

House of Cards

"Chapter 20.5"

by Jason Whiting

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"PREVIOUSLY ON"

Frank Underwood's scheming has placed him a heartbeat away from the presidency. Using his growing influence like a club, Frank installs Jackie Sharp as party whip before separating billionaire power broker Raymond Tusk from the president's favor.

Claire Underwood, meanwhile, has put down a foe of her own, using both carrot and stick on Gillian Cole, promising her former employee an influential position within the non-profit world while simultaneously threatening the viability of Cole's unborn child.

Rachel Posner, the only surviving witness to Frank's Peter Russo plot, has been bundled off to the suburbs where she finds her new life lonely and constraining, a feeling that Claire could sympathize with as she is also starting to feel romantically stifled by the increased scrutiny that comes with her husband's new job.

The only ones who seem capable of having any fun are Jackie and Remy Danton, their budding relationship complicated by the conflicting interests that arise when a member of the party's leadership gets into bed with a powerful Washington lobbyist.

TEASER

1 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - DAY

1

FRANCIS and CLAIRE UNDERWOOD are asleep in bed. A clock shows the time: 5:12am.

Frank's phone lights up and starts buzzing on the nightstand, DOUG STAMPER calling. Frank answers.

STAMPER (O.S.)

We've got a situation.

FRANCIS

Uh huh...

STAMPER (O.S.)

An American went missing in Cairo. His friend just got a call saying the Egyptians have him in custody.

FRANCIS

Who is he?

STAMPER (O.S.)

James Wallin, a small-time filmmaker but he's best known for being the only son of-

FRANCIS

(instantly awake)

Chief Justice Charles Robert Wallin.

STAMPER (O.S.)

Right.

FRANCIS

I'm up.

Frank hangs up the phone. He gets out of bed and moves to the bathroom before turning to camera.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

(to camera)

America, land of boundless opportunity where if you work hard, go to church and play fair, you're guaranteed a spot at the trough...

2 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

2

Frank lifts the toilet seat and begins to quote James Truslow Adams:

FRANCIS

(to camera)

*The American dream "is not a dream
of motor cars and high wages merely,
but a dream of social order in which
each man and each woman shall be
able to attain to the fullest stature
of which they are innately capable,
regardless of the fortuitous
circumstances of birth or position."*

He finishes with a shake, glancing down briefly before turning back to camera.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

(to camera)

*That said, it never hurt to have a
powerful daddy.*

He flushes.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

3 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - DAY

3

Claire stirs in the bed as Frank returns from the bathroom, showered and groomed.

CLAIRE
(sleepy)
What's happening?

FRANCIS
I have to go to work.

CLAIRE
To the office?

FRANCIS
I know.

CLAIRE
It's Saturday. I thought we could
lie in...

Claire stretches her arms over her head, soft and suggestive.

Frank is tempted. He gives the camera a knowing glance, his gaze instantly turning things creepy, before turning back.

FRANCIS
Darling, you look as tasty as a slice
of tipsy cake, but I'm afraid I must
demure.

CLAIRE
What's so important?

FRANCIS
The chief justice's son was arrested.

CLAIRE
For what?

FRANCIS
I don't know yet. Probably filming
a protest.

CLAIRE
Since when is that illegal?

FRANCIS
Since he's in Egypt.

CLAIRE

So let the State Department handle it.

FRANCIS

I could if we didn't care about currying favor from the Chief Justice of the United States.

His words finally land.

CLAIRE

Of course.

FRANCIS

I'll be back as soon as I can.

4 EXT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - DAY 4

Frank meets a SECRET SERVICE MEMBER on the steps outside the Vice President's house.

FRANCIS

Going to the office.

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER

Yes, sir.

5 INT. FRANCIS'S CAR - DAY 5

Frank is in the back of his SUV, being driven to the hill.

FRANCIS

(to camera)

Claire's a smart woman, she knows as well as I do how important the chief justice is going to be in the fight to come... Impeaching a president is a sensitive task, one that's made doubly delicate because no one can suspect my involvement. A simple majority in the house has to vote for articles of impeachment and then two-thirds of the senate. The president won't let it get that far, but if he does, guess who'll be there to rule over the proceedings? None other than Chief Justice Wallin. Not a bad time for us to get into bed...

6 INT. RACHEL POSNER'S PLACE - BEDROOM - DAY 6

RACHEL POSNER's on her back, knees tented in front of her while someone with long hair works between her legs.

She throws her head back, losing herself.

Rachel climaxes with a shudder, her gulping breaths eventually morphing into a tearful sob that she fails to suppress. She rolls away, embarrassed, as LISA WILLIAMS joins her.

LISA
Hey, what is it?

RACHEL
I'm fine, it's nothing. That was nice.

LISA
'That was nice'? Come on... what's up?

RACHEL
I don't want to talk about it.

LISA
Look, if you're feeling bad about this, let's talk it out. Believe me, I understand - I was raised Catholic.

RACHEL
It's not that.

LISA
Did I do something wrong?

RACHEL
You were great. It's something else. It's me.

LISA
(hurt)
"It's not you, it's me"?

RACHEL
It's not that. There was this thing. This guy.

Lisa nods.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
He was, I don't know, 'nice' or whatever. But the last time we saw each other, his face... He was just so sad, you know? Like I used to think I was the saddest person ever, but this guy was so... bottomed out. The way he looked at me...

LISA

His sadness rubbed off on you?

RACHEL

I think I was *the reason* he was sad.
Like he was already so low and I
dragged him down deeper. He died...

LISA

I'm sure you had nothing to do with
it. You make people happy.
(she moves closer)
You make me happy.

RACHEL

Can we, not? Not now?

LISA

Yeah, sure. Of course.

RACHEL

I'm sorry.

LISA

It's OK.

Lisa's upset about how things are going but she's a trooper.

LISA (CONT'D)

You hungry?

RACHEL

No.

Lisa gets out of bed and starts getting dressed.

LISA

I'm starving. I need breakfast.

RACHEL

Is it alright if I stay here?

LISA

Yeah, of course. You want me to bring
something back?

RACHEL

No. I think I should be alone for a
bit.

LISA

...Alright.

RACHEL

Thanks for coming over. I had a good time.

LISA

Sure it wasn't just 'nice'?

Rachel softens with a smile.

LISA (CONT'D)

Are you working today?

RACHEL

Yeah. Afternoon shift.

LISA

OK, call you later.

7 EXT. WASHINGTON CITY STREETS - DAY

7

It's a beautiful spring morning in Washington and Claire is out for a run. She passes through her usual haunts, loping through deserted streets and side alleys before coming to a park.

She sprints across the grass, finishing with a burst of energy before slowing to a walk. She exits the park and crosses the street walking toward a trendy-looking juice bar.

8 INT. VICE PRESIDENT'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

8

DOUG STAMPER is waiting in the VP's darkened outer office, the place giving off a deserted, ghost-town vibe.

Frank swoops in, keyed-up.

FRANCIS

OK, what've we got?

STAMPER

James Wallin goes out in Cairo and doesn't come home, his director of photography starts to worry when the boss doesn't show up for breakfast. A few hours later he gets a call saying that James has been arrested.

FRANCIS

For doing what?

STAMPER

He wouldn't say.

FRANCIS

You're talking to the friend directly?

STAMPER

We were two years apart at Dartmouth;
he heard I was working at the White
House and reached out online.

FRANCIS

So why won't he say what happened?

