDOR - A MOMENT LATER 11

Bartlet, C.J. and Leo on their way to the Oval.

LEO

The Sudanese authorities say some of them were trying to convert the locals to Christianity, and it's Islamic law in Northern Sudan...

BARTLET

So they threw the whole lot of them in jail.

LEO

Angela talked to Congressman Richter, apparently two are his constituents.

C.J.

Sir, did you talk to the DEA yesterday?

BARTLET

No. Angela didn't tell you about this Sudan thing?

C.J. shakes her head no, as they continue into

12 INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 12

Where JOSH, Toby, and Angela stand, waiting.

BARTLET

This blew up good and fast, didn't it.

ANGELA

Sir, I told the Congressman I'd look into it. There was no indication he was--

BARTLET

What's State saying?

ANGELA

They're treating this like any other foreign arrest. There'll be a consular visit, a trial. Richter isn't satisfied with that.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

A Sudanese jail, you gotta hope someone
back home's making noise. *

BARTLET

Were they proselytizing?

ANGELA

We don't know. He says no.

JOSH

You want me to...

ANGELA

(annoyed with Josh)

I think he wants to speak to the
President.

C.J.

Hostage is a big word. Particularly at
Christmas. *

BARTLET

(to Angela)

Alright, get him in here. *

Angela nods and exits. *

BARTLET

What about the DEA?

C.J. hands a memo to Bartlet.

C.J.

The DEA's coming down on a doctor in
Oregon for assisting with a suicide.
There's no federal jurisdiction, I don't
know what DEA thinks they're doing.

BARTLET

What do they say?

C.J.

They're calling it a violation of the
Controlled Substances Act. The narcotic
he used is federally controlled.

TOBY

So's a handgun.

JOSH

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

TOBY
Doesn't turn a shooting into a federal case.

JOSH
(re: Toby)
He makes a point.

BARTLET
We're sure this wasn't an accident? Pain management gone awry?

C.J.
The doctor's not hiding his intentions. The State of Oregon says it's legal, he was assisting a terminal patient to hasten the end of her suffering.

BARTLET
It's a living.

C.J.
Well, in Oregon, yes.

C.J.'s more comfortable with that notion than Bartlet is, but they're not going to get into it right now.

BARTLET
When's your next briefing?

C.J.
An hour. I was gonna go with-- *

TOBY
I don't think we comment. It's DOJ's mess, we don't want it.

C.J.
We don't want a lot of things.

TOBY
For four years it's been "The President does not personally support physician assisted suicide, but believes it is not a federal issue and should be resolved by the voters--"

BARTLET
"--state by state." And not by the Drug Enforcement Administration. *

(CONTINUED)

TOBY

We don't jump into the middle of a bar
fight and declare our intention not to
act. Let the Attorney General handle it. *

Bartlet considers, gives Leo the nod.

LEO

I'll sit down with the AG.

BARTLET

Thanks everybody.

All

Thank you sir./Thank you Mr. President.

BARTLET

Debbie, where are they? *

FIDERER (O.S.)

Blue Room, sir.

They all exit. We follow Josh and C.J. into--

13 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

13

--where they meet DONNA.

DONNA

Oh good. Doug Westin's in your office.

C.J.

Liz's Doug?

JOSH

How come he's not with his in-laws?

DONNA

The President's introducing Gus to the
Three Tenors. Hallelujah Chorus in the
Blue Room.

JOSH

Why's a five-year-old want to meet the
Three Tenors?

DONNA

I'm pretty sure he doesn't.

C.J.

Doug's your friend.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

JOSH
He's a perfectly nice guy.

C.J.
Speak slowly, you don't want to lose him.

C.J. peels off as Donna and Josh continue, past staffers hanging decorations.

JOSH
Check it out. They're decking the halls. *

DONNA
Five minutes and then I'll spring you.

They round the corner into--

14 INT. JOSH'S BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

14

There he is, standing in the doorway to Josh's office, looking at the newspaper.

JOSH
Douglas!

DOUG
I swiped your paper.

JOSH
That's government property, I'm gonna have to call the Feds.

DOUG
Then I'd better dash. See ya.

He fakes left, then laughs, as does Josh, almost. They shake hands.

JOSH
Come on in.

Doug follows Josh into--

15 INT. JOSH'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

15

JOSH
You guys here for a couple days?

DOUG
Just tonight and tomorrow. We're going to my folks for Christmas this year, the tree lighting seemed like the least we could do.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

No Annie?

DOUG

Swim meet. That and she pierced her eyebrow, thought we'd keep her off camera 'til it healed.

JOSH

She-- on purpose?

DOUG

Every day's a new set of challenges. Hey, you tracking Congressional recruitment? That still your area?

JOSH

Yeah. I mean-- yeah. What's...

Doug takes a big breath.

DOUG

New Hampshire. First District.

JOSH

Ken Campbell.

DOUG

He's stepping out, end of this term. He's got a valve thing, he doesn't slow down, his heart's just gonna... POW. Like a balloon.

JOSH

Huh. That's great. I mean, not the... but we'll have a good shot at the seat.

DOUG

I think so. And I think I'm the man to do it.

JOSH

To-- what.

DOUG

I think with a little help from you fine people, I'm gonna be elected to the United States House of Representatives.

CUT TO:

16 INT. LEO'S OFFICE - DAY

16

Margaret opens the door.

MARGARET
The Attorney General...

ALAN FISK enters.

LEO
Alan. How come I don't hear your
daughter's performing at the Kennedy
Center 'til two days after?

FISK
Between us, she was under a wig, behind
Aida's second elephant.

LEO
This cowboy over at the DEA, you fire him
yet?

FISK
No.

LEO
Sooner is better.

FISK
I think I've got to back up the DEA on
this one.

Beat. What?

FISK
The CSA--

LEO
The Controlled Substances Act is about
drug trafficking, it's about interstate
commerce, it was never intended to
supplant the states as regulators of
medical practice.

FISK
He had a license to dispense narcotics
for legitimate medical purposes only.

