

THIS ADMINISTRATION IS A JOKE

Written by

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INT. CHICAGO COMEDY CLUB - STAGE - NIGHT

ADDIE (24, she/her, unearned confidence) performs standup at a small comedy club. A half full audience is half interested.

ADDIE

My girlfriend is a gay republican,
which basically means she hates me,
I hate her, and we have a yard sign
that says "love is love is a
choice."

This gets a laugh, and the crowd perks up.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

We used to fight constantly about
politics, but she's been awfully
quiet since the government lost all
that nuclear research.

Laugh-groans from the audience. People start to record.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

Crazy right? I mean, what's next
with this administration: President
McGill publicly reveals the nuclear
launch codes?

More laughter.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

The password is "password." And the
failsafe is "DEAR GOD DON'T SEND
THAT FUCKING NUKE!!"

INT. BROADCAST NEWS SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

On a bustling set, REBA (40, she/her) works at her laptop. Crew sprint by. Interns pass out coffee. Reba gets a text. Her eyes widen. She bolts through set until she reaches:

INT. BROADCAST NEWS SET - EXECUTIVE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

EXEC (45, he/him) works at his desk in his pristine office. Reba bursts through the door and shows the exec her phone.

REBA

From Kim. We have to run this. NOW.

Exec nods and makes a call.

INT. BROADCAST NEWS SET - STORY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WRITER (30, she/her) sits in a dark room filled with computers. She receives the call, nods, and types furiously.

INT. BROADCAST NEWS SET - NEWS DESK - CONTINUOUS

GABE (40s, he/him, too-big grin) and RONNIE (40s, she/her, gritted teeth) sit at a glowing news desk, flashing screens all around them. They're live on air.

RONNIE

Now wasn't that a cute story about the penguin petting zoo?

GABE

Too bad Flippers was put down for biting that kid--

RONNIE

This just in. Breaking news today as CBS White House Correspondent Kim Kane was accidentally included in an iMessage group chat with President McGill and top defense officials, discussing nuclear codes. One of which: password.

GABE

No caps!

INT. HUMOR MAGAZINE - BILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Addie lounges in a chair across from BILL (50, he/him), the EIC for a mid-level comedy magazine. Bill sits behind a desk in a dingy office in a dingy building.

ADDIE

You like my submission?

BILL

Addie, you've written some good stuff for us, but this is vulgar.

ADDIE

If Representative Elix can call gay people the f-slur on a hot mic, then I can call him closeted in a humor mag--

Addie's phone rings. She pulls it out.

ADDIE (CONT'D)
My agent. Do you mind?

Without waiting, Addie picks up the phone.

ADDIE (CONT'D)
What's up?

INT. TONY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

TONY (62, he/him, sleazy) sits in a too-fancy office--marble desk, leather chairs--and eats Fritos.

TONY
How the hell did you know about the launch codes?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

ADDIE
What? Oh. Lucky guess?

TONY
Lucky guess just made you viral.

ADDIE
Huh?

Addie's phone buzzes. She pulls it away from her ear. A news headline: *No-name Comedian Predicts Nuclear Codes Scandal.*

ADDIE (CONT'D)
"No-name?"

TONY (O.S.)
Addie?

Addie hangs up the phone and smiles up at Bill.

ADDIE
Run it.

INT. BROADCAST NEWS SET - NEWS DESK / INT. SENATOR ELIX OFFICE - SPLIT SCREEN - DAY

Gabe and Ronnie sit at the desk, debating SENATOR ELIX (50, he/him), who calls in from his Senate office.

RONNIE
Senator Elix, you've voted against the Equality Act 4 times.

SENATOR ELIX
And I'd do it again.

RONNIE
You also commented "HOT" on Troye
Sivan's instagram.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - CONTINUOUS

Addie drives down a busy avenue and listens to the radio.

SENATOR ELIX (FROM RADIO)
So I can't be a gay republican now?

Addie gasps, nearly hitting EDNA (80, she/her, walker).

EDNA
BITCH!

ADDIE
Yeah? YOU'RE--

INT. BROADCAST NEWS SET - NEWS DESK - CONTINUOUS

GABE
--GAY?! Breaking news today--

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - CONTINUOUS

Addie's phone dings. A text from Tony: LAUGH FACTORY CALLED!!
Addie grins and nearly hits Edna again.