STAMPER

We could only Skype for a few minutes,
but I got the feeling he didn't want
to get into specifics.

FRANCIS

How does he think this works? Tell
your man if he wants our help, he's
going to need to get specific... Who
else knows?

STAMPER

So far, it's just us.

FRANCIS

Alright, good. Get him back on the
line and dig deep; I want to know
everything before we take this to
the judge... Where's Seth?

STAMPER

I don't know.

FRANCIS

Get him in, I want everyone on this.

Frank goes to leave then turns back.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Where do you get coffee on a Saturday?

9 EXT. JUICE BAR - DAY

9

Claire leaves the juice bar holding a brightly colored drink,
puts her change away and takes a seat on an empty park bench.

It's beautiful out and Claire turns her face toward the sun,
relaxing with her eyes closed when she's approached by CURTIS
(early 30s), an attractive blonde, also in running gear.

CURTIS

Excuse me -- anyone here?

Claire opens her eyes.

CLAIRE

No. Please.

Curtis takes out a water bottle and sits.

CURTIS
Nice day for it.

CLAIRE
Gorgeous.

CURTIS
I love running on Saturday mornings -
everything so quiet, the whole weekend
stretching out in front of you...

CLAIRE
It's one of my favorite times as
well.

CURTIS
I've noticed.

CLAIRE
You have?

CURTIS
How could I not? You're a striking
woman.

Claire is flattered but unsure how to respond...

CURTIS (CONT'D)
Plus there's your security detail.

Curtis nods towards where A BLACK SUV SITS PARKED, TWO MEN
IN DARK SUITS watching them closely.

CLAIRE
(disappointed)
You know who I am.

CURTIS
I do.

CLAIRE
Next you're going to tell me you're
a reporter.

CURTIS
I'm more of a blogger, but I don't
touch politics, I'm strictly sports;
hockey mostly.

Claire wrinkles her nose.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

Huge men doing battle with sticks
and knife boots? I'm surprised I
don't see you there every night.

Claire smiles, delighted.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

Can't wait to take you to a game.

CLAIRE

Well you've certainly set your hopes
very high...

CURTIS

Curtis.

CLAIRE

Claire.

They exchange dazzling smiles, something sizzling between
them.

10 INT. JACKIE SHARP'S BEDROOM - DAY

10

JACKIE SHARP wakes up alone. She comes out of her dream
slowly, casting a glance towards the empty side of the bed
before reaching back for her phone.

She opens her messaging app and starts writing a text to
Remy Danton:

Jackie: Just had a dream about you.

She pauses to consider the words before deleting the whole
message. She starts again.

Jackie: Morning. Thinking about you.

This doesn't pass either. She deletes "Thinking about you."

Jackie: Morning.

Jackie hovers on this for another moment before eventually
deleting that too.

11 INT. VICE PRESIDENT'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

11

Doug Stamper's at his desk, Skyping.

AMAL NASER (early 30s) is onscreen, an attractive artistic-
looking man of middle eastern descent. The feed is choppy,
digital static cutting in and out.

STAMPER

...but we can't move forward until we know exactly what we're dealing with.

AMAL

What we're dealing with, Doug, is that they're holding Jim in the Tora prison!

STAMPER

And I'm sure it's miserable, but we still don't understand what he did.

AMAL

He didn't do anything!

STAMPER

Look, Amal, I know you're dealing with a different situation over there, but I still don't think American tourists are randomly getting swept into Cairo detention centers.

Amal doesn't know how to respond to that, looks uncomfortable.

AMAL

I can't talk here.

STAMPER

Where can you talk?

AMAL

Nowhere. I'll email you alright?

STAMPER

Can you at least give me an idea?

AMAL

I've got to go.

Amal reaches out and ends the call.

Stamper sits back and turns to his left to where Frank has been listening in.

STAMPER

See what I mean?

FRANCIS

Cagey.

Frank nods before turning to camera.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

(to camera)

*If I had to wager, I'd say we're
either dealing with drugs or sex.
Young people always go red-faced
when the conversation turns to vice,
as if they're the first ones to ever
find their virtues caught in those
sticky little traps...*

Frank gets up, moving towards his inner office and calling over his shoulder as he goes.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Stay on it. Let me know when Seth gets in.

12 EXT. STREETS OF GEORGETOWN - SHOPPING DISTRICT - DAY

12

Rachel's walking through Washington D.C.'s upscale shopping district, looking adrift as she wanders from shop to shop.

She stops to gaze up at a stunning window display, clothing laid out like the wealth of royals, before glancing down to where she clutches a collection of crumpled bills.

Rachel wanders past a narrow alleyway and over to another shop window, this one filled with high-end handbags.

It seems as if she's trying to choose between the two stores, the true situation revealing itself once she turns down into the alley.

Rachel approaches a dumpster that's set in the distance where a man, previously unseen, steps out to meet her. They confer quietly, negotiating the terms of a shady business transaction.

13 INT. JACKIE SHARP'S KITCHEN - DAY

13

Jackie's up, making coffee. She pours boiling water into a French press before picking up her phone. She starts to type, hesitating again before the phone rings in her hand.

JACKIE

Shit...

REMY DANTON is calling. She answers.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

REMY (O.S.)

Looks like you're writing a novel.

(MORE)

REMY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Thought I'd give you a call to save
you some typing...

JACKIE
Goddamn it, Remy.

INTERCUT WITH:

14 INT. REMY DANTON'S PLACE - BEDROOM - DAY

14

REMY
What is the nature of this call?

JACKIE
I don't know, you phoned me.

REMY
Something I can do for you, Jackie?.

Jackie pauses, this is difficult.

JACKIE
Do you want to see each other?

REMY
Definitely. Business or pleasure?

JACKIE
Jesus, Remy, I don't know... How
about neither?

REMY
Neither?... Sure, I think I know
the perfect thing.

15 INT. VICE PRESIDENT'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

15

Frank is sitting at his desk when Stamper knocks.

STAMPER
Seth's here. He's up to speed.

FRANCIS
Alright, let's go.

Doug enters with SETH GRAYSON who has his iPad out.

SETH
I've been doing some digging on James
Wallin. You're going to want to see
this.

Seth presents his iPad which shows an image of a protest
taking place outside a film premiere.

Protesters face off against a line of police in riot gear, the demonstrators carrying signs like "Justice in Palestine", "Free Gaza" and "Stop the Massacre" covered in bloody handprints.

FRANCIS

What is this?

SETH

Montreal Film Festival, two years ago. James Wallin was set to premiere a movie about conditions in the Gaza Strip when he learned that a couple of Israeli filmmakers also had screenings. He pulled his film in protest. Then this happened...

Seth flips through a few more images. Things get messy, shoving, broken noses, arrests.

FRANCIS

AIPAC will shit themselves.

STAMPER

They already have. Every pro-Israel lobby group in Washington is united in the belief that James Wallin is an enemy of the state and an anti-Semite.

FRANCIS

Je-sus Christ.

STAMPER

If we're going to help him, it's going to have to be quiet.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

16 INT. HIGH-CLASS WASHINGTON GYM - DAY

16

Jackie is working out with Remy at his high-class Washington gym, looking more hardcore military than sexy.

They face each other in sit-up position, passing a heavy medicine ball back and forth.

JACKIE

Let's go, soldier, two more!

REMY

How about one?

JACKIE

Three!