LEO
The voters of the sovereign state of
Oregon have declared the termination of a
life of pain and suffering to be a
legitimate medical purpose.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LEO (cont'd)

And frankly, whether they are right or wrong is none of the DEA's business.

FISK

It's not assisted anything, it's murder.

LEO

Okay, we're done.

(standing)

You'll be hearing from the President.

FISK

The White House interfering with a federal prosecution, you really want to walk that road?

LEO

You're not a legislative body, Alan. There's only so many times you can pull this before the President--

FISK

What, fires me?

LEO

I don't want to have this fight. But if we do, I win.

FISK

Jed Bartlet's not gonna fire me for standing on principle.

Beat. Leo knows he's right. Fisk exits.

FISK (O.S.)

Have a good day, Margaret.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Thank you Mr. Fisk, you too.

Off Leo, we--

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

17 CONTINUED:

17

TOBY

If I'm doing it I'm doing it. This is not on the agenda.

LEO

(beat)

Talk to Will.

TOBY

Thank you.

Toby and C.J. exit into

18 INT. MARGARET'S AREA - CONTINUOUS

18

C.J.

Were you going to tell me?

TOBY

When I was sure it was a done deal.

19 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

19

Toby heads off, as Liz spots C.J. from down the hall. Liz is a whirlwind of can-do energy.

LIZ

C.J.

C.J.

Lizzie B.

LIZ

You're gonna get a call from an organization called Hunger Solution, they're very well-intentioned and totally clueless. They should be fund-raising for the World Food Program and instead they're developing freeze dried peanut butter and jelly or something. I got lassoed onto the board for two years, I just retired and I recommended you.

C.J.

You didn't.

LIZ

They get a small C-22 grant, it'd be a conflict, tell them you-wish-you-wish but you can't. It'll make 'em feel good just to know you were interested.

(CONTINUED)

C.J.
Thanks for the heads up. *

LIZ
We're gonna talk about UNESCO.

C.J.
You going?

LIZ
(she nods)
And we're gonna talk about a guy named
Chris Beck I want you to meet.

C.J.
He from UNESCO?

LIZ
(with a smile)
Nope.

And she's gone. Fiderer catches C.J.

FIDERER
(re: Liz)
She tell you about the walk through at
eleven?

C.J.
No. Could you maybe handle that?

FIDERER
She asked for you.

C.J.
I've got a meeting, could you tell her?

FIDERER
Can't say no to her, can you.

C.J.
Not really.

FIDERER
See you at eleven.

C.J., less than thrilled, moves on and we follow Fiderer into--

20 INT. FIDERER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

20

FIDERER
Any word from Ellie?

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

She's running an experiment on viral load reproduction and she hopes it'll wrap up in time for the thing tonight.

FIDERER

It's a special dinner, it isn't optional.

CHARLIE

She's a Bartlet. It's been special every day since '62.

CUT TO:

21 INT. MURAL ROOM - DAY 21

CONGRESSMAN DONALD RICHTER sits with the UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE (THEODORE MONTGOMERY).

RICHTER

I spoke to the gal here and then got a call from some flunkie at the Sudan desk. It doesn't inspire a great deal of confidence.

The door opens and Bartlet enters.

BARTLET

Congressman, you start saying "hostages," things get a little out of hand.

RICHTER

(rising)
Mr. President.

BARTLET

(shaking hands)
Sit. Hey Ted.

RICHTER

Proselytizing's punishable by death over there.

BARTLET

They're not gonna do that. Ted spoke with the families, let 'em know we're waiting on a report from the consular officer, you gotta let it go through channels.

RICHTER

We barely have an embassy in Sudan.

(CONTINUED)

MONTGOMERY

A consular officer from Cairo flies in when we have a problem. He's on the plane.

*
*

RICHTER

There should be a call to the Prime Minister.

MONTGOMERY

State handles thousands of these a year. Like it or not, Americans are subject to the laws of the country they're in.

RICHTER

These aren't crack dealers.

*

BARTLET

We don't arbitrate. We can't, not in 193 countries, with as many legal systems.

*

RICHTER

They didn't break a law. They were stocking a food warehouse, it was looted as soon as they were arrested.

Bartlet sneaks a look to Montgomery -- that true?

RICHTER

Mr. President, these are young people who have taken a couple of years out of their lives to bring food to a drought stricken, civil war riddled nation, of course they're religious. Someone asks them what it means to be a Christian, they're going to give an answer. That is not proselytizing. The Secretary of State needs to pick up the phone.

MONTGOMERY

As soon as they know it's a Presidential priority they'll hold us up for millions.

*

RICHTER

I've got 22 days of Christmas events ahead of me just like you do, Mr. President. I'm not sure how I explain to my district that Christians doing charitable works are in a Sudanese jail because we're too cheap to bail them out.

(CONTINUED)

MONTGOMERY

You ask the Prime Minister of Sudan to lean on a local official--

BARTLET

A warlord...

MONTGOMERY

Either way, you'll have to authorize a whole new aid package for incentive. The foreign aid budget isn't so generous to start with.

BARTLET

Which is why we depend on NGOs. Anybody brave enough to volunteer in Sudan... It's not like there were hordes of Americans, clamoring to get on that plane. Make the call.

MONTGOMERY

Mr. President--

BARTLET

Let's get the Secretary of State on the phone.

Montgomery reluctantly leans over and dials the phone on the end table.

CUT TO:

22 INT. OVAL OFFICE - SAME TIME

22

C.J. stands in front of the President's desk, coat on.

C.J.

We're expecting about 6,000 people. We're going to switch on the lights, then there'll be performances by the United States Marine Band and the Louisiana Bayou Gospel Choir. And there's going to be a troupe of dancing snowmen. Men, really, dressed as snowmen. Not as scary as it sounds. Though probably deeply humiliating for the men. No? Snowmen?

REVEAL: Gus sitting across from her, dwarfed by the big chair despite the Michelin Man effect of winter coat, scarf, hat. The dancing snowmen, like the rest of the situation, are doing nothing for him. C.J.'s doing her best to get through it, but the babysitting is doing nothing for her.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

C.J.