EDNA
YOU MOTHER FUCKING PIECE--

INT. IMPROV CLUB - THEATER - NIGHT

Addie and an IMPROVISER (25, she/her) perform a two-person
scene for a full crowd. Addie stands tall. The improviser is
on her knees. Audience members record.

ADDIE
It is the opinion of the court!

IMPROVISER
(Orphan Annie voice)
But sir!

ADDIE

Annie shall be banned from all schools for its classism against the upper class.

IMPROVISER

..."The sun'll come out--"

INT. PUBLIC SCHOOL - THEATER - NIGHT

As audience members exit and crew reset the stage, Ronnie and Gabe talk to a YOUNG GIRL (8, she/her) in a crappy red wig.

YOUNG GIRL

Tomorrow and Sunday at 6.

RONNIE

You heard it here folks! Come see Brook Academy's production of Annie for just two more nights.

GABE

Wait hold on, Ron... BREAKING NEWS! SCOTUS set to uphold a nation-wide ban on 300 school texts from Harry Potter to, you guessed it, Little Orphan Annie.

RONNIE

..."The sun'll come out tomorrow."

GABE (CONT'D)

Up next, a story from our nuclear correspondent, Donna.

INT. BROADCAST NEWS SET - SOUND STAGE - CONTINUOUS

DONNA (30, she/her) stands in front of flashing screens.

DONNA

"DEAR GOD DON'T SEND THAT F-ING NUKE!!" Words heard from the situation room minutes before a missile nearly launched at Kuwait.

INT. ADDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Addie sits in her dark apartment on a crumbling couch. She stares at her TV playing the news. She looks at her computer: *President McGill Murders Greta Thunberg with Glitter Bomb Prank Gone Wrong*. She deletes it. A call from Tony.

TONY (O.S.)

Addie, I got a call about you.

ADDIE
Colbert finally respond to my 13
unsolicited packets?

TONY (O.S.)
Addie... It's the FBI.

ADDIE
You're kidding.

TONY (O.S.)
I'm sorry, Addie. I can't go back
to jail. I just-- I'm sorry.

The line clicks.

ADDIE
Tony? Tony! FUCK!

INT. FBI - INVESTIGATION ROOM - DAY

MARK (30, he/him) and LEONARD (50, he/him) stand at a table
covered in papers. Addie manspreads in her chair. Mark slaps
the table.

MARK
WHO TOLD YOU THE CODES!?

LEONARD
Jesus, Mark.

ADDIE
Yeah, Jesus, Mark.

MARK
IS THIS A JOKE TO YOU! You're a
national security threat. I could
have you waterboarded in
Guantanamo.

ADDIE
No you couldn't.

MARK
Yes I could.

LEONARD
No he couldn't.

MARK
Leonard, I hate when you do that.

Leonard rolls his eyes.

LEONARD

How'd you know about the codes?

ADDIE

I didn't. It was a joke.

LEONARD

What about SCOTUS and Annie?

ADDIE

Improv.

LEONARD

Well how about the gay senator?

ADDIE

Everyone knew that one. Only gay people hate gay people that much.

LEONARD

Are you a spy?

ADDIE

If I was a spy, would I be publicly revealing national secrets?

LEONARD

Are you a bad spy?

ADDIE

I'm a comedian! Well, at least I was. Thanks to you guys, my agent dropped me and no one will answer my calls.

LEONARD

We're sorry for our abrupt investigation, but you've revealed every major headline in the last two weeks.

ADDIE

I just make stupid jokes. It's not my fault this administration makes decisions with the flippancy of a magic 8-ball.

MARK

(to Leonard)

How does she know about the presidential 8-ball?

(to Addie)

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE
PRESIDENTIAL 8-BALL?

LEONARD
Calm down, Mark.

ADDIE
Yeah, calm down, Mark.

MARK
That's it. I'm calling Guantanamo.
(pretending to dial
Guantanamo)
Beep beep boo--

Leonard rolls his eyes. TAYLOR (35, she/her) bursts in.

TAYLOR
Background check is clear. She's
free to go.

LEONARD
What?

TAYLOR
She really is just a lucky guesser.

ADDIE
Gentlemen.

Addie gets up and gives Mark the double bird. Mark's about to respond when MARK'S MOM (70) speaks through his phone.

MARK'S MOM (O.S.)
Mark? Honey? What's wrong? Is
Leonard bullying you aga--

Mark slams his phone into the table.

INT. FBI - WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Addie slumps in a chair in the FBI waiting room. A few others mill about the large space. Addie puts her head in her hands then sees a magazine on the table next to her. She picks it up. The headline: *No-name Comedian Investigated by FBI.*

ADDIE
Oh come on.

Addie throws the magazine on the floor. HERBERT (52, he/him, burning optimist) picks it up.

HERBERT
Not a fan of the tabloids, huh?

Addie doesn't answer. Herbert sits next to her.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

Neither am I. I'm more of a periodical guy. And a broadcast guy. Shoot, even the tabloids have a place. I'm an everything guy.

ADDIE

Yeah, well. I'm a nothing girl.

HERBERT

Aw don't say that. You're smart probably. You're healthy presumably. Shoot you're--

Herbert looks at the magazine.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

YOU'RE HER! You knew about the nuclear code stuff.

ADDIE

Okay please don't say that. That's kind of what got me here.

HERBERT

Well I'm here because I fall for so many scams that the FBI uses me to test new anti-fraud software.

ADDIE

Really?

HERBERT

If you could win a million dollars by simply uploading your social security and bank information to a foreign website, wouldn't you?

ADDIE

Anyways... it's not true. I didn't "know" about the codes.

HERBERT

But you also knew about SCOTUS and the ga-- homosexual senator.

ADDIE

Elix sucks. You can call him a cunt if you want.

HERBERT

WOAH! I would never say that.

ADDIE
Well, I would.

Addie stands up. Herbert catches her wrist.

HERBERT
Wait--

He looks down at the magazine headline.

HERBERT (CONT'D)
Sorry, it just says "no-name."

ADDIE
Addie.

HERBERT
Addie. I'm Herbert, the editor in
chief for the Chicago Lion.

He hands her his business card.

ADDIE
The paper that tanked Helen
Porter's bid for president?

HERBERT
Well, sure, if you're only defined
by your most recent, most
devastating mistake.

Addie turns to leave again.

HERBERT (CONT'D)
And we need a new politics writer.

ADDIE
I'm not a journalist.

HERBERT
But you know politics.

ADDIE
Only enough to make jokes.

HERBERT
But you *know* politics. Journalism
is all intuition, and you've got a
knack for calling this
administration's biggest stories.

Addie stares at him.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

What's the worst that could happen?

Taylor enters the room, a clipboard in hand.

TAYLOR

Herbert Johnson for the 3PM. You have four new emails from a Nigerian Prince in distress.

HERBERT

Is Obi's prostate cancer back?! I told him to cut back on red meat.

ADDIE

Really, Herbert?

HERBERT

Oh. Sorry, Addie, Obi needs me. Just think about it. Please?

Herbert exits. Addie looks down at Herbert's business card, which is mainly a photo of him in a field of daisies.

INT. THE CHICAGO LION - BULLPEN - DAY

What was once a prominent news source, now sags with falling posters and reporters slumped behind desks and at empty water coolers. MARTHA (73, she/her, intense) walks determinately through the Chicago Lion's bull pen, speaking to herself.

MARTHA

Well, yes, Herbert, our readership is down in the politics section. But politics readership is down nationally. Everyone's so depressed by politics, they'd rather read a puff piece about Charlie Da-whatever-the-fuck's Coachella nip slip or capybaras.

She stops.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

(mocking Herbert)

"We could push a piece on capybaras."

She continues walking.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Or I could just kill myself right
now, Herbert. Right here on your
desk?

Martha stops in front of TINA (50, she/her), Herbert's
assistant and a culture columnist. Tina sits at her desk and
works on her laptop.

TINA
Do what right here on my desk?

MARTHA
Kill myself.

TINA
Oh, honey, don't do that.

MARTHA
Is Herbert in for our 4 o'clock?

TINA
I think he's still at the FBI.

Martha groans. Tina looks expectantly at her.

TINA (CONT'D)
My column on the return of the mini
skirt went "viral" this morn--

MARTHA
I'll wait in his office.

Martha opens Herbert's office door. Tina glares.

INT. THE CHICAGO LION - HERBERT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Herbert's office is covered in motivational posters and
framed clips of The Chicago Lion's most successful stories--
many of them by Martha.

Martha sits down in a bean bag chair by the door, slowly
sinking into it. A moment later...

HERBERT (O.S.)
HERE I AM!

MARTHA
Mother of Christ!

Herbert laughs.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
You could've killed me, Herbert.

HERBERT
(suddenly very grave)
Tina said you were thinking of
harming yourself. Is everything
okay, Martha? Should I call Frank?

MARTHA
I'm fine, Herbert.

Martha attempts to get up from the bean bag. It takes four tries and she kicks the bag when she finally rises. She moves to a chair across from Herbert, who sits at his desk.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
So, Herbert, our readership is--

HERBERT
How was your day?

MARTHA
d-- Good. And yours?

HERBERT
Great.

MARTHA
Okay. So, yes, our readership is
down, but if I can just get this
Capillo hush money story out--

HERBERT
I have a solution to our problems.

Herbert slaps a magazine in front of Martha. The headline:
Comedian Predicts Senator Sexuality. Martha inspects it.

HERBERT (CONT'D)
Addie Reynolds. 24-years-old. UCLA
grad. Has a knack for the news.

MARTHA
Everyone knew Elix was gay. That's
not a knack for the news. That's
having a pulse.

HERBERT
It's not the only thing she
predicted.

MARTHA

"Predicted?" What does that even mean?

HERBERT

It means she might just be the key to revamping our politics section.

MARTHA

We don't need revamping, we n--

HERBERT

I've seen the numbers, Martha. Not even the octogenarians are reading. And they love you.

MARTHA

Yeah, well, they're probably dead, preparing for death, or at a funeral for their dead friends.

HERBERT

Look. I know it's unconventional, but we need a Hail Mary.

MARTHA

A Hail Mary is publishing without a second source. Hiring some biased "psychic" comedian as a reporter is like blowing up the stadium and everyone inside.

HERBERT

Wha--

MARTHA

We're the stadium, Herbert.

HERBERT

I got tha--

MARTHA

And I'm everyone inside!

HERBERT

She hasn't said yes yet.

MARTHA

Well I'm saying no. Anyone can call this administration crazy. Doesn't mean she can write an article.

Martha stands and storms out.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
 I'll write a column about Kim
 Kardashian's bleached asshole
 before I let some comedian
 "predict" her way through a clip.

Herbert sighs. After a moment, Tina enters.

TINA
 Should I call Frank? Or the police?

INT. INDOOR SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

People with every type of gun shoot at wooden targets from their stations. We pan down the aisle of stations and land on: Addie standing in safety goggles, staring up at a TV.

ANGLE ON: Gabe and Ronnie at the news desk.

GABE (ON TV)
 And, in my opinion, that's why we
 shouldn't vote.

RONNIE (ON TV)
 ...In other news, the FBI has
 dropped its case against young
 comedian, Annie Reynolds, but--

In anger, Addie cocks her gun upwards. An INSTRUCTOR (40, he/him) shouts from the end of the hall.

INSTRUCTOR
 HEY!! GUNS DOWNRANGE.

ADDIE
 Sorry I'm not some psychopath, who
 knows how to work a death machine.

INSTRUCTOR
 Then why the fuck are you here?

ADDIE
 BECAUSE NOTHING MATTERS.

Addie rapid fires into the wooden cutouts. All the patrons duck below their stations.

INSTRUCTOR
 NO RAPID FIRE!!!

EXT. PICKLE BALL COURTS - DAY

Dressed in a brand-new white tennis outfit, Martha approaches the court's fence, where CAROL (65, she/her) is packing up her bag. Carol notices Martha and starts packing up faster.

MARTHA

Carol Edelson, just the woman I was looking for.

CAROL

Martha, I didn't know you play pickle ball?

MARTHA

Yes, ma'am.

Martha holds up a paddle. It still has a label on its face. She twists the paddle. The other side also has a label.

CAROL

I see.

Carol moves to the fence's gate, but Martha blocks it.

MARTHA

Up for one more game?

CAROL

Martha, I'm not talking to you about the Governor.

MARTHA

Excuse me, I'm here to play.

CAROL

Be real, Martha. You might be old enough for pickle ball, but you lack agility.

MARTHA

Oh fuck y--

(composing herself)

Just tell me if Governor Capillo is paying off his ex-wife.

CAROL

After the piece you wrote on Porter, what kind of press sec would I be if I told you ANYTHING?

MARTHA

A semi-competent one.

CAROL
Martha, The Lion can't be trusted.

MARTHA
The Lion has apologized. Twice.

CAROL
The Lion isn't the problem.

MARTHA
Thank you for finally admitting it.

CAROL
You tanked America's chance at its first woman president. You're the problem, Martha, not the Lion.

MARTHA
I'm a Pulitzer prize winner.

CAROL
And you made a mistake. I can't risk you making another one when it comes to the Governor.

Carol pushes the gate and walks past Martha. After a beat, a bright yellow ball smacks Carol in the back of the head.

CAROL (CONT'D)
What the fuck?!

Angle on: Martha with her paddle raised over her head.

MARTHA
Sorry! Apparently, I'm a problem!
I'm also apparently really fucking good at pickle ball!!

INT. RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM - DAY

Addie sits across from DANIEL (72, he/him), an ex-writer for David Letterman and Addie's dad. Daniel fusses with a comically large lobster. Addie clutches a coffee.

ADDIE
I know, Dad, but that's why I need your Letterman contacts. If I could just explain--

DANIEL
I told you, Honey, they cut me off when I wrote that joke about 9/11 being faked.

ADDIE

Oh my god. I forgot that's what you said. That's not even funny.

DANIEL

But it's true.

Daniel stabs the Lobster and saws at it with his knife.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You know, Honey, the FBI investigation isn't really the problem. You are.

ADDIE

Thanks, Dad.

DANIEL

I'm just saying, people know by now that the FBI didn't find anything and they're still not calling.

ADDIE

Shouldn't I be a hot commodity. I've got a "knack for the news."

Daniel lifts his fork and points his lobster at Addie.

DANIEL

Even if you can guess the next big story, people can tell you don't know what you're talking about.

ADDIE

I read the news.

DANIEL

You read the headlines. Seriously, honey, you called launch codes passwords.

ADDIE

But the code was "password."

Daniel bangs the lobster against the table.

DANIEL

How about calling Senator Elix a Representative in that article?

ADDIE

My editor should've caught that.

DANIEL

How are you gonna keep up writing jokes about policy when you don't know the difference between House and Senate?

ADDIE

Dad, you think the government is poisoning men under 6 feet.

DANIEL

Well, that's why I had to leave Letterman. Couldn't agree on the facts.

Daniel begins to eat the whole lobster off his fork.

ADDIE

It was definitely the 9/11 thing.

Daniel offers Addie the lobster. Addie waves him off.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

My only offer's from the Chicago Lion. Politics reporter.

DANIEL

News room's a great place to learn the news.

ADDIE

They tanked Porter's run.

DANIEL

Porter's a lizard person. Working with the illuminati tanked her run.

ADDIE

You know, this is all kind of hypocritical coming from a conspiracy theorist.

DANIEL

Is that what we're calling being prepared nowadays? Oh, by the way, did your little FBI friends ever tell you if Fluoride gives you hemorrhoids? I read that on one of those "on-line" forums.

ADDIE

Dad, you have hemorrhoids because you push too hard.

DANIEL
I'm just passionate.

ADDIE
So am I. But I don't have
hemorrhoids OR A JOB!!!

Addie gets up and storms out. A WAITER (25, he/him) brings the check. Daniel pulls out a small gold bar.

DANIEL
I hope you take gold.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Addie drives with a terror down the road. She shouts, pounds her fists on the wheel, and swerves around Edna, the elderly woman from earlier. She rolls down the window.

ADDIE
EAT MY ASS, GRANDMA!!!

Edna rips a tennis ball off her walker and hurls it at Addie's car.

EXT. ADDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Addie exits her car and slams the door before entering her apartment building.

INT. ADDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

Addie storms up the stairs to her apartment in a huff. Out of breath, she stops. She heaves then continues up the stairs.

INT. ADDIE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Addie enters her apartment. Inside, DIANA (26, she/her, a woman of dualities) stands in the kitchen, frosting cupcakes.

DIANA
Hey, babe. I'm almost done here.
The school's having a bake sale
cause McGill pulled funding from
public schools teaching evolution.

Addie doesn't respond and grabs a beer out of the fridge.

DIANA (CONT'D)

I told the principal that the only big bang we should be teaching starts with A and ends with K47. To be clear, I want the kids to learn about guns and shooting guns.

ADDIE

Yeah, I got that.

DIANA

But Principal Gilroy didn't like that, and now we're baking cookies for erasers and Nemo toilet paper.

Addie slumps on the coach.

DIANA (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you?

ADDIE

What's wrong with me, Diana? What's wrong with you? You're a gay republican with zero self respect and a taper fade. Did I mention zero self respect?

DIANA

What the hell, Addie?

ADDIE

The hell, Diana, is my fucking life. Everyone dropped me. My dad's such a fucking weirdo that his Letterman contacts are useless. And I'm dating the world's biggest dyke-otamy.

DIANA

What did you call me?

ADDIE

A dyke-otamy. Shoot. I should write that down. Do you have a pencil?

DIANA

I won't apologize for having a moral code.

ADDIE

Being a pro-oil climate activist isn't exactly a solid moral code.

DIANA

Well, at least I have one.

ADDIE

What's that supposed to mean?

DIANA

It means you love to criticize, but really, you don't know anything about anything.

ADDIE

Diana, come on--

DIANA

It's really easy to hate everything, Addie. It's a lot harder to love something.

ADDIE

Like guns and oil?

DIANA

Like American industry! And god forbid, maybe even your girlfriend.

ADDIE

Diana, that's not fair.

DIANA

It's overdue. This dyke-cotamy with a taper fade needs you to leave.

ADDIE

Diana, let's just talk this--

DIANA

GET OUT!!

A beat. Diana begins launching cupcakes. Addie runs out.

EXT. ADDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Addie sits in her car with her head in her hands. She takes a deep breath and turns on her car. The LOW FUEL light blinks. Addie slams her head into the wheel, and the horn blasts.

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Addie stands at a gas pump, repeatedly shoving her card into the machine. It declines again and again.

ADDIE

FUCK!

Addie throws her wallet on the ground. Its contents spill out. Addie reaches down. As she goes to put Herbert's card back in her wallet, she pauses.

INT. THE CHICAGO LION - MARTHA'S OFFICE - DAY

Martha sits at her desk in her barren office, a newspaper twisted in her hands. Across from her, LORI (34, she/her) and KIP (27, he/him, sincere) sit and fidget anxiously.

LORI

He's laundering the money through some illicit website, but we don't know which one.

MARTHA

Illicit how?

LORI

Pornography, ma'am.

MARTHA

Kip, you said you knew someone in Governor Capillo's office who could get us that information.

KIP

Hey, Tom Wexler and I did go to a movie together in college. But it was more of a group situation and I was a plus one of a plus one, so--

Martha slams the newspaper down.

MARTHA

The only reason we hired you was for your Columbia contacts, and now you're telling me you MIGHT have met Capillo's chief of staff.

KIP

It's about 30-70 ch--

LORI

Ma'am, I can reach out to--

MARTHA

Lori, if you say Robbie, your "ex-lover" from Politico, one more time, I will hit you.

(MORE)

MARTHA (CONT'D)
I will literally put my fist
through your face.

LORI
He's offered to give us a tip
before.

MARTHA
We are a respected news
organization. We don't take tips
from OTHER NEWS SOURCES!!

LORI
With all due respect--

MARTHA
Get out of my office, and don't
come back until you have news that
doesn't make me want to staple my
balls to this desk.

KIP
You sure have balls, Ma'am. No need
to grow a pair.

MARTHA
OUT!!

Kip and Lori scurry out. Martha slumps at her desk. After a
beat, she makes a call. A few rings then:

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Honey.

INT. MARTHA AND FRANK'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

FRANK (68, he/him), Martha's ex-senator husband, has the
phone on speaker and is bedazzling a tiger portrait.

FRANK
My love, my light. How is the day?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

MARTHA
Honey, I need you to get me Richard
from Capillo's office.

INT. THE CHICAGO LION - BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Herbert giddily shows Addie around the Chicago Lion bullpen.
As he names people, he points to them.

HERBERT

So that's Dan and that's Linda.
Both in marketing. OH and that's
Brad, but we don't talk to Brad
because he's really mean.

ADDIE

Why don't you just fire him?

HERBERT

He kicked a man in the throat for
taking his parking spot. I'm scared
I'll be next.

ADDIE

Jesus.

Herbert stops at Tina's desk. Tina is eating a whole quiche.

HERBERT

And this is Tina! Our sports,
entertainment, celebrity, and
gossip columnist--

TINA

And food writer.

HERBERT

And my lovely assistant. But I like
to think of us as having a
symbiotic relationship.

TINA

Like when a fish eats dirt off a
whale.

HERBERT

And my office is just through
there. Open door policy. Unless
it's tummy time.

ADDIE

Oh, you have a baby?

HERBERT

No? Why would you ask that?

Herbert keeps walking until he reaches:

INT. THE CHICAGO LION - BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The break room is HUGE with ping pong, pool, and foosball.
Lori and Kip play a heated game of foos to blow off steam.

HERBERT
Hey, you hip thangs.

KIP
Herbert!

With Kip distracted, Lori scores and gives Kip the finger.

KIP (CONT'D)
Hurt people hurt people.

HERBERT
Why are we hurting?

LORI
Martha just ripped us a new one on
the Capillo story.

HERBERT
Classic Martha. Oh! This is Addie.
Addie, this is Kip and Lori, two of
our best politics reporters.

Kip sneezes into his hand.

LORI
Well, one at least. Nice to meet
you, Addie.

ADDIE
And you, Lori.

Lori shakes Addie's hand. An intense beat. Addie has a crush.

ADDIE (CONT'D)
You have very warm hands.

Lori is confused by this. Addie keeps shaking Lori's hand.

HERBERT
I have hyperhidrosis. I can't play
catch. Just slips right through.
Oh! Let's meet your editor.

INT. THE CHICAGO LION - MARTHA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Martha is still on the phone with Frank.

MARTHA
Frank, please. If we break the
Capillo hush money story, The Li--

INT. MARTHA AND FRANK'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

FRANK

It's unethical. I was a senator not a lobbyist. And you promised me when we got married that you wouldn't ask me for sources.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

MARTHA

I also promised to take care of you in sickness and in health, but we both know I hate sick people.

FRANK

Honey, I won't do it. I'm sorry.

Frank hangs up the phone, takes a deep breath, then continues bedazzling his tiger.

Martha throws her phone at her office door. Herbert opens the door and sticks his head in. He looks down at Martha's phone.

HERBERT

Is now a bad time...

MARTHA

Yes, Herbert, obvi--

HERBERT

(like a game show host)
...to introduce you to your new reporter!!

Herbert swings the door all the way open, revealing Addie.

MARTHA

NO!

ADDIE

I'm Add--

MARTHA

Nuh uh! I told you, Herbert, I am not working with this walking whoopee cushion.

ADDIE

I think my humor is a little more sophisticated than a--

FART NOISE. Addie pulls out her phone.

ADDIE (CONT'D)
Fart button. Only 1.99 on the app store.

HERBERT
But Marth--

MARTHA
Do you even have one thought in your head, Herbert?

HERBERT
That's a little harsh.

MARTHA	ADDIE
She is an untrained, no-name comedian, who's not fucking psychic--	Oh, come on.

HERBERT
STOP IT!! Martha, you ruined this paper's reputation, and I should've fired you, but I didn't. Addie, has something, I just know it, so you are going to work with her!

A long beat. Herbert looks horrified with himself.

HERBERT (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I've gone too long without tummy time. Excuse me.

Herbert practically sprints out. Martha and Addie stand in silence. After a while, Martha returns to her desk chair.

MARTHA
So where have you published?

ADDIE
I had a piece in the New Yorker.

MARTHA
REALLY?

ADDIE
Yeah. "Updated TSA Protocols Weirdly Invasive"

MARTHA
Oh, wow. Was it a feature?

ADDIE
Satire.

Martha sighs.

MARTHA

I'm sorry, Addie, I don't think this is going to work out.

ADDIE

I'm already on payroll.

MARTHA

Great! So find another section. I hear Tina is looking for help on her "Least Phallic Vegetables" Column.

ADDIE

I'm here to write politics.

MARTHA

Are you?

ADDIE

Yes.

MARTHA

Okay... You need DC's polling numbers for the 2024 election, where do you look?

ADDIE

What?

MARTHA

Where do you look to find DC's polling numbers in the 2024 presidential election?

ADDIE

DC votes for president?

MARTHA

You need a quote on US relations with Syria, who do you call?

ADDIE

Ghostbusters.

MARTHA

Shut the fuck up. What is a caucus?

Addie laughs.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

DON'T LAUGH.

ADDIE

You said cock.

MARTHA

This is exactly what's wrong with your generation. You can't take anything seriously.

ADDIE

What are you? Fucking generation A? You're like 1000. *Your generation* made our lives hell. Sorry if I cope by making jokes.

MARTHA

"Cope?" I'm not your therapist. And this isn't feelings camp for ugly girls with low self-esteem.

ADDIE

Real mature.

MARTHA

This is the real world. And in the real world, the news isn't a joke.

ADDIE

Are you kidding me? This whole administration is a joke.

MARTHA

I bet you think you know exactly what's going on in this administration because you read Tik Tok and watch TMZ.

ADDIE

Are you defending McGill?

MARTHA

Of course not. I'm just saying it's more complex than a few fuck ups.

ADDIE

Like yours?

A beat.

MARTHA

What is that supposed to mean?

ADDIE

It means you're not allowed to act so high and mighty when you ruined our chance at a woman president.

Martha scoffs.

MARTHA

Multiple sources told me those tweets were real. I was misled.

ADDIE

Or you were just too fucking old to know about photoshop.

MARTHA

She was running on a pro-abortion platform--

ADDIE

So you should've known that Porter's pro-life tweets were obviously faked.

MARTHA

It wasn't my fault!

ADDIE

Yet you're the one who set women back 100 years--

MARTHA

I didn't burn my fucking bra in '68 for some fatalistic Gen Z know-it-all to berate me for my mistakes.

ADDIE

Oh! Great! The hole in the ozone thanks you for your contribution.

MARTHA

I know you're used to being the victim, but I'm not the enemy here. I trusted people to act with civility--

ADDIE

How can you trust people to act civil when everyone's dropping bombs and dog mayors are deploying police against peaceful protestors and Governors are laundering hush money through OnlyFans and--

MARTHA
Why would you say that?

ADDIE
What?

MARTHA
About the Governor.

ADDIE
What governor?

MARTHA
Which governor is laundering hush
money through OnlyPans?

ADDIE
Fans. It's OnlyFans. It's a sex
website.

MARTHA
LIKE PORNOGRAPHY!?

Martha shoots up, runs to the door, and picks up her phone.

ADDIE
(earnest)
Well, you can really request videos
of anything--car tutorials, Italian
cooking--but most people request
sex or--

Martha dials a number on her cracked phone.

MARTHA
Okay shut up.

ADDIE
You asked me a quest--

MARTHA
Now I'm asking you to shut up, so
shut up.

Martha holds the phone to her ear.

ADDIE
You know what? This isn't worth my
dignity. Congratulations, I quit.

Addie stands and marches out. Martha's call connects.

MARTHA

Carol, is the Governor using a website called OnlyPans to send hush money to his ex-wife... Carol?... Carol, is he or is he n--

The line clicks. A beat. Martha starts to laugh hysterically.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

We fucking got you, Capillo.

Martha looks up, sees Addie has left, then sprints out of her office.

EXT. THE CHICAGO LION - SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

On a bustling sidewalk, Addie is nearly wrestling Edna over an Uber. Both are trying to shove themselves in the car.

ADDIE

What are you following me or something? This is my Uber, lady.

EDNA

Check the plate, idiot.

Addie pauses, walks to the back of the car. It's not her car.

ADDIE

Have a wonderful day, ma'am.

Martha comes sprinting out of the Chicago Lion building. She is completely out of breath and hunched over.

MARTHA

(heaving)
You're hired.

ADDIE

I just quit.

MARTHA

Okay, you're hired again.

ADDIE

Look. You won. I'm leaving.

MARTHA

I can't let you leave. I can't risk you leaking this to anyone else.

ADDIE

Leaking what?

MARTHA

The Governor. And the Pans.

ADDIE

Fans. OnlyFans. Wait what governor?

MARTHA

Capillo. He's laundering money to his ex-wife via OnlyFans to keep her quiet about election fraud. I don't know how you knew it, but Carol's silence confirmed it.

ADDIE

Who's Carol?

MARTHA

Unimportant. What's important is that we're about to break the year's biggest story.

ADDIE

You and me?

Martha starts to walk back into the building.

MARTHA

Well, I'll break it, but I need someone to write me a 10-page brief on OnlyFans and potential sources.

ADDIE

To be clear, I'm not like an expert on OnlyFans.

MARTHA

Well you will be by 8AM!

ADDIE

8AM? That can't be legal.

Martha turns back.

MARTHA

Politics waits for no one, Addie. But we've got to stay ahead of it.

Martha exits into the building, laughing but still a bit out of breath. Addie stands on the sidewalk, panic in her eyes.

END OF PILOT