

who Knew?

by

Montgomery C. Floyd

CONFIDENTIAL/PROPRIETARY

Represented by Dentons Multinational Law Firm
1221 Ave of the Americas, New York, NY 10020
Mr. Charles 'Trip' Dorkey III, Esq.
+ 1 212 768 6700
charles.dorkey@dentons.com/monty@carltonsseries.com

FADE IN:

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - PRESENT -- DUSK

We sweep over the Potomac. Zip by the Washington Monument. Dip past the White House's twinkling CHRISTMAS TREE, pushing into...

INT. WOMAN'S DANCE CLASS IN FULL SWING

We glimpse a graceful, petite Chinese GIRL, entering. Her attire reflects Park Avenue. Consulting her iPhone, she stops, sighs. HOPE DONAHUE (Ling Ching Hon), twenties is attractive, vivacious and modest. We instantly love her. She pivots, sweeping us out the door.

EXT. D.C. STREETS/TIFFANY & CO -- DUSK

We are sailing with Hope past CAROLERS toward the U.S. CAPITOL BUILDING. She gazes into Tiffany's window, sucking in every detail of a dazzling two-carat platinum job. Hope is trotting along the rain-soaked avenue, mounting marble steps, past Doric columns, splashing into...

INT. UNITED STATES CAPITOL BUILDING - HALLWAY -- DUSK

The clippity-clop of high-heels echo along the majestic corridor. Hope stops at the security desk. A natural look paints her face, as she says:

HOPE

Oh, Howard. My badge is on my desk.

HOWARD SIMONEUX, an African grandfatherly police officer proffers a festive grin.

HOWARD

Shhh, Hope. It's our secret.

Hope pecks his cheek, then breezes through security.

INT. HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER/HOPE'S OFFICE -- DUSK

The office resembles a disturbed beehive. Hope zips past STAFFERS. Going directly to her desk, blanketed with Post Its, she sinks into her chair. Hope's assistant, AUDRA MITCHELL, twenty and determined, approaches.

AUDRA

Sorry. Congressman wanted you here. Hoffman's on one.

Hope tucks her office phone receiver under her chin while scribbling on a Post It -- picture of efficiency.

HOPE/PHONE

This is Hope. Oh, I really don't care to comment on Mr. Walker. No, our policies have not changed. Congressman Duncan requires staff to attend regular ethics briefings and adhere to the same policies he does. All right, thank you.

Hope cradles the receiver, typing: 'PRESS RELEASE -- House Majority Leader...' when an incoming email catches her attention. The email is from Kim Fang. Audra pops over.

AUDRA

Dan's on four.

With the receiver to her ear, she reads the email.

HOPE/PHONE

Hey. I'm beat and going home.

Noticing Audra reading the email over her shoulder. Hope cuts a glare. Audra shrugs, and breezes off.

HOPE/PHONE

Well, if it's a surprise --

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

The door snaps open to a cardboard figure of Richard Nixon holding a new Babolat tennis RACKET.

DAN IMITATING NIXON

Maybe now you can beat Mr. Dan.

DAN WARNER peeks from behind the figure. He is in his thirties, dapper, sportive, and rather likable.

INT. DAN WARNER'S BEDROOM - D.C. -- NIGHT

The room is masculine with Yale tennis memorabilia. The TV drones. Hope is lying on the bed in a sexy nightgown. She throws a come-hither look to Dan, who misses it and leaps up.

DAN
Chocolate, mint, or strawberry?

HOPE
(smiles tightly)
Makes no difference.

Sporting Turnbull & Asser pajamas, Dan pads into the kitchen. Meanwhile, Hope slips a Yale sweatshirt over her gown.

HOPE
I received an email from Kim Fang.

DAN (O/S)
Who? Oh. LA's DA, yeah. What she want?

HOPE
She's in town and like to meet.

DAN
How do you know her?

HOPE
We met at the Watergate. I mean two Asian gals in politics...

Returning to the bedroom with bowls of ice cream.

DAN
How do you know her?

Dan's cell rings. He tosses Hope the ice cream, and snatches his phone. Hope rolls her eyes, as we fly to --

EXT. HOLLYWOOD -- DUSK

Various shots giving us the feel of the glamour capitol.

INT. MAJOR HOLLYWOOD AGENCY - LOS ANGELES -- DUSK

Someone is organizing papers and a film contract. They are staked neatly atop a *WONDER MAN III* SCRIPT, and slid into a large white envelope with the name 'Grant McAllister.'

EXT. IVY RESTAURANT PATIO - BEVERLY HILLS -- DUSK

It's a thriving eatery. A WAITER balances a tray of mojitos past Hollywood's glamour couple. On STEPHANIE GARNER, thirties, sultry. She is sitting across from...

GRANT MCALLISTER, twenties, handsome, bright, and hard to pin down. Stephanie throws Grant a serious look. He catches it.

STEPHANIE

You think I like this? Not to mention gives the press a new stream of provocations on the stuff that's happening.

Grant is gazing across the street at stalking PAPARAZZI.

STEPHANIE

That lady is waving at you.

Grant smiles at a Chinese business woman. KIM FANG, forties, sophisticated and attractive, smiles back.

STEPHANIE

Isn't that the DA?

GRANT

I helped her with a children's charity event last month. Can't we do this tomorrow?

STEPHANIE

I am *not* going.

GRANT

Is it me or was Ischia not insane?

STEPHANIE

Mac, playtime was never our issue.

GRANT

You're just like that agent who wanted to change my name.

STEPHANIE

No, I'm a gal craving the pesky perks that come with being in a *healthy two-way* relationship.

GRANT

There's nothing wrong with certainty.

STEPHANIE

There is with noncommittal. And I'm not even going to get into the cannoli incident, which any other gal would have written you off as a complete jack-ass.

As Grant reflects his Whatsapp pings.

GRANT

That's Brian. I gotta split.

STEPHANIE

Look, we both knew when we leapt on this crazy ride it would be challenging -- it is for everyone in this fish tank.

GRANT

What is it about me and this reoccurring role?

STEPHANIE

Maybe audition for a new one. Speaking of, I saw Joan Wallace on set and mentioned the script. She said she doesn't think you're the right fit for Sam nor does Sorensen. For what it's worth she is looking for the last round of finance...

GRANT

Thanks. I'll see ya.

A warm smile plays on Stephanie's face. Grant masks his grief with a resolute grin. He snatches a BOOK: *Calling Freedom*, and pads toward an awaiting SUV.

INT. SUV - REAR SEAT - MOVING -- DUSK

Grant enters to a *Wonder Man* ACTION FIGURE. It is held by BRIAN DOWNS. At thirty, his every move is artfully calculated. Sporting circular tortoise-shell glasses, and the air of superiority, he motions to the alcohol.

BRIAN/PHONE

... Agents don't take calls they return them. Listen, forget those art house films -- you're not defined by what you turn down.

Ice is dropped into a crystal glass; whisky is poured. Grant is gazing at ornaments on palm trees. It is Christmas and Sunset is decked with snowflakes and Santas.

BRIAN/PHONE

Tyler, let's rap mañana.

Brian hangs up. Cuts a 'where is she?' look.

BRIAN
A'right, here's how we spin --

GRANT
-- I'm solo.

BRIAN
Grant, lad, the press needs to be 100% focused on this film not your off-camera tryst. Cruise's shenanigans almost sank Spielberg.

GRANT
Tyler Ford, really? I thought you were speaking to Joan. Your job is to put me up for parts.

BRIAN
No, my job is fielding offers and I don't see Joan making one.

GRANT
I got the chops to nail Sam Travis.

BRIAN
You're not the one interviewing this time. Anyway, political-religious flicks don't bang the box-office or buzz streaming.

GRANT
This is a brilliant piece of work helmed by a genius --

BRIAN
Sorensen. He is teetering on psychosis. What I advise --

GRANT
-- I'm over popcorn flicks. I wanna story that's challenging, that scares the shit outta me.

BRIAN
How about the studio enforcing your five-picture deal? They'll sue your balls off, I've seen it!

GRANT
I want my work to represent my craft.

Brian proffers the white envelope. Grant throws a sly grin. Opens it. Deflates. Chunks the envelope to Brian.

BRAIN

They are seeing you with Ana Villafane -- the smoking Latina. Twenty million, sweet back-end, and you direct your next project. There are actors who'd kill for this deal.

GRANT

Let them have it.

BRAIN

Wake up. You don't have the clout you did two years ago. *Cocktail and Dreams* almost sank you. The studio's overlooking it. They want you. I want you.

The SUV eases to a stop. Grant's POV waving FANS.

BRAIN

But more importantly: they want you. We'll sign the contract...

GRANT

Brian. I'm not doing three.

End of story. Off's Brian's stunned look --

EXT. CINEARAMA DOME - *WONDER MAN 3* PREMIERE -- DUSK

The red carpet is jammed with celebs and photogs. GIRLS shriek at the sight of Grant. ANA VILLAFANE waves. REPORTERS are right there with --

REPORTER

Are doing *Wonder Man* three?

REPORTER TWO

What about *Calling Freedom*?

Suddenly, there is silence as the camera captures an oversized POSTER of Grant in yellow tights with the caption: "He Saves The World When The World's Not Looking."

E/I. GRANT'S HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD HILLS -- NIGHT

Twinkling lights. Hollywood sign. We push into a kick-ass bachelor-pad. Everything is top-notch. Grant enters with a bulging ENVELOPE.

GRANT

Music on.

Sinatra croons. Grant sweeps past a new-age Christmas TREE, surfboard, Travolta poster, replaying the day's events. He sinks into an Eames chair, and rips open the envelope. A note reads: 'Break a leg, Steph.' Grant beams, holding the script *Calling Freedom*. He begins to read.

TIME DRIPS

'FLY ME TO THE MOON...' Grant with BOTTLE of Cutty Sark in one hand, glass in the other. He begins TAPPING one foot, then the other, slipping into his own version of 'Weapon of Choice' --

INT. GRANT'S KITCHEN -- NEXT MORNING

Golden rays highlight the counter littered with invites, *Variety*, *The Actor Prepares*. Sporting drenched workout clothes, Grant chugs OJ from the carton. Suddenly the door snaps open to MARK HOFFMAN, twenties, quirky, disheveled. He sports a golf hat and Hunter S. Thomson tee.

MARK

Yo-yo. What, no grab bags?

Slapping Grant on the butt, he pours a coffee.

MARK

Missus still snoozing?

Notices Grant's mood seems dark.

MARK

Chin up, they give every picture show shitty... Whoa that sulk's not reviews. Shit. Th' cannoli. I told ya it was a rookie mistake. Three simple words to solidify the emotional cocktail and Casanova proffers a pastry.

GRANT

This coming from a guy who gages intellect by cup sizes.

MARK

I'm book-smart to know dames need to hear those cords. Shovel it out, make excuses; ya gotta forget that bullshit your folks have. Relationships are manual labor, a heart-shaped minefield littered with conundrums and pitfalls.

(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)

Steph was out of your league.
Shit! Ya scored it!

Mark is thumbing through the script.

GRANT

Steph talked Joan into a copy.

MARK

I love her. You're a dumbass for
letting her slip away.

GRANT

Joan and Sorensen aren't game on
me.

MARK

Let's hit Mel's and get jacked on
cheap Champagne!

(scouring the cabinets)

Ah, rum! Know what ya do?
Research. The Brando-kind.
Immersing yourself, wrapping your
head around what makes this Travis
cat tick. I got a guy, friend of
Gonzo's, who can put in few calls
and bingo you're cruising 'inside
the beltway' -- D.C., baby!

He's preparing a PEANUT BUTTER and MAYONNAISE sandwich while
Mark pours rum into his coffee.

GRANT

Absolutely not.

MARK

This is a no brainer. You
bellyache and bitch 'bout the
industry not takin' your craft
seriously and now you got a chance
to show those chops and you're
cowering on the sidelines.

GRANT

I turned down three.

MARK

(coughs out coffee)

Oh, fuck. Yuck. Rum and coffee
don't mix. I bet Brian pissed his
monogrammed gabardine trousers.

GRANT

He was livid. I took an Uber home.

MARK

So you're really doing this?
(then; it hits him) Oh. *Freedom*
isn't a pet project it's THE
project? I mean, hopefully...

GRANT

I turned down twenty and directing.

MARK

Yawza. After *Cocktail and Dreams*
I'm surprised they offered craft
service. A'right I'm trying to get
my head around this.

GRANT

Lionel's going to hit the roof.

MARK

Okay, okay. We do it. This is
your chance to be a maverick. What
is spookin' ya?

GRANT

Breaking my contract, not working
again, failure, no role --

MARK.

-- I got your back. I've said it
from the get-go Sam Travis is Grant
McAllister like Sinatra was Angelo
Maggio; one of the best-known
Hollywood underdog stories that
scored Francis a statue pissing off
Eli Wallach, studios. Or Pacino as
Michael -- Coppola wanted Redford!
This is your shot. Stop
overthinking and let's do this!

We see Grant's mind working. Then, a grin slowly spreads
over his face, which sweeps us to...

EXT. LAX AIRPORT -- TWILIGHT

We're following an airline EMPLOYEE hustling Grant through a
private door. Drifting along a corridor, Grant listens to
his air-buds as a PAP steals the moment -- click-click.

ON AIRPLANE WHEELS FOLDING UP...

INT. OLD EBBIT BAR - D.C. -- NIGHT

Dark, unassuming joint. CUSTOMERS line the bar. A martini. Hope steals a sip. She is parked next to ASHLEY CARR, twenties; spirited buxom blonde chatterbox chugging beer.

HOPE

So you left them at Doug's?

ASHLEY

Lovey. Focus. I started the night with the congressman listenin' to him ramble about the currency he could make on 'K' then I went home with Jason.

HOPE

I still don't understand how you lost your panties.

ASHLEY

That's another story, which, by the way, you should try.

HOPE

What, not wearing panties or having liaisons with strange men?

ASHLEY

Either.

GUY passes saying, "Congratulations."

ASHLEY

I won the 'Hotties on the Hill' contest again. Okay, what is your issue? You struck out with the lingerie, didn't you?

HOPE

It's hard arousing a man shouting at the Iowa party coordinator.

ASHLEY

So, how long has it been?

HOPE

The... Senate... gala.

ASHLEY

Explains your confectionery consumption. Dear, face it; you were born with a need for affection and desire to give it.

HOPE

He's this close. I can feel it.

ASHLEY

I thought you and the fam would be ginned-up about the hitch-up.

HOPE

Well, yes, but... I just... Lately, I've had difficulty picturing us together. I feel like the verdicts still out and yet already I'm poised to say 'yes.' Plus, I'm tired of my job and the Hill's daily grind. I need something new.

ASHLEY

What you're feeling is like when you have absolutely nothing that goes with those new eight-hundred dollar pair of Giuseppe's.

HOPE

I suppose what I'm wondering is, how do you know if it is right?

ASHLEY

I hear it's a tingling sensation.

HOPE

I have no idea why I am sharing this... But... I can't imagine Dan saying: "Hope, you're the only one who could walk out of a crowded room and make me feel lonely."

ASHLEY

Oh, help me Rhonda. How does your brain come up with such Hallmark thoughts? You've been dating since, what, nineteen? After a week the passion and zip evaporates; there's a reason porn's a billion dollar biz and Tinder rocks.

HOPE

But that's just it I've never even had seven days. I'm in my mid-twenties and feel my entire life is already so neatly planned by others there are no surprises. Forget it. Dan is smart. He's the salt of the earth and will --

ASHLEY

-- Make Walter and Doris thrilled bringing two stellar political families together.

HOPE

Ha, ha. He will come around.

ASHLEY

Honey, more sympathetic I cannot be but the only time a woman can change a man is when he's a baby. Visit some sample sales, slip on a La Perla garter or two. It's like shoes: I don't believe there's one perfect pair for everyone, simply one that fits better than others.

Dan approaches. Nonchalantly kisses Hope.

DAN

I've been voted 'Top thirty-five under thirty-five.' Taz, Tom Collins and drinks for the ladies.

HOPE

That is terrific!

ASHLEY

Dynamite, kil-ler.

DAN

Smith is finally with us on the Education bill! Oh, there's a dinner this week with Holder; I invited your father. Which reminds me, his wife arranged *Roll Call* to do a piece on us, something like how one discovers love in this rapid-fire arena...

Dan stops, holding a wild card up his sleeve.

ON AIRPLANE'S WHEELS LOWERING...

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. -- SUNRISE

Red hues casts shadows on the city's panoramic splendor.

INT. RITZ CARLTON - LOBBY/GIFT STORE -- MORNING

We are in the grand lobby. BELLHOP wheels a cart past suited MEN. The elevator doors open to Grant. He ambles into the...

HOTEL GIFT STORE

Grant is browsing a magazine rack. He glances Stephanie on *People* magazine. As Grant reaches for the lone *ESQUIRE* someone snatches it. That someone is Dan. He shrugs.

A middle-aged WOMAN approaches and is about to speak with Dan, when she notices Grant. Almost faints.

WOMAN

Sorry. My daughter would kill me --

GRANT

-- No problem. You have a pen?

The Woman turns to Dan, who clumsily proffers a pen.

WOMAN

Her name is Cindy.

Grant hands the Woman his autograph, and exits.

GO TO:

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - REAR STEPS -- MORNING

It is a stunning bright winter's day. There is the bustle of TOURIST and school CHILDREN. A sedan eases to a stop. Grant steps out wearing a CAP and SHADES. Suddenly, running toward him is a pack of exhilarated kids, ad-libbing "*Wonder Man!*" Grant scampers up the steps.

CAPITOL BUILDING ENTRANCE

Grant finds Howard flashing a welcoming smile.

HOWARD

Morning, Mr. McAllister.
Congressman Duncan's office
advised he was in a Budget
hearing. You may meet him in
Room 234. Go through Statuary
Hall, up the stairs, first door
on your left.

Grant pads down the corridor, meanwhile...

INT. HOPE'S OFFICE -- MORNING

It is a beehive. Hope breezes into frame, major tardy. She is wearing only ONE EARRING.

Racing toward the door, juggling a cup of (cold) COFFEE, and folders, Hope catches JEFF. He is the red-haired intern banging a television REMOTE on the desk.

HOPE

What time's the hearing? Jeff!

Hope scoffs, and breezes from the office...

INT. CAPITOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Meanwhile, Grant is ambling along the corridor when: "THERE HE IS!" Grant spots a pack of enamored GIRLS. His pace quickens.

On Hope. She is dashing around the corner, as Grant hustles past BUMPING her arm -- splattering coffee on her white shirt. Hope's arm is soaked; papers, trampled; culprit, gone.

HOPE

AH! Look at what you did!

Hope crams the scattered papers into the folder. Muttering to herself, she marches to the restroom, where further fueling her frustration is a sign: 'closed for repairs.'

INT. OLD HALL OF THE HOUSE/STATUARY HALL - MOMENTS LATER

It's a spectacular two-story, semicircular room littered with SCULPTURES of prominent figures. Grant creeps behind Daniel Webster. The pack of girls scream past. Suddenly, someone taps his shoulder. To Grant's surprise it is Hope.

HOPE

You can't hide from shame.

GRANT

Well, hello there.

HOPE

Do you see this? That's you. And may I add, running or any form of recklessness is strictly forbidden in the Capitol.

Her eyes slant into Grant with hard curiosity. He manages to suck in every detail of this beauty.

HOPE

I would suggest be less careless.
And for what it is worth, the
shades don't work inside.

GRANT

You could take it off and I'll wash
it in the men's sink.

Grant notes Hope's lone earring, then the incoming girls.

HOPE

That's cute. But no. Thanks.

When Hope looks up, Grant is gone; out of her life forever.
She gasps at the time. Juggling her folders, she enters --

BUDGET HEARING

Where a battery of CONGRESSMEN/WOMEN are seated behind a
bank of microphones. The room is packed. Hope enters to
Ashley. She is with GAIL, an attractive Latina, and Dan.

ASHLEY

What happened to you?

HOPE

This lunatic bumped into me.

POLITICIANS shoots daggers at the girls. Dan is consulting
his iPhone.

DAN

Nice shirt. What happened?

ASHLEY

She was frolicking in the
cloakroom with Senator Coleman.

GAIL

Oh, he's hot!

DAN

Coleman's eighty-years old...

CHAIRMAN

Excuse me. Mr. Warner. I would
expect more from a senior White
House staff member.

GAIL

You are so busted.

ASHLEY

Holy shit, it's Grant McAllister!

Grant has now entered the room. Giddy STAFFERS gravitate toward him. Dan kisses Hope on the cheek.

DAN

Gotta run. P.O.T.U.S. called.
Don't forget seven at the Grille.

Hope's gaze settles on Grant, who has lost the cap and shades. He flashes his coolest smile. Hope says:

HOPE

That's... the 'lunatic'...

Grant gives a flirty wave. Hope awkwardly waves back, as Ashley and Gail turn an envious shade of green.

DUNCAN (V/O)

To be honest, I was surprised
someone of your stature would
hold interest in Sam Travis.

INT. CONGRESSMAN DUNCAN'S HIDEAWAY - MOMENTS LATER

It's a special cloister; cozy nook with desk and chair.
CONGRESSMAN DUNCAN, fifty, is adjusting his dazzling tie.

DUNCAN

When I heard Bill Jones was penning
a book I told my wife it is bound
to flop. Today I'm eating my share
of crow. Sam Travis was a helluva
of Chief of Staff; youngest ever.
Practically made the fine senator
(McKenzie from Illinois). Being a
womanizing, Bible-thumper who hid
in the closet doesn't bother you?

GRANT

I relish a good challenge, sir.

DUNCAN

Mind penning an autograph?
Granddaughters love your films.
Apologize for canceling but this
session is th' longest in ten
years and we're tryin' to beat
Santa to the district.

We track with the men down...

CAPITOL BUILDING - HALLWAY

DUNCAN

I shall, however, have a member of my staff look after you.

The men discover Hope, Gail and Ashley touching up their LIPSTICK. Hope quickly tosses hers into her purse, UNCAPPED.

DUNCAN

Allow me to present Hope Donahue. Hope, this is Mr. Grant McAllister. He is researching Sam Travis -- I need you to help him with whatever he needs, as long as he needs. Grant, I'm confident you're in good hands with this young lady.

HOPE

Oh, but sir, with all respect, I have a million projects...

Gail and Ashley glare at Hope like she's insane.

HOPE

With your Budget bill and trying to... I believe -- Oh! One sec.

Hope pops into her office. A beat. She returns, presenting Jeff, the intern, like a prized orchid.

HOPE

Someone like Jeff here, who does have time to divulge all the interworkings of the Hill to Mr. McAllister.

DUNCAN

I'm late for Appropriations. You all work it out. Good luck, son.

As Duncan pads down the hall, Jeff says to Grant:

JEFF

Hey! You're that *Wonder Man* dude!
(snatching Grant's arm)
Sure. I'll show you around town.
Let's get a selfie.

Off the girls shooting daggers to a mortified Hope.

INT. OLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING - DAN'S OFFICE -- DAY

WHOOSH. A copy of the Washington *Times* SLAMS on a desk. Headlines: 'Grant McAllister takes the Hill.' Dan glances below the fold to: 'Dan Warner states...'

DAN

Lucy!

The plaque on the door reads: 'Political Director.' The room is plush with MEMORABILIA; photos of Dan with world leaders. LUCY CARR, 20s, a slender, high-spirited spark plug, breezes in.

DAN

I was to be above the fold.

LUCY

Thompson wanted to go with the big celeb. Who can blame him?

DAN

I think I ran into this joker.

LUCY

(screaming)

You met Grant McAllister? Where? Tell me you scored his sig!

DAN

Sweet Jesus, no! And frankly I don't see what's so great about an overpaid circus performer.

LUCY

What an unkind thing to say. Because 'He Saves The World When The World's Not Looking.' Not to mention has a killer...

DAN

Never-the-less. Listen, decline Senator Blando's invite. And did Holder receive the tickets?

LUCY

Yes, and Mrs. H. is a massive fan.

DAN

Outstanding. All set with the Ritz? I want a list of RSVP'S by day's end. You haven't told anyone, have you?

LUCY
Yeah, I tweeted my billion
followers.

Lucy spots a Tiffany's BAG on Dan's desk. Gives a crafty
wink.

LUCY
You ole smooth devil. That girl is
going to have a heart-attack!

DAN
Let's hope she's surprised. Also
confer with the Agent Rogers over
at the White House.

LUCY
(re: Dan reads the paper)
You really must get an iPad.
Nobody reads papers.

DAN
Print is coming back.

GO TO:

EXT. CAPITOL ENTRANCE/STREETS -- DAY

Battleship clouds loom on the horizon. Grant and Jeff breeze
down the sidewalk away from us. Jeff is speaking non-stop
but we cannot hear. Ashley and Hope appear on the Capitol
steps.

ASHLEY
You go save that poor boy or I
will. And you know the only
research he'll be doing is seeing
how long it takes me to --

HOPE
-- He's fine. Besides, I don't
have time babysit.

Seductively begins unbuttoning her blouse.

ASHLEY
Honey, stop looking at it as a task
and take it as a treat. A trial to
see what it is Hope Donahue truly
desires. A million girls would
love to be in your shoes.

(MORE)

ASHLEY (cont'd)

Besides, this could be your last opportunity for fun before Mrs. Warner is pushing out pups and ironing ties. Now. Are you chasing that fine ass, or am I?

HOPE

I hope you catch the flu with boobs out like that.

ASHLEY

Work it, baby.

Hope breezes toward Jeff and Grant. And by now she has caught them. Grant is ebullient.

HOPE

Hi. Look, Jeff. I'll show Mr. McAllister around. You go back to the office and work on whatever it was you were doing.

JEFF

I was trying to fix the remote.

Jeff stalks away. Hope shrugs, feeling herself being lured by some power. Grant beams. They walk and talk.

GRANT

Hope, right? You didn't have to...

HOPE

I don't mean to interfere. Honestly, though, I couldn't with a good conscious leave you with him.

Hope gives a natural smile that makes us really like her.

GRANT

Funny world, huh?

HOPE

At times hilarious.

GRANT

So where we headed?

HOPE

The Congressional Research Service center is probably the best place to start. They'll have everything you need on Sam Travis, is it?

EXT. D.C. STREET - CONTINUOUS

It is cold. Hope tugs at her coat. As we wander along PEOPLE ogle at Grant. Hope struggles to the newfound attention.

GRANT

I have an idea. You mind if we ran a quick errand?

HOPE

Oh, no. That's fine.

GRANT

Fabulous. Come on!

Grant matter-of-factly reaches out, and takes Hope's arm.

INT. BOUTIQUE - CONNECTICUT AVE. -- DAY

It's one of those high-end, chic boutiques. Counters and shelves full of women's clothing items. A SALESGIRL presents Chanel SHIRTS to Hope. Warming to the idea, she decides to strike a series of poses. Grant smiles, stealing every detail of this pretty woman.

OUTSIDE -- BA-BOOM -- CRACKS THUNDER

GRANT

We may need an umbrella.

EXT. D.C. STREETS -- DAY

It's drizzling. Grant and Hope are sheltered by an umbrella. They stroll along the rain-soaked street. Hope is deliriously happy.

HOPE

Is this how you operate? Wooing girls with private shopping sprees.

GRANT

Always.

HOPE

And the results?

GRANT

It varies.

HOPE

Thank you for my lovely shirt but you really shouldn't have.

GRANT

Consider it an apology, thank you, and Christmas gift.

Right then SPLASH! A passing auto soaks Grant's jeans. Hope giggles. Grant throws a deadly glare. Hope's smile evaporates. But reappears with Grant leaping into a PUDDLE, splashing and laughing.

Hope thinks he's crazy. Grant is keen on her. As they sprint across the street, Hope glances back, giggling at Grant's peculiar running style.

GRANT

What's so amusing?

A cab blares its horn at them as they run across the street.

HOPE

For a super hero you run like a, girl. It's cute. Come on.

EXT. CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE -- DAY

Grant and Hope bound up the steps, entering...

CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

PATRONS shoot cold stares to our giggling couple. Books abound. Hope locates a computer terminal.

GRANT

Is it the way I move my arms?

HOPE

Forget it I said anything. We need information on Travis and McKenzie, right?

Grant is peering over Hope's shoulder. Moving ever-so to his breath on her neck, Hope instantly becomes distracted.

HOPE

Super. It's, um, in electronic archives. Now is this for...?

GRANT

No tights in this one.

Hope pivots, finding herself inches from Grant's lips. The two stare wordlessly a beat. Then Hope motions Grant to a corner table. Seconds later. She returns with a stack of papers, and sits across from Grant.

HOPE

What I meant was I'm simply not a *Wonder Man* kinda gal.

GRANT

That's what I like about you.

Grant remains pensive for a moment, and then laughs.

HOPE

Quite a jump from playing Mark Rogers and your *Cocktail* character.

GRANT

I think it's healthy to force yourself out of your safety zone. Seems a woman like you would think the same.

HOPE

I do, no, I do, but sometimes it's a, a struggle for a nester like me.

And Grant is caught, staring. Hope's eyes remained glued.

HOPE

What is it we need exactly?

GRANT

Anything to get my head around what makes this Travis guy tick... Do you have a pen?

HOPE

Oh, yeah, yeah, sure.

She rummages through her purse, and proffers a pen. Hope rakes her hand through her hair. A sly grin plays on Grant's face. He motions to her forehead. Hope notices the trace of LIPSTICK on her finger. Grant leans over the table, wiping oh-so gently the lipstick from Hope's forehead.

Hope is susceptible. She recalls Ashley's advice, as a whisper of a thrill falls onto ears. Hope places her hand on Grant's chest, stares into his eyes and then -- she KISSES his face. Not quiet on his lips.

Grant falls a little. Hope's face conceals the awe she is feeling... as we realize someone is watching. Audra recedes behind a shelf wearing a Cheshire grin.

GO TO:

INT. HAWK AND DOVE PUB -- DAY

A BURGER slides under a heat lamp. Dive is about a quarter full. A seasoned WAITRESS floats by two GIRLS in a booth; one is JESSICA MORTIMER, thirties, Ava Gardner look-alike, whom we will meet later.

The front door swings open. Ashley sashays in. She slides into a booth across from Hope, who is applying lipstick using the butter knife as a mirror.

HOPE

What are you doing here?

ASHLEY

Are you wearing Chanel? Did he buy you Chanel? He bought you Chanel? Where is he?

HOPE

He had some calls to make and by the time he returns I'd like you to be history.

Hope is toying with confessing the kiss.

ASHLEY

Does someone still detest men in tights?

HOPE

I admit I am intrigued.

ASHLEY

There is more simmering below the equator than curiosity.

HOPE

Oh, my God, what a fun day! Hum.

Reading an incoming email on her phone.

HOPE

The LA district attorney is in town and wants to meet for coffee because she is considering...

(MORE)

HOPE (cont'd)

running for Congress and is looking for a... campaign manager! Do you think, you think she means me? Ash. Could she want *me* to run her campaign? You know that's what --

ASHLEY

-- I also know Walter Donahue and Dan Warner like Hope just where she it. Now, back to Mr. Tasty. Why is playing Sam Travis?

HOPE

Because it's a challenge.

ASHLEY

I'm a *Wonder Man* kind of gal.

She is winding herself up -- about to burst --

HOPE

I THINK I LIKE HIM!

Customers stare. Hope winces; that was loud.

ASHLEY

What?!

HOPE

You said 'browse.'

ASHLEY

I didn't say 'buy.'

HOPE

I think there is something --

ASHLEY

-- I hate to disappoint ya but you're a link in a chain of many; take it from someone who's been there.

HOPE

Hooking up with an extra from *House of Cards* doesn't make you an expert. Besides, you said, 'work it.'

ASHLEY

Yeah, the old Hope way -- not this!

HOPE

I think I know what I'm feeling.

ASHLEY

Hope naiveté is not your color.

HOPE

It is the first color I've felt good in in some time.

Suddenly in breezes Grant.

GRANT

Sorry. My agent...

Ashley is mesmerized. Hope shoots her a 'you ARE leaving' look. Grant slides into the booth beside Hope.

GRANT

Hi there. So my buddy, Mark is rollin' in later. I thought we could all grab --

ASHLEY

-- We'd love to meet your friend!
I'm Ashley.

GRANT

Ashley, you look right up Mark's alley.

ASHLEY

I've never been up a guy's alley.
(Hope kicks Ashley)
Ouch!

Grant glances up. Ashley covers. Hope grins.

HOPE

Aren't you late for something?

The waitress is balancing a plate of burgers past when Ashley leaps up -- smashing into her. Burgers splatter to the floor; plates splinter.

Ashley breezes out the door leaving Hope eyeing Grant help the waitress. As she bends down her handbag spills. Its contents clank to the floor -- birth control PILLS plop beside Grant, who simply smiles at Hope, ready to die.

Note a "SONG" croons on the jukebox. It is in this awkward, but salient moment, a bond is formed between Hope and Grant.

JAM TO:

INT. D.C. RESTAURANT -- DAY

Old-school. Place is brimming with CUSTOMERS. A martini glass; bourbon is poured into it; cherry added.

A gold state of Texas RING. A thick hand grabs the martini glass. WALTER DONAHUE, sixty is a bulky, self-made man who knows where of he speaks.

Parked across from Walter is Dan. An almost Dorian Gray painting of Walter, who glares at Dan toying with his iPhone.

WALTER

Let's forget about th' circus performer and get to details.

DAN

Friday is set. We have ninety-six percent RSVPs and, the President may attend.

WALTER

How 'bout tomorra? And the sparkler?

DAN

Tucked securely in my office safe.

WALTER

My boy, you and Hope'll gonna make a hell of a politically viable duo. More importantly, we're finally uniting two of the great American families. As for my end our courting Holder has yielded results. He'll run for the senate contingent all goes as planned for the missus.

DAN

Outstanding! Regarding Mandy, Jason and Dad are 'extremely confident' her nomination will be confirmed. Senator Smith is on the fence but Dad will push him over.

WALTER

The Dems have been hit by that public housing scandal, and I don't foresee any Republican challengers.

DAN

There's the DA, Kim Fang who's coming off that big media case. Rumor has it she wants mayor.

WALTER

If all this finagling works we'll have a young senator, new ambassador, and most importantly, my future son-in-law a California congressman.

DAN

I'm planning on Hope being deputy campaign manager. But I want to tell her after we file.

WALTER

That'll send her over Mars.

DAN

Let's keep it quiet until then.

INT. CAPITOL ENTRANCE/CORRIDOR -- DAY

Hope and Grant are ambling through a metal detector. They continue along the corridor. People pass, staring.

HOPE

I read somewhere you were 'pretentious and arrogant.'

GRANT

Nicholson taught me, 'never believe anything you read in those rags.'

HOPE

I imagine you've met a lot of fantastic stars.

GRANT

I have been fortunate. When Tom Hanks buys you a drink at the Polo Lounge, and Mark Wahlberg makes you buy his, you know you're in the club. But the best was meeting Elizabeth Taylor. I was a teenager and my agent and I were having dinner next she and Steve Martin. We chatted before we left. She was so down-to-earth.

(MORE)

GRANT (cont'd)

What killed me is she ordered liver and onions and smothered them with salt.

And Howard enters frame.

HOWARD

Hello, Ms. Hope.

GRANT

Hey, Howard.

HOPE

Grant is researching Sam Travis.

HOWARD

So I heard. Political capital aside, a hopeless romantic involved in a novelesque love affair with his biggest flaw being he drank Tom Collins' in the dead of winter. Old bulls gave him hell. I have some tasty tidbits I'd be happy to partake.

HOPE

Are you at Will's Christmas?

HOWARD

Afraid not. I'm saving for...

HOPE

That's right. Your Hawaii trip.

HOWARD

Novel listener she is. I must scoot. Merry Christmas.

Our couple amble past a JANITOR be-bopping to his music.

GRANT

Now where are you from?

HOPE

Houston, Texas. I was born in Chengdu. It's a long story. I don't care to bore you.

GRANT

I got time.

HOPE

My parents died in a car wreck when my twin brother and I were one.

(MORE)

HOPE (cont'd)

My grandparents didn't have the means to raise us so they put us up for adoption. A man at the consulate contacted my now mother and father. Next thing I knew Timothy and I were the only Chinese kids running around the Texas oil fields.

GRANT

And do you go much to China?

HOPE

Never, sadly. My parents stopped traveling after they had us and with university and now work haven't found the time.

GRANT

We filmed in Hong Kong last summer and I loved it. Like to hit the mainland sometime.

HOPE

What about you?

GRANT

I'm an Appleton, Wisconsin boy. Home of McCarthy, Houdini, Dafoe.

HOPE

If you don't mind I'd like to show you my special place.

INT. CAPITOL DOME & ROTUNDA - MOMENTS LATER

Grant gazes up one-hundred-and-eighty-feet to a gold-encrusted work of art. Granite stones. Founding Fathers on canvas. Absolutely stunning.

HOPE

The top used to be made of wood; called 'Bullfinch Dome.' And there are countless tales of phantom sightings, matter of fact, Howard claims to have seen John Adams' ghost over there.

Hope and Grant cross to a concealed DOOR in the far corner. Hope flashes her credentials to a posted OFFICER, who allows them entry.

INT. CAPITOL DOME - HIDDEN STAIRCASE

Grant's eyes immediately lock onto the tiny, sickly winding STAIRS that end at the tip-top of the DOME. Gulp.

HOPE

Are you okay? You look peaked.

GRANT

I'm not the daredevil I portray in my films.

HOPE

No?

GRANT

No. I'm honestly terrified of heights and grossly claustrophobic.

HOPE

(laughing)

Sorry. Imagining *Wonder Man* soaring over the skyline with a sick bag.

GRANT

Thank my stunt double Mike.

HOPE

Then how do you travel?

GRANT

That is a major hang-up. I despise flying. I purchase the entire row of seats and pop a Xanax, or four. I'm probably the only kid never to set foot in a tree house. Sorry to disappoint ya. Looks fabulous from down here though.

HOPE

It's my most favorite spot in all of D.C. When I'm up there I have this feeling all the bad things in life will be whisked away. There's a story that goes if you kiss someone -- Oh, I wasn't --

GRANT

-- I know --

HOPE

Come on. We can use the congressman's 'hideaway.'

INT. CONGRESSMAN DUNCAN'S HIDEAWAY -- DAY

The tiny room is cozy. Offers a postcard view of the National Mall. Hope withdraws PAPERS from her purse. She places them on a table. Grant is seated, surveying the documents.

GRANT

The script picks up at the peak of Travis' power.

HOPE

Says Travis was a 'kingmaker.'

GRANT

His mother left when he was seven; father raised him. Ran Republican politics from '52 to '64, close friends with LBJ?

HOPE

In the arena there are two types of politics: clash of dearly held values and buzz of gamesmanship, which after five both are drowned in whisky until sunrise. Sadly it's changed. Today everyone takes politics so personally. It appears Howard was correct. There are tons of love letters to Josephine, a French girl who Travis married... Oh, my.

GRANT

What?

HOPE

His wife, uh died in a car accident on, uh, on their wedding day.

GRANT

Get this, a Senate Page caught Travis and McKenzie in a 'warm embrace.'

HOPE

I beginning to see why he interests you. He's a challenge, huh?

GRANT

An elusive, complex creature.

HOPE

But also rather ruthless.

GRANT

Still you have to like him. You can't make those kind of judgments. The difficulty I'm having is finding the best entry point -- this character could easily get away if not approached correctly.

Under the weight of his stare, Hope operates her iPhone.

GRANT

You sleep with that thing, too?

HOPE

Only when I'm lonely. Look, would you mind terribly if I popped to quick coffee around the corner?

GRANT

Go for it.

HOPE

Here's the thing. This woman is considering a run for a congressional seat, and, I, well, I'm hoping she will ask me to be her campaign manager.

GRANT

That's terrific.

HOPE

It would be fabulous. But it is also very complicated. I'll go in five, and meet you in say, an hour.

GRANT

But not here. Let's be silly.

HOPE

Silly? I'll think about that and ping you. Okay back to Sam. The more I get to know you and see what kind of story this is the more, from a professional communication position --

GRANT

-- Seems suicidal?

HOPE

But I am overly practical.

GRANT

(withdrawing a LIFE SAVOR)

There's something about going after this role that revs my blood. Trapped in every artist there's this notion, this insanity, that one day you may do something perfect. This idea stimulates your creative juices, pushing you gunning to top that unsurpassable summit. Then if you do become one of the fortunate, th' big agents and studios tell you to 'do this for the bank and this for the power.' And when you're fresh you can't say 'no' so your artistic self suffocates. I decided to put it all on the line. Gamble that I may fall on my face. AND scene.

Grant notes Hope's puzzled expression. She is struggling with confessing about Dan.

HOPE

I salute your confidence.

GRANT

Wanna see something really cool?

Grant tilts back his head. He shoots a Life Savor out of his mouth, and into the air -- before dropping into his mouth. He throws a cheesy grin like 'pretty impressive,' huh? Hope grins, 'boys will be boys.'

HOPE

On that note I'm going. Ping you. Get some work done, Mr. Sam Travis.

Hope throws a warm smile, falling a little. As soon as she exits, Grant throws up his arms, dizzy with excitement.

GO TO:

INT. DAN'S OUTER OFFICE -- DAY

Dan sails into frame speaking into his phone...

DAN/PHONE

... They are incapable of governing that's why they're dusting off their old playbooks.

Sweeping past staffers at their desk, and into...

DAN'S OFFICE

Dan parks behind his paper-littered desk.

DAN/PHONE

We need him on the Indecency bill.
If he goes so do six others and we
can't afford that. Now handle it
or I'll have the president.

And Lucy has entered.

DAN

Get me Tony in the Whip's office.
See if we have the votes to get
HR 2345 out of committee.

LUCY

You're cranky about something.

DAN

What makes you say that?

LUCY

Because your ears are red.

DAN

Jason said Jessica saw Hope
sitting in Grant's lap at lunch.

LUCY

In his lap? Oooh, that is yummy.

DAN

I don't find it amusing.

LUCY

Stop. She's exaggerating. Hope
would never do something fun like
that. She's a prude. Not that
there's anything wrong with it.

DAN

I'm this close to popping the
question and this guy shows up. He
could derail everything. I'd like
you to do some poking around. See
if you can't dig up something tasty
on our actor friend.

LUCY

Where are you going with this?

DAN

Simply being proactive. Be nice to have insurance. Anything. Drugs, sex, rehab -- those people live licentious, unprincipled lives.

LUCY

Lucky bastards.

DAN

And keep this between us.

LUCY

'Like sand through the hourglass these are the Days of our Lives...'

Back on Dan, his mind is operating on something, but what?

EXT. CITY STREETS - VARIOUS SHOTS -- LATE AFTERNOON

The sun is low in the indigo sky. We see the Watergate Hotel. Lincoln Memorial. Christmas SHOPPERS shuffle past.

EXT. ICE SKATING RINK -- CONTINUOUS

Skating KIDS zip past Grant and Hope. They glide into frame. Hope is buzzing with excitement....

HOPE

Anyway, she said they are putting together an exploratory campaign for LA's congressional seat. And she wants my answer by Friday.

GRANT

And you'd be running the campaign? That's fantastic!

HOPE

Yes, and no. My stomach is doing cartwheels. I'm sorta locked into my current job by my father. Oh, I don't want to get into this now.

Grant looks into Hope's eyes. He half-smiles.

HOPE

You're not bad.

GRANT

I am a Wisconsin boy. Plus, remember in *WM2* my skating across the Antarctic? You didn't miss much.

HOPE

(laughs to herself)
I was just picturing my father's face if he could see us.

GRANT

Not fan of the blades, huh?

HOPE

He's not a fan of anything but politics. He lives and breathes it. Which is fine with me, however, with my brother that's a different story. He and Timothy go round and round. Walter Espy Donahue is a cantankerous cocktail of 'Bear' Bryant, Trump and LBJ.

GRANT

Ouch. Timothy in politics, too?

HOPE

Supposed to be. Daddy sent him to Yale whereupon graduation he passed on a White House offer and instead fled to Chengdu to work with pandas. They haven't spoken since. In fact, dad wanted State to revoke his passport, thankfully mom intervened.

GRANT

If politics wasn't in your blood what would you be doing?

HOPE

A dance instructor.

GRANT

Get out! Who's your model?

HOPE

I love Bill Robbins.

GRANT

He's okay but I'll stick with a fella 'hooper' --

HOPE

-- Kelly.

GRANT

(British accent)

Perhaps one of these days my lady
would allow me the honor.

HOPE

(similar accent)

Now would that be a request for a
spot on my dance card, dear sir?
Fantasy aside. I love being on the
campaign trail. It's exhilarating,
never boring, as opposed to the...

Right then -- Grant FALLS. Goes splat on the ice!

HOPE

Oh-my-gawd! Are you okay? Here.
Maybe we should sit down.

Waning winter solace. Hope and Grant sink onto a bench. We
see two small GIRLS whispering in bg.

HOPE

How is your knee?

Grant is grinning at Hope's disheveled hair. She moves to
adjust it. He stops her.

GRANT

No. Leave it. You wear the
disheveled, sexy look well.

HOPE

What about your parents?

GRANT

They are simple. Dad finally
retired from the factory and mom,
teaching -- now they fish. Only
been apart once. They're as
madly in love today as they were
thirty years ago, that kind of
love Keats and Shelley penned...
once in a lifetime. Something
I'll probably never know.

HOPE

What? That's silly to say.

GRANT

It's tough living in the fishbowl, then add the constant intrusion of social media.

HOPE

They must be proud.

GRANT

Pop was slow to come around but mom, yeah, she's been supportive from the get-go. She helped me book my first commercial.

HOPE

Which one?

GRANT

Remember 'Tummy Be Gone?'

HOPE

You were the little boy who asked the lady if she was pregnant. Hilarious.

GRANT

By far my folks have been the biggest influences and grounding in my life.

HOPE

Would you say the 'biz' has changed you?

GRANT

It can't help but. There's an old adage: 'Money doesn't buy you happiness. But it buys you a big enough yacht to sail up to it.' Part of me wants the yacht while the other half that tacky gold statue.

HOPE

It's more than half. I think you need to embrace the art. Love it. Do it. Personally, I believe it depletes your value talking about it yet continuing to position yourself in the storm of the money-making machine.

GRANT

Burton was the only one able to
pull that trick off.

Hope takes Grant's hand in hers. She is about to divulge
about Dan when the autograph-seeking girls interrupt.

GRANT

Hi there. What's your names?

WILKER

Wilker.

CARA

Cara.

CARA

She loves you.

With that, the girls zip off, leaving Hope realizing -- it is
7:10! She leaps up -- and as she does -- she slips --
falling directly into Grant's arms.

HOPE

Oh, my gosh! I'm late. I have a
reception...

Hope is frantically unfastening her skates.

GRANT

Can't you cancel?

HOPE

I would love to but...

GRANT

Will I see you later?

HOPE

I doubt it. Sorry. Don't take
it personally. Here's my card
and Ashley's number. Call her.

GRANT

I get the understudy, huh?

HOPE

Just for tonight's show. See you
tomorrow!

Dashing off, Hope throws one last look over her shoulder at
Mr. Hollywood, tangled in her honeysuckle web.

EXT. POLITICAL DINNER - TOWN HOUSE -- NIGHT

We trail Hope bounding up steps of a stately home.

INT. TOWN HOUSE - FORMAL PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

A cocktail reception in full swing. Priceless art line the black walnut walls. POLITICOS congeal in circles. Tray of CHAMPAGNE. WAITER offers Hope a glass, struggling out of her coat. Dan approaches.

DAN
There you are.

Hope jumps like a cat on hot tin roof.

DAN
You're thirty minutes late.

HOPE
I know. Sorry. Work was crazy.

Dan tries to kiss Hope still struggling with her coat.

HOPE
Give me one second.

DAN
What's up with your hair?

In the process of 'fixing' Hope's hair, Dan accidentally KNOCKS over a passing waiter's TRAY. Glasses scatter; some fall to the floor. The waiter scrambles to collect the broken pieces, as Dan simply states:

DAN
When you're done I need another Tom Collins.

Hope simply looks at Dan. Are you serious?

DAN
I need you on tip-top of your game with Holder.

HOPE
He gives me the creeps.

Making an effort to keep his patience under control.

DAN
Kips, I'm aboard the Holder train would be nice if you think of our future and hop on, too.

Hope rolls her eyes. Dan sweeps her into the

CLOAKROOM

He pulls her close, whispering:

DAN
What is it with you?

HOPE
I have a lot on my plate.

DAN
Meaning that actor.

HOPE
Tsk. He's here for research.

DAN
On whom?

HOPE
Can we get outta here?

DAN
(grabs her arm)
I do not care for him.

HOPE
You're squeezing my arm.

DAN
(releases her arm)
Hope, for my future wife to be
flaunting with one of low
scruples is unseemly.

HOPE
Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

DAN
I want you to tell Duncan you
don't feel comfortable --

HOPE
-- Is that an ultimatum?!

Right then, CONGRESSMAN HOLDER, forties, peeks through the
curtain.

HOLDER
Peek-a boo.

DAN
Congressman.

HOLDER

Hope. I'm looking forward to the seven-course meal.

Off Hope's forced smile, we jump to --

EXT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT/SEDAN -- NIGHT

The bustle of TRAVELERS. We watch Mark daintily race toward the sedan, and joins Grant...

INSIDE THE SEDAN

Mark and Grant are tucked into the rear seat.

GRANT

What took you so long?

MARK

I was arguing with the captain about which *Godfather* was best. Moron thought *III*! I'm going to hit you with this now and get it over with. Lionel and the studio are livid. He called you a 'snot-nosed brat,' and threatened Joan not to hire you for any projects. Also Sorensen's not sold on you grasping the Travis' romantic vein considering your revolvin' door.

GRANT

That's ridiculous!

MARK

Maybe is a rue because he's being pitched an 'up-and-comer.' I'm trying to find out who. Brian's having attorneys line-by-line your contract and considering suing you.

GRANT

I bet he's pitching Tyler Ford.

MARK

Crossed my mind, too. Good news is Joan's looking for the last five million. Not saying that will land you the role...

GRANT

But if I put in the five...

MARK

And do it for scale...

GRANT

Five's a lot to scrounge up.

MARK

I'd even add a read. I know you're past that. Hey, what if shoot a scene and send Joan. Give her something to show Sorensen. But we gotta be quick. Clock's ticking.

GRANT

Anyone tell ya you run like a girl?

MARK

Jackass, my left hip's off-kilter.

INT. RITZ CARLTON LOBBY - LATER

The elevator doors slide open to reveal Mark in a funky plaid jacket. He is straightening his cuffs. Grant is sporting a leather jacket. He is adjusting his collar. Our swingers stroll past, and out the door in SLO-MO...

EXT. RITZ CARLTON/SEDAN -- NIGHT

... Discovering Ashley; her voluptuous figured poured into a LBD. BELLMAN swings open the sedan's door. Our trio disappear inside.

FADE TO:

INT. TOWN HOUSE - DINNING ROOM -- NIGHT

It is decadent affair. Elegant formal place settings. Twenty GUESTS seated at tables. Hope is bored to tears. She secretly consults her iPhone to: 'He digs you! Ash.' Hope melts. Then: 'LOW BATTERY.' She frowns as Dan shoots her a cold stare. Will this evening every end?

E/I. NIGHT CLUB - ADAM'S MORGAN -- NIGHT

Meanwhile, PARTYERS eye Grant, Ashley and Mark trailing the MANAGER inside the club. We hear chill music, and see a hip CROWD. They arrive at a private table topped with spirits.

MARK

This is place is jumping.

ASHLEY

If you boys will excuse me I need to powder my nose.

MARK

Dude she could kick start a 747. Got this mistress of the naughty riff thang going on. I dig her!

GRANT

If I had a Benjamin for every time I heard that.

MARK

This time it's different.

Grant sees Jessica, from the cafe, cut a sensuous gaze.

MARK

I'm tellin' ya this is in play. Guess who I ran into at B.J's? Vanessa. The erotic shampoo commercial. Steph's friend. Anyhoo, we had a little pow-wow... I explained ya were goin' through a major transition and that you are in fact a 'nesting creature' who still has sparks for Steph.

Grant with a crooked look. Ashley sashays up.

MARK

Get outta my dreams and into my car. What's your poison?

ASHLEY

I'll do bubbly. Hard liquor blurs my judgement.

MARK

Double Smirnoff rocks coming up. Hey, maybe ya know, why is pizza so unhealthy? I mean you have cheese, vegetables, meat...

On Grant. He is wrestling with thoughts of Hope. Meanwhile

INT. TOWN HOUSE - DINNING ROOM -- NIGHT

WAITERS clear salad plates while others place down the next course. Dan winks at Hope, who returns a look of bitter pleasure. Dying inside.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - DANCE FLOOR -- NIGHT

The joint is now off-the-rails. Grant is a few drinks in, feeling loose. He is gyrating with the crowd. Stealing a look at his wristwatch, he sulks.

Right then, Jessica approaches. She caresses Grant's arm.

JESSICA

I saw you at the cafe earlier.
Mind if my girls and I get a photo?

Jessica and her FRIENDS encircle Grant, and just as the photo is snapped, Jessica KISSES Grant.

JESSICA

Take my card case you get bored.
You can ring me any hour.

Jessica slips her card into Grant's back pocket, stealing a squeeze of his famous asset.

JESSICA

And unlike others I'm unattached.

It takes a beat for Jessica's words to soak in, but when they do -- Grant is blown away. Suddenly, he's lost in his own world ruled by childish jealousy. He pads to Mark.

GRANT

I'm outta of here.

We follow Grant weaving through the crowd, and...

EXT. D.C. CLUB/TAXI -- LATE NIGHT

... into his waiting sedan just as --

-- We catch Hope emerging from a taxi. She breezes expectantly to the DOORMAN.

DOORMAN

Sorry, doll. Line's there.

Doorman waves her off with his clipboard. Hope is weighing her options. She stares at her dead cell. Crestfallen and lovelorn, Hope shuffles along the street CROSSFADING into Grant stalking past a Ritz EMPLOYEE hosing the sidewalk.

INT. RITZ CARLTON - GRANT'S SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

Grant enters. He stumbles over Mark's bags in search of light. He paces. Is he overreacting? Perhaps. He stewes a beat before retrieving the *Calling Freedom* script.

- He watches *From Here to Eternity*.

- He sets up his phone camera. Readies himself. Launching into a naked performance of Sam Travis, as

INT. HOPE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- LATE NIGHT

Hope drifts to the window, looking out, wondering: Why can't I stop thinking of Hollywood?

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. -- DAWN

It is early morning of the following day. The brilliant sun is peeking over the city when the silence is broken by

INT. DAN'S OUTER OFFICE -- MORNING

Shrieks and shrills. They are coming from Lucy and staff relishing social media. Dan strides past and into...

DAN'S OFFICE

Tossing his briefcase on his desk. Lucy is right there.

DAN

What's with them, Kim Kardashian lose her bra? I need you to send Holder a bottle of J.W. Blue and flowers to Mandy, make it something festive Caribbean.

LUCY

Here's the intel you requested.

Dan snatches the FOLDER. He reads the detective's results regarding Grant.

DAN

You're telling me the kid's only debauchery is underage drinking.

LUCY

That and... I take you haven't seen WhatsApp?

DAN
Some of us enjoy lives not likes.

Dan flops into his chair, scanning a NEWSPAPER from a stack of many. At that moment, he instantly goes British pale. Because there is a PHOTO of Hope and Grant, ice-skating.

Off his wonky-faced look we go to --

INT. HOPE'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Hope breezes to her desk, consulting her phone/social media when her eyes go wide as saucers. Because there is Grant and Jessica. She has sharp feelings of disappointment.

Audra enters with a newspaper.

AUDRA
Morn-ing. Sweet photo.
(off the ice-skating shot)
Dan's on one and knows you're in.

Picking up the receiver like dirty underwear...

HOPE
Hello. It's not how it looks.
Dan, please. Will you forget
about the stupid interview? I
refuse to do this. I'm hanging
up.

CLICK. Hope tries to fight off a panic attack. She stomps her foot and tosses her hair -- sailing out the door.

EXT. CAPITIOL COFFEE/NEWSSTAND -- MORNING

Grant rushes into frame. He is sweating, running hard; trying to clear his mind. Suddenly, someone slams into him. Grant frowns to discover -- Hope. Her eyes slant into him with a hard curiosity. People pass, staring.

GRANT
What a small, small world --

HOPE
-- Nice photo --

GRANT
-- Good reception? --

HOPE
-- Marvelous.

GRANT
Flying solo is a drag, huh?

HOPE
Look who's talking.

GRANT
I need my papers and I'll leave you alone.

HOPE
They're in my office. Happy to give you them before your flight.

GRANT
Like a moron I rescheduled.

Unfastening her eyes from his is difficult.

HOPE
You did? Call me later and I'll give them to you.

GRANT
Perfect.

HOPE
Terrific. Bye.

Like petulant children, Grant and Hope stomp off in opposite directions.

INT. RITZ CARLTON HALLWAY/GRANT'S SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

A hand is resting on a doorknob. Grant is about to open the door, when suddenly, a WAITER breezes out, and past.

WAITER
Good morning, Mr. McAllister!

Grant enters to Mark. He is slouched on the sofa savoring breakfast in his undies. Grant snatches a slice of bacon.

MARK
This girl is a box of dynamite.

GRANT
Spare me th' Cinemax tales.

MARK
Actually, they're Disney. We didn't even get bombed. Not even under the shirt over the bra.

(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)

We conversed. Kissed a little. She's not bad. Doesn't use her tongue enough. And listen to me *Jimmy* and listen tight -- her friend digs you.

GRANT

Her friend has a kickstand!

MARK

Yeah some White House yo-yo but don't freak. You are freaking. Relax. She may not love Dan.

(off Grant's look)

Told you we connected. You're always bitchin' 'LA' chicks this and 'LA' chicks that, well this gal ain't an 'LA' chick.

GRANT

No, she's a chick with a dude who she neglected to mention.

MARK

Whatta you ten? When you hit on a bird are your first lines: 'I'd love to fondle your melons but I'm dating someone.' My opinion, without even putting eyes on the filly -- ya stand the chance of never landing one of her caliber. I say roll the bones, stay clear of Italian deserts, and get over your little word phobia.

GRANT

Shut up! Okay? All right I'm gonna share something with you. Ya wanna know the problem, why the cannoli thing occurred? Because I've never said *IT!* There.

MARK

Wait. You're tell me that you've never said, 'I love you?'

GRANT

To my parents and my dog, but no, not to a girl.

MARK

Ha, ha. This is top-to-bottom loony. What's the reasoning?

GRANT

I don't know. The few instances I have had the urge I felt clumsily foolish like I'd be leading them on or worse, committing to a relationship I knew I couldn't guarantee much less live up to.

MARK

Y'know just uttering the words is not locking you into a marriage. What counts is emotions.

GRANT

What if being unable to express those words mean I'm incapable of possessing the emotions?

MARK

Bull-shit. I've seen you with Steph. The emotions are in there. Your problem, and I've vocalized it countless times, you're scared shitless of commitments. And this fear has somehow gotten wrapped up and associated with failure. You're a daredevil in all aspects of life but yet in the match of romance you're a fraidy-cat who not only avoids particular words but actions required for a healthy relationship.

(his phone RINGS)

I don't wanna see your heart shrivel up like Phil Specter's ball sack.

(now into the phone)

Talk to me. Uh-huh. Yeah. I'll be there! (click) Callback for the cop pilot! I'm back, baby!

Mark is like a whirlwind. In the process of packing, he stumbles over his VALISE...

GRANT

I'd shower if I were you.

MARK

Use the hot towel on the plane.

GRANT

Tell Joan I, I'll put into final capital.

MARK

Wow! You're really doing it?
Five mill? Shit! We ain't playin'
dollar Reno slots anymore.

GRANT

I had that money set aside to buy
that lake property for the folks.

MARK

When you earn an Oscar you can buy
the damn lake.

GRANT

Or I move in with you because I'm
broke and unemployed.

Mark's shoving clothes into his valise. He flings open the
door. Grant looms in the threshold.

GRANT

Break a leg, pally.

Right then Mark plants a smooch on Grant's lips. MOWA!

MARK

I LOVE YOU.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - LADIES RESTROOM -- MORNING

On Hope staring at her reflection in the mirror. She is
applying lipstick while Ashley powders her breast.

ASHLEY

I am totally into him.

HOPE

Do you realize how many times I
have heard those exact words?

ASHLEY

This is different. He is a good
kisser. Not great. Tongue is
too involved.

HOPE

See, there is more.

ASHLEY

We were kissing on the dance
floor and he had me pushed up
against the wall really hard...

HOPE

Enough.

ASHLEY

I know someone who hasn't had her second cup.

Ashley is now trailing Hope into...

CAPITOL BUILDING HALLWAY

CONGRESSMEN pass. Hope forces a smile, trotting forward.

HOPE

Someone passed two, five cups ago. Ash, my picture is splashed on every social media site. It's not a red-letter day for Hope.

ASHLEY

Are you insane? Of course it is! It's your Hallmark romantic.

HOPE

For Jessica, sure.

ASHLEY

Oh, she's a slut from the Senate side who had a fling with Dan years ago.

HOPE

Really?

ASHLEY

Don't be jealous.

HOPE

I haven't known him long enough --

ASHLEY

-- Since when does duration factor into emotions? Honey, don't you see the way Hollywood looks at you? He's completely ga-ga. You don't realize how lucky you are. Simply to have a guy look into my eyes would bring me climaxing -- these babies are fun to play with but a burden to love.

HOPE

This sounds horrible. I've thought of Grant more in the last day than I have Dan.

ASHLEY

Oh, heavens! You can't fit a square peg into a round hole.

HOPE

But I love...Dan...

ASHLEY

Do you? I mean really. Or do you love the idea, the stability? I saw we rub him out. What?

HOPE

If I break up with him people would think I'm a bitch. My parents would disown me. Not to mention, the political scandal.

ASHLEY

Don't let Hollywood go on dreaming if you're not. Now what about Kim Fang?

HOPE

God, that's right. The mere thought of telling dad, and explaining to Dan -- I'm going bonkers!

FADE TO:

INT. HOPE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Hope enters to utter chaos. Audra is right there with a concerned look.

AUDRA

There you are! AP's running a story on Duncan and the hunting trip with Judge Walker, who, as we speak is being accused of judicial impropriety.

HOPE

When did it hit?

AUDRA

Six minutes ago.

Hope checks her iPhone, and sinks. She glances to Jeff, still 'working' on that remote. To Audra:

HOPE

First, hold all my calls unless press related. Here's how we'll play it: We'll go with Duncan is still anti-gun and did not participate in any of the hunting activities. As for Walker, say at the time of scheduling Duncan's case was not before the bench and that we are extremely concerned and disturbed by these charges but we...

Off Jeff discovering the REMOTE... has no batteries.

CUT TO:

VARIOUS SHOTS OF GRANT RESEARCHING TRAVIS: 1) Grant at Travis' grave. 2) Reading political books; making calls. 3) Lunching with Howard; taking notes. 4) At Travis' home, etc.

EXT. GEORGETOWN HARBOR - OUTDOOR CAFE -- DAY

The Watergate hotel in bg. Grant is parked at a table, sifting through papers, re-examining the fact Travis' mother left his father. Note the *Variety* headline on his iPad: 'Sorensen in D.C.' Grant receives a message from Brian, stating the studio's considering firing him.

FADE TO:

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING -- NIGHT

It is lit up and glowing on this cold, clear night.

INT. CAPITOL/HOPE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hope is at her desk, frazzled. She glances at the DRESS that she should be wearing, and sighs. Scanning her messages, she cradles the phone receiver. Meanwhile...

INT. CAPITOL ENTRANCE/CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Grant enters to find a moon-faced POLICEMAN languishing behind a desk.

POLICEMAN
You looking for the film group?

GRANT
Actually, no. Hope Donahue.

POLICEMAN
Go ahead, sir.

Grant sweeps us through the shadows. His every step echoing: TAP, TAP. He hears music. It is coming from the janitor's radio. A happy thought strikes him.

INT. HOPE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Hope is resting her head in her hand when someone wraps on the door. She looks between her fingers to find Grant. A glowing tingle shots through her when he enters.

GRANT
Am I interrupting something?

HOPE
I just tried calling you. Come in.

GRANT
You look a little --

HOPE
-- We were hit hard today.

A moment comes and goes.

HOPE
How are things with you?

GRANT
Hit hard, too.

Note their difference in dress: Grant, hip, suave; Hope, tired, disheveled.

HOPE
Care to share?

GRANT
Didn't come to burden you.

HOPE
It would be welcoming distraction.

GRANT
Appears I'm not landing Travis.

HOPE
Oh, no. That's terrible. What happened?

GRANT
Director's betting on an unknown.

HOPE
That's terrible. Oh. Before I forget. Here are your papers.

GRANT
Actually, you have a sec?

His finger is stretched, beckoning.

GRANT
I want to show you something.

HOPE
What, now? I look atrocious.

GRANT
You look stunning.

HOPE
Really?

Teasing her drawn back hair, she drifts forward.

HOPE
There is something I have been remiss in sharing.

He places his index finger gently on Hope's lips...

GRANT
There's something I've been remiss saying: I apologize for behaving so childishly earlier.

With that remark, he takes Hope's hand in his, sweeping her --

INT. STATUARY HALL -- NIGHT

The room is dimly-lit. Steaks of light highlight the STATUES. Our couple comes into view. Grant steps forward. TAP, TAP. Hope delivers a coy smile, stealing a glimpse of the janitor, as music begins to consume Grant...

He begins to sway. To dance. Sensuous, yet manly; a concoction of Walken/Kelly.

Hope is mesmerized, touched in a manner that's almost sexual, and yes, folks -- falling head-over-heels.

JUMP TO: SOMEONE'S POV -- PHIL SORENSEN (director), sixties and two CONGRESSMEN, observe from a dark corner.

BACK TO: Grant folding Hope into his arms. They float around statues, through light beams.

JUMP TO: Sorensen. Witnessing a side of Grant he doubted.

BACK TO: Hope twirls, spins into Grant's arms. He nuzzles her throat; both swept away by the sexual undercurrent.

Grant spins Hope into his arms. Their lips are millimeters apart. Their breath rapid. Carefully, unblinkingly, Hope curves her back, pushing herself toward Grant's body, caressing his lips with her finger.

They are about to kiss, when --

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF CLAPPING. It is coming from a dark emerging FIGURE. Hope squints. She grimaces and swallows, hard recognizing...

Dan stalking forward like the reaper. He speaks quietly, calmly...

DAN

This explains your dinner absence.

He points decisively at Grant. They are now face-to-face. Any remark by Grant would be futile. Nasty moment passes.

DAN

Your father and I are waiting in the car.

Hope's look is cold and distant. Dan pivots, and exits. On Hope's hand squeezing Grant's; a simple gesture carrying the weight of love. Grant retreats into a dazed shell of disappointment...

EXT. CAPITOL STEPS -- NIGHT

Grant is stalking out the door when Howard (security guard) approaches.

HOWARD

You two were absolutely first-class. I have never witnessed anything quite... so romantic.

(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)

It would be neglect on my part if I failed to note the way Hope looked at you. Trust me, she doesn't have eyes like that for anyone.

GRANT

Wasn't th' finale I had scripted.

HOWARD

Precisely why there are rewrites.

Off Howard's smile, we dissolve to

E/I. HOPE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

A service sedan jolts to the curb. Hope is out like a shot. She storms inside the building with Dan quick at her heels. The APARTMENT door snaps open.

The flat is quaint, cozy, conservative with Chinese artifacts. Hope stalks to the bedroom. Dan closes the door behind him.

DAN

We don't want to give the impression something is amiss.

Hope is constant motion, sailing from room to room, undressing. Dan consults his iPhone.

HOPE

Something is and if you can see that you need bifocals?

Hope is struggles into a Yale tennis sweatshirt.

DAN

My vision is fine. I see everything. And I believe I am being extremely understanding considering --

HOPE (O/S)

-- Considering what? I danced with some guy.

DAN

I wouldn't push it any further.

Hope doesn't know where he's going with this. She strides into...

KITCHEN

Hope flings open the refrigerator. Snaps open cabinets. She is preparing a sandwich: MAYONNAISE and PEANUT BUTTER. Then she sees it -- Dan and his beloved iPhone. She snatches an ORANGE. HURLS it. It soars across the room. Dan ducks just as the orange SPLATTERS into the wall -- splat!

HOPE

THAT! It drives me absolutely insane because it gets fondled more than I do!

DAN

Is that the reason you kissed him?

Hope's face drains. She is utterly mortified.

DAN

I asked a simple question, I want... I know about the research center, Hope.

Hope's mind is doing cartwheels. How does he know? An intake of breath. She is about to speak...

DAN

And, I'm willing to overlook it so we can move past on.

HOPE

I'm sorry. It was --

DAN

-- I'm not looking for an explanation. Hope, this guy is linked to fifteen women in the last six months -- ten of which were models.

Scooping up a MAGAZINE, Dan reveals photos of Grant with various conquests.

DAN

I'm telling you this to save you suffering, and us embarrassment. He's an actor. That's what he does, Hope. He masquerades.

Hope sees Dan is genuinely concerned. She begins collecting her strewn clothes.

DAN

Sweetheart, you are my girl, the most amazing woman I've ever known. Who else possesses your incredible strategic sense and political prowess? Nobody. I apologize if I don't light candles or send flowers. I assumed you understood my feelings. From the moment I laid eyes on you in Poli Sci. The way you handle the press, your spunk. I can't imagine anyone more compatible to invest my life.

(Hope is being drawn in)

Remember my dad's '14 election? We were focused in the trenches while others were losing their marbles. We pulled together then like we must now. I apologize for overreacting earlier. I admit I was jealous -- I was. But for a legitimate reason: I don't want to lose you.

HOPE

I suppose I have been somewhat distant. With Timothy leaving, and all Duncan's work. Oh, plus, I forgot to tell you I met with --

DAN

-- I know.

HOPE

What?

DAN

Nothing. You were saying?

HOPE

What do you mean, you know?

DAN

Sorry. You were saying about Kim Fang.

HOPE

I didn't mention her name. Do you have people spying on me?!

DAN

Don't be absurd.

HOPE
I'm being dead serious!

DAN
No, I don't have people spying on you. The Hill's a small place; people talk. You know that.

HOPE
I find it peculiar you are aware of two incidences regarding me and I only recently found about you and Jessica Mortimer!

DAN
That was an Arizona campaign fling. We were broken up. Will you stop? How did it go, what did she want?

HOPE
I don't want to talk about it.

DAN
Stop. Don't be like that.

HOPE
I want to know who told you?

Waving the idea off. Begins to remove his shoes.

DAN
It's getting late...

HOPE
Who told you?

DAN
I don't know why you're getting so upset. I overlooked my girlfriend kissing another man. A lot of guys would have ended it. Please. Stop. What about Kim? Is she running for DA again?

Hope scoffs. She marches to the BEDROOM. Dan is trailing. Hope snatches a blanket and pillow, and tosses them at Dan.

HOPE
No. She's running for congress!

On that -- the door slams right on Dan's stunned face.

EXT. D.C. STREETS -- MORNING

It's a glorious, sunny morning. Festive Christmas music plays. Streets teem with SHOPPERS. Drifting toward us is Grant, toting shopping BAGS.

EXT. TIFFANY & CO -- MORNING

Grant detours inside. A moment passes. He exits carrying that fabled little blue BAG.

EXT. LOCAL COFFEE SHOP -- MORNING

Grant disappears inside. A moment. Exits with a COFFEE.

INT. HOPE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Meanwhile, Hope scoops coins off her desk, and is padding for the door.

HOPE
Anyone care for a coffee?

AUDRA
Jeff made a java run.

Noticing Audra leaving the Congressman's office, she cuts a curious look...

HOPE
I need some fresh air.

Breezing into...

CAPITOL BUILDING - HALLWAY

Hope's POV Jeff fumbling up the stairs. He is carefully balancing trays of COFFEE. Hope rolls her eyes, and stalks in the opposite direction. When right then, she hears a WHISTLE.

Scanning the deserted hall, Hope finally spots the source. It is Grant. He is peering from the janitor's closet; his finger is stretched, beckoning.

INT. JANITOR'S CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Hope pops inside. Okay, she is slightly amused. They are inches apart. Grant displays symptoms of claustrophobia.

GRANT

Whatta ya think? The janitor's
'hideaway.' You okay? I mean you
left so abruptly last night...

HOPE

Yes, sorry for the drama. This
is totally my fault.

GRANT

I did play a supporting role.

HOPE

If I would have been forthright
from the onset we wouldn't be in
this insane mess.

GRANT

Sometimes messes are fun.
Besides, what were you supposed
to say? 'I'm Hope I have a
boyfriend?'

HOPE

My kissing you -- God, what was
that? Don't take me wrong, I have
immensely relished our time
together but we have to face it --
this has catastrophe written all
over it. It was an impetuous move;
one that not only has complicated
matters, but hurt those involved,
particularly --

GRANT

Let me propose something to you.

What? Grant presents a small Tiffany's BOX. Hope bites her
lower lip, thinking: a womanizer with brilliant taste.

GRANT

Aren't you going to open it?

Hope strips the white ribbon. She opens the box to
REVEAL... wait for it -- a coffee store GIFT CARD? Are you
kidding?

GRANT

It's good for a year supply.

Hope lights, and wraps her arms around Grant's neck.

HOPE

I suppose you expect me to think of you whenever I have coffee.

GRANT

Absolutely. Here is the deal: I've never met someone whose made me act quite like I do when I'm around you. Since we've met, which is been only hours... I've felt this... I don't know, magic, this crazy, tingly sensation -- I'm taken by your smile, your innocence...

HOPE

I'm prude?

GRANT

Endearingly. I adore the way you bite your bottom lip when you're anxious. How you twirl your hair. That you're the only person in the world who hasn't wanted my autograph. You are what I have always dreamt of but doubted I would find.

HOPE

While those words are touching, I can't help but wonder how a man who could have any woman in the world would select Hope Donahue?

Grant wraps his arm around her waist.

GRANT

Because she's the feature and their the trailer.

Hope's heart slams to a stop --

GRANT

Would you like to have dinner with me tonight? Something simple. We lay our cards on the table and see what comes up. Whatta ya say?

HOPE

Unfortunately, I must decline.

GRANT

If something were to happen to you that has never before, if a switch suddenly flipped on inside you thought was broke, wouldn't you want to know how it got turned on?

HOPE

You are really something.

GRANT

I made reservations at eight.

HOPE

Rather presumptuous, too.

GRANT

Cautiously optimistic. I heard Markant has killer pasta.

Right then... the door SNAPS open to -- Jeff --

JEFF

Hope. I need a mop!

Without missing a beat, Grant proffers the mop. Jeff grabs it, "thanks" and slams the door behind.

GRANT

I'll see you tonight.

HOPE

I'll be there. And thanks for my treat, silly.

Grant beams, watching Hope breeze from the closet and into --

INT. HOPE'S OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Hope's ebullient mood changes. To her surprise is Walter, wearing this real stern look. Hope is nervous, and paranoid, but the thought of Grant inspires her.

HOPE

Daddy.

WALTER

We need to talk.

HOPE

Oh, sure. We can, uh, use the conference room.

WALTER
 (to Audra)
 Young lady advise me of Duncan's
 arrival.

AUDRA
 Yes, sir.

CONFERENCE ROOM

It's small with table and chairs. Walter motions Hope to
 sit; she does. There is this tension-filled long beat.

WALTER
 Last evening I made an
 observation. Something is amiss
 between you and Dan and I don't
 like it.

HOPE
 Daddy, everything is fine.

WALTER
 Don't give me that. It has
 something to do with that actor.

HOPE
 Congressman Duncan asked...

WALTER
 Duncan's behind this?

HOPE
 Grant is researching a role.

WALTER
 I'll get to the point. Your mother
 and I have worked hard to provide
 you and your brother a comfortable
 life.

HOPE
 Daddy, stop. I know you didn't
 come here to talk about Timothy.
 But I'm glad you did come. I was
 going to call you today.

WALTER
 To get to my point: Dan is a fine
 man --

HOPE
 -- Daddy.

WALTER

Let me finish. There is something I'd like to share with you. Before getting you and Timothy your mother and I tried for two years to have children. We had almost given up when she got pregnant.

This is a revelation for Hope.

WALTER

After three months, though she lost the baby. We were devastated. We never thought of adopting until Burton Warner contacted us. He sat on Senate Foreign Affairs with a sub on China and his contact knew your granddaddy. Your mother's dad worked for the government. After his daughter's passing he fell on hard times and was not capable of supporting two infants. Burton shared the story with your mother and I. We flew to Chengdu and drove out to a little village called Yue Lai.

HOPE

So that's why Timothy went.

WALTER

Burton fast-tracked all the documents with both governments. If it hadn't been for his swiftness we'd lost you two. Your mother, Burton and I returned to Houston with two of the cutest Chinese kids Houston ever saw. Your mother and I have always felt in debt to the Warners for giving us our kids. When you and Dan started courting we were thrilled.

Hope spots a delivery MAN depositing FLOWERS on her desk. She is gearing up to tell Walter about Kim Fang.

WALTER

We'd like nothing to derail the continuation of that relationship.

HOPE

Thank you for sharing this with me. However, Dan and I have some issues, like all couples, to work out. But I also have something I want to share with you.

WALTER

Hope. You hold a substantial position at the center of power with Duncan. As you know he controls the purse strings to all congressional races.

HOPE

Which, speaking of, I have tremendous news. Before you say anything I want you to listen, and know this is something I've desired for the longest. I have been asked by Kim Fang... the LA district attorney, to run her congressional campaign!

Walter frowns. Hope's words hang there. It's painfully awkward.

HOPE

I know you want me to stay on with Duncan, but daddy this is my chance to enter the area --

WALTER

-- Now, snow pea. That's great. But I'd like you not get involved in 27th district. Next cycle we'll find you a local election to run.

HOPE

What? That's so condescending! No! Kim seems to have faith in my ability I would expect my father to have the same.

WALTER

I do. But decline. It's not open for discussion.

Hope is about to speak with Audra appears at the door --

AUDRA

Sir, the congressman is here.

And Audra exits. Walter is face-to-face with Hope.

WALTER

I love you, snow pea. Do the
right thing now.

Hope releases a deep sigh, exiting the conference room with
Walter. She stalks into...

HOPE OFFICE

Hope crosses to her desk. She smiles at the colossal
arrangement of the most gorgeous WILD FLOWERS. She rips
open the ENVELOPE to: 'Kips, you're the greatest! Love,
Dan.'

The card flutters from Hope's hand; she's about to have a
nervous breakdown.

PASSAGE OF TIME

Hope is at her desk staring at the flowers. She is
actually rehearsing Grant's rejection speech, when suddenly
the door swings open. Her eyes almost pop out of her head
because there -- looming in the doorway, is Dan.

DAN

Hello, gorgeous!

HOPE

Whatta you doing here?

DAN

Came to see you.

HOPE

I thought you had the VP's social.

DAN

I advised them I had more pressing
matters.

HOPE

Great. Well. Unfortunately, I was
about to leave for dance class.

DAN

Haven't we had enough dancing this
week? Besides, I have a surprise
for you. Did you like the flowers?
You were surprised, weren't you?

HOPE

Today's been full of 'em.

DAN

And the show has only begun. Come on, I have something I know you'll love.

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING -- NIGHT

Happy COUPLES stroll past Hope and Dan. Hope is nervously tugging at her coat. Dan throws a sidelong glance. She smiles, covertly withdrawing her iPhone.

DAN

No, no. No communication gadgets. See. Mine is off.

INT. MARKANT - TRENDY RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

WAITERS scurry past chic PEOPLE. Vintage wine is poured. We discover Grant parked at a two-top in the corner. He is consulting his watch; Hope's absence speaks volumes.

JAM TO:

EXT. D.C. STREETS - PENNSYLVANIA AVE. -- NIGHT

A LIMOUSINE glides shark-like, slowly turning into

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - FRONT GATE/PORTICO -- NIGHT

The magnificent building is lit up and shimmering. Uniformed OFFICERS wave the limo through. It eases to a stop under the portico. Limo doors open. Hope and Dan, exit. Trailed by SS AGENT 1 through a door being opened by AGENT 3.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - HALLWAY -- NIGHT

AGENT 1 speaks into his shirt cuff. The group now rounds the corner into a corridor. They are met by AGENT 2 who follows. The four stride toward the double doors at the far end of the corridor. They stop.

AGENT 1

You have three minutes. Tops.

Agent 2 swings open the doors to the world's famous...

OVAL OFFICE

Hope is utterly speechless. She notices things like: the Resolute Desk, Seal of the President of the United States, bust of Abe Lincoln. She is completely overwhelmed.

DAN

Walter gave his approval.

Hope looks at Dan -- dear God -- he is about to...

Things move quickly now --

Dan drops to one knee on the Presidential Seal.

A tear slips down Hope's face. Dan opens a gorgeous blue Tiffany BOX to reveal the stunning two-carat RING from the top of the story.

DAN

Hope Donahue. Will you marry me?

Dan with expectant eyes. Hope's heart does a flip. She nods, albeit, not convincingly, saying "yes." Dan slides the ring onto Hope's finger. It is most spectacular.

DAN

So hello to the modern-day House
of Medici.

On Hope. She looks like she has taken a sledgehammer to the chest. Before she can speak, the door SNAPS open. Agent 1 leans in --

AGENT 1

Clock's up.

DAN

We have to go.

On Hope, wondering -- 'what the hell just transpired?'

EXT. MARKANT -- NIGHT

VALETS hustle past a Suburban. AGENTS exit, escorting an ENTOURAGE past a dazed Grant. Because there, across the street, dizzy with laughter, Grant spots Hope and Dan. They emerge from the limo, giggling, holding hands. Right then --

Grant's phone rings. It takes him a moment to answer it. When he does we INTERCUT with Mark, who we can surmise, Ashley rang. He is editing VIDEOS, allowing us a glimpse of Grant's MONOLOGUE.

Standing in a sea of PEOPLE, Grant absorbs the full impact of Mark's news. He waver a little...

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVE./NEWSSTAND -- NIGHT

A stream of cabs speed past Grant. Pulling his coat to the cold, his phone pings. With expectancy he reads the text: 'He's a boy in tights,' says Sorensen. A light rain begins to fall. Grant jams his hands into his pockets.

E/I. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT -- NIGHT

Sedan eases to a stop. Grant exits with his bags. He is padding through security when his phone rings. Grant doesn't answer it, he just looks up to --

INT. AMERICAN AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS -- NIGHT

A bottle of WATER. Grant lifts it to mouth and when he brings it down, he is in a --

INT. LOS ANGELES SERVICE CAR/MOVING -- DAY

The SUN brightly shines. Through the window, palm trees, Hollywood Hills. Grant is listening to his messages, his spirits crushed.

FADE TO:

INT. STATUARY HALL -- DAY

On Hope. Many unexpected things had happened in the night. She drifts past the Daniel Webster statue. This room evokes ghosts. She strides across the 'dance floor,' trudging out the door...

EXT. LOCAL COFFEE SHOP - D.C. -- DAY

Hope drifts out the door, toward us, gazing at her coffee. Her mind is a tangled mess; her stomach in knots.

EXT. ICE SKATING RINK -- DAY

The SOUND of children's laughter. Hope pauses a moment. There is no sign of Grant, but to her, he is everywhere.

INT. CYNTHIA HARDING'S BRIDAL STORE -- DAY

Tight on Hope's sullen face. We find her wearing a fabulous Vera Wang wedding gown. Throughout the scene, she tries on dress after dress while Ashley accessorizes.

ASHLEY

Leave it to your dad to book a dress fitting less than twenty-four hours after you're proposed to.

HOPE

It all happened so quickly. One minute I'm in the Oval Office and the next swept off to dinner with his parents and the VP.

ASHLEY

Who'd have thought Dan could reach into his magic hat and pull out a rock so sweet.

HOPE

It's a really good ring.

ASHLEY

It is a you ring.

HOPE

Isn't it? Oh, jeez. What have I done?

ASHLEY

Allowed your father to screw up your life.

HOPE

I can't blame him.

ASHLEY

I would. That looks hideous.

HOPE

I was the one who said 'yes.'
There is nothing wrong with Dan.

ASHLEY

Life Savor?

HOPE

Where-did-you-get-those?

ASHLEY

Mark.

HOPE

If he was so wrong for me why won't my heart and head stop battling?

ASHLEY

'Cause they're in-tuned.

HOPE

I'm a bitch, aren't I? Here I am thinking, not about my future husband, but about a guy I met three days ago.

ASHLEY

Love is a crazy whacky drug.

HOPE

How was I supposed to know I would fall for *Wonder Man*?

ASHLEY

So you admit it.

HOPE

Was he really upset?

ASHLEY

A wreck. Turn around.

HOPE

'Wreck?' Really?

ASHLEY

Actually, Mark used 'damn wreck.'

HOPE

I'm going to hell.

ASHLEY

Pull it down some. Show more cleavage.

HOPE

I should've been honest with him from the beginning.

ASHLEY

Oh, right. Guys love... "Hi, I'm Hope I have a boyfriend."

HOPE

He said I was the 'feature.'
(sotto)
All this because of a kiss.

Ashley thrusts back Hope's VEIL. Hope winces.

ASHLEY

What? Who kissed whom?

Hope is biting her lower lip.

ASHLEY

You?! You kissed him? When did YOU start kissing guys?! Oh-my-gawd! This totally changes everything. Can you see painting a kitchen with him? Kids?

(Hope winces)

Did it feel tingly?

Again, Hope nods. Ashley sighs. The SEAMSTRESS enters.

SEAMSTRESS

How is everything?

Hope is slumped in a chair while Ashley spread-eagle across the floor.

EXT. BEL AIRE GOLF COURSE -- DAY

A golf BALL soars into view. It lands inches from the hole. Over the crest appear three silhouettes. Drifting closer, we notice Mark, NICHOLAS HOULT, and a tall, chiseled-faced kid whom we shall call BRONSON.

NICHOLAS

That's two-hundred, Hoffman.

MARK

I said *in* the hole.

NICHOLAS

Bronson...

BRONSON

Pretty certain he did said 'in.'

MARK

Two-hundred, Nicolas.

Nicholas slaps CASH into Mark's hand, who then slaps it into Bronson's. Mark receives a text from Grant.

MARK

Boys listen up. Brian poached Tyler from CAA and pitched him to Sorensen. Grant's devastated. Aren't you and Tyler tight?

NICHOLAS

He used to my roommate.

MARK

Could you ring him? Give him the run down on this script and Grant's position. See if he'd reconsider. I promise we'll take care of him.

NICHOLAS

I can give it a shot.

BRONSON

Lynn exercises with Joan. I can try that angle too.

MARK

Then laddies looks like we got ourselves a mission.

JAM TO:

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - POOL -- DAY

The pool is shockingly lively. Packed with gorgeous PEOPLE. Grant's at a table with CHRIS MCDONALD.

CHRIS

So you lost a girl and role -- name me one fella in this town who hasn't? The first thing I would do is fire Downs. Then I'd be at the studio pleading to Joan Wallace, and last but not least, call D.C. Roles come and go but a good woman, they're a dime dozen.

GRANT

She's a loyal girl with morals. I don't see her renegeing on a marriage proposal.

CHRIS

You got two choices as I see it: Do *Wonder Man III* and continue with the sex bombs or go get Goldilocks. It's that simple.

GRANT
Yeah, for you, *Shooter*.

Grant swigs his cocktail. Gazing at the lovely bikini-clad ladies, and sweeping view of Hollywood below, he is embalmed in thought.

INT. GRANT'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Twinkling Christmas lights. Grant is on the sofa. He is watching Dean Martin TV roasts. Raffling through BOXES, he reads old letters from his parents. One catches his attention. He cross-references, then stops. The stark reality is blinding.

Grant sinks with the revelation his parents didn't have a 'perfect' marriage. He has learned his mother temporarily left he and his father when he was five.

STAY ON Grant... now... we HEAR a shrilling phone.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM -- DAWN

A hand comes into frame. Fumbling across the nightstand, it snatches the phone and disappears under the covers.

MARK
This better be Spielberg.

ASHLEY (V/O)
We have a problem.

MARK
Ash?

Mark sits upright. He turns on the lamp. There is movement under the covers. Girl perhaps? No, a GREAT DANE, peeks his massive head out.

FADE TO:

INT. GRANT'S HOUSE -- DAY

Grant is sporting ripped jeans, and untucked western shirt. He looks absolutely dreadful. Right then, Mark sails through the front door.

MARK
And the Oscar goes to... Hey, hey. Good news. Joan is on board you doing it for scale!
(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)

Let's pray ole Sorensen thinks the same.

GRANT

I'm having this sinking feeling read is going to tank.

MARK

Because it's been eight years since your last audition. It's a video call, come on. With your little dancing stunt you've at least Soreness on the love story. Steph's said they haven't made an official offer to Tyler. Bronson and Nicholas have the wheels in motion. We still have a chance.

Crossing to the icebox, he snatches a BEER. Drains it.

MARK

Y'know what I think? You're bogged down on a bird you knew for four days who lives in D.C. and is gettin' hitched to a dandy in a button-down.

GRANT

Or maybe I have coronavirus.

MARK

I think you have the love bug.

GRANT

I laid awake all night thinkin' of her.

MARK

Alrighty. Com'ere. (slaps the couch) Time for a father and son pow-wow. *Jimmy*, listen. If it weren't for me you wouldn't know this kitten. I sent you to D.C.

(Grant sinks next to Mark)

I find myself in a hell of a situation, a real pickle. Na hear me out. I've known ya a long time and I see a difference in you this week. Which is why I'm telling you: Ms. D.C. is having an engagement soirée this evening.

GRANT

Yeah, so?

MARK

So. I hear she may be in L-O-V-E.

GRANT

Where did you come up with this?

MARK

Never-that-the-mind. Now if she goes through with this engagement gig... What I am saying is if something, or someone were to interrupt the proceedings before they take place... track where I'm headed? If the social affair happens it's official -- it's out there -- on the net, in print.

GRANT

You won't me to break up an engagement party.

MARK

I'm merely putting it out there. Neither of you are victims of unsynchronized desires. But whatever you do the ole shot clock is ticking.

At that moment -- the door SWINGS open to Brian.

BRIAN

Sorry, I'm late fellas.

MARK

I'm gonna look at the sun. Think about what I said.

Mark exits the room. Grant cuts the coldest look to Brian.

BRIAN

What's up?

GRANT

We were leaving.

BRIAN

I came all the way up here to talk this out.

GRANT

Nobody ask ya.

BRIAN
Lionel's giving you a last
chance. Dude, we're talking mega
bucks here; profits of the world
franchise. The stats are off the
charts with you and Anna. Could
be bigger --

GRANT
Tyler Ford, really?

BRIAN
You know how things work. Comes
with the territory.

Grant's mind is working. He is arriving at a conclusion.

GRANT
I'm done with ya.

BRIAN
What? You're firing me?

GRANT
We had a good ride --

BRIAN
-- I made you! I got you the
franchise you wanted.

GRANT
You wanted. Game's done.

BRIAN
I can't believe what I'm hearing.
You're going to walk away on
everything we built over some role?

GRANT
That I am.

BRIAN
I would rethink this move. It's
not a smart one. I'm one of the
top agents in this city --

GRANT
Congratulations. If you will...

Grant opens the door, and gestures Brian to leave. Brian
with wounded doe eyes, pads off, as Mark breezes in.

MARK

Proud of ya. Where you are is exactly where Newman was thirty years ago -- hell with agents -- and he didn't do bad for himself. Oooohhh... we gotta get swingin'.

GRANT

I thought about it. I made a big enough ass out of myself already without crashing her party. I know her. She's a nester. This is what she's be wanting.

MARK

A'right. Audition here we come. Ya wearin' that?

GRANT

I'll slip into my duds when we get there.

MARK

Then -- away we go!

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - LA -- DAY

We are following a CAR WEAVING through traffic. It is not just any auto, but a '74 Jensen Interceptor 3. Grant handles it with precision. He is charging down the 405, as Mark works the radio dials... whizzing by the "song" from the diner.

GRANT

Ho. Stop.

Suddenly Grant is lost in reverie. Mark recognizes the sign. He flips out his cell, directing Grant onto the exit. The Jensen zips down a street, and into --

EXT. LAX TERMINAL -- DAY

The Jensen jolts to a standstill. PEOPLE stare. Grant leaps out with newfound gusto to an awaiting airline EMPLOYEE.

MARK

I knew this would happen. I already booked a flight. You land at 7:10. Soirée kicks off at eight. Got fifteen to hit the gate. Go get her. Oh, one tiny detail -- never mind, you'll see.

INT. AMERICAN AIRLINES PLANE - TOURIST CLASS

Jam packed. It takes us a minute to notice Grant is wedged between two beastly LADIES.

CAPTAIN (V/O)
Welcome aboard. Our flight to
D.C. will be five hours...

Grant could almost die. Meanwhile at...

INT. RITZ CARLTON GRAND BALL ROOM - SOIRÉE -- DUSK

The room is spectacular. Waterford chandeliers, Rococo mirrors; 'inside the beltway's' crème de la crème. We find a sea of tuxedos and shimmering gowns. LADY 2 says:

LADY 2
That's Congressman Holder's wife.

On MANDY HOLDER, fifty, elegant. She is speaking to SOMEONE.

The ORCHESTRA strikes up, as JASON ROE, forties, pads straight to the bar. He discovers Dan nursing a Tom Collins.

DAN
Jason C. Roe. Glad you could
make it. Cocktail?

JASON
I will for the children. The way
I see it every drink I have is
one less that will fall into the
hands of a child.

DAN
And they say you are 'one of the
worst people in the world.'

JASON
Are Ashley and the twins present?

DAN
They are and if I may say, look
stupendous. Jack on the rocks?

Jason and Mandy exchange glances. Dan throws her a smile.

JASON
Congratulations on Holder. It's
difficult to beat a congressional
seat and missus in one swoop.

DAN
 Couldn't have done it without you.
 (re: Mandy)
 Ambassador to Barbados.

JASON
 There are worse gigs.

DAN
 She is ideal for the post.

JASON
 I already have her set up to pay
 courtesy calls on St. Kitts and
 Nevis' Prime Minister.

At that moment DORIS, Hope's mom, elegant, sixty, laced with jewels, enters. She and Walter float into frame. It is obvious their romance ended years ago.

WALTER
 Is that a Tom Collins? Only a
 fool drinks Tom Collins in the
 winter. Barkeep, four Jacks
 rocks. Hello Jason.

JASON
 Mr. Donahue. Mrs. Donahue you're
 looking splendid as always.

WALTER
 Thanks for your leg work on this.
 I'll make certain something swings
 your way in the not-to-distant-
 future. Dan, where are your folks?

DAN
 Drinks at Observatory Circle. VP
 had something to run by Dad.
 They'll stop by later.

We see Hope. She is peering through a side door. Suddenly, she is grabbed by Ashley, and pulled into...

INT. RITZ'S LADIES RESTROOM -- NIGHT

Hope has her hair done up. She looks elegantly sexy in an exquisite evening gown, and string of pearls around her neck. Ashley looks Hope up and down.

HOPE
 Well?

ASHLEY

Fabulously stunning. I'd marry you. Now you want to hear something hilarious? I let the Chief Justice touch my boob.

HOPE

I have a confession to make, too. (re: no panties) It does feel 'liberating and naughty.'

Hope and Ashley stand in front of a full-length mirror.

ASHLEY

Look at my girl.

HOPE

Yes, look at her. She can't get Hollywood out of her mind.

ASHLEY

Good. Because he's on his way.

HOPE

WHAT?!

ASHLEY

He's coming.

HOPE

Here? Are you're kidding? My God! You did it? You really called? He is actually coming?

ASHLEY

You said if he came before --

HOPE

-- That was locker room talk!

ASHLEY

Sounded like a game plan to me.

HOPE

And I certainly didn't mean two minutes before. Oh-dear-lord.

ASHLEY

Next time be more specific. Listen, if you don't do this now you will go through your entire life wondering... OH! I got the scoop from Jason last night.

(MORE)

ASHLEY (cont'd)

Senator McMillan's going to State. Mandy Holder, Ambassador to Barbados. Audra wants your job and she is who snitched the kiss. And lastly. Are you ready for this? Dan is running for Holder's seat!

Hope looks at Ashely carefully and unblinking. Her body is a contradictory mess.

ASHLEY

This means --

HOPE

Kim will challenge Dan in the primary. That's why he and daddy were behaving so strangely. I can't believe this. I feel betrayed they didn't mention it. I mean -- (screams).

ASHLEY

Look at like this: you're either marrying a congressman or putting one into office. Oh, yeah, *The New York Times* reporter is here.

HOPE

Rachel McDermont?

ASHLEY

I guess. The society, wedding girl.

HOPE

Oh. I've dreamed of having my engagement...

ASHLEY

While you pull yourself together I'll grab us a stiff drink.

Ashely breezes out the door. Hope paces. She's muttering to herself. She studies herself in the mirror, and arrives at a decision.

GO TO:

EXT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT -- NIGHT

The SNOW is really coming down. Scurrying Christmas TRAVELERS zips past frame. Grant glances at his watch: 7:16.

Grant is met by a DRIVER who ushers him into a SEDAN.

CUT TO:

INT. RITZ'S LADIES RESTROOM

On Hope. She is composing her thought, trying to convince herself and come to some conclusion.

Ashley has floated in with a box of TISSUES and MARTINI.

ASHLEY

Jason's here. But I'm trying to be a good little girl for Mark.

HOPE

What, you slept with him last night.

ASHLEY

I didn't say that. He wanted to. I refused.

HOPE

That's a shocker. What am I going to do?

ASHLEY

I think you know.

Tight on Hope's watch: 7:53. She is staring at her reflection, as Ashley pushes up her boobs. Hope slaps her hand. Ashley shrugs.

EXT. RITZ CARLTON -- NIGHT

Grant's sedan eases to a stop. He exits, sprinting around the corner, running directly into -- Dan.

The two resemble mismatched gunfighters.

Right then, Hope sweeps into frame. The sight of Grant inspires her. Grant is dazzled by her beauty.

Dan is walloped in the gut by the stark reality of losing everything.

GRANT

Looks like my timing is off.

HOPE

When is it not?

GRANT

I had to give it a shot.

WALTER

What the hell is going on?

Hope feels herself being lured by Grant's power, but surely, a decision like this can't be made so hastily.

WALTER

Dan, do something.

DORIS

Dan.

GRANT

These last four days have been the most insanely enjoyable ones of my life. I never want them or, us to end. I realize my coming is totally insane and completely out of line... What I'm trying to say is you're the kind of woman I would like to spend the rest of my life with and I had to at least tell you before it was too late.

Everyone is waiting, holding their breath. Walter's anger is growing.

HOPE

I'm touched. I truly am. But, I mean all this has happened so suddenly and unexpectedly...

WALTER

Hope, you know what to do.

GRANT

Hope, you are the only woman who could walk out of a crowded room and make me feel lonely -- and I never want to be lonely again.

Hope's heart does a flip. The tears come. She is not alone either, the entire party is moved. Ashley is all smiles.

Hope scans faces: Jason, Walter, Dan, Mandy and Holder -- struggling with resentment and remorse, and arrives at a decision...

The snow falls.

On Dan. He is nodding absently, with dignity, accepting his fate. Hope slips off her engagement ring. She places it in Dan's palm. They share a silent beat.

Hope looks at Walter and Dan.

HOPE

I wanted you both to hear it from me first. I will be running Kim's congressional campaign.

Dan and Walter sink.

Hope is now grinning, and Grant likes that a lot. She throws her arms around Grant's neck. He runs his fingers through her hair, sending it cascading across her shoulders.

HOPE

I thought I lost you.

GRANT

Never.

And like that... order is restored in the universe. Grant snatches a BELLHOP'S COAT. He wraps it around Hope.

GRANT

What time does Howard leave?

HOPE

In... fifteen minutes. Why?

Grant grabs Hope's hand in his. Our couple are racing for the sedan. They climb inside. The sedan speeds off --

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING -- NIGHT

The sedan shutters to a halt. Grant and Hope, exit. They bound up the steps and into

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING/STAIRWAY

Where Howard glances up from behind the desk. Grant snatches Hope's hand, whisking her down the corridor to the concealed rotunda DOOR. Grant snaps it open, gazing nervously at the stairway. Hope glides past and up the tiny steep stairs with Grant trailing.

EXT. TOP OF CAPITOL DOME - D.C. VIEW -- NIGHT

As Hope pushes open the door, a freezing wind greets her. Grant is creeping into frame. He takes a moment to steady himself. His eyes light at the extraordinary view of the nation's capitol blanketed in freshly-fallen snow.

GRANT

I have something for you.

Grant presents the coffee store ENVELOPE. A coltish grin plays on Hope's face. This is an exhilarating moment. She opens the envelope, and suddenly, tears swell in her eyes.

GRANT

When we met you were only wearing
one, figured a girl should have a
complete pair of earrings.

Hope is staring at a pair of two-carat diamond EARRINGS. Her eyes light up like a child on Christmas morning.

On that, Grant slowly folds Hope into his arms. Pressing her body gently to his, he kisses her deeply and beautifully, as we sweep over the city, and...

FADE OUT:

THE END