Jackie fires the ball aggressively, loving the burn. When Remy collapses at the end of the circuit, Jackie springs up.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

On your feet!

REMY

I prefer it here.

JACKIE

I'll give you a reason to be on your back! Come on now, snap to! Move with a purpose!

Remy gets up, smiling.

REMY

I'm starting to regret suggesting this...

JACKIE

What, you just wanted me in spandex so you could check out my ass on the treadmill?

REMY

See that already sounds way better.

JACKIE

(smiling)

Let's go: back-to-back.

They line up back-to-back, sweating, ripped, beautiful.

Jackie passes the medicine ball over her right shoulder to Remy who drops it across his body before passing it back.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Nine more, push-push-push!

17 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - BATHROOM - DAY

17

The floor of the Underwood's steam-filled bathroom is littered with running gear, a glass-enclosed shower running noisily, a woman's silhouette shifts in the glass.

Claire shuts off the water with a snap. She grabs her towel and steps out of the shower to find Frank waiting there.

CLAIRE
Francis! I didn't hear you come in.

FRANCIS
Sorry to startle you, I have a favor to ask.

CLAIRE
Can it wait until I'm dressed?

Frank doesn't like to be put off, but he's not the one calling the shots.

FRANCIS
Of course. I'll meet you downstairs.

18 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

18

Frank's sitting at the kitchen table with two cups of coffee when Claire enters, dressed comfortably.

She moves around the room, cleaning up, avoiding the place her husband has set out for her.

FRANCIS
It's about James Wallin.

CLAIRE
Is he alright?

FRANCIS
As far as we know.

CLAIRE
What was he doing?

FRANCIS
That part's still not clear, but a film he made about the Gaza Strip has riled-up every pro-Jewish lobby group in Washington.

CLAIRE

How inconsiderate of him. Doesn't he realize mid-term elections are right around the corner?

FRANCIS

The party's already playing catch-up on the fund-raising front, Claire, we can't be seen sticking our neck out for a pro-Palestinian agitator.

CLAIRE

...So you want me to stick my neck out instead.

FRANCIS

I wouldn't ask if I thought there was any other way.

CLAIRE

You haven't actually asked me for anything yet.

Frank takes a moment to recalibrate his approach.

FRANCIS

I'd like you to come out and provide cover on this, Claire, while someone else twists the knife in a way that would be... *indelicate* for the administration.

CLAIRE

I'm listening.

FRANCIS

We need to tell the Egyptian authorities that someone who used to work for you has been arrested by mistake.

CLAIRE

Who used to work for me?

FRANCIS

A young and talented filmmaker named James Wallin. He was on his way to shoot something for the Clean Water Initiative when he was mistakenly detained in Cairo.

CLAIRE

I don't work there anymore, Francis, that kind of ask is going to have to come from them.

FRANCIS

So ask them.

CLAIRE

Gillian Cole runs CWI now, and in case you've forgotten, we're not exactly on good terms.

FRANCIS

Then patch things up, this is important.

Claire lets that settle before continuing.

CLAIRE

So that's the shield. What's the sword?

FRANCIS

We'll have Jackie Sharp meet with the Egyptian ambassador to hint that the substantial and sustained foreign aid package that our country provides might become much less substantial and sustained.

Claire considers the information before finally approaching the kitchen table.

CLAIRE

I'll think about it.

She picks up her coffee and walks out.

19 EXT. CALL CENTER - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

19

Rachel approaches the front door of the call center building. She's in rough shape, spaced-out and weaving. It takes her a few tries to get the door open.

20 INT. CALL CENTER - CUBICLES - DAY

20

Rachel arrives at her desk, stoned. She pulls the chair out before becoming distracted by her computer. She reaches down and attempts to log in, fumbling with her keyboard, when her co-worker, MEGAN, approaches.

MEGAN

God, finally. You're almost an hour late.

RACHEL

(out of it)

No.

MEGAN

I've been covering for you, but
Heather's pissed. Is your phone
off?

Rachel can't seem to get her computer working. She reaches out to steady herself and ends up knocking over a cup full of pens. The clattering noise seizes her attention, but then she's immediately lost, standing there frozen...

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(getting it)

Oh wait: you're fucked. You're
totally fucked right now!

RACHEL

I can do it.

Rachel clumsily moves to gather up the pens before Megan stops her.

MEGAN

Jesus, Rachel, you can barely stand.

She takes Rachel by the shoulders and steers her into a chair.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Sit. Stay. You can't work today.
I'm going to tell Heather you're
sick, alright?

RACHEL

(quietly)

Heather.

MEGAN

How are you going to get home?

RACHEL

I'm here to work.

MEGAN

Don't move, don't talk to anyone.
I'm going to call your emergency
contact...

21 INT. VICE PRESIDENT'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

21

Doug is working at his desk beside Seth when his phone rings. He turns his phone over to read the screen, not recognizing the number.

STAMPER

Hello?

Doug takes his hands off his keyboard to listen.

STAMPER (CONT'D)

OK.

He looks over at Seth who's started to pay attention.

STAMPER (CONT'D)

Yes, I understand. I'll be there.

He hangs up and checks the time.

SETH

Everything OK?

STAMPER

Yeah, fine. It's a... family thing.

SETH

You go. I got this.

22 INT. CWI OFFICES - DAY

22

Claire enters the CWI and heads for the back. Things inside are looking much less slick, signs that much more actual nonprofit work is going on now that Claire's no longer in charge.

GILLIAN COLE is sitting in the back office, every inch the boss. She stands up when Claire reaches the doorway, visibly pregnant.

CLAIRE

Gillian, hello. Thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me.

They don't shake hands.

GILLIAN

It was a difficult decision.

CLAIRE

I can understand that. I treated you horribly.

GILLIAN

You were awful.

CLAIRE

I'm sure you can never forgive me for the things I said. And you shouldn't. My words were terrible, absolutely hateful.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I became an appalling version of myself, a monster really; it's taken me some time to come to terms with that. I've been getting help which has been humbling and painful but, ultimately, a healing experience.

Gillian stays silent.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I was upset at being forced out of a job I loved in order to follow my husband's ambition. I was frustrated with CWI's shrinking budget and the failure of the watershed bill, but, ultimately, what I discovered hiding underneath all that was anger at myself and jealousy of you.

GILLIAN

You were jealous of me?

CLAIRE

Yes, I coveted your youth and beauty, your energy but, ultimately, I was jealous that you were going to get to experience something that I've wanted so badly but can never have.

Claire's gaze darts towards Gillian's stomach. A beat as Gillian processes this new information.

GILLIAN

...You can't have children?

CLAIRE

They say it has something to do with the abortion. There were... complications.

GILLIAN

I'm sorry to hear that.

Gillian is sympathetic to this type of frank talk. She motions to a guest chair then takes a seat herself.

23 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - MAP ROOM - DAY

23

Frank is in his study, carefully lowering a toy soldier onto the miniature battleground when he gets a phone call.

FRANCIS

(on phone)

Hello, Seth.

SETH (O.S.)

I might have found something...
Some photos on Amal Naser's Facebook
account showing him and James looking
more than friendly.

FRANCIS

Is that right?

INTERCUT WITH:

24 INT. VICE PRESIDENT'S OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

24

Seth at his desk, on his computer while he talks with Frank.

SETH

I pulled a couple of shots of James
at the beach and ran them through an
online search to see if I could find
any matches.

FRANCIS

I didn't know you could do that.

SETH

Google is a wonderful thing.

FRANCIS

And?

SETH

A few of these are also showing up
on a gay dating site.

Frank turns to give the camera a knowing glance.

SETH (CONT'D)

I'm thinking this was why he was
arrested; Cairo's not The Castro
district.

FRANCIS

What does Doug think?

SETH

He's not here.

FRANCIS

Why not?

SETH

Family emergency.

Frank finds that strange but just then EDWARD MEECHUM shows
up carrying a package.

Frank motions Meechum to set the box down.

FRANCIS

And how are we doing on setting up a meeting with the judge?

SETH

It's with his people.

FRANCIS

Alright, get Doug back in so you can both have another go at Amal. And keep on the judge; we need to meet.

Frank hangs up and reaches for the package.

25 EXT. POTOMAC RIVER - DAY

25

It's late afternoon and Remy and Jackie are walking along the river, Washington's iconic cherry trees in full bloom.

REMY

See, this is nice, right?

JACKIE

I didn't say it wouldn't be nice, I just thought there'd be too many tourists.

REMY

This is Washington, there's always too many tourists.

Remy's phone rings. He checks it.

REMY (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Jackie motions it's alright, she knows the drill. He steps away.

REMY (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

Good afternoon, Mr. Tusk.

TUSK (O.S.)

Actually it's already early morning here.

INTERCUT WITH:

26 INT. PRIVATE PLANE OVER CHINA - DAY

26

RAYMOND TUSK is being served an elaborate breakfast by TWO FLIGHT ATTENDANTS, a birding field guide open beside him.

REMY (O.S.)

Well then, good morning. How can I help you?

Raymond turns towards the field guide.

TUSK

Do you know anything about birds, Remy?

REMY

I don't think so.

TUSK

The Northern Wheater winters in sub-Saharan Africa, but its migration ranges from Alaska through Europe and into China. Every year it crosses over deserts and ice floes, it flies non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean, all this from a bird that weighs less than a handful of salt.

REMY

That's impressive.

TUSK

That's patience, Remy, that's endurance. I find myself thinking of the Wheater because even though I've endured a lot, my patience sometimes wears thin.

Tusk snaps the field guide closed.

REMY

I'm listening.

TUSK

Our difficulties with Frank Underwood have gone beyond regular bullheaded business. Frank's made things personal, and that's a rough game for a politician to play with a money man.

REMY

I agree.

TUSK

Money's everything in politics: starve the bird and it drops from the sky.

REMY

Something specific on your mind?

TUSK

Egypt pulled out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty last year. They're not too fond of Israel's position on nuclear weapons, but are really more concerned with restarting their own nuclear power program at El Dabaa. The Egyptians have wanted my help with that project for some time, and they just now called me with some news.

REMY

What's that?

TUSK

It seems that Egyptian authorities are holding a very interesting specimen in one of their cages, someone who the administration is going to try to free as quickly and quietly as possible... I want you to make sure that doesn't happen.

27 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - MAP ROOM - DAY

27

Frank opens the delivery with Meechum looking on, producing a vintage toy cannon, still in its original packaging.

FRANCIS

I've been waiting for this all week.

MEECHUM

What is it?

FRANCIS

The most popular cannon of the Civil War -- the 12-pounder Napoleon. This machine revolutionized field artillery: light enough to be moved around the battlefield by a team of horses, but heavy enough to destroy fortifications almost a mile away.

MEECHUM

Huh.

FRANCIS

The William-Britain company stopped building these in the 60s: it's got an operational firing mechanism, open bore, spring bolt, the works!

Frank shows it off like a proud parent.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Shall we set it up?

Excitement as the grown men open and assemble the toy cannon, attaching the wheels and snapping the body into place.

Frank carefully lowers the model onto a spot he's prepared on the battlefield before bending over to place AN EXPLOSIVE CAP under the firing hammer.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Fire in the hole!

Frank pulls a switch but nothing happens.

He's in close, fiddling with a lever, when the cannon goes off, BOOM!, white smoke and a flash of light as Frank gets HIS FINGER SLAMMED IN THE FIRING MECHANISM.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

(hurt & delighted)

Hot Christmas!

He jerks his arm back, holding his hand close to his body before his index finger starts to bleed.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Goddamn it.

(looks over at Meechum)

Don't tell Claire.

28 INT. RACHEL POSNER'S PLACE - FRONT AREA - DAY

28

Doug opens the door to Rachel's place, practically dragging her semi-conscious body across the threshold. He flops her onto the couch before moving into the kitchen.

STAMPER

I don't understand, I thought you were doing OK.

RACHEL

Everything's fine.

STAMPER

Everything's not fine, Rachel, this is pretty far from fine!

Doug starts pulling open cupboards and drawers, looking for something.

STAMPER (CONT'D)

Where'd you put the rest of it?

RACHEL
There's no rest of it.

STAMPER
You didn't stash any?

RACHEL
It's gone.

STAMPER
You sure there's none left?

RACHEL
(holding her arms
open wide)
Does it look like there's any left?

STAMPER
You better not be lying. Don't ever
lie to me...

Doug resumes his search through the kitchen, looking for something different now.

STAMPER (CONT'D)
Do you have any coffee?

RACHEL
You want tea?

STAMPER
No, it's for you.

Doug's phone starts to ring. He stops and answers it.

STAMPER (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Yeah? No, it's fine, what's up?
...OK, I'm almost done here. How's
it going with the judge? OK good,
thanks Seth, yeah thanks. I'll be
right there.

Doug hangs up the phone before turning back to Rachel.

STAMPER (CONT'D)
Where's your wallet? ...Do you still
have your wallet?

He returns to the couch and grabs Rachel's purse, rooting around inside until he finds it.

STAMPER (CONT'D)
I'm taking this.
(MORE)

STAMPER (CONT'D)

I have to go but I'm going to be
back later. I want you to sleep;
I'm going to come back later to make
sure you're sleeping.

Doug walks to the front door and opens it, turning in the
doorway before he leaves.

STAMPER (CONT'D)

Everything's going to be fine, OK?
We're going to be alright.

29 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

29

Frank is standing in his bedroom closet getting dressed for
dinner. He's got a shirt on but is having trouble buttoning
it because his index finger is wrapped in a bandage.

Claire bustles into the room.

FRANCIS

I was beginning to worry.

CLAIRE

Sorry, things went overtime with
Gillian. It was a long journey back
to civility.

Frank hides his bandaged finger as Claire starts getting
dressed herself.

FRANCIS

But it went well?

CLAIRE

She still hates me and is
uncomfortable with the lie, but I
think I convinced her that the good
outweighs the bad. I used one of
your favorite lines: "In the end, we
will remember not the words of our
enemies, but the silence of our
friends."

FRANCIS

That's not my line.

CLAIRE

You know what I mean. And how are
things on your end?

FRANCIS

The situation may be more serious than we thought: Seth thinks James was arrested for sex rather than politics.

CLAIRE

Meaning what?

FRANCIS

Meaning it's still dangerous to be gay in Cairo: Human Rights Watch has Egyptian authorities on the books for torturing and killing gay men.

CLAIRE

That's awful.

FRANCIS

We're going to have to move faster.

Claire looks over to see Frank continuing to struggle with his shirt.

CLAIRE

What happened to your finger?

(walks over)

Francis?

FRANCIS

Wouldn't you know it? I burned it on the stove.

CLAIRE

Here, let me help.

Claire buttons up Frank's shirt for him before smoothing it out, warm and intimate.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

There, perfect.

They kiss.

30 INT. FANCY WASHINGTON RESTAURANT - NIGHT

30

Remy is waiting alone in a fancy restaurant. He stands as a woman approaches but it's not Jackie, it's the Washington Telegraph reporter, AYL A SAYYAD.

REMY

Ayla, hi.

AYLA

Remy.

He motions for her to take a seat but she stays standing.

AYLA (CONT'D)

I can't stay.

REMY

That's too bad, the black cod is incredible.

AYLA

What have you got for me?

REMY

Have you ever heard of James Wallin?

AYLA

The troublemaking son of the chief justice.

REMY

He was arrested in Cairo last night.

AYLA

So what?

REMY

Nobody knows about it yet.

AYLA

I came here to get background on Raymond Tusk's relationship with Xander Feng.

REMY

And I've already told you I can't discuss that. What I can offer you is a scoop on a huge human interest story with international implications.

AYLA

Is this a joke? Go fuck yourself, Remy; no deal.

She turns to go.

REMY

It's not to buy you off. This is no strings attached. I'm being nice.

AYLA

Yeah, like the Greeks to the Trojans.

She starts walking away.

REMY
(calling after her)
I can take this to the Herald.

AYLA
(over her shoulder)
Tell them they can fuck themselves
too. Give me a call when you've got
something real.

31 INT. ANOTHER FANCY WASHINGTON RESTAURANT - NIGHT

31

Frank and Claire have finished their dinner date and are in high spirits. Frank leads the way back through the expensive restaurant and is being helped into his coat when his phone rings. He leaves Claire standing by the bar and steps away.

FRANCIS
What've you got?

STAMPER (O.S.)
I'm calling to confirm your meeting
with the Chief Justice.

INTERCUT WITH:

32 INT. VICE PRESIDENT'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

32

Doug and Seth huddle in the vice president's outer office.

STAMPER
The judge will be speaking at a
private function at the Arlington
Heights Country Club. He's agreed
to meet you at the upstairs bar before
the talk, but said he can only spare
a few minutes.

FRANCIS
That's all I'll need.

STAMPER
And there's more... We got Amal
Naser back on the line. There are
pictures of James being taken into
custody.

FRANCIS
Are they bad?

STAMPER
They're not good.

Doug flips through some cell phone photos that show a beaten-down James Wallin, black eye, bleeding, being shoved into the back of a dirty police car.

STAMPER (CONT'D)

Amal confirmed that James was picked up in a nightclub raid. They were in Egypt to film a documentary about gay culture in the Middle East.

FRANCIS

So Seth was right.

STAMPER

Yes, but there's more to it than that... The reason Amal was so nervous about the whole thing is that the father doesn't know.

FRANCIS

Who's father?

STAMPER

James' father... The judge doesn't know his son is gay.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

33 INT. RACHEL POSNER'S PLACE - FRONT AREA - DAY 33

It's early Sunday morning and Doug wakes up on Rachel's couch looking like he didn't sleep well.

He moves into the kitchen, replaying his day-before search for coffee before giving up.

He picks his suit jacket off the back of a kitchen chair and pulls out his cell phone, reading something that springs him into action.

34 INT. RACHEL POSNER'S PLACE - BEDROOM - DAY 34

STAMPER (O.C.)
(calling out)
Rachel?

Doug comes around the corner and sticks his head into the bedroom.

STAMPER (CONT'D)
I have to leave, but I'll be back.
We're still going to go out. Get up
and get dressed, I'll come back for
you.

35 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - TV ROOM - DAY 35

Doug comes into the TV room to find Frank and Seth already there watching CNN. A chyron along the bottom of the screen reads: "Chief Justice's Son Arrested in Egypt".

FRANCIS
(turning on Doug)
Who the fuck gave them this?

STAMPER
I don't know.

SETH
(off his iPad)
The Washington Herald is quoting a
source in the Egyptian government...

FRANCIS
Bullshit. The Washington Herald
doesn't have a correspondent in the
whole Middle East never mind a source
in the Egyptian government. Someone
leaked this... Seth, did you say
anything to Remy?

SETH

No.

STAMPER

This is going to complicate meeting with the judge.

FRANCIS

Reporters will be crawling over him like fleas on a stray.

SETH

Maybe we just need to adjust.

Seth takes out his phone.

SETH (CONT'D)

I know someone who works in the kitchen at Arlington. Let's see if they can suggest a different location.

36 INT. JACKIE SHARP'S BEDROOM - DAY 36

Jackie wakes up alone, again. She reaches for her phone and dials Remy's number but gets no answer.

37 INT. FRANCIS'S CAR - DAY 37

Frank is being driven to the meeting with the judge when his phone rings. He answers it.

FRANCIS

Good morning, Mr. President, I was just about to dial your number... Yes sir, I woke up to that news as well.

INTERCUT WITH:

38 INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY 38

PRESIDENT WALKER is standing in the Oval Office, dressed down for the weekend.

PRESIDENT WALKER

Well what are we going to do about it, Frank?

FRANCIS

What else can we do, sir? We have to get him out of there as quickly as possible.

PRESIDENT WALKER

You of all people should know it's not that simple, Frank; there's a political angle to all of this.

FRANCIS

We're talking about the only child of the Chief Justice of the United States; I would advise against any display of weakness.

PRESIDENT WALKER

No one's talking about looking weak, Frank, but his son is a bit of a hot potato. Are you aware of his politics? Linda tells me he's angered every pro-Israel lobby group in Washington.

FRANCIS

That may be true, sir, but we're no more beholden to them than we are to the Egyptian government. In fact, last time I checked the United States was propping up that regime to the tune of several billion dollars a year.

PRESIDENT WALKER

So what do you suggest?

FRANCIS

Send in Catherine Durant, have her threaten to put every single Egyptian funding program on hold until James Wallin is released.

PRESIDENT WALKER

That's a bit blunt, Frank, even by your standards; we don't even know what he's accused of yet.

FRANCIS

He makes political movies for a living, sir, I'm sure it involves filming some kind of protest.

PRESIDENT WALKER

Be that as it may, I'd still like us to tread more carefully. Catherine sends too strong a message.

Frank turns to give the camera a look.

FRANCIS

How about Jackie Sharp? She's close enough to the administration to deliver a valid threat, yet far enough removed to offer a layer of deniability should things turn sour.

PRESIDENT WALKER

...I hadn't thought of Jackie...

FRANCIS

She's familiar with Middle Eastern politics and has proven herself to be a capable negotiator. If anyone knows how to deliver an iron fist inside a velvet glove it's Jackie Sharp.

PRESIDENT WALKER

That sounds like a good compromise. Can you set it up?

FRANCIS

Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT WALKER

Thank you, Frank. Hope you won't let this ruin your weekend.

FRANCIS

As far as I'm concerned, Mr. President, this is the kind of thing that rescues me from my weekend.

He rolls his eyes to camera and hangs up the phone.

39 INT. REMY DANTON'S PLACE - BATHROOM - DAY

39

Remy is on the phone, standing outside his shower, a towel wrapped around his lower half.

REMY

Yes, sir. I was happy to see that too. It's leading every Sunday show.

TUSK (O.S.)

So I hear.

INTERCUT WITH:

40 EXT. BANK OF LAKE KHANKA, CHINA - DUSK

40

The sun is setting on RAYMOND TUSK as he stands on the banks of a quiet lake, an expensive-looking Chinese helicopter motionless in the background.

Tusk uses binoculars to watch a pair of endangered red-crowned cranes feeding in the shallows.

TUSK

I wish I could be there to see the look on Frank's face. It's going to be impossible to get Wallin out of there now without it costing them every Jewish dollar in Washington.

One of cranes shoots forward, spearing a frog before it lifts it into the air and violently shakes it to pieces.

Tusk smiles, delighted.

41 INT. JACKIE'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

41

Jackie stands in the doorway of her inner office, ushering EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR FAUD SHERIF SALOUSY inside.

JACKIE

Mister Ambassador, good morning. Thank you for coming in on such short notice.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

I serve at the pleasure of your government and mine.

JACKIE

I'm sorry I can't offer you any coffee.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

I've already had my Starbucks today, thank you.

JACKIE

Please, sit... I'm sure you already know why we're here.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

I assume it's to talk about the chief justice's son.

JACKIE

As you can probably imagine, it's an issue that the administration is interested in resolving as quickly and quietly as possible.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

The authorities in Cairo had no idea who this man was when he was arrested.

JACKIE

I'm sure.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

And yet our country, Ms. Sharp, like your own, is stitched together with the rule of law. When someone breaks that law, it frays the very fabric of society, maybe even more so when that individual is well-connected.

JACKIE

Let's start there then: what law has been broken?

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

Perhaps more than one. If I understand the situation correctly, this person was somewhere he shouldn't have been, filming something he shouldn't have seen, operating beyond the bounds imposed by proper permitting and visas.

JACKIE

Then perhaps there's been a misunderstanding. James Wallin was passing through Egypt on his way to Mali.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

Oh, yes?

JACKIE

Yes, I'm told he was on assignment with an American NGO, on his way to film some well projects in..

(consulting her notes)

"Didieni".

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

Well that's good news for all involved. My own administration, of course, would be interested in seeing the proof of this. As I'm sure you can appreciate, Ms. Sharp, proper documentation is often all that is required to soothe the many highly irritable layers of government bureaucracy.

The Ambassador's smile is more than slightly predatory.

42 EXT. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS COUNTRY CLUB - BACK ENTRANCE - DAY 42

Establishing shot of the regal golf and country club.

43 INT. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS COUNTRY CLUB - BACK KITCHEN - DAY 43

Frank and his Secret Service guard are waiting at the back entrance of the club when Doug approaches.

STAMPER

We're all set. This way.

Doug leads the way past the kitchen's walk-in cooler and over to an old-looking cellar door.

STAMPER (CONT'D)

He's waiting down here...

(aside, to Frank)

Are you going to tell him?

FRANCIS

I haven't decided yet.

Doug holds the door open as Frank pauses.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

I'll be fine from here, gentlemen,
thank you.

Frank leaves Doug and his guard at the top of the stairs, ducking his head as he walks down the creaky steps.

44 INT. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS COUNTRY CLUB - ROOT CELLAR - DAY 44

The root cellar is a primitive affair, hard-packed floor, post-and-beam construction.

Frank steps down off the bottom step to find an older, distinguished-looking, black man waiting there, CHIEF JUSTICE CHARLES ROBERT WALLIN. The other man is turned away, peering into a wooden trough that's filled with potatoes.

FRANCIS

Chief Justice.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN

(not turning)

Mr. Vice President.

FRANCIS

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. This must be a difficult time for you.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN

These things are never easy, but what you have to remember, Mr. Vice President, is that I've been James' father for his entire life. My boy is well-acquainted with trouble.

FRANCIS

Spoken like a loving parent.

Frank watches as the judge reaches down to pick up a potato from the overflowing bin.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN

I don't mean to be glib, but I haven't seen this many potatoes in one place since my army days. I'd forgotten how they present themselves; each one with its own personality, staring up at you like a bunch of old men. I'm just now realizing that I've always found something pleasing about these things, even if I never much enjoyed the taste.

FRANCIS

I'm more familiar with peaches, myself, and I suppose I've always thought of them as having a feminine quality.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN

Well the female is certainly the sweeter sex, no matter what political correctness would have us say.

The judge puts the potato back on its pile, wipes his hand against his pant leg and then turns.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN (CONT'D)

So why are we here?

FRANCIS

The administration is in a difficult position with regards to your son, Chief Justice. Intervening openly could damage us politically... I hope you'll forgive me for speaking so plainly, but I should warn you that the president is not in favor of offering any assistance at all.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN

Given the president's record on decisive action, I hope you'll forgive me for saying that I don't find that very surprising.

FRANCIS

That said, I am very sympathetic to your situation and do operate with a certain amount of autonomy. I would like your permission to set in motion a plan to free your son.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN

What's the plan?

FRANCIS

Nothing illegal or even strictly immoral, but my activities will require some degree of dissembling in order to meet the obligations imposed by secrecy.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN

Spoken like a politician.

FRANCIS

I'd like to help, Chief Justice.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN

And I appreciate the offer, Mr. Vice President, however, the problem, as I see it, is that I don't always believe it's in James' best interest to be helped out of situations like these. Sometimes there are lessons to be learned.

FRANCIS

That is certainly often the case, and normally I would agree with that prescription, however this particular circumstance might be more serious than you realize.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN

Really? Why's that?

Frank is deliberating what to say when the door opens at the top of the stairs.

MRS. WALLIN (O.C.)

Charlie?

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN
(to Frank)
My wife. This recent business has
set her on edge.

MRS. CECILIA WALLIN, a nervous-looking woman who's the same
age as the judge, walks down the steps to join them.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN (CONT'D)
Mr. Vice President, may I present my
wife, Cecilia.

FRANCIS
How do you do, Mrs. Wallin?

MRS. WALLIN
Mr. Vice President.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN
The Vice President was just telling
me that he would like to personally
intervene to help get Jimmy home.

FRANCIS
With your permission, of course.

MRS. WALLIN
(genuinely grateful)
We would like that very much, Mr.
Vice President, thank you. I know
our son can sometimes be difficult,
but he means well and has a tender
heart.

Frank learns something from her words, a look passing between
them.

CHIEF JUSTICE WALLIN
As you might suspect, my wife tends
to advocate for clemency in these
situations.

FRANCIS
Claire and I will do everything in
our power to get him home safely.

45 EXT. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS COUNTRY CLUB - BACK LOT - DAY

45

Doug walks Frank to his car through the staff parking lot.

STAMPER
How'd it go?

FRANCIS

Fine, but not great. I need you to get in touch with the judge's wife.

STAMPER

Alright...

FRANCIS

Set up a private meeting with her and Claire. There's more than one way to skin this cat.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

46 EXT. ROCK CREEK CEMETERY - ADAMS MEMORIAL - DAY

46

Claire and Cecilia Wallin sit on a bench that encircles the Adams Memorial, the spot featuring a larger than life bronze statue of a seated figure draped in a mourning cloth.

MRS. WALLIN

I come here often after church.
It's a peaceful place.

CLAIRE

Yes, it's lovely.

MRS. WALLIN

Are you and your husband regular churchgoers, Mrs. Underwood?

CLAIRE

We are, although it can be a contentious issue in our household: I was raised Episcopal while Frank is pure Southern Baptist.

MRS. WALLIN

So it goes. I never took to talk of fire and brimstone myself, but in the end, I suppose, it's all the same God.

CLAIRE

That's well put.

MRS. WALLIN

I think I know why you wanted to meet with me, Mrs. Underwood.

CLAIRE

Please, call me Claire.

MRS. WALLIN

I saw it in your husband's eyes this morning; I think you know about my son and are worried for him.

CLAIRE

Frank told me almost the exact same thing; he said he had a hunch that you already knew.

MRS. WALLIN

I've always known; a mother can tell... But my husband is driven by
(MORE)

MRS. WALLIN (CONT'D)

tradition, he more easily turns aside certain truths in order to maintain an undisturbed picture of our son.

CLAIRE

Francis had been meaning to discuss it with the chief justice, but said he changed his mind at the last minute.

MRS. WALLIN

The Vice President is perceptive; it's not the kind of news that my husband would be inclined to accept.

CLAIRE

The issue here, Mrs. Wallin, is that James' sexual orientation puts him in danger. Men in his position are treated cruelly in Egypt.

MRS. WALLIN

I understand.

CLAIRE

And the difficulty is compounded by your son's politics. To be completely honest, the president is disinclined to help at all, he considers your son to be a toxic element, bad for fundraising.

MRS. WALLIN

(horrified)

He's thinking of fundraising?

CLAIRE

This town can be terrible; people come here looking to change things but very often find that it's they themselves who are changed.

Claire reaches out to comfort the other woman.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

My husband approached you because we want to help, but we can't afford to leave James in prison for much longer. We will be forced to act more boldly, take greater risks...

Mrs. Wallin reaches back.

MRS. WALLIN

Do what you think is best, Claire,
but please, keep my son's private
life private. For my husband's sake.

47 EXT. FRONT STEPS OF THE CWI OFFICES - DAY

47

Gillian Cole stands on the front steps of the CWI offices,
addressing a gathering of reporters.

GILLIAN

James Wallin, a filmmaker whose work
I've admired for many years, was
traveling through Cairo on his way
to Mali, a country where less than
half of the rural population has
access to basic sanitation and safe
drinking water. Our organization
hired James to film a series of well
water projects that the Clean Water
Initiative has already broken ground
on,

MATCH CUT TO:

48 INT. RACHEL'S PLACE - TV ROOM - DAY

48

GILLIAN (O.S.)

(on TV)

projects that, along with local
educational outreach, will help the
Malian people take control of their
own infrastructure challenges and,
ultimately, improve the lives of
people disposed by famine and drought.

Doug is watching the news conference on Rachel's TV, keeping
one eye on the time.

GILLIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(on TV)

James Wallin's work was to be a
central component of that plan. We
call upon--

Doug switches the TV off and puts down the remote.

STAMPER

Time to go.

He goes to the door, holding it open until Rachel, slow-moving
and bleary-eyed, shuffles out into the hall.

49 INT. JACKIE SHARP'S PLACE - OFFICE AREA - DAY

49

Jackie is working on her laptop, the muted TV in front of her tuned to Gillian's press conference.

She looks up from her computer before picking up the remote and turning off the TV. She picks up her phone to text Remy.

Jackie: Hi. I'm sick of business, how about some pleasure?

She hesitates for a second then presses send with a smile.

50 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - MAP ROOM - DAY

50

Frank is hovering over his miniature battlefield, repairing the damage from the day before, when Seth shows up.

SETH

You wanted to see me, sir?

FRANCIS

Yes, Seth, come in.

SETH

Will Doug be joining us?

FRANCIS

Stamper takes Sunday afternoons for his meeting, but I think you'll be able to handle this just fine... Did you catch Gillian Cole's press conference?

SETH

Yes, sir.

FRANCIS

Claire delivered her charge like a pro.

(looking up)

Are you a religious man, Seth?

SETH

No.

FRANCIS

People are funny about religion, they tend to forget that the whole front part of the Bible is basically a manual on animal sacrifice: what to do, how to do it; seems that God liked nothing better than to see an unblemished creature bled and burned in front of a crowd.

(MORE)

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

"The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even."

SETH

I don't understand.

FRANCIS

The lambs need to be sacrificed. It's time to let the world know that Gillian Cole is lying with the blood appearing on the president's hands...

51 INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

51

Doug and Rachel sit in a sharing circle of an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. A MAN is speaking.

MAN

...and to be honest, I don't remember much of what happened after that; police got involved, my wife's parents. I've got my son to thank on getting me here: sober two years next month and I don't ever want to fall that low again... Thanks for always being here you guys.

People murmur encouraging words, "Keep coming back" etc. The GROUP LEADER nods before turning around.

GROUP LEADER

Would anyone else like to share?

Rachel puts her hand up and the leader nods encouragingly.

RACHEL

Hi, I'm Rachel.

The group murmurs back a greeting. Rachel sits forward, eventually turning to fix her gaze on Doug, delivering the bulk of her words directly to him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I didn't want to come here at first. You know how you sometimes feel like it's got a hold of you, like you can't escape? Like at first you might have thought it was helping you out of a tight spot, that it somehow cared about you even?

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

But then you start to realize that's a lie, that it's actually the thing that's been hurting you the whole time - it's the thing that's been holding you down all along.

Doug is the only one in the room who realizes Rachel's not talking about her addiction.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I guess what I'm trying to say is it feels good to realize that maybe it's not your fault after all. Maybe you can go back to being the one who's in control, that you can take your life back... That's all I've got to say.

GROUP LEADER

Thank you, Rachel.

The group responds with encouragement while Doug fumes.

52 EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

52

It's a gorgeous afternoon and Jackie and Remy are golfing.

Jackie is in high spirits. She executes a powerful second shot from the fairway, admiring the trajectory, before her phone rings. She excuses herself to answer it.

JACKIE

(on the phone)

Jackie Sharp.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR (O.S.)

Ms. Sharp, it's Faud Salousy.

JACKIE

Good afternoon, Mr. Ambassador.
What's happening?

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR (O.S.)

I was hoping you could tell me.

JACKIE

I'm sorry, I don't understand.

INTERCUT WITH:

53 INT. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE - DAY

53

The Egyptian Ambassador is in his office.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

Then perhaps you are even further removed than I have come to suspect. Your story about James Wallin is unraveling rapidly.

JACKIE

Excuse me?

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

The Washington Herald says that James Wallin has no association with the Clean Water Initiative, while several other outlets are pointing to the now rather obvious association between that organization and the Vice President's wife.

JACKIE

I haven't seen any of that yet, but that doesn't change the fact that the United States still expects your government to honor-

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

My government is an American ally, Ms. Sharp, but we will not be made to look the fool!

JACKIE

No one is at risk of that.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

Oh but we are, Ms. Sharp, especially when you tell lies designed to protect law-breakers and sexual deviants.

JACKIE

Sexual... Mr. Ambassador, I'm sure I don't need to remind you of the substantial foreign aid package that your government receives each year.

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

Just as sure as I am that I don't need to remind you that you don't actually speak for the administration. In fact, Ms. Sharp, I suspect that you are, much like the Clean Water Initiative itself, neither operating cleanly nor from your own initiative.

JACKIE

I-

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

I've been in Washington longer than you've been alive, Ms. Sharp, and whether you realize it or not, you are in no position to be making demands. You are a pawn in another man's game and I'm calling as a courtesy to inform you that you've just been removed from the board.

The ambassador terminates the call without saying goodbye.

Jackie is upset as Remy approaches.

REMY

Everything alright?

Jackie stays silent before making an abrupt decision. She grabs Remy's hand and pulls him into the woods, heading towards a barely visible garden shed.

54 INT. RACHEL POSNER'S PLACE - FRONT AREA - DAY

54

Doug storms through Rachel's front door with her close behind.

STAMPER

...And who pays for this place?

RACHEL

I do.

STAMPER

You *help* pay for it, you couldn't afford a place half as nice as this.

RACHEL

And look how grateful I am.

STAMPER

Listen, Rachel, I'm sorry your life is so miserable right now, I know everything would be better if you could just get back to turning tricks with congressional low-lives.

Rachel freezes.

RACHEL

Fuck you.

STAMPER

OK, sorry, I'm sorry, OK? I know this isn't ideal, but at least we're building something.

RACHEL

Since when are we doing anything?

STAMPER

Right now it seems like I'm the one calling the shots, but that's just because I understand the situation better than you do. We're wrapped up in things that are bigger than both of us.

RACHEL

(storming out)

I don't want something big, I don't want "us"! I want my life back!

55 EXT. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS COUNTRY CLUB - GARDEN SHED - DAY 55

Two figures move behind the smudged-up glass of the isolated garden shed. Pre-lap sounds of breathless fumbling...

56 INT. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS COUNTRY CLUB - GARDEN SHED - DAY 56

The garden shed is neat and utilitarian, filled with mowers and lawn care supplies. Jackie has Remy pushed onto a stack of grass seed, kissing him hard while she works his zipper.

She slips her hand inside and grabs hold before looking back up at him, her gaze smoldering. He grins.

REMY

Fore.

The joke lightens the mood and then they're back at it.

57 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 57

Frank is asleep beside Claire when his phone lights up and buzzes. He props himself up to read the text:

Stamper: News from Egypt. James Wallin is dead, killed in his cell.

Frank reads the news impassively before putting the phone down and rolling over, quickly falling back to sleep.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

58 INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

58

It's early morning and the President has just called Frank into his office.

PRESIDENT WALKER
This is a nightmare, Frank.

FRANCIS
Yes sir, a real tragedy.

PRESIDENT WALKER
We could have done more!

FRANCIS
The situation was complicated, we--

PRESIDENT WALKER
We could have delivered a tougher message! We could have sent in Catherine, like you suggested.

FRANCIS
And that might have ended in diplomatic disaster. The Egyptians are saying they had nothing to do with it, that a fight broke out in James' cell.

PRESIDENT WALKER
His 'cell' was a holding pen with 70 other prisoners!

FRANCIS
I blame myself. I asked to be handed the reins and I won't throw up my hands now that the horses have charged away.

PRESIDENT WALKER
How did the press move so quickly on this?

FRANCIS
I have no idea, sir, but I accept full responsibility.

PRESIDENT WALKER
I'm inclined to accept your offer, Frank. It was rather bone-headed of you to bring the CWI into this.

FRANCIS

Certainly not my finest hour.

PRESIDENT WALKER

The press are going to want a statement.

FRANCIS

And I'll give it to them. I don't believe we could have done anything to alter the final outcome, but I can assure you that the damage will stop with me.

59 EXT. WALLIN RESIDENCE - DAY

59

Claire carries a casserole up the front walk of a stately-looking home in Rosslyn, Va.

A FILIPINA HELPER answers the door, retreating back inside to return with Mrs. Wallin. Claire steps forward.

CLAIRE

Mrs. Wallin, I'm surely one of the last people you want to see today, but I couldn't rest until I'd delivered my personal condolences.

MRS. WALLIN

That's thoughtful, Mrs. Underwood. Will you come in?

CLAIRE

Thank you, no. I don't want to impose... I made you this.

The casserole gets passed to the helper who carries it away.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, these things seem like such empty gestures.

MRS. WALLIN

There's nothing to be done in situations like these, but we can take comfort in the fact that human kindness is never wasted.

CLAIRE

Well said, as always... How are you?

MRS. WALLIN

I'm sure the truth of it hasn't fully-arrived, but I find myself feeling surprisingly clear-headed this morning. James was never one to shy away from dangerous situations, especially if he thought he was doing the right thing. I take a large degree of comfort from that. It's going to take him some time to recover, but for now I want to thank you for keeping my son's private life private. It means a lot.

CLAIRE

Everyone has the right to privacy and dignity, especially in times like this... And how is your husband?

Mrs. Wallin's expression clouds.

MRS. WALLIN

My husband is a different creature.

She looks back into the house before continuing.

MRS. WALLIN (CONT'D)

My husband is furious. He blames the president.

Claire takes note of this, Frank's plan a success: the president gaining a powerful new enemy.

CLAIRE

That is completely understandable...

60 INT. CALL CENTER - CUBICLES - DAY

60

Rachel is back at work at the call center, looking recovered.

RACHEL

(on her headset)

And is there anything else I can help you with this morning? Alright, thank you for your call.

Rachel ends the call before looking around to check on the location of her boss. She takes out her phone to fire off a quick text:

Rachel: Hey. Sorry I fell off the grid, was going through some shit. I want to see you.

She puts the phone down and turns her attention back to her computer right before a reply dings in.

Lisa: How about tonight?

Rachel smiles as she cues up her next call.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(on her headset)
Good morning, K.B. Industries, my
name is Rachel and how can I help
you today?

61 INT. WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

61

Frank stands at the lectern in front of a CROWD OF REPORTERS,
flanked by Doug and Seth, the Q&A portion of the briefing.

FRANCIS
We only have time for a few more.
(nodding to a reporter)
Yes, go ahead.

REPORTER
Mr. Vice President, several news
organizations are raising questions
about Gillian Cole and her connection
to your wife. Would you care to
comment?

FRANCIS
Anyone who's ever met my wife learns
very quickly that she's the definition
of an independent woman. And she's
sensitive to the plights of all
people, especially mothers who have
children in trouble. My question to
you would be what, exactly, is she
being accused of? Encouraging someone
to lie in the attempt to save another
person's life? Seems like a fair
swap to me.

DIFFERENT REPORTER
Mr. Vice President, are you saying
that you yourself would lie or
encourage others to lie in a similar
circumstance?

FRANCIS
I can't imagine what I'd do under
similar circumstances, but I can
tell you that I'd be willing to do
almost anything to save the life of
an American citizen, and I hope that
each of you would do the same...
Thank you for your time and attention.

Frank steps down, Seth and Doug shielding him.

He turns toward the camera as he's ushered away.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

(to camera)

They make it too easy.

62 INT. UNDERWOOD RESIDENCE - TV ROOM - DAY

62

Claire's at home, drinking coffee and watching the press conference on TV with Meechum standing guard behind her.

She picks up the remote to change the channel, eventually landing on one that's playing game highlights.

CLAIRE

Do you follow sports, Meechum?

MEECHUM

Not very much, ma'am. Enough to make conversation.

CLAIRE

Never played in school?

MEECHUM

Not really. I'm from Boston. Mostly I played pick-up hockey.

CLAIRE

(turning, pleased)

Hockey? Isn't that interesting. You'll have to teach me the rules sometime.

MEECHUM

Anytime you'd like, ma'am.

Claire picks up her coffee cup and moves into the kitchen, making sure Meechum notices her form-fitting dress, the fabric hugging her every curve. His gaze follows her as she passes, how could he resist? Claire Underwood is looking sexy as hell.

FADE:

END OF SHOW