Your Mom's gonna be right back. And your
Grampa'll be rolling in any second now.

(beat)

So what'd you think of the Three Tenors?

CUT TO:

23 INT. CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

23

Fiderer finds Bartlet coming out of the Mural Room and she
follows him down the hall.

BARTLET

Is Dr. McNally in her office?

FIDERER

I believe so. How about I send her in
right after the Tree rehearsal.

BARTLET

Come again?

FIDERER

Liz is concerned that Gus may find it
overwhelming, with the cameras, and the
crowds and all. We're going to practice.

BARTLET

Flipping a switch?

FIDERER

We're going to show him the platform, and
the tree, and the switch certainly.

BARTLET

He'll be fine. Ellie can show him, she
did it one year in New Hampshire.

(off her look)

Ellie's not here yet?

FIDERER

A topic for another time.

BARTLET

Alright push the rehearsal. I need to
stop in Nancy McNally's.

(beat)

Is Ellie coming?

FIDERER

She's working on it.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

BARTLET

One would never know that the leaders of powerful nations respond to my call on a moment's notice.

FIDERER

Not at first glance, sir, no.

CUT TO:

24 INT. WILL'S OFFICE - DAY

24

WILL's at his desk. Toby stands in the open door.

TOBY

Russell's speaking to the American Nursing Association this week?

Will nods.

TOBY

We need him to do a speech insert.

He hands Will a page. Will reads.

WILL

In his first big health care speech?

TOBY

It'll come up in Q&A anyway, might as well nip it in the bud.

WILL

By making his first speech to the medical community about assisted suicide? Are you kidding? Are you people trying to kill me?

TOBY

We're trying to make sure you can move to Oregon and kill yourself.

WILL

He needs to be talking about the insurance gap, and prescription drugs. Bread and butter issues.

TOBY

We need to place some distance between the President and--

(CONTINUED)

WILL

You know how this thing polls? 48% of Americans consider it a right, 46% of Americans consider it morally reprehensible. It is the definition of a lose-lose issue.

TOBY

The AG's back-dooring this on a technicality, we need to wait for the courts to knock it down, which they will, meanwhile he's usurping the policy prerogative of the President, somebody needs to remind the public this wasn't our decision.

WILL

You guys are asking me to groom a backwater Congressman, I don't know how to do that if you--

TOBY

We didn't ask you to groom Russell for a presidential run. He asked you.

WILL

He was chosen by the President.

TOBY

He was chosen by the Republicans.

WILL

Look, I've got a budget to finalize--

TOBY

I'm sorry. I'm sure you're gonna pull a great Eliza Doolittle here.

WILL

Your confidence is touching.

TOBY

Meanwhile, if the Vice President would be so kind, between campaign stops, could he do the President this favor?

Will makes him wait a beat.

WILL

I'll run it by him.

TOBY

Okay. You do that. You run it by him.

(CONTINUED)

Toby exits as we

CUT TO:

25 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

25

Donna walks with Josh.

DONNA

It's important that you look at the catalogues before the end of the day.

JOSH

It's three weeks away.

DONNA

Who's in charge of shopping?

JOSH

You are.

DONNA

There are pages turned down, with post-its that tell you which of your relatives the gift is for. If you're happy with the choice you should initial at the X. If you're not happy with the choice you should remember how this goes when you try to do it yourself.

JOSH

I like the polar fleece stuff.

DONNA

Who's in charge of shopping?

ZOEY

Hey.

JOSH/DONNA

Hey/Hi.

ZOEY just walked past them and it takes a second to register.

DONNA

Hi!

JOSH

You look fantastic!

ZOEY

Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

DONNA

Gosh it's great to see you back here.

ZOEY

(still walking)

Good to be back.

JOSH

Wow. She looks great.

Josh enters--

26 INT. MARGARET'S AREA - CONTINUOUS

26

Leo's looking through the in-box on Margaret's desk. *

JOSH

Angela taking care of Richter and his
hostages? *

LEO

Yeah.

JOSH

(beat)

You know, I could do a little of the-- *

LEO

You hate dealing with freshmen
congressmen.

JOSH

Yeah.

LEO

You try to do a guy a favor.

JOSH

No, I know. So, if Angela's got a way
with the new kids, I got a job for her.
Nice young guy from New Hampshire, wants
to run for Congress. Married to the
boss's daughter.

As the color drains from Leo's face, we

CUT TO:

27 OMITTED (INCORPORATED INTO SCENE 26)

27 *

28

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

28

Josh and Leo stand, waiting for some kind of response from Bartlet.

BARTLET

In New Hampshire? United States Congress? Not the state--

JOSH

No.

BARTLET

And he wants an endorsement.

JOSH

I spoke to the county chair, and the D triple C. They have some doubts.

LEO

(to Bartlet)

Did you know about this thing with Lanex Biotech?

BARTLET

They were in a nosedive. I know he tried to pull them out.

JOSH

He didn't.

LEO

DNC wants to run Mitch Clark. He's been in the state legislature three terms, he's got ideas, he's a deal maker. This has been a Republican seat for a couple terms now, the party doesn't want to risk it with anybody untried.

(beat)

We don't endorse in contested primaries, it'd be a real bear to get behind him.

JOSH

Even with our endorsement he may not make it through the primary.

LEO

Then everybody looks like an idiot.

JOSH

Could be the best way to get the bug out of his system.

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET

No, I don't want him in the primary.
I'll talk to him.

JOSH

I can--

BARTLET

No I'll do it.

LEO

Mr. President, he went to Josh. Asked his opinion. You gotta respect that. He didn't want to put you in an awkward position. Didn't want it to be about he's your son-in-law. Let Josh take care of it.

BARTLET

(beat)

Tell him to think about state legislature. Work his way up. It's just the timing.

JOSH

Thank you Mr. President.

Josh exits. Bartlet turns to Leo.

BARTLET

Can you imagine? Campaigning?

LEO

Crisis averted.

