

FIRST MAN

"Pilot - Two Steps Back"

Written by

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TEASER

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

SENATOR ANNA RHODES (40s,) stretches out comfortably in the darkened business class section of a commercial flight. Hers is the only light shining in the section as she intently reads a book, pausing to highlight passages.

The gagging SNORE of her scrappy and exhausted assistant, WILMA (20s,) causes her to flinch. Anna recovers and then carefully replaces Wilma's fallen blanket. After tucking in the sides, Anna smiles fondly at her.

She continues reading the book, which we can now see is titled, "Baseball for Dummies." Wilma awakens and frowns at Anna. She swipes her cell phone and then shows the time to Anna.

Anna smiles and gives her an "aye, aye" salute and puts the book down.

WILMA

Are my clogged nasal passages  
keeping you awake?

ANNA

Snoring, Wilma. It's called  
snoring.

WILMA

Curmudgeons snore, I breathe  
laboriously.

Wilma leans in close.

WILMA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Was I really snoring?

Anna shakes her head, no.

ANNA

It's the list that is keeping me  
awake.

Wilma perks up, excited - more like a small puppy than an  
executive assistant.

WILMA

I talked to Drew this morning. You  
bring in the Midwest vote, check.

Wilma makes a checkmark in the air.

WILMA (CONT'D)

Female vote, check. Indigenous  
person, check. Being a tribal  
leader and youngest Democratic  
Caucus Chair, check, check. Dead  
war hero husband, well...that is  
just check, check, check!

Wilma GASPS when she realizes what she just repeated after  
seeing Anna's shocked face.

Anna touches her arm.

ANNA

I know that came from Drew and not  
you. But the VP hasn't resigned  
yet...

Wilma studies her boss.

WILMA

You want it, don't you?

Anna reaches up and turns out her light and fakes a SNORE.

ACT ONE

INT. HOTEL COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

It's early morning and both Wilma and Anna look like two people who slept on the plane. But Wilma is more like someone who has two settings; full throttle and asleep. She quickly scrolls down again and again on her cell phone. Her face almost touches the screen.

WILMA

Not ready, not ready, not ready. I specifically requested that your room be ready by six.

Wilma perks up as a young man with bright white teeth, DREW McALLISTER (30s,) comes into the coffee shop. Wilma leans over toward Anna.

WILMA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Show time. Here comes the evil warlord.

Wilma starts preening Anna, but she slaps her hand away. Drew comes up behind Anna and squeezes her shoulder.

DREW

Long flight, Senator?

Anna unconsciously smooths out her skirt but keeps firm eye contact with Drew.

ANNA

When you only have a day in each city, you've got to cut corners somewhere.

Drew turns to Wilma.

DREW

Let's hear Anna's schedule.

WILMA

Breakfast at nine with the Bright Future Foundation then toss out a baseball at a minor league game.

Drew shakes his head as he gets up to leave.

DREW

Bright Future Foundation. You're looking too liberal. We need to warm up Walker, not make us all look like a bunch of bark eating tree huggers.

ANNA

I talked to him last night. Walker wants me. He expects VP Short to resign on Monday after the testimony of the CEO of Boston Bank.

DREW

It is not what Walker wants, it is what he needs to get reelected in four months.

WILMA

Senator Rhodes is the perfect replacement for Short and a running mate Walker. She not only softens his image but brings him the states he needs, the female, the Indigenous vote, and...

DREW

Save the speeches for the campaign. If you make it to the top of the list, then you better be ready to play ball. What do you say, Anna -- are you in the game?

Drew turns and leaves without waiting for an answer. Anna brushes off her clothes, smooths her hair.

ANNA

It's like I got slimed. Remind me why I wanted all this.

WILMA

This isn't just something you want, this is something you need. Our people need this. The first Native American President.

ANNA

You mean, VP, right? But what I need is a shower and what I want is a nap.

Wilma opens her cell phone, scrolling with one hand and preening Anna again with the other.

WILMA

Nap when you're ninety, but you're right, I must get you that shower soon.

Wilma turns her attention to cell phone, as Anna watches Drew's car drive away and another car pulls up.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM -- DAY

Although she still looks wrinkled, it's an energized Anna addressing a small group of BUSINESS PEOPLE who pick at their breakfast while she rattles statistics. She doesn't need any note cards - this is a speech she's passionate about.

ANNA

Gun violence caused one hundred and twenty thousand deaths, fourteen thousand were children...

Anna stops and looks at her audience. She sees the boredom.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Last week I stopped at the local seven eleven. As I got out of my car, the guy in the truck next to me got out at the same time. He had a forty-five on his hip.

She steps away from the podium and closer to the group.

ANNA (CONT'D)

What kind of world do we live in where a guy feels that he needs a forty-five to buy a Slurpee?

One of the BUSINESSMEN in the audience lays down his fork.

BUSINESSMAN #1

I object.

Anna has her prey in her sights. You can tell that she's been waiting for a good debate.

ANNA

You object...that our children feel safer in downtown Chicago than in their school cafeterias?

She moves in closer to the guy.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You object...that our hospitals have to absorb eighty percent of their gun-trauma costs -- to the tune of four billion a year?

She is now right in front of him.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You object...that a guy wants the right to own an AK-47 to protect his front lawn from dog poop?

She gives him a moment to think about this. He shakes his head.

BUSINESSMAN #1

I own a seven eleven and we also sell fresh fruit, milk, flashlights and beer. I object that we get thought of only as place to get a Slurpee.

Anna LAUGHS with the group, picks up the guy's orange juice and makes a mock toast in his honor.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM -- DAY

It's height of the baseball season and the banner across the entrance of the small minor league baseball stadium offers attendees a free movie ticket and a discount to the nearby water park. All of them are freebies that have nothing to do with baseball.

At the side entrance to the park the team bus parks next to a tunnel. Young baseball PLAYERS get out and sprint into the tunnel carrying sports bags.

The last person off the bus, JAKE "FLASH" MACCOOK (40s) throws his sports bag over his shoulder and winces in pain. We can see a World Series ring on his finger as he rubs his shoulder and walks slowly toward the tunnel.

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

The young players release nervous energy horsing around boisterously while getting ready for the game.

Jake unpacks a pharmacy of ointments, pills, and bandages onto the bench next to where the aging team manager, PETE (60s,) works intently on his crossword puzzle.

PETE  
Six letter word. Hawaiian fruit.

He's not really asking anyone.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Mango, coconut, kiwi...

JAKE  
Papaya.

Pete nods and writes in the word.

PETE  
Nervous?

JAKE  
Jumpy, tense, fidgety. How many letters?

Pete puts down the puzzle.

PETE  
Last few games of the season. Playoffs soon. You nervous?

JAKE  
I'm too old for this shit. Tell me again why I even needed to play another season?

Jake gestures at the crazy players who appear to be dressing one player in toilet tissue.

PETE  
Nothing for you to be ashamed about. Going down from the majors to the minors, still gets you noticed. This farm system has given lots of players a second chance. Maybe not pitching, but you could coach, manage...

JAKE  
Ever been to a real farm?

Pete nods.

PETE  
Spent most every summer out in Iowa  
with my Uncle George.

JAKE  
Ever seen any old animals on the  
farm?

Pete thinks hard.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Six letter word for what happens to  
old animals on a farm -- d - I - n -  
n - e - r, dinner.

Jake starts to wrap his wrist and winces in pain. He grabs  
his shoulder and rubs. Pete notices.

PETE  
Go soak it.

Jake shakes his head, no.

JAKE  
My contract says I've got to do the  
warm-up prance and dance for the  
crowds.

PETE  
You worry about that shoulder and  
I'll worry about your contract.

EXT. BALLPARK PARKING LOT -- DAY

Cars start to fill the parking lot and people file into the  
stadium as a limo pulls up to the player's entrance. Wilma  
pops out of the car and helps a struggling Anna get out.

ANNA  
Two hundred hotels in this town and  
I'm taking a shower here?

WILMA  
I wasn't the naughty girl that let  
her speech run thirty minutes over.

Anna is excited and grabs Wilma's arm.

ANNA

Did you hear them? I got  
Republicans interested in gun  
control and the environment.

Wilma drags Anna toward the tunnel, waving her hand in front  
of her nose.

WILMA

This shower is the best thing you  
can do for the environment.

INT. LOCKER ROOM SHOWERS -- DAY

Jake soaks in a foaming steel jacuzzi. Jake drags himself  
out of the jacuzzi and puts a towel around his waist. He  
hears a SHOWER running. He shakes his head.

Jake turns around the corner and spots Anna in total bliss as  
she lets the hot water run down her face. She turns off the  
shower and reaches blindly for a towel on the ledge. Jake  
grabs a towel, rolls it up, and tosses it to her.

Anna is quick to grab it and tries to dry her eyes while  
still covering up.

ANNA

How much time do I have?

JAKE

Never enough.

Jake grabs another towel to hand to her and then steps into  
the shower as Anna opens her eyes. She SCREAMS. Jake does  
the only thing a guy like him knows how to do to quiet a  
screaming female -- he grabs her and kisses her.

Anna pulls away, focuses in on Jake and her face softens.  
She leans toward him -- maybe returning the kiss, but slips  
on the wet shower floor and SCREAMS again.

Jake reaches down to help her up as Wilma runs around the  
corner and bravely tackles Jake. a PHOTOGRAPHER comes back  
around the corner and take video and pictures of the  
partially naked and screaming threesome.

Jake hears the opening MUSIC for the game and dashes toward  
his locker.

ACT TWO

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM -- DAY

Excited fans pack the stands. Each team's players line up along the baselines. Jake runs out and gets in line. He GASPS when he spots Anna following him. She wears the wet cat look well.

He gestures for her to get off the field, but freezes when the arranged press group starts taking pictures. Anna waves at them before taking her place next to him at the end of the line.

JAKE  
You still look good.

He looks her up and down.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
With and without your clothes, but you picked an odd time to hit on me again.

ANNA  
Hit on you? Don't you watch the news?

Anna puffs up, faces him and points a finger into his chest.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
I am a United States Senator. One of the hundred most influential people...

Jake carefully holds her finger and gestures to the crowd.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Today's first pitch will be thrown by the Senator from Oklahoma. Let's give a warm hand for Senator...

Anna pulls back her finger, turns away from Jake and gives the crowd a regal wave. She has turned back into the smiling politician.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
... Anna Rhodes, Oklahoma's first  
female Cherokee Senator.

Jake leads her to the mound while she smiles and waves at the stands. He leans in close to her.

JAKE  
How about a nice underhand toss?

Anna smiles sweetly, but her tone is all business as she locks on his eyes.

ANNA  
You think that because I'm a woman  
that I can't throw a baseball  
overhand? I'm not some sissy girl  
or the doe-eyed college girl that  
fell for the big jock. I chair one  
of the most powerful Senate  
committees and I'm capable...

Jake shakes his head as he hands her the baseball.

JAKE  
Underhand because in the rush to  
get out here, I didn't put on a  
cup.

Anna steps up to the pitcher's mound, waving with one hand and continues tossing the ball a few inches into the air with the other.

When she reaches the mound, she pretends to spit on the ball, much to the delight of the crowd.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER  
Ladies and Gentlemen, Senator Anna  
Rhodes.

Jake jogs over to the catcher and says a few words. The catcher hands him his mitt and Jake takes a half crouching position behind home plate.

Jake punches the center of the mitt a few times for show and then sticks his mitt squarely out in front of him behind the plate.

Anna makes a forward bend and places the ball behind her back in concentration. The fans CHEER. Jake turns to make a remark to the players standing along the baseline.

JAKE

You can sure tell that it's an election year and...

A photographer moves in close to Jake and snaps a picture. Distracted by the flash, Jake looks toward the camera as Anna makes the windup and burns an overhand curve ball.

Jake concentrates on trying to protecting his crouch, but the ball SMACKS into groin area and Jake falls backwards into the dirt.

Anna runs to him. He is rolling around on the ground in agony.

ANNA

Jake, Jake, I'm so sorry.

Jake winks at her, springs up and rubs rearranges his "package." He reaches down, grabs the ball and holds it up as the fans CHEER again. He has stolen the show. He turns and winks at Anna.

Jake starts to sign the ball as a few photographers start closing in. Anna takes the ball and pen from Jake.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'd be happy to give you an autograph. Jake with a "k" isn't it?

JAKE

Actually, could you make it out to Buffi?

ANNA

Buffy with a "y"?

JAKE

With an "I".

Anna looks up and down at Jake.

ANNA

It figures that you would be with someone who spells her name with an "I".

She collects Wilma, makes one last wave to the fans and smiles broadly for the photographers.

INT. STADIUM SKYBOX -- DAY

Anna and Wilma sit comfortably in a stadium skybox filled with the city's ELITE politicians. Anna watches the field intently as Wilma tilts her head back SNORES like a crusty sailor.

Anna looks toward the field and Jake. She closes her eyes and smiles.

ANNA

Jake MacCook. What a blast from the past.

Wilma wakes up.

WILMA

Past? Blast, flash? What past?

Anna comes out of her trance and turns toward Wilma as she taps the skybox glass window.

ANNA

I mean, how come they call him Flash?

WILMA

Being a pitcher, I doubt if it has anything to do with speed -- at least not on the field. Is this that guy from college?

Anna nods.

WILMA (CONT'D)

The one you didn't choose?

Anna nods again.

ANNA

I picked the dashing military officer instead of the jock. I was pregnant with Sarah and I wanted security instead of being a traveling baseball groupie with an infant. Look how that turned out.

WILMA

But which one did you love? Both?

Anna shrugs.

ANNA

It was a long time ago.

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

This has been a hard-earned victory for Jake's team. Jake watches the hoopla from his locker as he finishes getting dressed.

He catches the eye of one of the reporters, SAM GRAY.

SAM  
Hey, Flash. That was some action  
out there.

Sam grabs a note pad from his pocket and moves over to Jake.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Give me a quote that will get  
picked up by the wire.

Jake picks up his jacket and drapes it over his shoulder.

JAKE  
The shoulder has never been better.  
I expect to be called back to the  
majors any day now.

SAM  
I meant that pitch from Senator  
Rhodes.

Jake rearranges his pants and grins. He answers with a high-pitch SQUEAKY VOICE.

JAKE  
She really burned one in there.

SAM  
You two had your heads close  
together after that pitch. Give me  
a little juice, Flash. What were  
you two talking about?

JAKE  
Foreign policy, plight of her  
Indigenous people, gun control, and  
the challenge of balancing the  
budget.

Sam looks confused, but he also looks like the type of guy who is used to that. Frustrated, Sam scans the room for a more interesting interview and locks onto the winning home run hero, JIM CASEY.

SAM

Jim -- hey, Jim Casey. That was  
some action out there.

Sam chases after Jim Casey as Jake tosses his gear bag over his shoulder. Jake looks back at the top shelf of his locker and the baseball that Anna signed. He grabs it and looks for a moment at the signature.

JAKE

(to himself)

The press or politicians. It would  
be hard to choose who to throw  
gasoline on first if they both  
caught fire at the same time.

INT. TEAM BUS -- DAY

Jake naps in the back of the bus on the way back to hotel as the rest of the inebriated players file on, bringing the celebration from the locker room with them.

Jim Casey and another player, LANCE KRUGER tumble into the seats in front and across from Jake. Jim knocks Jake's feet down.

JIM

Not a bad day for you, Flash.

Jim leans across the aisle.

JIM (CONT'D)

We got some local groupies coming  
up tonight to party. Want me to  
save one for you?

JAKE

Just one?

Pete comes down the aisle and takes a seat next to Jake.

PETE

Quite a looker that Senator lady  
today. Might help you get back to  
up to the show. Plus, fill the  
seats. We need that.

Jake gives him a little salute.

JAKE

You betcha, but I'd like to skip  
out early. Never seen Notre Dame.  
We are in South Bend, right?

PETE

Yup, she's speaking at the college.  
Bright lights and exciting venues.  
It is sort of like being in the  
majors again. Woman like that could  
be good for you.

Jake pulls down his hat and pretends to snore. Pete gets up  
and sits down next to another player.

JAKE

(to himself)  
She was -- once.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Jake walks down the corridor of the hotel and passes an open  
hotel door. There is a party going on of young ballplayers  
and some baseball groupies. One of them spots Jake.

GROUPIE#1

It's Flash MacCook.

The groupie runs toward the door as Lance grabs her ankle  
from his position on the floor.

LANCE

Where ya going sweetie?

She easily breaks loose of his grip and makes it to the door  
as Jake unlocks his door down the hall.

GROUPIE#1

It is him. Flash -- Jake -- it's  
me. Remember?

Jim Casey comes up behind her and puts his arm around her.

JIM

Relax honey, I heard Jake order  
take-out earlier.

INT. JAKE'S HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Jake undresses down to his boxers and stretches out on the  
bed. He flips through the channels on TV and finds a west  
coast baseball game in the final innings. He watches for a  
few minutes and then picks up the phone.

JAKE  
(into the phone)  
You got any streaming channels  
here?

He points the remote at the TV and smiles.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Thanks.

He replaces the receiver and continues clicking through the channels. He reaches into his gear bag next to the bed for something and comes up empty.

He reaches over to his jacket hanging on the chair and performs another search. Smiling, he finds the object of his search -- a piece of candy. He unwraps it and pops it in his mouth.

He tosses the wrapper toward the wastebasket and misses.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

Wilma and Anna get out of a limo. As the limo pulls away Wilma looks disdainfully at the hotel's exterior.

WILMA  
Even the Ramada has two stars.

ANNA  
This is America's heartland, Wilma.  
This limo is bad enough. Too much  
show.

A small car with an UBER sticker pulls up and two working girls, RED and MORNING DEW tumble out of the back seat. They look like they have more miles on them than the worn Honda.

Red leans in and says to the DRIVER.

RED  
You might want to hang around.  
We'll be done in a flash.

Red LAUGHS at her joke, but then turns her attention to the elevator.

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR -- NIGHT

Wilma rushes Anna into the elevator and repeatedly pushes the "3" button. Just before the door closes, Red sticks a foot in the elevator. Morning Dew follows her in.

RED

Thanks for holding it for us. Us  
working girls need to stick  
together.

Red looks over at the lit number "3" and smiles as the door  
closes. Wilma backs Anna protectively into the corner of the  
elevator. Morning Dew turns toward Red.

MORNING DEW

Any idea why they call him Flash?

Wilma starts to respond, but one look at Anna's frown and she  
pushes even further back into the corner.

INT. ANNA'S HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Anna wakes with a startle. She sits up and turns on her  
night stand light. She picks up a photograph of a handsome  
man in a military uniform.

She kisses the photograph, but the tender moment is  
interrupted by loud LAUGHTER outside her hotel room door and  
the sound of running FOOTSTEPS up and down the corridor.

She MOANS as she lays back down and covers her head with a  
pillow.

INT. HOTEL COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

Anna struggles to stay awake as she skims through her cell  
phone screen and gulps down her coffee. Jake slides into the  
booth across from her.

JAKE

You've got to stop following me  
around. The press is going to  
mistake you for a groupie.

Anna glares at him.

ANNA

Because of you, I have circles  
under my eyes this morning.

Jake holds up his hands in surrender.

JAKE

Guilty. I still snore like a  
grizzly bear.

The two working girls, Red and Morning Dew are in the booth behind Jake. Anna points at them. Jake turns around and smiles at Red. She frowns at him.

RED  
We're off the clock, Pal.

Anna leans across the table.

ANNA  
She doesn't even remember you.

JAKE  
Fifteen years in the show, two World Series rings, four times on the All Star team -- you'd think she recognize the famous Jake MacCook.

Red and Morning Dew finish their coffee and get up to leave, but Red hears this last comment. She approaches their table.

RED  
Jake? Jake "Flash" MacCook?

Jake holds out his hand.

JAKE  
You betcha.

RED  
Thanks for the room and the dough, but we don't give rain checks for no shows.

The two leave. Anna makes a puzzled look.

JAKE  
I have an image to uphold. What would those kids on the team think if they found out that I binge watch Outlander and Downton Abby and do sunrise yoga instead of doing something like the "dew."

Jake points to the two working girls who can be seen getting into a taxi outside.

The waitress sets down the change tray and Anna holds out the coins for Jake, but closes her fist before he can take them. He grabs her other hand and it turns into an arm wrestling match.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
You still love the game, the  
passion, the challenge, the fight,  
don't you?

Anna's face is all determination, but there doesn't seem to be much effort from Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
You win and you come up to my hotel  
room tonight after our double  
header game.

Anna clenches her jaw. She's winning. Jake fakes a near defeat.

ANNA  
And what's up in your room that's  
the prize? You still got all that  
candy?

Jake uses his free hand to point to himself.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
You're the prize?

JAKE  
You betcha.

ANNA  
What's with this new "betcha"  
stuff?

JAKE  
Spent five years in Minnesota with  
the Twins. Almost froze off those  
twin targets you hit yesterday.

Jake takes a deep breath and brings their arms even and starts to overcome her.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Every other word was either "ya",  
or "you betcha." If a pretty girl  
wants to make you dinner and maybe  
more, you say, "ya" and "you  
betcha."

ANNA  
You could also say, no?

Jake has almost pinned her arm to the table.

JAKE  
You never did.

Anna starts a comeback, moving their arms upright.

ANNA  
I should have and I did have the  
strength to do it in the end.

Jake is surprised with her strength.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
So if I win, you're the prize? You  
win, I'm the prize?

JAKE  
You betcha. It's a win-win  
proposition.

A few moments later, the arm wrestling match is over and Jake  
rubs his shoulder.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Not nice to pull that trick.

ANNA  
My husband taught me that. He  
could also tear a phone book in  
half.

JAKE  
Big strong guy?

Anna shakes her head.

ANNA  
Average, but safe and secure.

JAKE  
You dumped me for safe and secure?  
How did that work out for you?

ANNA  
Safe and secure got me a husband  
back in a body bag in too many  
pieces to count.

JAKE  
Sorry.

She lowers her head into her hands.

ANNA  
I can't believe I said that.

Jake gently strokes her hand.

JAKE  
I could be safe and secure. I  
could be average.

Anna looks up, shakes her head, smiles and grabs her purse.

ANNA  
Neither one of us is average. You  
sleep with Kardashians and I have  
dinner with the President.

JAKE  
Are sure you didn't get that  
backwards? I thought I found some  
of Walker's hair on my pillow last  
night.

Anna notice flashing lights and sprints out of the coffee  
shop.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT -- DAY

The motorcade pulls into the hotel driveway just as Anna runs  
out to the foyer. A frantic Wilma paces back and forth.

WILMA  
Where were you?

She starts circling Anna, performing an inspection.

WILMA (CONT'D)  
Is he gone? I don't want Walker to  
see you with him.

ANNA  
I thought you didn't know where I  
was.

WILMA  
My sources tell me that he leaves a  
trail of beer cans, bras, and  
broken hearts.

ANNA  
He's a baseball player, but you  
make it sound like I just slept  
with a Republican.

WILMA  
You slept with him?

ANNA  
College. A different girl. Today  
it was coffee. We were having  
coffee.

WILMA  
Did anyone see you? Who knows  
about you and this -- baseball  
player?

ANNA  
America's heartland loves baseball.

A dark SUV pulls in first and two secret service agents get  
out. One of them comes back to the limo and opens the door.  
As Anna steps into the limo, she looks back at Wilma.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
You betcha.

INT. LIMO -- DAY

Anna sits across from a smiling and confident, PRESIDENT  
WALKER (70s) which has forced Wilma and Drew tightly into the  
side seat.

WALKER  
Enjoying your tour through your  
homeland...the Midwest?

ANNA  
You say "Midwest" like it is dog  
poop on your shoe.

Walker ignore the dig and pats the file on his lap.

WALKER  
Pretty impressive party fund  
raising for a Senator.

Walker leans over and taps her arm.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
Shouldn't even need a list. If it  
were all up to me...

ANNA  
Mr. President, I'd expect no less  
either way.

WALKER  
Have you talked to Sarah yet?

ANNA  
That's my next stop. I don't know  
who is more frightening...

Anna straightens her skirt.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
...my daughter or the press.

WALKER  
Welcome to the fishbowl, Anna.

INT. NOTRE DAME LAW LIBRARY -- DAY

It's a circus of reporters, secret service agents, and the  
city's elite. President Walker finishes his speech.

WALKER  
Notre Dame is more than just these  
majestic halls of learning, volumes  
of great works...

He gestures toward the shelves of thick books.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
... it's also the home of the  
Fighting Irish. Here's to another  
winning season.

The crowd breaks out into APPLAUSE. Walker moves away from  
the podium and is quickly surrounded by REPORTERS.

REPORTER#1  
Mr. President, does Senator Anna  
Rhodes presence today with you mean  
that you've chosen her for VP  
Short's replacement?

The group of reporters turn toward Anna who has been standing  
along one of the walls in front of a door. Walker holds up a  
hand.

WALKER  
It's a little early to be talking  
about a new VP when Frank Short  
hasn't resigned yet.

Walker heads over to Anna and the cameras start FLASHING.  
The secret service agents usher Walker out of the room and  
Anna stands almost frozen as the crowd follows the President  
and his group.

Anna takes a big breath and watches the room empty. The door behind her opens a crack and Anna turns quickly around. Jake holds a finger up to his lips.

JAKE

Shhh...

He pulls her into the room.

INT. LAW LIBRARY STUDY ROOM -- DAY

Anna looks around frantically.

ANNA

We'll be spotted.

He pulls out a Tasmanian "She-Devil" baseball cap and puts it on her head.

JAKE

Your disguise. Let's duck out of here.

ANNA

Where?

JAKE

One more time around the block barefoot before the circus begins?

ANNA

I've already got my shoes on and lots of clown suits to pack.

He holds a finger up to her lips.

JAKE

Shhh...

He traces the finger down to her chin.

JAKE (CONT'D)

The circus tent is down for another day.

Anna closes her eyes and he kisses her passionately. He slips a hotel key into her coat pocket and whispers urgently.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Come to my room tonight. I need you.

Anna comes out of her trance, shaking her head. Her voice is shaky.

ANNA

Jake...we can't.

JAKE

I'm a stupid ballplayer and you're a political shooting star. We've got a few things to work out.

ANNA

First, there is no "we". Second, I already have a full plate with the confirmation hearings if Walker appoints me this week. Third, I've got a daughter to consider, and fourth...

Jake places a finger on her lips again.

JAKE

Don't need a fourth, only three strikes in baseball.

He gives her a tender kiss on the cheek.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Take care of yourself, Madam Vice-President.

ACT THREE

INT. ANNA'S HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Anna packs her bags while an anxious Wilma gathers things and tosses them to her. She places the last thing in her suitcase and then reaches into her pocket. It is the hotel key.

ANNA  
I've got an errand.

Wilma stops and swipes her cell phone.

WILMA  
No, no errand.

Anna gives a hearty tug on the suitcase zipper.

ANNA  
It's personal, Mankiller.

Wilma giggles with the use of that name. She studies Anna.

WILMA  
That baseball guy?

Anna nods as she picks an imaginary piece of lint from her dress.

ANNA  
A quick good-bye.

Anna heads for the door. Wilma stands with both hands on her hips and sporting a serious frown.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, I said quick,  
Mankiller.

She runs back and gives Wilma a quick pat on the head.

WILMA

Okay, okay. Let's hope that's why they call him "Flash".

INT. JAKE'S HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

A towel SNAPS as stunning woman runs out of the bathroom wearing only a tiny cheap hotel towel. She laughs as she tumbles onto the bed. There is a KNOCK on the door and she bounces up.

WOMAN

I got it.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

The door opens to a surprised Anna. She glances down at the key card in her hand and back at the door.

ANNA

Six one five. Is this Jake MacCook's room?

WOMAN

Sure, it's Flash's room -- and who are you?

Anna makes an abrupt turn and storms down the hall. Another hotel room door opens and a surprised and towel-clad Jake steps into the hall. The woman LAUGHS, gives Jake a thumb's up and ducks back into the room and closes the door.

Jake spots Anna and runs down the hall after her catching her at the end.

JAKE

Anna.

Anna stops and looks back at Jake. She shakes her head and continues.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Wait, Anna -- it's not...

Anna stops again and faces him.

ANNA

Not what it seems? That's just Buffi with an "I" right?

Jake points in the other direction.

JAKE  
It's not -- the way out.

Anna stops, looks both directions then turns around. She holds her head up high and struts past Jake. He grabs her arm as she passes.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Let me explain?

Anna looks hard at Jake and his towel. In a swift and fluid motion, she grabs his towel and pulls his open hotel door shut.

ANNA  
Third strike. You're out.

Anna quickly ducks into the opening elevator while a naked Jake POUNDS on the next door.

EXT. HOTEL -- NIGHT

Anna sits outside enjoying fresh air. Pete comes outside to smoke a cigarette.

ANNA  
Those things will kill you.

PETE  
I quit every year.

Pete puts the pack away away.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Start up again every season. I heard you're taking a red-eye tonight? You're going to miss the game tomorrow, Senator?

ANNA  
Not much of a baseball fan.

PETE  
Too bad. I just saw Jake got some exercise running around naked in the halls. He'll probably pitch his best game tomorrow.

NNA

You're going to tell me that Jake is a great guy, he doesn't really chase women -- it's all a front for a heart of gold? He's so much more under the surface?

Pete shakes his head.

PETE

Nope, nothing deeper there and he's been around the block barefoot so many times that he's got blisters -- but Jake is the best friend a guy like me could ask for.

ANNA

Your honesty is refreshing, but Jake is a cliché. He was twenty years ago and nothing has changed.

PETE

You got it wrong. Jake changed rooms with another player whose young wife showed up to surprise him. Jake's contract lets him have a single room, but the rest of us down here on the farm have to share a room. I saw the way you two looked at each other. Haven't seen Jake look that way in years.

ANNA

I know Jake's angle. He gets some good press with me and he's back to the majors.

Pete drops his head.

PETE

He's not going back up. That shoulder is shot. Jake knows it.

ANNA

What's he doing down here in the minors...you call the farm league?

PETE

They're forcing him to play and fill the seats. Sort of like a circus keeping around an old elephant. He has to complete his contract or he gets nothing.

ANNA

Money, fame, and women. It's all Jake ever wanted. He's had it all. He doesn't need me. When I needed him in college, he didn't come through.

PETE

Are you sure about that? From what I heard, you ran out on him. What about now? What do you need? You can't always look perfect, you can't always say what they want to hear, and more importantly, sometimes life gets messy.

Anna heads back to the lobby and kisses Pete on the cheek.

ANNA

The Prince is not judged by his words or deeds, but by the people he surrounds himself with. I can't have Jake around me and get what I want.

PETER

Does he know that?

INT. ANNA'S HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Anna lets Jake in and he lays down on the closest bed and stretches out.

JAKE

This is cozy. Just the three of us.

Wilma doesn't notice the inference. She is busy organizing Anna's suitcase.

WILMA

Three hours until we leave for our flight...

Anna walks over to Wilma and gently touches her arm.

ANNA

I can handle it.

Wilma straightens up and takes notice of Jake.

WILMA

No, no, no. This won't do.

She looks sternly at Anna.

WILMA (CONT'D)  
He was just supposed to come and  
talk until our Uber comes.

Anna herds Wilma toward the connecting doors.

ANNA  
Go back to your room and get your  
packing done.

WILMA  
My sources say that there could be  
reporters.

ANNA  
We'll keep our feet on the ground.

Wilma looks over at Jake again. Jake flips his shoes off in defiance. Anna holds onto the door handle.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Would you feel better if I left  
this open?

Wilma pivots and slips through the door. She closes the door with a SLAM. Anna turns toward Jake and picks up a towel from the floor.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
She was born an old soul, and she's  
just doing her job.

JAKE  
You're going to have to show me her  
job description someday, I don't  
think it says "chaperone?"

Anna holds the towel up in front of Jake.

ANNA  
Let he who has no sins cast the  
first towel.

Anna tosses the towel on the bed.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
You should have told me that you  
had loaned out your hotel room to  
another player.

Anna moves over to the bed and sits down next to him. Jake takes her hand in his.

JAKE  
Not everything has to be a Senate  
inquiry.

ANNA  
We have to talk about this.

JAKE  
What's this?

Anna points to Jake and herself.

ANNA  
This. You and me. The  
confirmation hearings. Our  
differences.

JAKE  
You mean I like plastic and you  
like paper?

ANNA  
Gun control, foreign trade, charter  
schools.

Anna shakes her head sadly.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
It's not that we don't agree, it's  
that we don't even know what we do  
or don't agree on.

JAKE  
Is there a you and me?

ANNA  
I don't know. Maybe.

JAKE  
When can I see you again?

ANNA  
I'm meeting with Walker tomorrow.

JAKE  
Does seeing you again depend on  
that?

ANNA  
It's complicated. They do a  
packaging sort of thing.

JAKE  
You've got to get me approved?

ANNA

I've worked my whole life to get here. I have a chance to do things for my tribe, my state, women...everything. There's more at stake than a shiny ring.

Jake looks down at his World Series ring. He pulls it off his finger and tosses it on the bed.

JAKE

Keep it. It's gold. Melt it down. Consider it a campaign contribution.

As he head for the door Anna grabs his arm.

ANNA

Wait.

Jake stops and looks in her eyes. She drops her hand. He walks out the door.

INT. BLAIR HOUSE DINING ROOM -- DAY

Anna looks nervous as she sits alone in a small private dining room. The table is set for two. She touches the flowers in a small vase and leans forward to smell them.

A side door opens, she jumps up, spilling the flowers, vase, and water. The water runs down her skirt. President Walker runs to her aid, but the water spills onto his pant leg.

Walker gestures for her to sit down and she is relieved to be able to hide her skirt.

WALKER

I need to make the VP nomination public.

Walker surprises Anna by topping off her coffee before filling his own.

WALKER (CONT'D)

You in?

ANNA

No rules or conditions? I don't have to bring Drew the broomstick of the wicked witch of the west?

WALKER

Lately Drew has been requiring the firstborn child.

Anna tries to stifle a GIGGLE with no luck.

ANNA

Drew hasn't met my daughter yet. I doubt if he'd want to be in the same room as my firecracker, Sarah, let alone take her as collateral in this deal. Plus, I've reconnected with...

WALKER

Jake MacCook, the ballplayer. Pretty odd choice for a possible First Man, but if you want it, it's yours.

ANNA

You betcha -- I mean, I'm honored, Mr. President.

INT. AIRPLANE -- DAY

Anna and Wilma sit next to each other in the front of the plane. Wilma has her head back in a loud SNORE.

Anna gets up quietly and heads toward the back of the plane. She pushes aside the curtain and the members of the PRESS CORPS perk up. Anna leans against the first seat and gives a seasoned reporter, TOM WRIGHT (60s,) a squeeze on the arm.

ANNA

How's the food, Tom?

Tom reaches for his note pad frantically as Anna reaches down and picks up a small piece of mint candy from his tray and pops it into her mouth.

TOM WRIGHT

Any comments on your gun control policy?

Anna holds up her hand.

ANNA

Let's wait for the confirmation hearings.

MARYANN, a stout woman in her fifties, raises her hand. Anna gives her a nod.

MARYANN

I understand that you had been  
dating a ballplayer..?

Anna moves down the aisle and gets closer to Maryann. She spots some candy wrappers in the aisle. Anna stoops down and picks them up. She studies them.

There are more candy wrappers on the floor. In the middle of the wrappers is one unopened piece of candy.

Jake slouches down in his seat and pulls down the brim of his baseball cap. She reaches up and tips back the "She-Devil" cap of Jake who provides a sheepish grin.

JAKE

Is there a movie on this flight?

INT. AIRPLANE RESTROOM -- DAY

Jake sits on the tiny sink counter while he pins Anna against the door.

Anna takes off his baseball hat.

ANNA

Was it the hat I sent that changed  
your mind?

JAKE

That along with daily phone calls  
from Wilma and the case of my  
favorite candy. Sending a security  
detail to pick me up this morning  
was the deciding factor.

ANNA

They hadn't told me yet if you had  
agreed.

JAKE

You had me at "men in guns shouting  
to get in the car."

Anna kisses him passionately. The plane starts to descend.

ANNA

We have a lot to talk about, but we  
have to go up front now.

JAKE

Too bad, this faucet in my behind  
was starting to feel good.

EXT. AIRPLANE -- DAY

The plane sits in a secured area with two black SUVs and buses waiting. Two Secret Service agents stand at the bottom of the steps, while another five agents hold back the hoards of reporters.

Anna pauses at the top of the stairs. She turns to Jake.

ANNA

Are you sure you want this?

JAKE

I said I was all in. Sure I either had a gun or water faucet in my back at the time...

ANNA

We have a hard road ahead for us...could go into extra innings. I have to be confirmed, then Walker's reelection is around the corner and...

JAKE

You want to be president. I'm here for the whole game.

Anna turns her head up and receives a gentle kiss from Jake.

ANNA

I need you. I love you.

JAKE

I love you too, Madam Vice-President.

Together they descend the stairs and at the bottom, a podium has quickly been positioned between Anna and the reporters.

As Anna adjusts the microphone, Jake takes two steps back. Anna looks back at Jake.

ANNA

Ready?

Jake gives her a little salute.

JAKE

You betcha.

FADE OUT: