

BRAINDEAD

Written by

Robert King & Michelle King

Address
Phone Number

TEASER

INT. RUSSIAN CAR - DAY

WHOMP!-- BASH!--

--we're in a car crash-- a dashboard camera recording a car hitting a truck, SPINNING out of control, SLAMMING into a highway divider, coming to rest. And silence.

The drivers get out to discuss. Argue. Yell. "Na kaleni, suka--!" "Tvoyu mat'--!" This being Russia, they throw punches, wrestle, fall to the ground. Yep, it's the internet meme: Russian car crash video, but suddenly--

--BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!--

--the largest explosion ever recorded echoes overhead!

Like a million thunder claps! The drivers stop fighting, look up, see a hole burning through the sky! What the hell? And--

INT/EXT. VARIOUS SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS - DAY

--surveillance cameras all across Northern Russia record the sight: a METEORITE barreling toward earth! All witnessed through found footage. Store windows shatter, cars screech, people look up mouth's agape! Finally we CUT TO...

INT. LAKE CHEBARKUL SHORELINE - DAY

...a peaceful scene. Another dashboard camera, this one parked beside Lake Chebarkul. Lovers on the hood kissing, ice fishermen fishing, when--

--WHOOOOSH-- BAMMMM!-- a rocket of light smashes into the lake, throwing up a massive wave of ice and dark water! Heading straight toward us! The fishermen and lovers barely have time to react before it washes over them, thrusting everything into-- silence, darkness.

INT. LAKE CHEBARKUL SHORELINE - ONE HOUR LATER - DAY

RUSSIAN REPORTER

"Znat odin jazyk padeshevla!"

A news camera clicks on. It's a local reporter, lake side. News about the meteor: shots of the lake. It plays on...

INT. HEALY GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - ROOM - NIGHT

...a monitor half a world away. In a Georgetown townhouse. Just one monitor among dozens: reporting on various troubles: in Syria, Gaza, D.C. While...

LAUREL
When did this happen?

LAUREL HEALY (29) on her cell, dealing with her own disaster. Eclectic and lively, Laurel's an art school grad trying to find her way in the world. It's difficult when you're a Healy. The Healy are a Democratic dynasty-- the Gores on steroids-- and Laurel is the only one who hates politics.

LAUREL (CONT'D)
I thought the financing was in place-- Because you said so. No. Okay, I'll deal with it when I get back. Yeah, talk to you.

Laurel hangs up, frustrated:

LAUREL (CONT'D)
Dammit.

SENATOR SCHUMER
Is the bathroom through here?

SENATOR CHUCK SCHUMER peering in the door.

LAUREL
No, down the hall. Second door.

SENATOR SCHUMER
Thanks.

And Senator Schumer heads off as Laurel puts her cellphone away, swallows her disappointment, nods, heads out into...

INT. HEALY GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - VARIOUS ROOMS - NIGHT

...the middle of a party. A packed D.C. birthday party. Jazz quartet in the living room. Balloons everywhere. The crowd a mix of old and powerful, young and desperate. Laurel takes a drink from a passing tray.

HILL STAFFER DOUG
I know you from somewhere, don't I?

DOUG (28). Gung-ho Hill Staffer, earnestly flirtatious.

LAUREL
No, I don't think so.

HILL STAFFER DOUG
Becky?

LAUREL
Laurel.

HILL STAFFER DOUG
Right. Doug Steiner, legislative
aid to Mark Begich. You work for
Barbara Boxer, right?

LAUREL
No.

HILL STAFFER DOUG
Senate or house?

LAUREL
Neither.

HILL STAFFER DOUG
D.o.D.? Pentagon?

LAUREL
Sorry.

HILL STAFFER DOUG
(impressed)
The White House?

LAUREL
(decides not to let him
suffer anymore)
I'm a documentary filmmaker. Out
for the weekend from L.A.

HILL STAFFER DOUG
Ahhh, great. Nice meeting you.

And he heads off-- immediately. Laurel laughs to herself,
shakes her head:

LAUREL
Yep, D.C.

A LOBBYIST bumps Laurel aside, rushing past:

LOBBYIST
It's him. He's here.

A commotion at the front door. Some kind of political
celebrity arriving. The Vice-President? Secretary of State?
Laurel peers past the crowd to see who, and shakes her head,
smiling, realizing it's her brother:

LUKE HEALY
Sorry, we're late. We got stuck at
the Kennedy Center--

LUKE HEALY (38). The senate whip. Rising star. Man of appetites. Loves food, drinking, and power. He introduces his wife, GERMAINE (33), an ex-model, very pregnant, to SENATOR SPECK (40), a Kennedy-esque Democrat, great hair.

SENATOR SPECK
No problem. You look beautiful,
Germaine. How many months?

GERMAINE
Seven. I feel like a tub of lard--

They laugh, but Luke looks off and suddenly sees...

LUKE HEALY
SIS!

Laurel. He rushes up to her, hugs her, spins her around.

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)
Look at you! I didn't know you'd make
it--

LAUREL
Yeah, mom sent me a ticket--

LUKE HEALY
Germaine, Laurel is here!

GERMAINE
Thank god. I'll have somebody to
talk to--

But the three are interrupted by the ever-persistent Doug:

HILL STAFFER DOUG
Laurel *Healy!* Of course. I
thought I knew who you were--!

But Luke's two BODY MEN block Doug.

LAUREL
Wow. Look at you. Bodyguards.

LUKE HEALY
Yep. You used to make fun of me.
Now I'm powerful--

LAUREL
I still make fun of you--

Luke grins. Loves his sister. Loves the teasing.

GERMAINE

We should introduce you to them.
Mike and Al. They're both single--

LUKE HEALY

And Republican. Won't that make dad
happy?

LAUREL

(smiles)
He'd kill me, then you.

SCARLETT POLK

Senator, sorry, you have that
budget call. The Smithsonian--

Luke's chief of staff, SCARLETT POLK, pretty redhead.

LAUREL

I'll catch you later--

LUKE HEALY

No, no, if I have to work, you're
gonna keep me company. Make me one
of your Mojitos.

EXT. HEALY GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Laurel muddles mint for a Mojito as Luke sits on the kitchen
counter, waiting on his muted phone. Caterers rushing past.

LAUREL

What did dad do to my room? It
looks like the bedroom of a Bond
villain--

LUKE HEALY

Yeah. He's consulting with Armed
Services now.

LAUREL

Armed Services? Why Armed Services?

LUKE HEALY

Why not? Something Biden got him.
How are things in L.A.?

LAUREL

Fine.

LUKE HEALY

Yeah, sounds like it. Having
trouble with your student loans?

LAUREL
No, I just had the financing fall
through on a film.

LUKE HEALY
Really? The documentary about
religious music in Bora-Bora? Huh.

LAUREL
(throws a lime at him)
Solomon Islands. It took me a year
to get \$200,000 together. Now I
have to start over--

LUKE HEALY
You should do something people want
to see. Like gun control. I could
get you a NEA grant tomorrow--

LAUREL
Okay, let's let Laurel control her own
life for a few hours please--

But Luke raises a finger, unmutes his phone. Someone coming on:

LUKE HEALY
No, gentlemen. I'm still here. I
didn't have you on mute.

Laurel smiles-- bad boy-- slides him the mojito.

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)
I understand, Dr. Pittman, but the
Republicans want to decimate your
budget. We're your friends here.
We just need a 680 million cap.
(tastes the Mojito. Wow!)
Yes, I know it's science, and I know
it's important--

Luke makes a jerk-off gesture as...

INT. SMITHSONIAN RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

DR. PITTMAN
I don't think you understand *how*
important, Senator. We already
spent 680 million this year.

INTERCUT with DR. PITTMAN (40), pacing in his modern lab.
Soft Albert Brooks face, good heart, great scientist.

LUKE HEALY
Then you'll need to cut future programs.

ASSISTANT

Russia.

Pittman sees his ASSISTANT holding up another phone.

DR. PITTMAN

Senator, is there any way to get an additional 40 million? We're conducting a joint operation with the Russian Institute right now.

LUKE HEALY

No. I might be able to get you five, but my office will have to personally sign off on all expenditures--

DR. PITTMAN

Okay. Let me see what I can do.

Pittman hurriedly gets on the other phone, takes a breath:

DR. PITTMAN (CONT'D)

Dr. Lagunov. Hello. We have a bit of problem.

EXT. LAKE CHEBARKUL - SHORE - DAY

And we INTERCUT with DR. LAGUNOV (40) on the banks of Lake Chebarkul. Where the meteor crashed. Accented:

DR. LAGUNOV

We're about to bring the meteor up now.

DR. PITTMAN

Yes, unfortunately, is there any way you can do it...
(winces, hates this)
...cheaper?

Dr. Lagunov frowns, looks down the shore at a very expensive-looking SALVAGE CRANE being set up:

DR. LAGUNOV

Doctor, I have a crew here based on our agreement. We share the cost, and you receive half of the materials.

DR. PITTMAN

Yes, we're just having some budgetary issues here. Can you try to negotiate them down?

Dr. Lagunov sighs and starts toward the salvage crew and a dozen men pulling on wetsuits. Lagunov smiles, tries to make it sound casual:

DR. LAGUNOV
*Privét. Vyh preenemahetyeh
 uhmeereekahn?*

Even without subtitles, we can tell he's lowballing them. The crew looks at each other, takes a second, then starts packing up. Lagunov pleads-- "*Etot muzcina platit za vsë*"-- but no go. A frustrated Lagunov looks around, sees...

...a rusty TOW TRUCK and three bearded guys drinking from a bottle of Vodka. A very cheap alternative. Lagunov raises his eyes heavenward. Oy. He starts toward them.

INT. LAKE CHEBARKUL - UNDERWATER - DAY

The lake bottom. Two of the ragged and BEARDED SKIN DIVERS swim through the murky water toward...

...the METEOR, the size of a VW Bug. One of them starts to wrap a salvage rope around it when he stops, startled, seeing something strange. He nudges the other skin diver who looks too, seeing...

...two hundred fish. All staring at them.

What the hell? The divers try to move on, but all the fish eyes follow them. Spooked, the divers quickly get to work, wrapping the rope around the meteor, as...

INT. HEALY GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

...applause. The candles on a large cake are blown out by... DEAN HEALY (70). An ex-Delaware Senator, with an authoritative great man bearing. His wife, EMMA (68), an aging Jackie O. beauty, beloved D.C. hostess, calls out:

EMMA
 Family photo! Come on, Laurel, Luke,
 Germaine, or I'll drag you up here.

Laurel, Luke, and Germaine bashfully thread through the crowd. A beautiful family.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 Al, make yourself useful. Here.

She thrusts a camera at SENATOR AL FRANKEN as the family poses. Dean kisses his daughter on the forehead, whispers:

DEAN HEALY
Do you have a minute to talk?

LAUREL
What about?

DEAN HEALY
The future.

Uh-oh, Laurel sighs: she hates those talks.

INT. HEALY GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - ROOM - NIGHT

Dean closes the door to the control room, turns to Laurel.

DEAN HEALY
How are you doing, Laurel?

LAUREL
Good, Dad. You look well.

DEAN HEALY
I'm walking more. Luke says you're
having trouble with your student loans.

Laurel frowns. No secrets in this family.

LAUREL
No. I'm fine.

DEAN HEALY
You're 29, Laurel. When Luke was
your age, he was running for a
Delaware house seat.

LAUREL
(frowns)
Too bad I don't want that, dad.

Dean reaches for her, hugs her, softens:

DEAN HEALY
I'm sorry, I didn't mean that the
way it sounded. I just-- I don't
have any connections in L.A. I
have millions here.

LAUREL
I'm fine, dad. I don't need your
connections.

DEAN HEALY
And I respect that. But your brother
isn't as strong as you.

(MORE)

DEAN HEALY (CONT'D)

There's no more crucial time right now for him than this budget crisis; he's the majority whip, and he doesn't have anyone on his staff he can trust, anyone he can confide in. He needs you.

LAUREL

Don't, Dad.

DEAN HEALY

What?

LAUREL

Play the guilt card.

DEAN HEALY

There's a position open in his office. Legislative aid. I think you should take it. Just do it for a year until he gets out of this budget crisis--

LAUREL

Dad, I hate politics, I hate D.C.--

DEAN HEALY

That's why you'll be great. I know you've never wanted help with your student loans, but do it for a year and I'll pay them off.

Laurel looks off, frowns. Sees all the monitors playing trouble spots. She considers it, a thought. Looks back:

LAUREL

I need \$200,000 to complete my documentary. I'll do this job for six months if you finance half.

DEAN HEALY

(frowning)

What? Laurel, this is about your brother--

LAUREL

No, it isn't. It's about you wanting someone in his office, someone to keep you informed--

(before he can object)

I know how you work, dad. I've watched you work. I love you, but you live off information.

(MORE)

LAUREL (CONT'D)
 So I'll take this job for six
 months, that's it. And you become
 an investor in my movie.

Dean stares at his daughter. He sits in a chair. Smiles.

DEAN HEALY
 One year.

LAUREL
 No, six months. That's it. I'm
 not negotiating.

Dean eyes her, despite himself he loves this side of her, as--

EXT. LAKE CHEBARKUL - SHORE - ONE HOUR LATER - DAY

--ROARRR! The rusty tow truck violently drags the meteor up
 onto the shore where-- CRREEEEEEAK-- it breaks open like an
 orange. A frustrated Lagunov raises a hand:

DR. LAGUNOV
Stohp! Pahzhahluhstuh!

The tow truck stops. Dr. Lagunov rushes up to the meteor,
 looks into it. A bluish cast. Lagunov considers it, and--

EXT. RUSSIAN PORT - DAY

--whap-- he slaps a "Biohazard material" warning on a large
 SHIPPING CRATE, a piece of the meteor inside. He slips a
 Russian official a wad of rubles, and watches worried as...

...the crate is closed up in a dumpster-sized SHIPPING
 CONTAINER and hoisted onto a large SHIPPING BARGE past a sign
 reading... "OUT-BOUND: USA." And we...

...CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - THE MALL - DAY

"The First Day"

Washington D.C. Cherry blossoms everywhere. Beautiful,
 serene. But we realize it's all an illusion as we dip
 toward...

INT. RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

...the Russell Senate Offices where all is chaos. The last hour
 of the Titanic. Interns and staffers rushing, bumping into a
 calm Laurel dressed up for her first day of work. She finds the
 massive door for "Luke Healy, United States Senator: Delaware."

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - HEALY'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is just as chaotic. Young AIDES shoving past her.

LAUREL

Hello, this is my first--

But the RECEPTIONIST turns away, on the phone:

RECEPTIONIST

It's not up to us. It's the
Republicans--

Laurel stands there, sees the waiting room full. She looks toward a row of three monitors. One playing C-SPAN, another MSNBC, the last a Rachel Maddow-like newscaster named RACHEL MONARCH intoning grimly over a diagram of the senate seats:

RACHEL MONARCH (ON SCREEN)

*50 seats Democrat, 50 Republican,
with the Vice-President breaking
the tie. Divided government
doesn't get any more divided than
this. And the only question is
will there be a budget in time to
keep the government from shutting
down? The clock is ticking--*

At the bottom of the screen there *is* a clock: 8 hrs, 22 mins. Laurel sees the receptionist hanging up. Tries to dive in:

LAUREL

Hi. I just need--

But the receptionist picks up another phone, starts to gossip as Laurel sighs, looks around. Takes out her cellphone, and texts: *"I'm here. Who do I see?"* And--

INT. CBS NEWS - MAKE-UP ROOM - DAY

--beep-- Luke is in a chair having make-up applied for an interview. He reads her text, and types something; and--

INT. CAPITOL ROTUNDA - DAY

--beep-- his legislative aide, BECKY (50), older, a real adult, stops halfway across the capitol rotunda, sees the senator's text. She furiously types a text. And--

INT. SCARLETT'S OFFICE - DAY

--beep-- Luke's young chief of staff, Scarlett, reads the text, jumps up. Shit.

INT. SENATOR HEALY'S OFFICES & HALL - DAY

Laurel races to catch up with Scarlett as she moves WEST WING fast through the labyrinth of posh Whip offices...

SCARLETT POLK

Sorry. We're a bit crazed here. The Senator needs everyone on the budget, so you'll be on your own with C.C., if that's alright?

LAUREL

C.C.?

SCARLETT POLK

Constituent Care.

(ah, Laurel nods)

There are eight constituents in the waiting room who want a meeting with the Senator. You hear their complaints; you investigate and satisfy their complaints; and that's it. Give them these pens, caps, and signed photos to keep them happy, okay?

LAUREL

Okay.

SCARLETT POLK

Good. I'll be right down the hall if you need me. Good luck. And welcome to senatorial aid work. You are living in very interesting times.

And Scarlett rushes off. Laurel takes a second. Turns to the waiting room, eyes the eight people there. Okay. She can do this. She straightens her jacket, her collar, tries to look more official. She starts toward them, passing...

...a TV, noticing her brother on a news show, arguing with a Republican senator, RED WHEATUS (60), a drinking, fun-loving, cynic, an American Brendan Gleeson, talking over each other:

LUKE HEALY (ON SCREEN)

You know what this is? A temper tantrum by Republicans--

RED WHEATUS (ON SCREEN)

And the Democrats have lost their minds--

The waiting room. Laurel enters, scans the eight people. One holding a life-sized BLACK DOG STATUE in his lap. She looks oddly at that.

LAUREL

Hi. My name's Laurel. You're all meeting with me today, I guess. It's my first day, so go easy on me.

She chuckles, but they all just stare back at her.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Nice dog.

CHOCOLATE DOG MAN

It's chocolate.

LAUREL

Of course. So who's first?

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

Laurel checks a clipboard, seated across from one of the constituents, CLAIRE (48), hasn't smiled in ten years. They sit in an impressive conference room overlooking the mall.

LAUREL

Hi. It says here you have Social Security problems, Claire?

CLAIRE

I don't have Social Security problems. You have Social Security problems.

LAUREL

Right. And how may I help you with...
(um)
..."my" social security problems?

INT. MEETING ROOM - TWENTY MINUTES LATER - DAY

A man in an ill-fitting suit now sits where Claire was...

ILL-FITTED SUIT MAN

But it's a rash. It's not a preexisting condition. And the Medicare doctor was so rude. He said "that's just a rash." But Medicare should work for me, not me for Medi--

INT. MEETING ROOM - ONE HOUR LATER - DAY

Laurel looks more beaten down as another constituent complains:

FRUSTRATED HOMEOWNER
So I went to HUD, and they said
"No, it's a U.P.Z."

LAUREL
U.P.Z.?

FRUSTRATED HOMEOWNER
(frustrated)
Urban Promise Zone. But they said,
you have to join the HCVP--
(sees Laurel's confusion)
Housing Choice Voucher Program.

INT. MEETING ROOM - ONE HOUR LATER - DAY

The Chocolate Dog man sits facing Laurel...

CHOCOLATE DOG MAN
I want to give it to the Senator.

LAUREL
Yes. Unfortunately the Senator is
a bit busy--

CHOCOLATE DOG MAN
Why are you trying to keep me from him?

Laurel eyes him-- uh-oh.

LAUREL
Would you like a cap?

INT. MEETING ROOM - ONE HOUR LATER - DAY

An exhausted Laurel talks on the phone in the office:

LAUREL
She's having Social Security
problems. Why can't you help me?
No, no, please don't put me on hold--

But she's put on hold. Laurel sighs, turns back to her
laptop, hitting play. Documentary footage starts up of an
all black choir in the Solomon Islands. Singing beautifully:

MELANESIAN CHOIR (ON LAPTOP)
"Jisas, yu holem hand blong mi--"

And the image is replaced by Laurel. A Kickstarter video:

LAUREL (ON LAPTOP)
*This music is disappearing, just as
the island itself is disappearing.*
(MORE)

LAUREL (ON LAPTOP) (CONT'D)
*All I need is matching funds of
 \$100,000 to help preserve this
 culture. You can help--*

But someone comes back on the phone, Laurel hits pause:

LAUREL (CONT'D)
 Hello, yes, hi! It's me, the social
 security lady. Yep. No, no, don't--
 (put on hold)
Come on!

LUKE HEALY
 Having fun?

Her brother at the door...

LAUREL
 Sure, what's not to like?

Luke laughs, grabs her phone, waits for a voice to come on.

LUKE HEALY
 I'm glad you're here, sis. It's
 good to have a friendly face.
 (Laurel smiles)
 What's that?

LAUREL
 A Chocolate dog.

LUKE HEALY
 Why?

LAUREL
 I don't know.

Someone comes on the phone:

LUKE HEALY
 Hello, this is Senator Healy, what's
 your name, dear? Well, listen,
 Joan, I want you to get your ass in
 gear and help my constituent or I'm
 personally cutting your incidental
 budget by 40%. Do you understand?
 (she obviously does)
 Good.

He hands the phone back to Laurel, then breaks off the ear of
 the chocolate dog, and winks:

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)
 Don't be afraid to use my power.

And Luke slips out, as Laurel gets back on with a compliant Joan...

LAUREL

Hello. Yes. That'd be great.

INT. HEALY'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Laurel slips back into the waiting room, exhausted. Only one person left. BREANNA BURKE (38). African-American. Not a wacko. First grade school teacher, out of sorts.

LAUREL

Ms. Burke. I think it's just us now.

INT. MEETING ROOM - MINUTES LATER - DAY

Breanna sits across from Laurel, not sure how to start.

LAUREL

So what happens to be your problem, Ms. Burke-- I mean *my* problem?

BREANNA BURKE

Your problem?

LAUREL

Sorry, that's what I was told to say. It doesn't make much sense to me either. Your problem?

BREANNA BURKE

My husband, Randall, he's...
(not sure what else to say)
...he's not who he was.

Pause. Laurel studies her. Is this woman crazy? She seems sane.

LAUREL

He's-- not? What do you mean?

BREANNA BURKE

I don't know how else to say it. He's not my husband anymore. His manners. His speech. His drinking.

LAUREL

He needs a drug and alcohol program--?

BREANNA BURKE

No. He used to drink a lot. Now he doesn't at all.

LAUREL

(stares at her)

Okay. I guess I'm not sure how I can help you with this--

BREANNA BURKE

He works as Second Engineer on a container ship: "the Alba." He just got back from a crossing, and I was going through his phone and I found... this.

She takes out a cellphone, places it in front of Laurel. Laurel eyes her oddly as Breanna pushes play and--

--dink-- a video starts up. Darkness. The phone is held by a burly first mate, CHUCK, whispering:

CHUCK (ON VIDEO)

Okay, ready.

He turns the lens toward someone else.

RANDALL BURKE (ON VIDEO)

We're documenting this for insurance purposes. We heard a noise inside dry container C-744. That's why we're breaking the seal.

RANDAL BURKE (35), African-American, solidly blue collar, turns to a dumpster-sized CONTAINER, carefully ripping the seal, lifting the container latch, and slowly, slowly opening the container door, revealing... darkness inside.

CHUCK (ON VIDEO)

I don't see anything. Let's go get the Captain.

Laurel leans in to watch closer. All spooky, weird, bizarre as Randall start in among the crates.

RANDALL BURKE (ON VIDEO)

No. Point it down here.

The camera follows Randall's finger, tilting down to the base of a crate (it's the meteor crate), a basketball-sized hole.

CHUCK (ON VIDEO)

Something got out.

Randall doesn't answer. The camera tilts back up to him, but finds he's-- stone still, staring off, petrified.

CHUCK (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)
*Randall? Come on. You're freaking
 me out--*

But Randall doesn't move, something freezing him in place.
 The camera pans where he's looking, into the darkness, and--

CHUCK (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)
Holy--

But-- click-- that's it. The frame freezes. Video over.
 Scary. Laurel clears her throat, looks up at Breanna.

BREANNA BURKE
 Something happened to Randall on
 that ship-- something that was in
 that container. I need your help
 finding out what.

GARETH (O.S.)
 Laurel Healy?

Laurel almost jumps. A man at the door. GARETH RITTER (30).
 Handsome but disheveled Republican. Funny, biting, sarcastic.

GARETH (CONT'D)
 Do you have a minute?

LAUREL
 I-- no, not now. Fill out the
 clipboard in the waiting room, and
 I'll be right out with you--

GARETH
 Actually, I don't have--

LAUREL
 Sir, I'm with someone right now.

Gareth looks at Laurel, smiles politely, exits.

LAUREL (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry, Ms. Burke, I-- We're just
 here to help constituents with small
 things like Social security and senate
 tickets, not-- things like this. Have
 you gone to the police?

BREANNA BURKE
 No. I came here first.

LAUREL
 Why here?

BREANNA BURKE
The crate is yours.

LAUREL
The crate is mine? I don't--

BREANNA BURKE
I called the Navy Shipyard. They
said your office signed off on it's
delivery.

And Breanna shows her the freeze-frame of the crate with the
hole in its side. Laurel studies it. Odd. As...

INT. HEALY SENATE OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - DAY

...Gareth Ritter sits in the waiting room, checking his watch.
Looks up at one of the TVs:

RACHEL MONARCH (ON SCREEN)
*Ninety-four minutes left and the US
government will be out of money and
shut down because, as many believe,
Republicans have lost their minds--*

Gareth shakes his head-- rank partisanship. He looks over
toward Laurel and Breanna exiting, shaking hand. Gareth
stands, ready to meet Laurel but instead she goes to another
door, knocks. It's...

...her brother's door. She calls in:

LAUREL
Luke, do you have a minute?

SCARLETT POLK
He's on the senate floor. What do
you need?

Scarlett passing by.

LAUREL
I... ah... Is there any reason
we'd be signing off on a crate
being shipped from overseas?

SCARLETT POLK
Excuse me?

LAUREL
Is there any reason--

But Laurel sees Breanna is now talking with Gareth in the
waiting room. He offers her his card, shakes her hand. Odd.

LAUREL (CONT'D)
Nothing. I'll handle it.

INT. MEETING ROOM - FIVE MINUTES LATER - DAY

Gareth sits across from Laurel now. She reads the clipboard:

LAUREL
So you're having problems with your
Viagra prescription, sir--?

GARETH
Uh... no.

LAUREL
You wrote "Viagra not considered
Medicaid," Mr. Finnerman?

GARETH
I'm not Mr. Finnerman. I'm Gareth
Ritter, Chief of Staff to Senator
Wheatus.
(off Laurel's confusion)
Red Wheatus. Republican from
Delaware--

LAUREL
Yes, I know. I mean, I don't know,
but... Do you want me to get a more
senior staff person?

GARETH
No. I don't need senior; I need the
sister. I'm here to offer a deal on
behalf of Senator Wheatus. Actually,
I'm not here at all.

LAUREL
You're-- not?

GARETH
No. If your brother tries to get
mileage out of this by embarrassing
the Republicans, we'll deny this
meeting ever happened--

LAUREL
I really think I should get some--

GARETH
Ms. Healy, there are now 90 minutes
until the government shuts down and
100,000 employees are thrown out of
work.

(MORE)

GARETH (CONT'D)

My boss is ready to cross the aisle
and vote with the Democrats in order
to keep the government working.

Laurel's eyes widen at this.

GARETH (CONT'D)

But he needs the Democrats to set
aside a 48 million dollar earmark for
autism studies. It's a pet cause of
his. I think you'll agree, 48
million is a drop in the bucket--

LAUREL

Seriously, this is my first day.
Let me just get--

GARETH

No, I'm out the door. This is my
cell number. Get your brother's
agreement in 90 minutes and call me
or my boss will have to stand with
his Republican colleagues. And
don't tell anyone or this deal goes
away. Do you understand?

LAUREL

I-- No.

GARETH

Ms. Healy. 100,000 jobs depend on
you getting to your brother in 90
minutes and convincing him to take
this deal. You're the go-between.
So if I were you, I'd run.

And Gareth goes. Laurel sits there for a second. Another
second, staring straight ahead. Then-- bang-- she's up from
her chair, running, and...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - DAY

One minute later. *Bang--* Laurel races out the senate office door-- bumps into a lobbyist, drops her phone:

LAUREL

Sorry.

She picks it up again, hears on her speed-dialing cell:

LUKE HEALY (V.O.)

*"I'm away from my phone at the moment.
Please leave a message after the beep--"*

LAUREL

Luke. Call me immediately. You just got offered a deal by a Republican senator on the budget. We have ninety minutes to respond.

But Laurel sees a sign: "Senate Subway," pointing down the stairs. Oh, right-- she makes a u-turn, runs toward it.

INT. SENATE SUBWAY STATION - DAY

GUARD

The subway is for Senators and staff--

A GUARD stops her from getting on a subway car in the underground station--

LAUREL

I *am* staff.

GUARD

You're not staff with a senator. You need to take the platform.

Laurel starts to turn away when she decides to try it: use her brother's power:

LAUREL

What's your name?

GUARD

My name? Ben.

LAUREL

Well, listen Ben, I am Senator Healy's-- aide, and he wants you to put your ass in gear and help me or I'm personally--

INT. SENATE SUBWAY - WALKWAY - DAY

But Laurel runs along the walkway platform, clearly that didn't work. Out of breath. She passes under one of the dozen TV monitors placed along the route... Rachel Monarch:

RACHEL MONARCH
*There are only 82 minutes left
 until budget-geddon hits--*

Laurel frowns. I know! Her cell rings. Desperate:

LAUREL
 Yes, hello. It's me--

DEAN HEALY (O.S.)
Laurel. Is everything alright?

LAUREL
 (damn, it's her dad)
 Yes, dad, I'm just... I'm busy.

INT. HEALY GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - ROOM - DAY

INTERCUT with Dean sitting in front of all his monitors:

DEAN HEALY
 Yes, I'm just checking in, seeing
 how your first day is going.

LAUREL
 Great. Couldn't be better.

DEAN HEALY
 Any last minute deals on the budget?
 It's getting pretty close here.

LAUREL
 Dad, can I call you back?

DEAN HEALY
 Is something going on?

LAUREL
 No, just-- I'll call you back.

Laurel quickly hangs up as Dean frowns, considers it. And--

INT. CAPITOL ROTUNDA - DAY

--Laurel runs across the beautiful rotunda when--

CAPITOL GUARD
 No running in the capitol, ma'am.

Laurel slows, still fast-walks.

CAPITOL GUARD (CONT'D)
No fast-walking either.

Jeez! Laurel slows even more, checks her watch, sees a swarm of senators coming out of the senate room. All men, all well groomed. Starting among them, she looks furiously for her brother, when--

SENATOR SPECK
Laurel? Laurel Healy?

The Kennedy-esque senator with great hair.

SENATOR SPECK (CONT'D)
Senator Speck. I saw you at your dad's party.

LAUREL
Oh, yes, hi. Is Luke on the senate floor?

SENATOR SPECK
No, he left for dinner ten minutes ago. Are you alright? You seem out of breath.

LAUREL
No, I mean, yes-- sorry, I need to know where he went. Do you know?

INT. HUDLEY'S RESTAURANT - DUSK

A MAIRE D' looks up at a sweating Laurel, hair askew:

MAITRE D'
Yes, he was here fifteen minutes ago. But then he left.

LAUREL
(desperate, checks her watch)
I need to get to him in the next 40 minutes. Do you know where he went?
(the maitre d' hesitates)
Please. I'm his sister. Here, see, that's my driver's license. And that's me. I had pink hair back then. I wanted to be a poet.

The Maitre D' eyes her. Considers it. Calmly:

MAITRE D'

I don't know where he went, but I don't think it was work. He was with a woman.

LAUREL

Ah, Germaine, right.

Laurel starts to dial when the Maire D' adds:

MAITRE D'

A red headed woman.

Laurel looks up. Oops. She stops dialing. Considers it, and...

EXT. LAFAYETTE SQUARE TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

...skidddd, a taxi races up to a aging townhouse. Laurel stumbles out, barrels up to the door, and-- bang-bang-- knocks on it. Nothing. Yelling in:

LAUREL

Scarlett. The office said you were home. It's Laurel.

Nothing. Laurel bangs again. Then...

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Luke, I know you're in there. It's me.

INT. SCARLETT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Luke looks up from making love to a naked Scarlett:

LUKE HEALY

Crap.

INT. SCARLETT'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An intense Luke, in a robe, talks on an intercom phone in Scarlett's threadbare living room, interrupting a group of voices:

LUKE HEALY

Senators, gentlemen, wait. Do we make the deal? That's all we have to answer. And we only have...

Luke looks up at a pacing Laurel.

LAUREL

Nine minutes to decide.

SENATOR (O.S.)
*Look, the Republicans are running
 scared.*

INT. SENATE CLOAK ROOM - NIGHT

SENATOR
 I say we use this to embarrass them--

INTERCUT with five top Democratic senators in a senate cloak room. All anxious, huddled. Talking on an intercom:

LAUREL
 No, he said if you did that, he
 would deny it.

SENATOR GOLDENBERG
 Who's "he?" And who's talking?

LUKE HEALY
 It's my sister. She's the reason
 we know about this offer at all.

Speck, with his great hair, in the cloak room too, leans in toward the intercom:

SENATOR SPECK
 Look, I say we take the deal. All Red
 wants is 48 million in earmarks.
 That's nothing--

LUKE HEALY
 Or we collect on their media hit.
 Then make the deal.

Laurel looks toward Luke, surprised. Her own brother.

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)
 Let the Republicans shut down the
 government. It's bad for them.
 Why would we get in the way of them
 shooting themselves in the foot?

LAUREL
 Because it's 100,000 people out of
 work.

The senators all look toward the phone. Her naive comment.

LUKE HEALY
 Sis. Why don't you give us a minute.

Laurel studies Luke, frowns. Then steps out in...

INT. SCARLETT'S HALL - NIGHT

...the hall, the door closing on her. She sees Scarlett sitting on the stairs.

LAUREL
They're gonna' let it close.

SCARLETT POLK
Yep, it's the smart move.

LAUREL
God, I hate politics.

SCARLETT POLK
I'm a child of divorce.

Laurel looks toward Scarlett. Huh?

SCARLETT POLK (CONT'D)
This isn't serious with your brother. It's just blowing off steam.

LAUREL
Okay.

Embarrassed Scarlett starts up the stairs as Luke exits.

LUKE HEALY
Okay. We're gonna let the deadline pass.

LAUREL
Luke, this is wrong. It's only 48 million dollars.

LUKE HEALY
Yes, and we're looking to the long game. It's not just about this battle with the Republicans, it's about the next one. Did dad call?

LAUREL
Yes.

LUKE HEALY
And did you tell him about the offer?

LAUREL
No.

LUKE HEALY
Good. That's best. He'll only worry.

Laurel stares at Luke, then suddenly hits him upside the head.

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)
Owww. What was that about?

LAUREL
Cheating on Germaine.

LUKE HEALY
It's not cheating-- I mean, it's
not what you think--

Laurel hits him again.

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)
Owww. Stop it.

LAUREL
Sure, soon as you do.

LUKE HEALY
(stares at her)
I have to go upstairs to change.
Are you alright with that? Or do
you want to hit me again.

LAUREL
I do, but I won't.

And Luke continues upstairs. Laurel frowns, takes out her phone and Gareth cards, inhales, dials:

LAUREL (CONT'D)
Hi. It's Laurel. Healy. So...

INT. GARETH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

INTERCUT with Gareth who closes his eyes, frowns, knows what's coming.

GARETH
You're passing?

LAUREL
They just-- they don't want to make
the deal... just yet.

GARETH
(angry now)
Okay. But when you see all those
people out of work tomorrow, that's
on you.

And he hangs up. Laurel pauses, looks off. Hates this.

EXT. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE - NIGHT

The castle-like Smithsonian. Lights slowly switch off.

INT. SMITHSONIAN RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

Inside we find the METEOR. Half of it. Resting like a massive cradle in the middle of the lab. An awe-struck Dr. Pittman leans over it, examining the interior, reciting to a lab tech:

DR. PITTMAN

There's something odd under the fusion crust. It's a honeycomb structure, but not organic. It's... structured. It's like it was built. I know that's impossible--

MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Doctor. It's time to go.

Pittman looks up. What? The grim, grey-haired DIRECTOR.

DR. PITTMAN

Excuse me?

MUSEUM DIRECTOR

We're shutting down. Everybody's being sent home.

DR. PITTMAN

This is the meteorite from Russia, sir. I've never seen anything--

MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Yes, and it will be here when you get back. It's the budget shutdown. We're out of money.

Pittman looks at the meteor. But-- click-- the overhead lights go out. Come on!

MUSEUM DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

When you get back. Let's go.

Pittman sighs, then reluctantly leaves. Joining the other scientists. And the lab is silent. Just the eerie glow of the emergency lights. We hear movement. The sound of cracking. We close in on the meteor, seeing...

...a crack developing in the middle. Something forcing its way out. Something black.

Something spilling out of the honeycombed interior onto the floor. At first we think it's just dark water or ink. Then we see...

...it's alive, pulsating. **BUGS**. Hundreds of thousands of them. The size of pill bugs. Terrifying. Meanwhile...

INT. SMITHSONIAN - GUARD STATION - NIGHT

...a GUARD turns from his surveillance monitors:

GUARD

Let's go. We've been furloughed.

A SECOND GUARD nods, not seeing the horrifying sight of bugs covering the floor of the lab as he clicks off its video feed.

INT. SMITHSONIAN RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

The bugs, unobserved, move across the floor, and start up a wall toward a window. A silent army, they squeeze through a crack, and out onto...

EXT. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE - NIGHT

...the bough of a tree. Cherry blossoms. And beyond it D.C. The lights of the mall flicking off one by one. Shutdown in full swing. The bugs gather, and start toward them.

CUT TO:

"The Second Day"

EXT/INT. D.C. MALL - VARIOUS ROOM & MONUMENTS - DAY

The next morning. It's beautiful. Cherry Blossoms drifting on the light wind. But... where are the people?

The Lincoln Memorial is un-touristed, just a plastic bag drifting. A capital elevator opens and closes for no one. The senate floor is vacated. Is it the zombie apocalypse?

No. A sign reads "*All facilities closed due to budget shutdown.*" Laurel passes it, heads toward work.

INT. SENATOR HEALY'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM & HALL - DAY

She pushes into the quiet senate office. Where is everybody? She hears noise down the hall. Turns a corner, finds thirty staffers around a grim-faced Luke. Mid-speech:

LUKE HEALY

--Your patience and your diligence has been remarkable.

(MORE)

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, the Republican shutdown will force this office to furlough all but two of you.

(sighs and gasps)

I know. I'll be working full-time to turn on the lights again, so I'll need my chief of staff to stay.

Scarlett nods stoically as Laurel looks between the two lovers. Oy.

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)

And I'll need Constituent Care.

Oops, that's Laurel. She sees several staffers eye her, frowning, disgusted at the nepotism.

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)

The rest of you: go home, get some rest, hug your kids. And come back ready to work when this is over.

There's half-hearted applause, and the group breaks up, grumbling. One of the staffers bumps Laurel. Another shoots her a frown, bitterly. Laurel hates this. She guiltily hears a worker hugging the crying receptionist:

RECEPTIONIST

I don't know what to do. How do I pay my rent?

Laurel sees her brother slipping into his office. She follows.

INT. HEALY'S OFFICE - DAY

LAUREL

Luke, come on, you don't need me. Keep one of the others.

But Luke, waiting on the phone, looks up at her:

LUKE HEALY

I said I needed you.

LAUREL

You're doing it because I'm your sister.

LUKE HEALY

Check any senator on this floor. They're all keeping Constituent Care. More than anything right now, we need our districts behind us. So get to work.

Laurel starts to turn, turns back:

LAUREL

Did we sign off on any delivery
from overseas?

LUKE HEALY

What?

LAUREL

There's a crate from overseas we
supposedly signed off on.

LUKE HEALY

We sign off on a lot of stuff after
departments exceed their budget,
but I have no idea what you're
talking about. Get me the invoice--
(someone comes on the line)
Hey, Bud, yeah. It's awful, isn't
it?

Laurel thinks about it, starts out.

EXT. WASHINGTON NAVY SHIPYARD - DAY

"The Alba." A massive container ship docked at the busy Navy
shipyard, crates being lifted on board.

INT. BRIDGE - NAVIGATION DECK - DAY

CAPTAIN GARY SACHS

What's this about again?

CAPTAIN GARY SACHS (55), gruff, never makes eye-contact with
Laurel as she follows him across the modern bridge, Dire
Straits' "Walk of Life" playing loudly on the sound system.

LAUREL

One of our constituents worries her
husband, a first mate on your ship,
was... sickened by some cargo.

CAPTAIN GARY SACHS

Sickened? How?

LAUREL

She said he came back-- changed.

The Captain stares at her, frowns. Turns down the music.

CAPTAIN GARY SACHS

Look, lady, everybody comes back a
little changed from sea.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN GARY SACHS (CONT'D)
 You're out there for four weeks. You
 got seasickness, you got the time
 change. Sometimes it takes your
 family a while to adapt to you and
 you a while to adapt to them.

The Captain gets back to work, turns up "Walk of Life" again
 as Laurel eyes him suspiciously.

LAUREL
 Don't you want to know who the crew
 member was?

CAPTAIN GARY SACHS
 What?

LAUREL
 It just seems like a natural
 reaction to my question. "Which
 crew member are we talking about?"

The Captain stares at her, sees her suspicion:

CAPTAIN GARY SACHS
 I'm a little busy. Is there
 anything else you need?

LAUREL
 Yeah, the cargo manifest.

EXT. CONTAINER SHIP - DECK - DAY

Captain Sachs yells out the door to Chuck.

CAPTAIN GARY SACHS
 Chuck. Help this woman please.

CHUCK
 Yes, sir. What do you need, ma'am?

Laurel pauses, recognizing him.

LAUREL
 You know Randall Burke?

CHUCK
 No, who's that?

LAUREL
 (frowns)
 Randall Burke. You were in a video
 with him, below deck, opening a
 container.

CHUCK

I have no idea what you're talking about, ma'am.

Laurel eyes him. What's going on here? Then she notices something weird... A dozen crew members are staring at her, eyes glued on her, not moving. (Like the fish in the teaser.) Intimidated...

LAUREL

I-- Okay, I just need the ship manifest.

CHUCK

I gave the manifest to another aide out here this morning.

LAUREL

You--? Who?

CHUCK

Someone named Gareth.

Laurel stares at him, surprised, and...

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - BASEMENT HALL - DAY

...Laurel charges toward the nondescript door of "Senator Red Wheatus" in the cramped basement hall of the senate building.

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - SENATOR WHEATUS'S OFFICE - DAY

It's an empty office. No receptionist. Laurel sees the usual waiting room TV, this one turned to Fox:

FOX NEWSCASTER (ON SCREEN)

The government shutdown, widely blamed on the Democratic congress, continues to devastate the local economy--

Laurel frowns. Rank partisanship. She calls out:

LAUREL

Hello? Anyone?

She hears snoring down the hall. Heads toward it. The suite of offices are clearly more cramped, not as prestigious as her brother's. She peers in an office door. Finds Senator "Red" Wheatus drunk on the couch:

SENATOR RED WHEATUS

You the masseuse?

LAUREL

What?

SENATOR RED WHEATUS

The masseuse. It's my adductors.
They need special attention.

But the Senator has already fallen back to sleep as Laurel continues on, turns a corner and finds the only other occupant: Gareth answering phones:

GARETH

The senator is at lunch at the moment. May I--

He looks up, sees Laurel. Frowns. Reaches out his hand, slams the door on her. Laurel yells in:

LAUREL

Look, I'm not here about the...
stuff yesterday. You have the ship
manifest for Ms. Burke.

Gareth opens the door again, stares at her incredulously:

GARETH

The "*stuff* yesterday?" You mean,
the 20 employees I just sent home
unemployed in tears?

LAUREL

Come on. The Republicans are just
as much--

But he slams the door on her again. Laurel yells through:

LAUREL (CONT'D)

--to blame as the Democrats! And
what are you doing helping Ms.
Burke anyway?

But the door suddenly opens, and Gareth exits. Ignoring her:

GARETH

I'm heading for lunch, senator.

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - BASEMENT - DAY

Gareth marches toward the stairs, Laurel following:

LAUREL

I saw you in our waiting room,
trying to poach our constituent.

GARETH

Our constituent too. And I wasn't poaching her. She approached me.

Two staffers pass Gareth, nod to him while eyeing Laurel.

GARETH (CONT'D)

Would you stop following me? I look like I'm collaborating with the Democrats.

LAUREL

Sure. Give me the manifest and I'm gone.

Laurel sees other Republicans approaching. Loud:

LAUREL (CONT'D)

So about that Pro-Choice rally. What are you wearing, Gareth?

The Republicans pass, look back at them. Gareth stops, stares at a smiling Laurel. And--

EXT. MALL - DAY

The manifest. Gareth unfolds it on a bench in front of the capital. Eating lunch:

LAUREL

It was Geological materials--

GARETH

Scientific Research materials for the Smithsonian. Okayed by your brother's office.

LAUREL

Did you try the Smithsonian?

GARETH

Closed, due to the government shutdown.

LAUREL

Did you question the first mate?

GARETH

Chuck Sanders. Yeah, he said...
(checks his iphone)
"Everybody comes back a little changed after four weeks at sea. You got seasickness, you got the time change.

(MORE)

GARETH (CONT'D)

Sometimes it takes your family a while adapt to you and you to adapt to them."

LAUREL

That's what the Captain said.

GARETH

So?

LAUREL

That's what the captain said word for word. They agreed on a story. Why agree on a story unless there's a reason to agree on a story?

GARETH

Look. It's your second day, right? There are so many reasons to be paranoid in this town, you don't need to create new ones.

LAUREL

Oh, please, tell me more about "this town."

GARETH

I'm eating lunch. You can go now.

Laurel gets up, starts away.

GARETH (CONT'D)

The Senator may still be up for a deal.

(Laurel stops, looks back)

On the budget. You can get the town back to work tomorrow. All you have to do is say "yes."

LAUREL

I'll talk to him.

GARETH

Don't talk to him. Convince him.

Laurel eyes him, then starts off.

INT. MAYFLOWER HOTEL - BAR - NIGHT

LUKE HEALY

Why do I trust him?

Laurel and Luke drink, in a quiet corner of the Mayflower bar, light music playing in the background:

LAUREL
Why not trust him?

LUKE HEALY
Senator Wheatus doesn't give a damn about 48 million dollars for autism. He only likes to drink and screw. His chief of staff, Gareth Ritter, on the other hand, has a sister who's autistic.

LAUREL
(eyes him)
How do you know that?

LUKE HEALY
I had Scarlett check.

LAUREL
Oh, really, Scarlett? How's Scarlett doing?

LUKE HEALY
Don't. I broke it off with her.

LAUREL
Really? Like Dad broke it off with his secretary--?

LUKE HEALY
This isn't comparable--

LAUREL
You almost killed him when you found out. I left home when I--

LUKE HEALY
God, we gotta talk about the whole boss/employee dynamic here.
(finishes his drink)
Look, find out if this Gareth guy is freelancing, and I'll consider the deal.

LAUREL
Good. And what about this?

The manifest.

LUKE HEALY
It's for a Dr. Pittman at the Smithsonian. I had to sign off on something he was doing in Russia. Talk to him.

(MORE)

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)

And don't get obsessed with any one constituent, okay? You gotta keep a lot of constituents happy. Are you listening to me?

But Laurel looks off, sees four suited men staring at them.

LAUREL

Have you noticed something weird?

LUKE HEALY

What?

LAUREL

People are staring at us.

LUKE HEALY

Who?

LAUREL

Those four guys over there. That waiter over there.

LUKE HEALY

So? We're famous. It's like Hollywood, but with the uglier people--

(kisses her on the forehead)

Get used to it.

And Luke heads out, leaving Laurel staring at the people staring back. She takes out her cellphone, dials. And...

INT. BREANNA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

...INTERCUT with Breanna, in nightgown, picking up her phone in the quiet kitchen of a suburban home. Small. Neat.

BREANNA BURKE

Yes, hello?

(suddenly whispers)

Oh, hi. No, I can talk.

LAUREL

I just wanted to update you, Ms. Burke. I'm trying to get in touch--

But Laurel pauses, hears Dire Straits' "Walk of Life" over the phone. Playing in Laurel's house. The same song from the ship.

BREANNA BURKE

Yes?

RANDALL BURKE
Who's that, dear?

Randall Burke enters the kitchen, surprising Breanna.

BREANNA BURKE
No one. Just Judy from my class.
(into the phone)
Judy, why don't we talk tomorrow?

LAUREL
Is that your husband? Is
everything alright?

BREANNA BURKE
Yes. Thank you. That sounds good.

And Breanna hangs up. Turns to her husband. It's the same Randall we saw in the video, but he seems different: stiffer, more collegiate.

RANDALL BURKE
I was thinking of putting some
spice shelves up here, how's that
sound?

BREANNA BURKE
Great.

RANDALL BURKE
And I cleaned out the refrigerator.

BREANNA BURKE
Great.

INT. BREANNA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Breanna slips into bed as Randall places a vase of cherry blossoms on the bureau.

RANDALL
I'm sorry I haven't been myself. I
think I've been feeling a bit down.

Randall gets into bed, scoots up behind her, holds her sweetly.

BREANNA BURKE
That's nice.

Randall kisses her neck. And keeps holding her.

BREANNA BURKE (CONT'D)
Good night.

She tries to reposition herself to get some sleep, but Randall holds onto her.

BREANNA BURKE (CONT'D)
Randall, I need to get some sleep.

But Randall doesn't answer, still holding her. Breanna tries to scoot away, but she can't. His grip tightens.

BREANNA BURKE (CONT'D)
Randall, you need to let me--

But then Breanna sees it. A small swarm of something coming out of the cherry blossoms. Bugs. Hundreds of them. Heading toward the bed.

BREANNA BURKE (CONT'D)
Let go! Let--!

But Randall doesn't. And-- Breanna SCREAM!--

But Randall covers her mouth with his hand, smothering it. He whispers to her, calming:

RANDALL BURKE
Shh, shh, it's okay. They don't take all of you. Just a portion.

He still holds her in a vice grip as she struggles in bed.

RANDALL BURKE (CONT'D)
You'll still be yourself, but a better part of yourself. And we'll know each other like never before.

Her eyes widen, seeing the swarm of bugs climbing up the bed covers toward her. Randall kisses her cheek:

RANDALL BURKE (CONT'D)
I love you.

And the bugs are on her.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. MARTIN LUTHER KING MEMORIAL - DAY

"The Third Day"

The Martin Luther King Memorial. Not one of the better known D.C. monuments. A massive stone canyon, Laurel and Gareth dwarfed by it...

GARETH

Are you asking me if I'm freelancing?

LAUREL

Yes.

GARETH

We're in the middle of the biggest budget crisis in four years, and you think I would make up this budget offer from my boss?

LAUREL

Yes. Senator Wheatus doesn't give a damn about autistic kids. You do. You have an autistic sister.

Gareth stares at her.

GARETH

You've been investigating me?

LAUREL

I always find that best when you don't trust someone.

Gareth smiles, eyes her, considers it...

GARETH

Okay, I'll be completely honest--

LAUREL

How refreshing.

GARETH

I told my boss the Democrats wanted a deal and they were offering 48 million for autism to close it. And he said "yes," because I know he wanted a deal. He just didn't want to make the first offer--

LAUREL

So you're lying?

GARETH

I am creatively structuring a deal.

Laurel laughs, shakes her head, gets up to go.

GARETH (CONT'D)

Come on, are you seriously walking away from this? People are going hungry over this. People can't pay their rent. They're dipping into their savings, and all you have to do is convince your brother to meet. That's all.

Laurel stops, considers it. Then continues off.

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - DAY

Laurel enters Russell, sees a SUPERVISOR at the metal detectors sending one of his downcast GUARDS home. Frowning, Laurel sees another tear-stained AIDE passing. She considers it, and...

INT. HEALY SENATE OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - DAY

...enters the senatorial office surprised to find Luke there, waiting for her:

LAUREL

What's wrong?

LUKE HEALY

Are you still looking into this Smithsonian shipment?

LAUREL

Yeah, why?

LUKE HEALY

I think you can stop.

INT. HEALY SENATE OFFICE - LUKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Randall and Breanna Burke jump up, arm-in-arm, smiling, as Luke leads Laurel into see them:

RANDALL BURKE

This must be her. Laurel, thank you so much for helping Breanna. We're happy you did, but we don't need your help anymore.

Laurel frowns, eyeing Breanna.

BREANNA BURKE

I get worried about Randall being away. Maybe even a little paranoid. And Laurel was great at hand-holding me--

RANDALL BURKE

Everybody comes back a little changed from the sea. You're out there for four weeks. You got seasickness, you got the time change--

Laurel runs her fingers under the exact words on her notepad:

RANDALL BURKE (CONT'D)

Sometimes it takes your family a while to adapt to you and you a while to adapt to them.

LAUREL

Breanna, do you have a minute?

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - HEALY'S OFFICE - DAY

Laurel leads Breanna out into the hall, away from the men...

LAUREL

Is he hurting you?

BREANNA BURKE

What? No. We're good.

Laurel eyes Breanna, but there's no break in her serenity.

LAUREL

Breanna, if there is some abuse going on, you just have to nod to me, and I could get you protection.

But Breanna smiles, takes Laurel's arm, pats it...

BREANNA BURKE

Laurel. I'm happy. Don't question happiness.

RANDALL BURKE

Ready to go, babe?

Breanna kisses her husband, and they leave. Luke pats Laurel on the back.

LUKE HEALY
 Good job. Making constituents
 happy since 2015.

LAUREL
 You know why he brought her here?

LUKE HEALY
 To thank us.

LAUREL
 No. No one goes this far out of
 their way to thank anyone.
 Something's going on and he wants to
 stop me from investigating.

LUKE HEALY
 Laurel, it's Constituent Care, not
 Nancy Drew. They're happy. Take yes
 for an answer. And move on.

Luke starts off when Laurel stops him. Lying:

LAUREL
 He's not freelancing.

LUKE HEALY
 Who?

LAUREL
 Gareth Ritter. He's not lying.
 Senator Wheatus wants the deal.
 Want me to set up a meeting with
 you two?

LUKE HEALY
 (eyes her uncertain)
 Let me think about it.

LAUREL
 Luke, you need to do this--

LUKE HEALY
 No, I don't. But thanks for the
 moral advice.

And a sarcastic Luke heads into his office. Laurel frowns,
 starts toward her office when she pauses. A thought forming.
 She takes out her cell. And...

INT. HEALY GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - ROOM - DAY

DEAN HEALY
 Laurel, how are you?

INTERCUT with Dean in his control room, distracted, typing.

LAUREL

Good, Dad. Can you do me a favor?

DEAN HEALY

Sure. What's that?

LAUREL

Don't tell Luke I told you this.

Dean looks up, pushes everything aside: magical words to him.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

No, it's okay, I'll handle it myself.

DEAN HEALY

(appetite whetted)

No, Laurel, what?

LAUREL

I think Luke has a chance to make a budget deal with a Republican senator, but he's hesitating.

DEAN HEALY

Why?

LAUREL

I don't know why, but I think you should convince him it's good for his career. If he single-handedly puts the government back to work, he'll be seen as the leader of the party. It could put him on the Presidential track.

Dean pauses, considers it. She's right.

DEAN HEALY

Why don't you tell him that?

LAUREL

I'm his little sister. He'll listen to you, not me.

Dean sits back in his chair, smiles.

DEAN HEALY

You may hate politics, Laurel, but you're not bad at it.

And Laurel hangs up, smiles. And with that...

EXT. POV ROOF TERRACE BAR - DUSK

RED WHEATUS
Hey! Where's the party?

A tipsy Senator Wheatus exits the elevator at the rooftop bar, P.O.V. Great views of the White House and Washington Monument. Gareth and Laurel greet him:

GARETH
Hello, Senator. This is Laurel--

RED WHEATUS
Get me a drink, will you? And
don't let Philip mix it. He always
waters it down. A 7 & 7.

Laurel heads off with Wheatus as Luke arrives on the other elevator, nervous, uncomfortable to be here--

LUKE HEALY
So you must be Gareth Ritter?

GARETH
Yes, Senator.

LUKE HEALY
You're not gonna screw me, are you?

GARETH
Sir?

LUKE HEALY
Get me to meet, then leak it to the
press, so it looks like the
Democrats are desperate for a deal--

GARETH
No, sir--

But Senator Wheatus sees Luke, and is appalled, yelling:

RED WHEATUS
What the hell! You didn't tell me
it was a Democrat!

Laurel and Gareth freeze-- oh shit. But Luke starts to grin, laugh, realizing he's joking. Red laughs too.

RED WHEATUS (CONT'D)
You gonna join me for a drink--

LUKE HEALY
Sure. Why not? It's 4 o'clock--

A sexy cocktail waitress, TIFFANY, comes over.

TIFFANY
Senator, good afternoon.

LUKE HEALY
Actually two Senators today. A
Vodka and orange. And don't let
the guy downstairs mix 'em--

RED WHEATUS
Philip--

LUKE HEALY
Right. Asshole. He always cuts
them. And we want some food.
Those little pizza things--

RED WHEATUS
And potato skins with bacon--

TIFFANY
Be right back.

And she starts off. Both senators watch her go.

RED WHEATUS
Nice girl.

LUKE HEALY
Very smart.

RED WHEATUS
So we think we can save the
country, Senator?

LUKE HEALY
We can try.

LATER: Laurel and Gareth sit across the empty terrace bar, two
waters in front of them, watching their bosses laugh, drink.

LAUREL
Do you think they're even talking
about the budget?

GARETH
I think it may not matter. I saw
your documentary on-line. The
yodeling one. What was it called?

LAUREL
"Yodeling?"

GARETH

Right, pretty good. What's your next one about?

LAUREL

Melanesian Choirs. Religious music from the Solomon Islands.

GARETH

Ah. So you're selling out?
(Laurel laughs)
Why Melanesian Choirs?

LAUREL

You don't want to know.

GARETH

I do. I'm right here.

LAUREL

They're disappearing. Kids in the Solomon Islands are all listening to Taylor Swift now.

GARETH

So you're an idealist?

LAUREL

No. I just don't like when things disappear.

GARETH

That's a Republican line. Liberals love when things disappear.

LAUREL

They do not.

GARETH

That's the very definition of being a liberal--

LAUREL

Oh my god. What a bigot. Their culture is disappearing because of *global warming*. So tell me what Republicans think about that.

Meanwhile, Luke and Red continue to drink, eat. Topsy:

RED WHEATUS

You know the biggest problem in this town? Ethic rules.

(MORE)

RED WHEATUS (CONT'D)

Lobbyists used to throw these great parties, and get us all drunk. And it was all of us together, Democrats and Republicans, having a good time--

LUKE HEALY

Yeah, that yearly thing at the Mayflower--

RED WHEATUS

Right. Now they can't spend more than 8 dollars on any of us. It's disgusting. Little shrimp plates. Cash bars. I never talk to any Democrats anymore.

And we're back with Gareth and Laurel...

LAUREL

There it is again. That song.

They listen. Dire Strait's "Walk of Life."

GARETH

What're you talking about?

LAUREL

That's the third time I've heard it today. "Walk of Life." Is it suddenly *in* again?

GARETH

I think it's on a commercial. Why?

But Laurel sees three people at the bar staring at her.

LAUREL

Something weird is going on.

GARETH

Here we go.

The two Senators are standing, unsteadily, and shaking hands:

LUKE HEALY

Okay, noon tomorrow.

RED WHEATUS

Joint press conference. Good.

(seeing Laurel)

Your brother says you make a mean Mojito. I will have to be convinced of that.

LUKE HEALY
It makes the blind see, Senator.

RED WHEATUS
Gareth, it's time to leave these
communists. To the town car. *Avante.*

Gareth nods to Laurel as they depart, leaving Laurel and Luke.

LAUREL
Well?

LUKE HEALY
Well, it's your third day, and I think
you saved the D.C. economy. What are
you gonna do for your fourth?

LAUREL
Sleep.

Luke starts down the stairs as Laurel feels her phone
buzzing. Takes it out. Reads "Dr. Hal Pittman" calling.

LAUREL (CONT'D)
Hello, doctor. Thanks for
returning my call.

INT. DR. PITTMAN'S HOME - NIGHT

INTERCUT with Dr. Pittman sitting at his computer in his book-
lined home.

DR. PITTMAN
You're welcome, but I'm not sure I
understood it. You think someone
was infected by my... shipment?

LAUREL
Yes, sir. Our constituent's husband.

DR. PITTMAN
Well, I'm not sure how that's
possible. It was a meteorite from
Russia, not--

But Pittman pauses, thinking.

LAUREL
Doctor?

DR. PITTMAN
Yes. Ms. Healy, I've been
furloughed. Can your brother help
me get back into my lab?

LAUREL
Yes, definitely.

DR. PITTMAN
Good. I'll call you back in one
hour either way. There's something
odd here.

Pittman hangs up, considers it, quickly gets up, as...

EXT. WATERGATE - NIGHT

...across town, in the Watergate building...

INT. SENATOR WHEATUS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

...a drunk Senator Wheatus opens the window of his stuffy,
once elegant, now messy, apartment. He breaths in the air,
almost throws up, sits on the edge of the bed, and leans down
to take off his shoes, almost tumbling over.

He steadies himself, decides-- fuck it-- falls back on the
bed and starts to snore. Silence.

We turn toward the window and see a dozen bugs crawl off a
tree branch. Then more. A small army. Hundreds. They
crawl toward Senator Wheatus sleeping now on his side.

The bugs crawl onto his collar, up his neck, and into his ear
lobe, a trail of them. The room is silent for a second.
Then...

...Wheatus suddenly thrashes. Violently. Fighting
something. His eyes open. Wide. The white of his eyes now
red. He opens his mouth as if to scream, but instead--

--SWUSSSH--

--there's a flushing sound in his head-- like a toilet
flushing-- and *slurrrrrp*-- a pink placenta like substance
spills out his other ear, half his brains spilling out onto
the pillow. Making a mess.

Wheatus sits up in bed. Takes a second. Blinking. He looks
back at his soaked pillow. Red with pus and brain matter.
It takes him a second, but he shrugs, unbothered. He closes
his eyes, and goes back to sleep.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE - MORNING

"The Fourth Day"

Morning. Laurel knocks on the door of the Smithsonian research wing. The GUARD peers out:

LAUREL

Is Dr. Pittman here? I can't seem to get him on his cell.

GUARD

We're closed.

But Laurel stops him from closing the door. Tougher now:

LAUREL

Excuse me, I work with Senator Healy and he's looking for some budget cuts to be made to the security payroll here, so unless--

INT. SMITHSONIAN RESEARCH LAB - MORNING

And Laurel's inside, feeling pretty good about herself. The cowed guard opening the lab door for her.

LAUREL

Thanks. Do you mind waiting--

But the guard takes off. Okay. Laurel ventures in, daylight flooding the lab. She sees the meteor. Calls out:

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Dr. Pittman? Hello? It's Laurel Healy.

Nothing. She sees footprints in the dusty path of meteor fragments. She follows the path to a lab room door. Pushes on it. It bumps against something. She shoves harder, and harder, and squeezes through finding...

INT. OTHER LAB - MORNING

...Dr. Pittman on the floor. Unconscious. A microscope dragged onto the floor and broken beside him.

LAUREL

Guard! Call 911!

Laurel kneels hurriedly, loosens his tie, starts CPR. Chest compressions. Tilts his head back.

Pinches his nose, opens his mouth, breathes into it, watching the chest rise. Nothing. She tries again, breathes into his mouth. While behind her...

...Pittman's hand rises from the floor. Slowly, slowly. And he reaches toward Laurel still giving him CPR when... he grabs her wrist, eyes bursting open!

From her screams, we go to...

INT. SENATOR WHEATUS'S BEDROOM - MORNING

...quiet. Birds chirping. A beautiful morning. Red Wheatus gets up, looks at the wet spot where his brain stained the sheets. He gets up, pulls the sheets from the bed, the pillow case from the pillow.

INT. SENATOR WHEATUS'S APARTMENT - LAUNDRY ROOM - MORNING

Wheatus stuffs the sheets into the washer.

INT. SENATOR WHEATUS'S BEDROOM - MORNING

He holds a blow dryer up to his wet pillow, drying it.

INT. SENATOR WHEATUS'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

He sits at his computer, races through itune selections, finds one, clicks it. And "Walk of Life" plays, yet again:

DIRE STRAITS

*"Here comes Johnny singing oldies, goldies
Be-Bop-A-Lua, Baby What I Say..."*

Wheatus takes the attached computer speaker, holds it to his ear, turns up the music, LOUD! He closes his eyes, nods, the musical vibrations seeming to satisfy some deeper urging.

A little extra pus slurps from his left ear, dripping down his neck. He gets a dish towel, wipes it away. Good.

Refreshed, he gets up, not drunk or bleary, looking ten years younger. He goes to the kitchen, clears out his pantry of alcohol. Whiskey, vodka, tequila. Everything going in the trash. He finds some by his bed. Tosses them too. Then...

EXT. MALL - DAY

...Wheatus jogs around the mall's reflecting pool. "Walk of Life" playing thunderously loud in his ear buds:

DIRE STRAITS

*"He do the song about the knife
He do the walk, he do the walk of life..."*

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - SENATOR WHEATUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Bang-- Senator Wheatus pushes through his office door, yells:

RED WHEATUS
Gareth. Where are you, buddy?

Gareth is startled from his chair. Peers out his door. Surprised to see his boss striding toward him.

GARETH
Morning, Senator. I didn't expect you for another hour--

But Wheatus hugs him, holds him close...

RED WHEATUS
I'm feeling like a million bucks this morning--

GARETH
I can see that. Did you want me to call the masseuse?

RED WHEATUS
No! What do we have up first?

GARETH
The call with Senator Healy-- to set up the press conference--

RED WHEATUS
No, we're not gonna do that.

And Wheatus pushes into his office. Gareth pauses. Standing there. Confused. Um. He goes to the Senator's door. Enters. Watches him toss more bottles in the trash.

GARETH
Senator, I-- Do you want me to set up a meeting instead of a call?

RED WHEATUS
With who?

GARETH
Senator Healy.

RED WHEATUS
Why?

GARETH
The agreement yesterday.

RED WHEATUS

No. We don't need all that.

GARETH

But-- Senator, there was an agreement.

RED WHEATUS

Yeah, but I was drunk. You know, I don't know what I'm saying when I'm drunk. In fact, why don't you call this number for me?

A piece of paper. Gareth just stares at it.

RED WHEATUS (CONT'D)

Gareth, I love you like a son. But it's a new day. Rejoice. I'm taking charge. Call that number.

INT. GARETH'S OFFICE - DAY

Gareth closes his door, goes to his desk, sits. Considering it. He takes out his cellphone, struggling with himself. He dials. A voice mail answers:

LAUREL (ON CELL)

It's me. I'm away from my phone.

The voice mail beeps. And Gareth hesitates before saying:

GARETH

Yeah, Laurel, it's-- Gareth. This really isn't to my benefit so I don't know why I'm doing this, but Senator Wheatus has backed out of the deal--

INT. SMITHSONIAN RESEARCH LAB - STORAGE - DAY

But chaos-- noise-- Laurel's phone on the floor ignored as two paramedics, a guard, a gurney, and Laurel surround Pittman's unconscious body on the floor. Talking fast:

PARAMEDIC TOM

Dr. Pittman, can you hear me? Can you hear my voice--?

PARAMEDIC JOSH

No response. Checking his pupils. Ma'am, please step away--

LAUREL

I can't. He's holding me.

Oh, they see he's still holding her wrist like a vice. The paramedic tries to release it, straining:

PARAMEDIC JOSH

Dr. Pittman, we think you've suffered a stroke. We're taking you to the hospital, but you need to let go--

The more they try, the more he tightens his grip. And Laurel sees Pittman suddenly sitting up, staring at her!

LAUREL

Um, guys. *Guys.*

DR. PITTMAN

Listen to me carefully. It wasn't an organic structure. The honeycombs in the meteor--

PARAMEDIC TOM

Doctor, we're lifting you onto the stretcher now. Could you please let go?

DR. PITTMAN

(he doesn't, raving)

They were built! There were twenty here in the lab. Two millimeters. 2.46 grams. I had them under my microscope.

PARAMEDIC JOSH

On three. Ready?

They lift him, strap him in as he continues, still gripping Laurel, looking at her now:

DR. PITTMAN

Five crawled up my arm. I swatted the others away.

PARAMEDIC JOSH

Here we go. We're moving.

EXT. STREET - DAY

And Laurel walks beside them as they lift the stretcher into the ambulance, Pittman talking to Laurel the whole way:

DR. PITTMAN

They're inside me. Do you understand?

LAUREL

Yes.

But Laurel looks toward his eyes, sees he's crying blood!
The paramedics see it too:

PARAMEDIC TOM

We got a cerebral hemorrhage!
(yells to the driver)
Code three!

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

And the paramedics slam the ambulance door, Laurel crowded in with them as the driver starts off.

PARAMEDIC TOM

This is oxygen, doctor--

But the SIREN starts up, blaring-- *WHAHHHHH-whahhhhhh*. And Pittman's mouth opens as he lets out a blood-curdling scream of pain.

PARAMEDIC JOSH

GO! GO! We got code three!

DR. PITTMAN

STOP IT! NO, STOP!

He reaches for his ears, violently!

PARAMEDIC TOM

Hold him down! He's--

DR. PITTMAN

They're attacking me! They're in my ears!

PARAMEDIC JOSH

We're giving you a sedative, doctor--

DR. PITTMAN

NO! Turn off the siren!

PARAMEDIC TOM

Sir, we're on our way to emergency.
Lie back--

LAUREL

Check his ears! He says something's in--!

But Laurel sees his forehead bubbling out. Something going on under there.

LAUREL (CONT'D)
Oh my god. Look.

PARAMEDIC TOM
(seeing the bubbling too)
Oh Jesus. Oh Jesus.
(to the driver)
FASTER! We're losing him!

DR. PITTMAN
They're killing me! The noise!

LAUREL
Doctor, look at me.

And all is chaos now as Pittman screams, fighting with an almost superhuman panic as the Paramedics try to restrain him when the siren gets louder, YELPING WHA-WHA-WHA as it passes through an intersection. And Pittman SCREAMMMS:

DR. PITTMAN
Make it stop. Make it--!

LAUREL
Doctor, look at me. You can fight this. All you have to do is look at me. And don't look away--

But the words are barely out of her mouth when--

--BOOOOM!--

--Pittman's head EXPLODES, a massive blast that throws blood, brain matter, synapses, everywhere, splattering Laurel, the paramedics, the ambulance walls, the gear.

And Laurel sits there, stunned. Staring at the headless body as-- glop, glop-- blood and brain tissue drips from the ceiling.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - SENATOR WHEATUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Wheatus is on the phone, drinking a green shake of some kind:

RED WHEATUS
No, that's not what they want.
They want power. They want to
grind our face in this shutdown.

Gareth stands at the door, looking in on a newly revived
Senator Wheatus.

GARETH
Senator. He's coming.

RED WHEATUS
(into the phone)
Hold on, Bob. Bob. I gotta call
you back. If this works, this is
history.
(hangs up)
Where is he?

GARETH
He's worried about being seen.
He's in the hall.

RED WHEATUS
Good. Take him through the
kitchen. I'll meet him in there.

GARETH
You sure you want to do this?

RED WHEATUS
Do you like your office, Gareth?

GARETH
Not especially.

RED WHEATUS
Do you like having to go to the
Democrats to beg for every morsel
of legislative clout?

GARETH
No.

RED WHEATUS
Good. Then show him in through the
kitchen.

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - BASEMENT - DAY

Gareth exits the senator's office, crosses to someone trying to look incognito, pretending to be on his cell.

GARETH
This way, Senator.

The man turns. It's Senator Speck, the Kennedy-esque Democrat. Gareth leads him to a smaller door into...

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - WHEATUS OFFICE KITCHEN - DAY

...a tiny cramped kitchen where Wheatus nods for Gareth to stay.

RED WHEATUS
Hello, Senator. Thank you for meeting with me--

SENATOR SPECK
I'm *not* meeting with you.

RED WHEATUS
Right. Thank you for *not* meeting with me.

SENATOR SPECK
What do you want?

RED WHEATUS
Your fellow Democrat, Senator Healy, tried to make a deal with me-- one that would benefit him and not--

SENATOR SPECK
(cutting through it)
I don't need the pep talk. What're you offering?

RED WHEATUS
Chair on Armed Services, ranking member of Economic Policy.

SENATOR SPECK
Not enough.

RED WHEATUS
And a 14 million dollar war chest from the Republican PAC.

Speck pauses. Not bad.

SENATOR SPECK

You know I've been a Democrat all my life--

RED WHEATUS

I know. But what is a Democrat these days? What is a Republican? A brand. You ate Cheerios this morning, you'll eat Wheat Chex tomorrow.

(off Speck's look)

Come on, Senator. Let's do this. Let's make history.

Speck stares at him, considers it. And...

INT. SENATE FLOOR - DAY

...the empty senate chamber. Dark. The doors opens, and three men enter, start down the aisle between the 100 senate seats. 50 on the right. 50 on the left. The tough-looking SERGEANT-OF-ARMS and two JANITORS carry a heavy-duty PNEUMATIC WRENCH.

They stop at the 50th chair on the Democratic side; and-- RUHRRR-- they use the pneumatic wrench to--

--unscrew the bolts fixing it to the floor. The two janitors pick up the chair and desk and carry it across the aisle to the Republican side. Then-- RUHRRR-- bolt the desk and chair into place. Yep, that's all it takes. As...

INT. LAUREL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

...a naked Laurel stands in her shower, shell-shocked, letting the water run over her, watching Dr. Pittman's blood spiral down the drain. We move outside the shower to find...

...her bloody clothes in a clump on the floor. Messy. But we see something worse...

...a few blood-stained bugs peel away from a splotch of blood on the blouse. Then a few more. Eight total.

A cellphone rings. Laurel sighs in the shower, turns off the water, catches her breath, reaches through the shower curtain blindly for the phone. Searches for it, misses the bugs by a few inches, takes the cellphone, answers it. Limp:

LAUREL

Hello?

(sighs)

Hi, dad.

INT. HEALY GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - ROOM - DAY

INTERCUT with Dean in his control room, on his cell:

DEAN HEALY
Where are you?

LAUREL
At home.

DEAN HEALY
Why are you at home?

LAUREL
I don't know how to answer that,
dad. I am at home taking a shower.

DEAN HEALY
You lost the majority.

LAUREL
I lost--?

DEAN HEALY
The Democrats lost the majority
about an hour ago. Senator Speck
went over to the Republicans. They
are now in control.

Laurel slumps against the tiles.

LAUREL
Where is Luke?

DEAN HEALY
In his office. He was wondering
where you are. We have to talk.
Every day at two. I want to know
what's going on.

LAUREL
I have to go, dad.

And she hangs up, takes a big inhale of breath. Then steps out of the shower, exiting the bathroom, her naked feet passing the unobserved bugs.

INT. RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

Laurel, now dressed in clean clothes, races toward her brother's office. The hall now packed with Sergeants-of-Arms, workers, movers, desks, filing cabinets. Everything in flux. Laurel pushes into...

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - HEALY'S OFFICE - DAY

...the office. Papers on the floor. Chair overturned. No one around? What the hell? She hears on the TV:

RACHEL MONARCH (ON SCREEN)
*History was made today, as the
 senate was handed from the
 Democrats to the Republicans--*

SCARLETT POLK
 Where were you?

Laurel turns to see Scarlett entering.

LAUREL
 Watching a man's head explode.

SCARLETT POLK
 Very funny. Your brother is
 looking for you.

LAUREL
 Where is he?

SCARLETT POLK
 The new offices. We're in the
 minority now. We give these up.

Laurel takes one look around at the roomy office...

LAUREL
 Where do we go?

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - BASEMENT - DAY

A door under the stairs in the basement. Looks like the door to a boiler room. Laurel pushes through, into...

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - HEALY'S BASEMENT OFFICE - DAY

...a shit hole. Small, cramped. Cubbyholes lining the hallways. The overhead lights shake and creak when too many people tromp down the stairs. Scarlett points to a door:

SCARLETT POLK
 Your office.

Scarlett pushes it open. A walk-in closet with a desk. A window at the end looking out on the ass of a horse statue. Laurel sighs. Yep.

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - BASEMENT - HEALY'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

Laurel knocks on another door, hears...

LUKE HEALY (O.S.)
Come on in.

Laurel does, finds Luke at his desk. The office isn't great. Tiny. It looks out on a dumpster.

LAUREL
I'm sorry, Luke.

LUKE HEALY
Why? This is great. Have some dog.

The chocolate dog. Only one leg left.

LAUREL
Why are you not sad?

LUKE HEALY
Because we're going to destroy
them. And you're going to help me.

Laurel eyes him. She likes her brother this way.

LUKE HEALY (CONT'D)
I need you and Scarlett to help me
kick their ass. Starting today.

Laurel nods, smiles.

LAUREL
Tell me what to do.

But at that moment, they hear music. Outside the office.

DIRE STRAITS
*"Here comes Johnny singing I Gotta Woman
Down in the tunnels, trying to make it pay"*

"Walk of Life." Laurel peers out and sees...

INT. RUSSELL BUILDING - HEALY'S BASEMENT OFFICE - DAY

...Scarlett playing the music at her desk. Laurel eyes her as Scarlett looks up at her. And stares.

Laurel stares back at her. Then turns away.

END OF EPISODE