BARTLET

He offered to stump for me in the first gubernatorial. I'd never been so terrified in my life.

LEO

Did he do it?

BARTLET

From each according to his abilities. He held up signs and smiled.

CUT TO:

29 INT. TOBY'S OFFICE - DAY

29

Will taps on Toby's open door.

(CONTINUED)

WILL

I spoke to the Vice President about the assisted suicide thing. He's not comfortable getting into it.

TOBY

I asked you, what, ten minutes ago?

WILL

I'm a bigwig over there, I don't have to make an appointment. *

TOBY

You found him, brought it up, carefully considered, and then decided I could go stuff it? *

WILL

He agreed with my analysis that death plays poorly at Christmas.

TOBY

Did you even take it to him or did you walk around the block and come back with your "no"?

WILL

I made your case.

TOBY

I should have sent a card.

WILL

I'm not your man in the VP's office, Toby, it can't work like that.

TOBY

I know who you are, you're the guy we pulled out of Botox Babylon over there and brought to work for the President. *

WILL

I work for somebody else now.

(beat)

I don't want this to be acrimonious--

TOBY

No you certainly don't. *

(beat) *

The President will take it to the Vice President. *

(CONTINUED)

WILL

Okay.

Will exits as we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

30 INT. ROOSEVELT ROOM - AFTERNOON (FORMERLY MESS) 30 *

There's a North Pole scene in the center of the table, flanked at each end by Rudolph the Reindeer statuettes, red noses blinking on and off. Toby's got a few briefing books spread out, reading as he eats his lunch. Rudolph's nose casts a blinking red light on the page. Toby stares him down for a moment, then turns the thing around so the nose faces the other way. C.J. passes, sees Toby through the glass, enters. *

C.J.

You see the clips Carol dropped off?

He didn't.

C.J.

The Jackson Clarion-Ledger says "Attorney General Cracks Down on Doc Peddling Death."

TOBY

Catchy.

C.J.

Nobody but the locals in Oregon have picked it up yet, except the Jackson Clarion-Ledger.

TOBY

Jackson, Mississippi?

C.J.

Home of the steam boat, the mud pie, and Attorney General Alan Fisk.

TOBY

The steam boat's from the river, not the state.

C.J.

You wanna fight me on the pie too? He's talked about running for governor.

TOBY

The AG?

C.J.

Is the Vice President gonna--

(CONTINUED)

TOBY

I'm working on it.

She absently fiddles with Rudolph. Turns him back around.

C.J.

I've been thinking. Maybe it's time to get back into this.

TOBY

We thought it through the first time.

C.J.

Five years ago.

TOBY

Oregon hasn't worked out all the kinks.

C.J.

The number of suicides among the terminally ill has gone down since they passed it.

TOBY

A policy of non-intervention--

C.J.

--is a little lame when there's a 14th Amendment violation in the offing.

TOBY

We have no constitutional right to die. Refuse treatment, yes, but--

C.J.

The framers never considered the notion of degenerative death. An event which is entirely the creation of modern medicine. We have a right not to reach the end of life in unendurable suffering and agony.

TOBY

We're not stopping anyone from squirreling away fifty Second in the night-stand and washing 'em down with a bottle of vodka.

C.J.

In order to down fifty Second, you have to have control of both the muscles of the hand and the muscles of the esophagus.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

C.J. (cont'd)
This is an opportunity. And we're dodging it.

She turns to walk away.

TOBY
C.J. How's your dad?

She's angry at first -- that's not what this is about. But of course it is. Then... *

C.J.
He's in the hospital again, I don't know. I don't know if he knows the difference. *

She exits. Rudolph's blinking. Toby takes his empty coffee mug and plunks it over the statue's head.

CUT TO:

31 INT. RESIDENCE SITTING ROOM - AFTERNOON (WAS GUEST BEDROOM) 31 *

Doug digs through a big suitcase on the bed. There is a KNOCK on the door.

DOUG
Come on in.

Josh enters.

JOSH
Hey.

DOUG
Hey there. Gus has a glove somewhere in here, I know I packed it.

JOSH
He's hitting already?

DOUG
Like a pro. Can't catch to save his life, but he can swing, boy.

JOSH
That's great. So, New Hampshire First.

DOUG
Yeah. Whatcha got?

JOSH
Do you know a guy named Mitchell Clark?

(CONTINUED)

DOUG

Sure. Voted for him a couple, three times.

JOSH

The DNC seems to think he's got a chance with Campbell's seat.

DOUG

Anyone's got a chance. It's a moderate district, it's poachable.

JOSH

No question, we have a shot, but the party, they're reticent--

DOUG

It's the nepotism thing isn't it.

JOSH

Could be part of it.

DOUG

Look, it's gonna come up. And it's gonna pass. If the worst thing they can say is I'm Jed Bartlet's son-in-law... Once the public gets to know me as an individual, it's a whole different race.

JOSH

What about state legislature?

Doug smiles.

JOSH

It's the place to learn. The President--

DOUG

Come on. I run while Jed's in office, I've got a leg up like no two, no six terms as a state legislator will ever give me. What kind of fool is going to let a moment like that sail by?

JOSH

I don't know.

Doug opens a carry-on bag on the floor and finds the glove lying right on top, a glove for a very small hand.

(CONTINUED)

DOUG

Here we go. Is that the greatest thing you ever saw? Can't even get my thumb in there.

JOSH

Yeah.

DOUG

I appreciate your concern, I do. But it's gonna be fine. I'm a winner, buddy, I'm gonna win this.

Doug gives him a pat on the arm, and heads out the door. Josh follows into--

32 INT. RESIDENCE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

32

A Secret Service Agent stands in the hallway.

DOUG

(to Agent)

Alright, Chris, let's do it.

Josh watches as Doug jogs down the hall, the Agent following.

CUT TO:

33 INT. FIDERER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

33

Charlie's working, Toby's waiting when the Oval door opens and out comes Zoey.

ZOEY

Hi Toby.

TOBY

Hi. You back to stay?

ZOEY

Nah. I'm liking New Hampshire.

CHARLIE

You can go in.

TOBY

You look great.

ZOEY

Thanks. Good to see you Toby.

Toby enters the Oval. Zoey's been gracious, but this routine's wearing on her.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE
People making a fuss?

ZOEY
Yeah.

CHARLIE
You don't look that good.

Which earns him a smile and a punch on the arm as she exits.

CUT TO:

34 INT. OVAL OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON 34

Bartlet and Toby.

TOBY
I was hoping you could speak to the Vice President, ask him to do some talking for us on the right-to-die situation.

BARTLET
Yeah, he said Will brought it up.

TOBY
You already discussed it?

BARTLET
That's not gonna work. Leo's hoping the Attorney General'll back down. But if not, C.J. puts it in a Christmas Eve briefing, restates our position, it's gone by Boxing Day.

TOBY
We just had a huge victory, we're looking at a month of Christmas carols and the official ornament from the State of South Dakota, the press is itching for a story with blood in it.

BARTLET
The court'll stop him, there's no--

TOBY
One in five patients requesting aid-in-dying has MS. One in five. You know what the questions sound like?

BARTLET
I have a pretty good--

(CONTINUED)

TOBY

How long does the President think he has before his MS becomes debilitating? Do his doctors anticipate a speedy decline? Does he have a plan? Does the First Lady have four glass vials and a syringe in a lock box in the night stand?

BARTLET

She may chicken out, maybe I'll call you.

TOBY

That's the conversation. It won't be Controlled Substances Act, or federal overreaching, or anything else. I don't think we're ready to have that conversation with the American public.

Charlie knocks and enters.

CHARLIE

Excuse me, Mr. President.

Charlie hands Bartlet a note, which he reads. He looks up at Toby who's standing, waiting.

BARTLET

Leo's put you at the head of the table for State of the Union.

TOBY

Yes sir.

Bartlet considers him for a minute, pissed enough to wonder if that was a bad idea, then places his attention back on the note.

TOBY

Mr. President, the VP is--

BARTLET

You can go.

Toby waits for a beat, but Bartlet's done. Toby leaves.

CUT TO:

Josh stands at Donna's desk glancing over a memo when Leo comes through.

(CONTINUED)

LEO
Hey. Did you get a chance to...

JOSH
Doug? Yeah.

Josh walks on with Leo into--

36 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

36

LEO
He take it okay?

JOSH
He did, you know, he really did.

LEO
Good.

Josh continues on with him.

LEO
You want to carry my books or something?

JOSH
I'm not sure he got it.

LEO
Got what?

JOSH
The rejection.

LEO
If he didn't take it personal, all the better.

JOSH
I think he thinks he's still running.

Leo stops.

LEO
You didn't tell him?

JOSH
He took it more like a cautionary tale than an actual--

LEO
Oh for the love of--

(CONTINUED)

JOSH
He's resilient. Which isn't such a bad thing in a candidate.

LEO
He's gonna show up at dinner popping champagne corks and the President's gonna be stuck delivering the news in front of the guy's wife and his mother-in-law... You have to go back and tell him no.

JOSH
Yeah.

LEO
In no uncertain terms.

JOSH
I'm sorry. I'll--

LEO
Draw a picture if you need to. A ballot, in a circle, with a line through it.

Josh turns around and heads off as Leo continues into--

37 INT. FIDERER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 37

--to find C.J. and Fiderer. *

C.J.
Liz and Gus are a little behind schedule, can we move this to four?

FIDERER
Do you want to belly dance for the Joint Chiefs or shall I?
(to Leo)
Go on in. *

Leo continues into--

38 INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 38

Bartlet's looking slightly perturbed.

LEO
Everything okay?

BARTLET
I'm waiting for my daughter and her son so we can practice the ceremonial flipping of a switch.

(CONTINUED)

LEO

Right.

BARTLET

He had a Fisher Price gizmo hooked to the side of his crib with more cranks and levers than a DC 10, but we're gonna practice flipping a switch.

LEO

C.J. says the assisted suicide story's showing up in some Mississippi papers.

BARTLET

You think Fisk is feeding it to them?
(then)
I want him in here first thing tomorrow.

Leo hands him a file.

LEO

Consular report from Sudan. Holly Gilweit and Katherine Melo, ages 20 and 23 respectively, had a grand total of 18 Bibles and a video on the lives of the Apostles.

BARTLET

The NGO know about this?

LEO

They never identified themselves as evangelists, never mentioned religion. *

BARTLET

So they're undercover agents?

LEO

Spies for Christ, yeah.

BARTLET

18 Bibles. They couldn't have just talked about loving kindness and good will toward men?
I just had Berryhill call the Prime Minister of Sudan and issue a stern reprimand, for behavior that I likened to that of street gangs and petty thieves. *
We need to issue an apology. *

(CONTINUED)

LEO

We can't. Ten other relief workers who weren't distributing anything other than wheat and sorghum are in jail. We gotta stick with our denial.

BARTLET

But they know--

LEO

And we know. That's where the money comes in. Nancy's waiting downstairs.

BARTLET

Debbie! 20 and 23?

LEO

Girls.

BARTLET

Toby asked me today if I have a plan for my death. Liz has never asked. Zoey. Ellie asked her mother once, but I'm not supposed to know about it. I get Toby.

Fiderer enters.

BARTLET

Are we expecting Liz and Gus?

FIDERER

They're running late. There's a disagreement about a bath.

BARTLET

Nancy McNally's waiting and she already had her bath.

FIDERER

I'll tell Liz.

Fiderer hands him a couple documents for his signature.

BARTLET

Josh talk to Doug yet?

LEO

They spoke.

(beat)

He didn't seem to follow, Josh is gonna try again.

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET
He didn't follow?

LEO
Josh wasn't clear.

BARTLET
What's not to follow?

LEO
It's hard to say. Thank you, Mr.
President.

Leo exits. Bartlet gathers his things. *

BARTLET
3.2 billion men in the world. She picks
this one.

FIDERER
I hear he had a great pitching arm.

BARTLET
When he was nineteen, sure.

They exit into-- *

38A INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

38A *

BARTLET
She dumped a MacArthur winner for this
guy. Zoey left Charlie for the Frog.
Ellie and the guitar player with the
purple van. My children choose morons,
every one. *

FIDERER
They say daughters look for their
fathers.

BARTLET
You know, fifteen years ago we took a trip
to Egypt, all five of us. Saw the
pyramids, Luxor, then headed up into the
Sinai. We had a guide, a Bedouin man, who
called me Abu el Banat. And whenever we'd
meet another Bedouin, he'd introduce me as
Abu el Banat and the Bedouin would laugh
and laugh and then offer me a cup of tea.
And I'd go to pay them for the tea and
they wouldn't let me. Abu el Banat means
Father of Daughters. They thought the tea
was the least they could do.

(CONTINUED)

They head toward the Sit Room as we--

CUT TO:

39 INT. WILL'S OFFICE - EVENING (FORMERLY COMM. BULLPEN) 39

Will enters to find a MOVER assessing the room as his Sidekick loads Will's stuff into boxes.

MOVER
Boxes for all this, and dolly the couch.
And the desk.

WILL
Hi. What are you doing?

MOVER
This you?

WILL
Yeah.

MOVER
We're moving you to your new place across
the street.

WILL
I don't have a new--

MOVER
(looking at his work order)
Will Bailey. OEOB.

Out of the corner of his eye, Will catches Toby enter his office and wing the door closed behind him.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

40 INT. FIDERER'S OFFICE - EVENING (FORMERLY OVAL OFFICE) 40 *

Christmas music courtesy of the U.S. Marine Band and the sounds of a large crowd filter through the Portico doors. Bartlet and C.J. stand by the door, bundled in winter coats, beginning to overheat. Charlie enters and shakes his head "no."

BARTLET
Does he know we've heard "Walkin' in a Winter Wonderland" twice?

C.J.
What did Liz say?

CHARLIE
She says we should have rehearsed.

BARTLET
I should go up there.

C.J.
7,000 people standing in the cold, sir, you have to go turn on the lights.

Zoey arrives, a phalanx of Agents trailing.

BARTLET
Any movement?

ZOEY
There was a lot of noise, and somebody's in a time out.

BARTLET
Gus or Doug?

ZOEY
I'll go. You and me.

They didn't expect that. Bartlet looks to an Agent.

BARTLET
Len, this gonna be okay?

The Agent nods.

BARTLET
It's cold out there, you got a--

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

Zoe.

Charlie's taken his coat off, and holds it out to her.

ZOEY

You're a prince.

She puts it on and takes her father's arm. The Agent speaks into his wrist piece as Zoey and Bartlet exit, followed by, C.J. and Charlie.

AGENT

We're moving Eagle and Bookbag.
Replacing Eagle and Tonka with Eagle and Bookbag. Units 6 and 9 assist exit.
Uniforms to the front for a possible surge.

C.J.

She's good.

Charlie smiles. Music swells, as does applause, and some excited hollering when they figure out it's Zoey coming out there.

ON FIDERER'S TV: A live feed of the proceedings outside: Zoey and Bartlet making their way out to the Ellipse, past rope lines of PEOPLE CHEERING, and CAMERAS FLASHING. Zoey's all smiles. They arrive at a microphone. *

BARTLET (ON TV)

Good evening, and thank you all for joining us on this very special night...

CUT TO:

41 INT. JOSH'S OFFICE - NIGHT (A LITTLE LATER)

41

Doug knocks on the open door.

DOUG

Donna said you were looking for me? *

JOSH

Yeah. How'd it go with the tree? *

DOUG

Lights are on, let's leave it at that.

JOSH

Okay. The conversation we had earlier. I think I wasn't clear.

(CONTINUED)

DOUG

This is awkward for all of you, I know that, I don't want you to feel--

JOSH

We're asking you not to run.

Beat.

DOUG

Who's we?

JOSH

The DNC. The White House.

DOUG

The President?

Josh reluctantly nods. *

JOSH

If you want to go forward on your own... The White House can't endorse you.

DOUG

Wow. Wow.

JOSH

New Hampshire House is a great place to get some experience, build a network--

DOUG

I have a network. I've been working R&D in the New England tech corridor for 15 years. I have the CEO of Diginet and the CFO of McGrath ready to join my finance committee. I've got the guy who ran your boss's New Hampshire primary finding me a campaign manager, and I spent five hours last Sunday in a duck blind with the editor of the *Manchester Union Leader*. I'm running for Congress.

JOSH

Hal Collins is-- you met with Hal?

DOUG

There's lots of fun to be had with all the "nobody's good enough for the President's daughter" stuff. But I'm not actually an idiot.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

That's--

DOUG

I'm gonna have to dash, I'm late for dinner, but I appreciate your time, Josh, I really do.

Doug gives him a firm handshake and he's out the door.

JOSH

Any time.

CUT TO:

42 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

42

Bartlet, Abbey, Zoey, and Liz sit at a lavishly appointed table, two chairs empty. Salad's already at each place, but nobody's touched it. They're waiting.

BARTLET

He shouldn't be upset, he'll light the tree next year.

LIZ

He's just wound up.

BARTLET

He's not eating?

LIZ

It's eight o'clock. He goes to sleep at eight. He eats at five.

BARTLET

Why didn't we eat earlier?

ABBEY

You're a bright guy and that's a stupid question.

ZOEY

Where's Doug?

LIZ

I think he's making sure Gus is down.

BARTLET

Isn't there some kind of person--

LIZ

A nanny is not a substitute for a parent.

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET
I thought that's exactly what a nanny
was.

ZOEY
She has a strange chin.

ABBEY
No she doesn't.

ZOEY
She kinda has no chin.

LIZ
She's Swedish.

ZOEY
Yeah but most Swedes have chins.

BARTLET
Would you like to call up and tell him
we're starting and he should leave the
child with the competent chinless Swede?

ABBEY
We can give it ten more minutes.

LIZ
Is Ellie--

BARTLET
Apparently not.

ABBEY
Can we give it ten minutes?

It's getting a little George and Martha. Liz looks at Zoey --
they always like this lately? The door opens and Doug enters,
a strained smile on his face.

ABBEY
There he is.

DOUG
I'm sorry. Are we eating already?

ZOEY
We're waiting.

LIZ
Is he--

(CONTINUED)

DOUG
He's fine, he's watching a video.

LIZ
I should--

DOUG
He's fine. So. What's on the menu?

ABBEY
The menu is absolutely--

DOUG
Where's Ellie?

BARTLET
We have yet to determine if medical
science can spare Ellie Bartlet for an
evening.

ABBEY
We're giving her a few minutes.

A brief silence.

LIZ
(quietly, to Doug)
Did you...

DOUG
Mm hm.
(beat)
I think I'm going to grab a drink, if
that works. Anyone else want a...

He stands.

ABBEY
Let me get the steward.

DOUG
No, I'll get it. They put ice in the
scotch and I really don't want any ice in
my scotch today. It's-- which one's the
sitting room?

Zoey points to one of the three available doors.

DOUG
Great.

Doug exits. Liz shoots a piercing look at her father, then
rises and follows Doug out.

(CONTINUED)

ABBEY
(to Bartlet)
What was that?

But before he can answer, another door opens and Leo enters.

LEO
Good evening, everybody. I apologize,
they said they hadn't started serving.

ABBEY
That's alright.

BARTLET
Did you want to sit? We have room.

LEO
Thank you, no, we, uh...

Bartlet rises and steps aside with Leo.

LEO
Two more physicians' licenses were just
suspended. The AG's downstairs. I asked
him to come in tomorrow, but he's getting
on a plane, I figured you'd want him
before he left.

BARTLET
When's his flight?

LEO
Two hours.

Bartlet turns and looks at Abbey.

BARTLET
Five minutes. Ellie's still not here,
I'll beat her back.

Leo shoots Abbey a contrite look as he and Bartlet exit.
Abbey looks at Zoey. Zoey smiles.

ABBEY
(calling off)
John!

The STEWARD enters.

ABBEY
We seem to have lost our quorum.

CUT TO:

43 INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

43

Alan Fisk stands waiting as Bartlet barrels in. *

BARTLET
Two more doctors? You couldn't wait a year to start campaigning?

FISK
Mr. President-- *

BARTLET
You don't run for governor from my Cabinet. *

FISK
You really think a run to the right on a couple pro-life standards is gonna win me Mississippi? *

BARTLET
"The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, are reserved to the States respectively." *

FISK
How long before there's a lawyer arguing that we can't limit this to terminal patients, we ought to include the chronically ill? When is it allowing children to make the decision for their parents? *

BARTLET
Yes, when is it allowing the State to decide, not families? We'll start knocking off the weak and the indigent along with the sick and dying. When does my administration deteriorate completely into the Third Reich? *

FISK
I'm not suggesting-- *

BARTLET
The federal government has no place here. The question is a moral one, an individual one, a grappling with the nature of life and the purview of God in which the federal government has no-- Leo! *

Bartlet starts to go. *

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET

You do what you want, the courts are gonna nail you. You're counting on my silence and you've just lost it.

Leo enters from his office. *

FISK

Sir, a public debate--

BARTLET

Yeah, I didn't want to get on TV with Oprah and talk about who's gonna cut my meat when the coordination goes, but c'est la vie. Lid's off. *

(then) *

You pull this crap one more time, you're fired. Tell Janet Merry Christmas. *

Bartlet exits. Leo shows Fisk out, closing the Oval door behind them. *

CUT TO:

44 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

44

The table's empty. The Steward refolds napkins, straightens place settings and chairs. And ELLIE BARTLET enters.

STEWARD

Good evening, Miss Bartlet.

ELLIE

Good evening, John. Is my-- *

STEWARD

They'll be right back.

ELLIE

Oh. Okay.

STEWARD

Can I get you something to drink?

ELLIE

No. I'm fine.

The Steward smiles and retires to the sideboard, preparing silverware for the second course. Ellie pulls out a chair and sits at the long empty table, alone.

CUT TO:

45 INT. RESIDENCE CORRIDOR - NIGHT 45

Bartlet walks slowly toward the guest bedroom door. He stands looking at the door for a moment, about as excited as a child staring down a dose of cod liver oil. Then he quietly knocks. The door opens. Bartlet leans against the doorpost, looking into--

46 INT. RESIDENCE GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 46

The room is lit with spill from the hallway, and a small lamp on the night-stand. Liz methodically plucks toys and kid clothing off the floor.

When they speak, which they don't do quite yet, they speak quietly.

BARTLET

There's a guy named Mitch Clark, DNC's been--

LIZ

Mitchell Clark single-handedly disemboweled managed care reform. He put together the committee, took credit for creating rate stabilization, then sold the whole thing down the river. How do you think he's financing a run? He's got board members from White Mountain Mutual writing check after--

She stops abruptly and goes back to cleaning.

BARTLET

The district's splitting right, much more than in my day.

LIZ

Josh mentioned something about that. Apparently he was very helpful.

BARTLET

Elizabeth.

LIZ

You couldn't give him the courtesy of five minutes? It's one thing to delegate my car loan, or Ellie's MCATs to your staff, but my husband--

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET

He went to Josh. He didn't come to me.
If he wanted my advice, or if you did,
for that matter...

(beat)

It's not as if you aren't involved. Josh
says Hal Collins is in. The finance
committee...

LIZ

Mom made a useful suggestion or two in
the early years.

BARTLET

"The Speaker can convince most people of
most things and himself of almost
anything." Doug came up with that?

LIZ

We're a good team. We have different
strengths. And skills. He has skills,
you've never bothered to--

BARTLET

He's a great guy. And a fantastic
father. You're the politician. Why the
hell don't you run?

LIZ

Because Annie pierced her face, and this
one can't catch. Or bathe.

BARTLET

You can--

LIZ

No you can't. Forgive me, Ms. Steinem
and Ms. Friedan, you cannot do it all.

BARTLET

Your mother did.

LIZ

No. Daddy. She didn't.

Beat. Bartlet takes a weary breath.

BARTLET

There's no question, we missed things, we
all made sacrifices, but, Elizabeth, when
Annie and Gus watch you walk onto the
floor of the House--

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

I don't want my son to be part of my
entourage. A photo op is not his idea of--
(beat)
I don't want it.

BARTLET

Then why would you let Doug?

LIZ

Because he's my husband and he asked me
to.

She goes to the bathroom to straighten up scattered towels and
bath toys. She's in there for a long moment, Bartlet catching
glimpses of her through the open door. He didn't think the
conversation was over, but perhaps it is.

CUT TO:

47 INT. JOSH'S BULLPEN - NIGHT

47

Josh drops a report on Donna's desk.

DONNA

You gonna come watch, there's people
singing in the lobby.

JOSH

Spontaneously?

DONNA

The choir from the Tree Lighting's-- Hi
Angela.

Angela's just entered.

ANGELA

Sometime tomorrow I need you to sit down
with me and find some foreign aid money
we can reprogram.

JOSH

For what?

ANGELA

Humanitarian assistance in the Sudan.

JOSH

You're bribing a dictator to get your
missionaries out?

(CONTINUED)

ANGELA
I'm free at ten.

Donna checks the book.

ANGELA
Feel good to see your replacement drop
the ball?

DONNA
Ten fifteen?

Angela nods, exits.

DONNA
You could make an effort, she might like
you.

JOSH
She doesn't have to like me.

CUT TO:

48 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

48

Not a lot has changed. Plates untouched. No people. Except
Bartlet, who sits at the head of the table eating an apple.
Abbey enters. Stands. With no kids and no staff to perform
for, it's a bit cold.

ABBEY
You didn't want to wait for dinner?

BARTLET
I'm waiting. There's a fruit bowl.
Turns out the fruit's real.

ABBEY
Zoey and Ellie went down to watch the
carolers. Didn't know how long you'd be.

BARTLET
Ellie's here? That's nice, she enjoying
her stay?

ABBEY
You talk to Liz?

BARTLET
I did. I'm not sure we're gonna see her
for dinner.

Abbey sighs, annoyed.

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET

It's okay, I've got a picture in my wallet of the three girls together from Acadia in '96.

ABBEY

It's Doug's fight, she doesn't need to get in the middle.

BARTLET

It's bigger than Doug.

ABBEY

What, are we back to the ice skates we never got her?

BARTLET

That and the cauliflower incident.

ABBEY

We didn't beat them.

BARTLET

There's still time.

Abbey almost smiles.

BARTLET

Shame about the tree.

ABBEY

You really thought he was going to march out there--

BARTLET

I did. He would have had fun.

ABBEY

He thought he was doing it alone, with you. He didn't understand what all the people were doing out there.

BARTLET

Yeah.

(beat)

Last Christmas Ellie wasn't around, and the year before there was Tennessee and the calls to Belarus. I don't remember when it was just five of us and weather and everybody in their slippers.

ABBEY

We don't do that.

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET

We did.

ABBEY

I was on call three straight Christmas Eves when Ellie was little. We've never been Currier and Ives.

Beat.

BARTLET

I'm putting together a panel on assisted suicide. If you've got names-- medical ethicists.

ABBEY

Your position's changed?

He shakes his head.

BARTLET

No syringe in the night-stand. It'll get ugly and that's that.

(beat)

You gonna be there?

She's surprised he asks, but also surprised the answer isn't on the tip of her tongue. Eventually--

ABBEY

Yeah.

It's not a rousing affirmation, but it's a start. She stands to go.

BARTLET

Abbey--

The kiss stops him. It's the first in quite a while and it's not so much affection as it is water to people who have been walking under relentless sun for a long long time. When she pulls away she doesn't look at him, she simply goes to the door...

ABBEY

Gus is still up, go say good-night.

...and exits.

CUT TO:

49 INT. C.J.'S OFFICE - NIGHT

49

C.J. on the phone. Her tree still isn't standing.

C.J.

He's not a fan of turkey. I was told he didn't eat any of it. Yes, Talmidge Cregg. The other night nurse... right, we spoke the day after Thanksgiving. It's fine, I just thought I can send a ham-- I'm not asking the kitchen to do it, I'm saying it's three weeks away, they vacuum pack it, if I can just send it to you and you can see that they give it to him instead of the-- No. No, this is C.J., I'm his daughter.

CUT TO:

50 INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

50

Decorations sparkle. A crowd of Staffers listens as a CHOIR sings a peaceful Kyrie Eleison.

In the back, Zoey and Ellie stand together in a doorway. After a moment, Liz enters, joins them. Zoey asks her something we don't hear. When she answers, Ellie smiles and Zoey suppresses a giggle. Ellie wasn't gonna laugh, but once Zoey did... Liz shushes them both, trying not to draw attention, knowing they're always a spectacle, knowing they're laughing at her. Zoey puts a reassuring arm around Liz, and they focus on the music, all three struggling to keep a straight face. Failing.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. WHITE HOUSE ELLIPSE - NIGHT

51

A couple of Agents trudge across the lawn, over patches of crunchy snow from an inch that fell a day or so ago. A couple more Agents. Then Bartlet and Gus (Gus wearing coat, hat, boots over feety pajamas). They cross the Ellipse to the brilliantly lit Colorado blue spruce, known as the National Christmas Tree. They stand in front of it looking up, boy and man dwarfed by the 42-foot wall of lights.

We pull back, and back, and Bartlet and Gus get smaller and smaller until we can't really see them anymore. All we see is the tree. And from our distance we hear:

BARTLET

Ready?

(CONTINUED)

GUS

Yeah.

BARTLET

Go ahead.

And the lights on the huge tree go off.

And on again.

And off again.

And on again.

As we

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE