

THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

by

Richard Bartle

WGAE reg. no. 135177-00

Orchard House,  
Queens Road,  
West Bergholt,  
Essex. CO6 3HE  
United Kingdom.  
+44 1206 241441  
richard@mud.co.uk

FADE IN:

EXT. BOSTON AIRPORT -- DAY

A passenger airplane taxis away from the terminal building.

INT. BUSINESS CLASS -- DAY

Englishwoman PENNY ROSE occupies an aisle seat. A trim, thirty-something brunette, she wears a pale business suit that's almost as buttoned-up as she is.

With both arms, Penny clutches a very smart briefcase.

TOM NEWTON, in the window seat next to her, thumbs through an in-flight magazine. The chinos and sweater he wears are direct from the "Boyish Charms 'R' Us" Summer collection -- and hey, he's thirty-something too!

A female FLIGHT ATTENDANT appears next to Penny.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Could you stow your briefcase ready  
for take-off, now, Miss Rose.

PENNY

I'd rather just hold onto it, if  
that's OK? It's legal and everything --  
I have all the papers.

Tom looks up, suddenly aware of Penny's existence. He closes his magazine ("HOW TO MAKE \$300 MILLION FROM THE INTERNET").

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Is it cuffed to your wrist?

PENNY

No..?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Good, that way it won't hurt when I  
rip it out of your arms and jam it  
under the seat in front of you.

Penny swiftly places the briefcase on the floor. The flight attendant breaks into standard smile #6 (Victory) and leaves.

TOM

Good decision. I think she could  
have taken you mano a mano.

PENNY

I'm sorry, Complete Stranger, but  
are you addressing me?

TOM  
I am, but it's OK, I have sarcasm  
insurance.  
(proffers his hand)  
Tom Newton.

Penny looks at his hand like she never saw one before.

TOM  
It's a hand. Hey, you shake it.

PENNY  
(shaking his hand)  
Help. I've been abducted by aliens  
and dropped on Planet Extrovert.

TOM  
Oh, don't worry -- the natives are  
very friendly.

INT. MEN'S ROOM -- DAY

A PILOT leaves as plain-clothes cops ADAMS and MCNAB enter,  
with tall, mean murderer MIKEY ZALE cuffed to Adams. Adams  
sports a blazer in the hope that people will realize that  
he's the cop, not Mikey.

ADAMS  
This better be one helluva dump,  
Mikey, they already called our flight.

MCNAB  
(to Adams)  
You're getting soft, he ought to  
have to hold 'til we reach Phoenix.

MIKEY  
Hey, you made me eat the freakin'  
broccoli, this ain't my doing.

Adams and Mikey go into a stall and close the door.

A PASSENGER enters.

ADAMS (O.S.)  
Wait, let me get comfortable.

The passenger gapes in surprise. McNab flashes his warrant  
card and nods, grimly. The passenger quickly leaves.

There is a COMMOTION in the stall.

MIKEY (O.S.)  
Out! Come out, you bastard!

ADAMS (O.S.)

Oh my god. Oh. My. God.

Mcnab cracks a grin, but suddenly there's a SHOT. He pulls his gun, but a second SHOT spits through the stall door and wings him.

Mcnab goes down.

Mikey kicks the door open and runs to the exit, the shot-through cuff chain dangling from his wrist.

Adams picks himself up from the floor and scrambles to McNab.

MCNAB

I'll live. Take my gun, get the...

Adams nods, takes McNab's pistol and chases after Mikey.

EXT. SKY -- DAY

The airplane flies smooth and level in a cloudless sky.

INT. BUSINESS CLASS -- DAY

Penny rests her briefcase on her lap and grips its handle.

TOM

So, are you here on business or is that suit a pleasure thing?

PENNY

Business, and it's none of yours.

Tom waits for more, but more doesn't come.

TOM

(turns to face window)

And how about you, Tom? Why are you Washington bound? You, uh, don't work for the government, do you?

(turns to face Penny)

Seems that way at times, the tax they take. But no -- actually I'm on the tourist trail.

(turns to face window)

Really? Oh, how I wish I could join you. The White House, the Capitol, the Memorials, the Smithsonian...

(turns to face Penny)

It has to be better than sitting at home watching soaps all day.

PENNY

So if I speak to you, I only have to hear you half the time instead of all of it?

TOM

That's the plan.

(grins)

So, what does it say on your home page?

PENNY

(sighs)

My name's Penny Rose and I teach mathematics at Oxford. My hobbies include flower arranging, motor sports and conversing with airborne madmen.

A sudden, loud WHUMPH outside sends a tremor through the airplane. An engine GROANS in regret that it's eaten something it shouldn't have.

PENNY

(clasping her briefcase)

What was that?

TOM

(looking through window)

It'd take us a DNA test to find out...

There is the CHIME of the "SEATBELTS ON" sign illuminating.

FIRST OFFICER (O.S.)

Uh, this is the first officer, people. We just hit a big, big bird and we're going to have to land someplace.

TOM

He didn't say there's no need to panic. I find that reassuring.

PENNY

I don't mind flying, but that falling from the sky thing sounds unpleasant.

The flight attendant stalks the aisle, looking at waists.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Are you going to buckle up, or is there an airbag in that briefcase?

INT. DEPARTURES HALL -- DAY

A long, large atrium affords outgoing passengers twice the room to be bored in as the arrivals hall above.

Mikey bursts through a door, followed shortly by the slower Adams. Two uniformed COPS mooching around notice what's happening and pull their guns.

Mikey fires a speculative SHOT. Panicked passengers scatter.

Adams and the cops check, then all three give chase.

INT. AIRPORT CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Mikey sprints alongside a travelator full of more-than-concerned people. He stops, looks back, then all around.

He shoulder-charges his way through a side door.

INT. OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

A jaded SUIT sits behind a desk, next to a large window.

MIKEY  
(points gun at suit)  
Here -- now.

The suddenly unjaded suit, frightened witless, obeys.

MIKEY  
Turn around, face the window.

The suit turns, and Mikey KO's him with the pistol.

Mikey lays the suit against the door like a draft excluder. He opens the window, footprints the desk, then hides in a stationery cupboard. He can't resist taking one of the pens.

INT. CUPBOARD -- CONTINUOUS

Mikey tries hard to pant quietly.

There are ominous THUDS as people attack the office door, then a loud BANG as it gives way.

ADAMS (O.S.)  
Aw man, a human doorstop. I hate it  
when they do that.

COP (O.S.)  
Uh, you think maybe we can replace  
those teeth before he wakes up?

Mikey hears FOOTSTEPS as regulation police boots move around.

ADAMS (O.S.)  
OK, so Mikey jumped out the window...  
Is backup here yet?

INT. ARRIVALS HALL -- DAY

Penny and Tom appear in an amorphous line with other passengers from their flight. Everyone walks like someone must know where they're going. Penny carries her briefcase.

PENNY  
I have no idea at all where we are.

TOM  
The pilot mumbled Connecticut, so I guess that narrows it down to only five thousand eighteen square miles.

PENNY  
Only if you know where  
(Tom-American accent)  
Connecticut  
(end American accent)  
is...

The flight attendant hands out small pieces of paper like they were her own children. Penny and Tom each take one.

PENNY  
(reading paper)  
So, we can exchange these little vouchers for pizza. How generous.

She and Tom stop simultaneously. There's a line at the pizza stall that has more people in it than the stall has pizzas.

PENNY  
They said it would take three hours to scrape the ostrich from the engine, but that's a four-hour queue.

TOM  
Somewhere, there has to be an ice cream stand, I know it...

PENNY  
Yay! Trappings of civilization!  
But aren't these only good for pizza?

TOM  
I have some of that money stuff, we'll try to use that instead.

INT. DEPARTURES HALL -- DAY

Mikey enters with what he thinks is nonchalance, hand (and gun) in pocket. He looks up at a monitor, moving his lips as he reads. He grins a magnificent set of yellow teeth, but stops rapidly upon spotting Adams scanning around.

An elevator arrives. Mikey steps in as people step out.

INT. ARRIVALS HALL -- DAY

Penny and Tom wander along a deserted walkway with a wall on one side and a handrail guarding the drop to the departures hall on the other.

PENNY

So where's this ice cream stall you promised? I could have been two hundred and thirty-first in the pizza queue by now.

An elevator door opens. Out steps Mikey.

TOM

If only I'd studied maps of every airport in America, just in case I --

Mikey, looking especially mean, barges past Tom.

PENNY

Hey! Primitive man!

TOM

No! Don't --

Mikey stops and turns.

MIKEY

You got somethin' to say?

PENNY

No, but you have. Apologize to Tom here, you nearly knocked him over.

Mikey sneers.

TOM

I accept your apology. Now let's --

PENNY

(ignoring Tom)

Come on, surely you can grunt "Sorry"?



MIKEY

No way, you dumb ass --

He turns to leave.

PENNY

Too many syllables for you?

Mikey snaps. He pulls his gun and points it at Penny.

MIKEY

I ain't apologizin'!

Penny instinctively hugs her briefcase.

MIKEY

Now what have you got there?

Penny, virtually paralyzed, manages to shake her head.

MIKEY

Must be somethin' important... Money?

Penny shakes her head again, making whimpering noises.

TOM

Give him the case, Penny, before --

Mikey snatches the briefcase by the handle. It opens with a loud BANG and sprays orange dye all over him.

A huge plume of blue smoke billows out. Papers, books, pens, lipsticks, brushes and other collectibles spill everywhere.

Mikey SHOOTs once, blindly. He drops the briefcase, covering his eyes and moaning as he staggers into the handrail.

He loses his balance, topples over and falls to the departures hall, landing with a satisfying THUD.

INT. DEPARTURES HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

Mikey's body lies at Adams' feet. He could be dead.

Adams looks up. Penny stares horrified over the rail.

ADAMS

(holsters gun)

Stop! Police!

INT. ARRIVALS HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Penny turns around, eyes pleading with fear and dread.

PENNY

Oh my god! I killed him!

She looks back through the thinning smoke and sees Adams running to an escalator. Immediately, she drops to her knees and searches about the floor, frantically.

PENNY

Help me! Quickly, it's --

She stands up, clutching a metal flask in triumph.

PENNY

Sorry, Tom, but I'm going to have to go. Good luck finding an ice cream.

TOM

No, wait! I don't think he --

She dashes off. Tom glances upwards with a "why me?" expression, only to spot a CCTV camera.

Resignedly, he darts after her.

INT. AIRPORT FOYER -- MOMENTS LATER

People stand at a barrier waiting to greet passengers emerging through a doorway. Some hold hand-made name signs.

Penny and Tom, skidding as they turn to avoid the barrier, race for the exit to the outside world.

EXT. AIRPORT FOYER -- MOMENTS LATER

A line of sleek, black limos waits next to a line of garish hotel shuttles. Two uniformed DRIVERS smoke and chat.

TOM

Hey! Who you waiting for?

DRIVER

(looking at watch)  
Blumberg and Kowalski, why?

PENNY

That's us!

They run to his limo.

DRIVER

But they told me two guys!

PENNY

I'm on hormones.

The limo's doors are locked.

DRIVER  
(getting into vehicle)  
So -- hey, where are your bags?

TOM  
Mix up, they were sent to China.  
Why won't this door open?

PENNY  
Our hand luggage went there, too.

Still unconvinced, the driver releases the central locking. Penny and Tom clamber in together.

INT. AIRPORT FOYER -- MOMENTS LATER

Adams limps across to the exit, out of breath and nursing a stitch in his side. He arrives just in time to watch the limo pull away, with Penny and Tom in the rear seats.

An equally unfit uniformed cop joins him moments later.

ADAMS  
Damn! I really wanted to shake that woman's hand.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

A white van moves with the same disregard for the speed limit as the rest of the traffic. It flaunts a small satellite dish on its roof and the logo for "CHANNEL 24" on its side.

INT. VAN -- DAY

TV reporter PHIL PRESTON drives. His fifty-year-old face and forty-nine-year-old hair boast a standard of personal grooming completely unknown to the rest of him.

His passenger, young cameraman RAPHAEL NOVAK, cleans a lens tenderly.

A cellular PHONE rings. Raph somehow finds it in the pile of old fast food cups and cartons behind him, and answers.

RAPH  
(listens)  
Uh, OK, yeah, maybe 20 minutes?  
(nods)  
OK.  
(he offs the phone)  
We got to go to the airport.

RAPH (CONT'D)

Some woman just took down an escaped killer then ran off.

PRESTON

We're going no place but the office. My contract clearly states: human interest stories only.

RAPH

It states no such thing!

PRESTON

Well it damned well ought to.

He checks the mirror.

RAPH

What is it with you, Phil? Don't you have no ambition no more? I'm tired of Pet Bears With Toothache, and Lives Ruined By Birthday Cards. I wanna do something that matters!

PRESTON

The bears mattered -- that piece won me an award.

RAPH

Yeah -- for services to veterinary dentistry... Make a left here.

Preston turns the wheel and they exit the highway.

PRESTON

You figure this time there's a story?

RAPH

Well why did Mystery Woman split? Is she wanted? She having an affair? Maybe she's a celebrity?

PRESTON

(laughing)

OK, Raph, tell you what: if there's celebrity involvement here, we'll follow it up. Agreed?

RAPH

You serious? Hell, sure it's agreed!

PRESTON

And if there isn't, the burgers are on you for all of next week.

INT. DEPARTURES HALL -- DAY

Preston interviews Adams, while some distance away Raph seeks incredible camera angles.

PRESTON

Blue smoke and orange dye? Damn, I wish they'd let us colorize closed circuit tapes. What about her stuff, is any of that stained?

(waves an arm)

Hey, Raph!

ADAMS

Sorry, turns out she was English -- I had to bag it up, send it to DC.

PRESTON

DC? Washington, DC? Haven't to every corrupt, scheming, lying, manipulative soul-sucking crook in the country?

ADAMS

Yeah, that DC.

Raph saunters over to them, looking skyward.

RAPH

Light's good, you want to do it here?

PRESTON

Here's fine, maybe with a long shot for when I say the guy fell.

(to Adams)

OK, I'll make my report now; Raph can edit in the fun bits on the way back to Hartford. Can I borrow your jacket?

ADAMS

My jacket? Why do you want my jacket?

Preston removes his own jacket and drops it on the floor.

PRESTON

You've never wondered how TV news people always have on a fresh outfit every time you see them?

Adams removes his jacket. Preston puts it on, admires the lousy fit, then composes himself for Raph's waiting camera.

PRESTON

(professionally)

The time: one fifteen p.m. Recaptured triple murderer Mikey Zale has overcome his police guard, brutally wounding an officer in the process. It looks like he's made another getaway. Then, this happens.

(gestures with hand)

Cut to footage.

(clears throat)

Thanks to the quick thinking of a female passenger, Zale is blinded by orange dye and thick, blue smoke. Dazed and confused, he plummets from...

(same hand gesture)

Long shot.

(resumes)

...this balcony to land in a crumpled heap, a cop-killer in our midst. So who is this mystery woman, who ran off after she'd done the deed? Police have identified her as English national Penelope Rose, and they really want to find her. And, with a reward of two thousand dollars already offered by the State, somehow I don't think it's going to take them very long. This is Phil Preston for Channel 24 News.

RAPH

Perfect.

PRESTON

(looks at watch)

Fine, so, if you do the long shot now we'll just about make the early evening news.

EXT. DOWNTOWN -- DAY

The street teems with Dilberts heading home from the office.

Tom helps Penny to her feet as their limo pulls away; for people who have been unceremoniously dragged from a vehicle and thrown to the sidewalk, they're in good shape.

TOM

How much do they pay those guys? Time was when forty dollars seventeen cents was a decent bribe!

PENNY

Still, at least he didn't take us to a police station.

They walk in the direction the limo went.

TOM

Yeah, well, maybe we should visit one anyway.

(slaps his face)

Whoa! How did that reality virus beat my immune system?

PENNY

Tom, I

(whispered)

I killed someone.

(hurriedly)

Now it was an accident and he was rather beastly, but I still did wrong and so I shall turn myself in -- it's just I really, really must do something in Washington first.

TOM

Well, I don't know where we are, but sure as hell it's not Washington: no-one has tried to rob me yet.

PENNY

Can I try? Only, I lost my money and everything with my briefcase.

(she stops)

My passport! It has my photo in it! They'll know what I don't look like!

TOM

(taking her arm)

Hey, calm down... Although I left my carry-on bag behind like every other sane person, I do have that trusty all-American fall-back, the credit card.

With a flourish that would have worked better if his chinos weren't so tight, he produces a wallet from a front pocket.

His proud grin freezes as he glances first at the wallet, then down at the pocket.

PENNY

I realize that as a British citizen I'm in no way qualified to make this remark, but isn't that a bullet hole?

Tom puts a hand in the pocket and pokes a finger through.  
Slowly, he opens his wallet, fearing the worst.  
It is the worst: there's a bullet lodged in it.

TOM

Oh, for -- ! Thirty-six credit cards,  
and he took them all out in one shot!  
What kind of disturbed individual --

PENNY

I don't think he was specifically  
aiming for your credit cards...

TOM

Damn damn, damn and damn!  
(walking dejectedly)  
Well we can't do much on forty dollars  
seventeen cents. Let's find a bank,  
I can have my mom wire me something.

PENNY

Yay! Then we can check into a hotel,  
organize transport to Washington and  
why are you looking at me like that?

TOM

Uh, it's just... I want to help  
you, I really do, you're so --  
(sighs)  
It's just harboring a fugitive could  
land me in jail with guys who have  
tattooed tongues. Why am I risking  
that?

PENNY

Because I'm a maiden in distress?

She smiles sweetly.

TOM

Penny, what's in the flask?

Penny stops walking and immediately hides it behind her back.  
Ha! He'll never find it there!

TOM

Come on, you hug your briefcase like  
a baby the whole time, but when it  
falls open you only want the flask.  
Not your passport, your money, your  
"I've Been to Boston" crystal effect  
paperweight, no, just the flask.



TOM (CONT'D)

Now why is it so damned important?

PENNY

I can't tell you.

TOM

Yes, you can. You can say, "Here's why it's important, Tom," then --

PENNY

No, no I can't -- you could be anybody. Well, not Joan of Arc, obviously, she's dead, but --

TOM

Then maybe I'll just take my forty dollars seventeen someplace else. Sell that suit to a thrift store if you want some cash of your own. Or hey, get this! Maybe you could actually trust me?

PENNY

(distraught)

No, it's not like that, I --

Tom turns to leave.

PENNY

Sperm! It's sperm!

Every single person in the street stops and stares at her.

PENNY

(inspired)

-- whale serum. With this, sperm whales need never suffer from bad flipper ever again!

Every single person in the street groans disappointedly and continues about their business.

Penny and Tom start off walking again, but they're going to have to speak in low voices now. Hey, that means they'll need to keep real close to one another..!

TOM

(low)

Sperm? Uh, human sperm?

PENNY

(low)

Of course human sperm!

PENNY (CONT'D)

What sort of person do you think I am?

TOM

(low)

It could have been racehorse sperm, or prize bull sperm. But if it's...

(he frowns)

Uh, whose sperm is it, exactly?

PENNY

(low)

I really, really do not want to tell you...

TOM

(breaks from Penny)

OK, if you're going to be --

PENNY

No! I -- It's the president's.

Every single person in the street stops and stares at her.

PENNY

What is it with you people?

TOM

The -- the president's?

He drags her into an alley off the main street. The passers by continue passing by again.

EXT. ALLEY -- CONTINUOUS

TOM

(in disbelief)

What, you mean the president's? The president of the United States, that president's?

PENNY

In liquid nitrogen. Frozen.

TOM

But how can it be the... Whoa! You mean -- so what they say about Brad Hawks is really true?!

PENNY

Of course it's true! You think I'm trying to impress you by lying?

She turns and leaves the alley.

TOM  
But how did you -- wait!

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

The Channel 24 van sits gridlocked. The way other drivers are out of their vehicles, it's been so for some time.

INT. BACK OF VAN -- DAY

There's a ton of equipment in here, all of which Raph regards as his own, personal property. He consults a monitor.

PRESTON (O.S.)  
They got it OK?

RAPH  
They said it'll be item two.

PRESTON (O.S.)  
Two, huh? My highest for years.  
(he snorts, bitter)  
Yeah, well, tomorrow it's back to  
People Who Can't Sleep Because Their  
Neighbors Look Like Vikings.

Raph rewinds and replays the CCTV tape. It's like he hasn't heard Preston.

PRESTON (O.S.)  
Raph, you ok?

RAPH  
(freezing a frame)  
Uh, yeah -- come take a look at this.

PRESTON (O.S.)  
But I'm driving.

RAPH  
Phil, you're sitting at the wheel  
while the cops try to clear the  
highway of ten thousand three hundred  
sixty eight broken soda bottles from  
an upturned truck. Now get in here!

Preston clammers NOISILY through the fast food carton barricade to join Raph at the back.

PRESTON  
Soda truck, huh? I was kinda  
wondering what item one was.

RAPH  
 (pointing at the screen)  
 This is the girl. And this...  
 (winds tape on a bit)  
 This is Tom Newton.

PRESTON  
 That's Tom Newton?  
 (nods)  
 So he's a world-famous skydiver?  
 Chess player? Science fiction author?  
 Nobel Prize winner? Monster truck  
 racer? 1940s crooner? Danish prince?

RAPH  
 (mildly impatient)  
 You know, Tom Newton! The guy who  
 sold his Internet soap opera business  
 for three hundred million last month?

PRESTON  
 (peering closer)  
 Him? So why's he hanging with a  
 vigilante math professor?

RAPH  
 You're the investigative reporter --  
 investigate!

PRESTON  
 (frowning at monitor)  
 Hey, just -- that can't be right...

He leans over Raph's shoulder and shunts a couple of frames.  
 His frown deepens as he steps back.

PRESTON  
 Did you broadcast any of this?

RAPH  
 No, course not, he wasn't no part of  
 the story.

PRESTON  
 (animated)  
 Good boy -- this is amazing!  
 (off his look)  
 This is! He is!  
 (points at monitor)  
 Last time I saw the top of that head  
 was ten years ago, when it belonged  
 to a slime-ball called Tom Meredith.

RAPH  
 So we're talking scalp donors here?  
 (peering at monitor)  
 No, that's Tom Newton, I saw him on  
 CNN -- I can picture it right now.

PRESTON  
 Then he's changed his name. This  
 angle is the exact same one I had in  
 the press gallery.

An AUTOMOBILE HORN sounds outside.

PRESTON  
 (steps back)  
 I'm telling you, Raph, that's Tom  
 Meredith. Boy, I loathe that guy!

RAPH  
 Does he count as a celebrity?

Preston clammers over the cartons back to the driver's seat.

PRESTON (O.S.)  
 The woman he molested is now a  
 senator, so I guess he kinda does.

Raph puffs his cheeks. It looks like Children Who Write  
 Poems For Bananas will be on hold for a while.

EXT. DOWNTOWN -- DAY

Tom and Penny are still walking, and it's still fairly busy.

TOM  
 Well hot damn, that's the last time  
 I ever vote for any candidate under  
 sixty years of age.  
 (shakes head ruefully)  
 So, uh, pardon my indelicacy, but  
 how exactly did you get to be the  
 (low)  
 the Keeper of the Sperm?

PENNY  
 (avoiding eye contact)  
 Oh it, er, just came my way.

TOM  
 Yeah, right...  
 (low)  
 Say, you're not a British spy, are  
 you? Do you have one of those watches  
 that can microwave puppies?

PENNY

If I did, surely I'd have used it on you by now?

TOM

(low)

So you're expecting some kind of payment, then? You plan to --

PENNY

No, it's not like that, we're friends --

(low)

Libby, Brad and I.

(normal)

I know them from Oxford, they're just normal people like you and -- well, like me anyway.

TOM

(aghast)

Whoa! Libby? You call

(low)

You call Olivia Hawks "Libby"? Olivia Hawks? The first --

PENNY

(low)

Yes, I call her Libby, OK? Look, inside this flask is a sealed tank. Inside the tank is liquid nitrogen, floating in which is a cane containing the you-know-what. The nitrogen is good for seven days, today being day five. Now can't we just find a phone so you can call your

(slight stammer)

mmmother?

TOM

(low)

So what am I missing here? Why don't we simply call your friend, the Commander-in-Chief, and ask for Air Force One?

PENNY

(low)

No, no -- people might find out what I have here! I can't let anyone even suspect. No-one. Not the air force, the secret service, the FBI, not anybody. It's too important.

TOM  
(nodding)  
You left out the "because" part at  
the end there...

Penny stops and looks around, exasperated. She spots a recessed doorway and drags Tom to it by the hand.

EXT. DOORWAY -- CONTINUOUS

PENNY  
(very nervous)  
OK, you have to promise. You have  
to promise that you won't tell anyone  
what I'm about to say to you.

TOM  
OK, sure, why not? I promise.

PENNY  
And none of that talking to rocks in  
earshot of other people, either.

TOM  
It's OK, I can keep a secret -- just  
tell me what this is all about.

Penny looks him in the eye a moment. OK, she's satisfied.

PENNY  
Article Two of the Constitution of  
the United States requires that all  
presidents be natural born U.S.  
citizens, correct?

TOM  
Correct. Natural born on U.S. soil  
or to U.S. parents. Or they could  
be older than the constitution, that  
also works.

Penny glances around quickly. She doesn't want anyone to overhear, lip-read or mind-read what she's going to say.

PENNY  
So the fact that a DNA test of this  
sperm would prove that the president  
is not a natural born U.S. citizen  
might just be a problem?

TOM  
A problem?  
(horrified)  
A problem?

TOM (CONT'D)

Hell fire -- it would mean a full-blown constitutional crisis!

PENNY

So perhaps now that you understand, you'll stop harping on and do something to help me!

(looking across street)

Thank god, a pub!

(off his look)

Pubs equals pay phones!

She sets off.

EXT. DOWNTOWN -- MOMENTS LATER

Tom catches up to Penny just as she's about to cross the road, hauling her back by her collar.

PENNY

Yikes!

TOM

You want to be arrested for jaywalking? Cross over there!

They head for a nearby WALK/DON'T WALK signal.

PENNY

And as the judge sentences me to life for murder, I'm sure I'll take comfort in the knowledge that you've spared me an extra two days.

It's WALK. They cross.

TOM

Now I've been thinking about that... Call me naive, but why did the cop at the airport holster his gun?

PENNY

He didn't want to shoot out a window and depressurize the whole building?

EXT. BAR -- CONTINUOUS

They pause at the door.

TOM

I'm beginning to wonder if maybe you aren't actually wanted by the police at all. Think about it --



Tom pushes the door open.

INT. BAR -- DAY

A TV plays Preston's report as Tom and Penny stroll in.

PRESTON (O.S.)  
A cop-killer in our midst.

INT. TV SCREEN -- DAY

An unflattering CCTV image of Penny.

PRESTON (O.S.)  
So who is this mystery woman, who  
ran off after she'd done the deed?  
Police have identified her as English  
national Penelope Rose, and they  
really want to find her.

The image cuts to Preston himself, with the Channel 24 logo  
watermarked in one corner of the screen.

PRESTON (O.S.)  
And, with a reward of two thousand  
dollars already offered by the State,  
somehow I don't think it's going to  
take them very long. This is Phil  
Preston for Channel 24 News.

INT. BAR -- DAY

Penny and Tom have faces frozen in horror. In perfect  
synchronization, they turn and walk slowly out.

EXT. BAR -- DAY

The moment the door closes, Tom and Penny glance at each  
other then bolt like the place was on fire.

EXT. RESTAURANT -- DAY

Tom and Penny arrive panting, their mad panic having sustained  
their flight for several hundred yards.

TOM  
OK, so here's what we do.  
(pants)  
I go into this restaurant, and I ask  
to use their phone.  
(pants)  
You stay out here pretending to read  
the menu.

TOM (CONT'D)

(pants)

I fix up the wire transfer, then we  
cab to the bank for the cash.

(pants)

Then we make another plan.

PENNY

(leans against a wall)

I don't suppose we ran all the way  
to Washington, did we?

INT. OVAL OFFICE -- DAY

FBI chief WILLIAM DYSON enters, tall, imposing and deadly serious. He wears his dark suit like it was a uniform and carries a large brown envelope.

BRADLEY HAWKS stares pensively out of the window. The light catches him very favorably, his arms folded like he's modeling for a portrait called "Savior of the Free World".

His wife, OLIVIA HAWKS, glances back as she walks to Dyson. She's around Brad's age (late thirties) and wears a smart, cream trouser suit. What's this? She has on rimless glasses.

DYSON

I'm sorry. Didn't realize it was a  
husband and wife moment.

OLIVIA

(finger to lips)

Let's not disturb Brad just now --  
we can talk outside.

INT. WHITE HOUSE CORRIDOR -- DAY

Olivia closes the door behind her.

DYSON

(nodding at door)

He OK?

OLIVIA

He has a lot on his mind... So what  
was this about, Mr Dyson?

DYSON

Incident in Connecticut earlier today.  
An Englishwoman tipped an escaped  
prisoner over a balcony.

OLIVIA

Is the prisoner alright?

DYSON

Head like an anvil -- airport floor  
needs repair, though.

(he laughs. Hurr Hurr)

But the heroine ran off. Local law  
enforcement found this.

He digs in the envelope, retrieving a pink, plastic-coated  
card which he hands to Olivia. There's a photo of Penny on  
it and the words "WHITE HOUSE: CLASS A SECURITY PASS".

DYSON

It's a class A security pass.

OLIVIA

So that's what those words mean.

DYSON

Clearly a forgery -- only the  
president can issue one of those.  
But I guess you know that.

(he laughs. Hurr Hurr)

You recognize her?

OLIVIA

(visibly pales)

It's Penny Rose, isn't it?

DYSON

Passport confirms it: Penelope Rose --  
whose only brother died trying to  
save Brad's life.

(takes back the pass)

Who knows how fifteen years of  
bitterness have twisted her mind?  
What monstrous plans she's hatched  
to take her bloody revenge?

OLIVIA

Now listen, Bill, you must leave her  
be. This is purely personal, it --  
(flustered)

it has nothing to do with presidential  
security, and neither have you. I  
can't and won't ask to have her  
arrested. Do you understand?

DYSON

Completely, ma'am.

OLIVIA

(unconvinced)

No, I mean really understand?

DYSON  
Of course. Observation only.

OLIVIA  
No, nothing only. I'm speaking to you as an ordinary citizen. Spending public money on private matters is illegal. She's done nothing wrong, so no arrest, no observation.

DYSON  
No arrest, no observation, no anything. Understood.

OLIVIA  
Good. Yes. I'll tell Brad.

She opens the door.

INT. OVAL OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Olivia closes the door. Brad looks over to her.

BRAD  
You OK, dear?  
(frowns)  
Something Dyson said?

OLIVIA  
(goes to him)  
Penny's met with some bad luck. I think she'll be alright -- I made it clear he's to leave her alone.

Brad puts his arm round her waist, supportively.

INT. WHITE HOUSE CORRIDOR -- SAME

Dyson replaces the documents in the envelope as his aide CALHOUN approaches. This guy is young, ambitious and so sneaky-looking that he may as well have the words "I am a shifty person" stamped on his forehead.

CALHOUN  
What did she say, sir?

DYSON  
She made it clear, we arrest Rose. Here,  
(gives him envelope)  
this goes to the British Embassy. I'll be in my office.

INT. CLAUDETTE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Senator CLAUDETTE GRANT taps at her computer, her frilly blouse exploding from a shocking-pink designer suit. A testament to the skills of legions of beauty therapists, she's half-way through smoking a small cigar.

Her vast desk supports only the computer, a phone, ashtray and brass "SENATOR CLAUDETTE GRANT" name-plate.

Calhoun enters from her right, carrying Dyson's envelope.

CLAUDETTE  
(not glancing up)  
What is it, Calhoun? Can't you see  
I'm reading my email?

CALHOUN  
And everyone else's.

She looks at him blankly. He's making some kind of point?

CALHOUN  
(waving envelope)  
I've found something that could help  
you in your quest to become president.

CLAUDETTE  
And therefore help you in your quest  
to become Director of the FBI...

CALHOUN  
(unperturbed)  
We don't have it for long, it has to  
go to the British Embassy.

He tips the envelope out to form a neat pile on Claudette's desk. She's horrified -- is this guy a slob or what?!

CLAUDETTE  
If that orange dye is still wet then  
I'm going to have to kill your  
firstborn -- supposing you ever get  
one...

CALHOUN  
It's dry, it's dry!  
(under breath)  
Jeez, this desk feng shui really  
bites.

CLAUDETTE  
(spreads the pile out)  
So what do we have here?

CALHOUN

The effects of an Englishwoman who captured a murderer in Connecticut earlier today, then ran.

CLAUDETTE

Phone, credit cards -- they have credit cards in England? -- papers, eww, what is that? Some kind of math, ick, take it away!

She picks up a sheet of paper like it was a soiled diaper and gives it to Calhoun.

CLAUDETTE

OK, so, passport -- ah, now we're getting somewhere, White House pass. Oh, that's nice -- class A!  
(draws on her cigar)  
So our dear president invited her?

CALHOUN

That's what I think, yes.

CLAUDETTE

And what does Dyson think?

CALHOUN

He thinks that this Penelope Rose is out to murder Brad on account of how Brad got her brother killed.

CLAUDETTE

Well, it would be nice if she could pull it off, but I guess that's too much to hope for.  
(sighs)  
How did Brad react to the suggestion?

CALHOUN

I didn't see, but Olivia was uncharacteristically flustered.

CLAUDETTE

Flustered? Olivia Hawks, flustered?  
(leans forward)  
OK. Time to find out what's going on here. Dig up what you can on limey girl, I'll contact Mr Knight.

CALHOUN

Mr Knight? Mr "cold-blooded assassin" Knight? The man's a psychopath!

CLAUDETTE

True, but his surveillance rates are very competitive.

(takes Penny's phone)

Besides, if Dyson really thinks this woman aims to kill Brad, why disappoint him?

She listens for a dial tone, gives Calhoun a "You got a problem?" look, then punches in a number.

INT. BANK -- EVENING

A large, digital clock on the wall clicks over from "6:59:59 HAVE A NICE DAY" to "7:00:00 HAVE A NICE EVENING".

Tom strides towards the exit, thumbs in pockets and shoulders hunched, with Penny falling in step beside him. The place is pretty well empty, as are Tom and Penny's coffers.

PENNY

You don't look like a man whose pockets are bulging with dollars.

TOM

They wanted ID. Why don't shot dead credit cards count as ID?

They reach the door and walk out onto the street.

EXT. BANK -- CONTINUOUS

The pair stop outside in the light from the bank's windows.

PENNY

So we're still broke?

TOM

No, we're not broke.

(laughs)

That doesn't happen until we've bought something to eat.

PENNY

We passed a place earlier that looked like it did cheap food. I use the word "food" only loosely, of course, but the "cheap" bit is accurate.

TOM

Hooch's Bar, I saw that, too. Well OK! Let's go fill ourselves on brats and try figure a way out of this.

PENNY  
Brats? Unruly children?

TOM  
My, you really are English... Brats  
are Bratwurst.  
(off her blank look)  
German sausage.

PENNY  
I think I'd have preferred for it to  
be the unruly children...

INT. HOOCH'S BAR -- EVENING

It's a rough-looking joint, but not all the women are hookers,  
and hey, beggars can't be choosers. Penny and Tom perch on  
stools eating stuff that only qualifies as food under a legal  
technicality. Tom savors every mouthful.

A card game at one of the tables in the back busies JAKE,  
HOTSHOT and SVENGALI.

PENNY  
(looks around)  
So this is the real America?

TOM  
No-one's young, restless, bold or  
beautiful, so I guess it must be.

PENNY  
I'd take that as an insult if I didn't  
suspect I was missing something...

TOM  
You know -- the soaps.  
(amazed)  
You don't get The Young and the  
Restless in England?

PENNY  
Coronation Street?

Start "Bold and the Beautiful" zoomed face conversation mode.

TOM  
The Bold and the Beautiful?

PENNY  
Eastenders?

End "Bold and the Beautiful" zoomed face conversation mode.



TOM

OK, so talking about soaps won't help me get to know you better.  
Hmm.

(frowns)

I need a guiding light...

He bites into his brat with gusto.

TOM

Mm-mmm! So what's your opinion of fine, American cuisine?

PENNY

This brown stuff is either meat or the inside of a floppy disk, right?

TOM

Floppy disk? Mind if I take a byte?  
(he laughs)

Penny watches the card players.

PENNY

Uh, oh, yes, of course.

She offers him her sandwich, still observing the card game.

TOM

That was 'byte' with a 'y'.

Penny doesn't react.

TOM

Page one of every jokes-about-computers book ever printed?

PENNY

(snaps out of it)

Oh, uh, sorry, I was just... What game are those men playing?

TOM

(glancing over)

Looks like -- whoa! High Card Pool, AKA Montana Red Dog. That's one hell of a dangerous game.

(looks at his brat)

Maybe not as dangerous as eating this, of course...

He shrugs and takes another bite.

PENNY  
They don't shuffle the pack...  
(turns to Tom)  
Tom, what are the rules to High Card  
Pool, AKA Montana Red Dog?

INT. HOOCH'S BAR -- SAME

Down at the table, Jake has noticed Penny watching them.

JAKE  
Hey, that chick at the bar, looking  
our way -- don't she seem familiar  
to you?

HOTSHOT  
If that kind of chick were familiar  
to me, would I be playing Red Dog  
with losers like you.

SVENGALI  
Ain't, ain't she off'a the TV?

JAKE  
Hey, yeah! She was on the news,  
she's up two thousand for busting a  
murderer!

HOTSHOT  
I remember. Isn't she English?

JAKE  
But why's she looking over here?

HOTSHOT  
Maybe that two grand is burning a  
hole in her pretty little pockets?

SVENGALI  
I, I dunno, Hotshot. If she can  
bust a murderer, she can, she can  
bust us.

JAKE  
No, Svengali, we do it legit! We  
invite her to the game, let her get  
all settled, then win the two grand  
off her all fair and legal.

SVENGALI  
But what, but what if she's good?  
If she wins? We, we don't know her.

HOTSHOT

Oh, you think, like, she's a world-famous professor of statistics?

(waves to Penny)

Excuse me, lady?

EXT. HOOCH'S BAR -- NIGHT

Tom and Penny exit the bar hurriedly onto a street which is full of young people headed for a good time and late-working office types headed for a coronary.

TOM

(making the gesture)

Taxi!

(to Penny)

How much did you win?

PENNY

Let's see, there was seven fifty-six in the pot, which I matched; I had another eight-two over, so that's one thousand, five hundred and ninety-four dollars.

A taxi arrives.

PENNY

I suppose you want back the twenty I borrowed for my stake?

INT. CALHOUN'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

The sun streams gleefully through newly-opened drapes, awakening Calhoun from that deep, restful sleep enjoyed by all those who lack a conscience.

CALHOUN

(blinded)

What the blue cheese -- ?

He sits up, shielding his eyes with his hand to see who's tormenting him. What neat, monogrammed, silk pajamas!

A shadowy figure, backlit by the sun so Calhoun can't make out his face, stands at the end of the bed. It's MR KNIGHT.

MR KNIGHT

I start early, Mr Calhoun. I was told you had a package for me.

CALHOUN

Knight? Is that -- Uh, yeah, it's --

MR KNIGHT

It's in my hands, Mr Calhoun. Your safe is not Japanese.

CALHOUN

Japa -- Say what?

Mr Knight suddenly flings open the windows. He makes a "catch you later" gesture, then leaps out.

Still dazzled, Calhoun sits alone in his double bed.

He reaches over to his alarm clock. It's 4:48 a.m. Attached to the clock is a yellow, stick-on note: "IF THIS WERE A BOMB, YOU'D BE DEAD NOW."

INT. BRIEFING ROOM -- MORNING

Dyson stands behind a desk, in front of a screen.

Special Agents POWELL and FAIRBANKS are seated before him. Both in their late twenties and regulation dark suits, at first glance they could be identical twins except Powell is a guy and Fairbanks is a girl.

A clock on the wall clicks over to 07:00.

DYSON

Sorry for the late start, Special Agents Powell and Fairbanks.  
(nods to each in turn)  
The Brits don't keep records as efficiently as us.

He laughs. Hurr Hurr. Powell and Fairbanks exchange a knowing look of agreement: no-one could possibly keep records as efficiently as the FBI!

Dyson presses a button on the desk. The lights dim, and a slide projects onto the screen. It's a younger Penny.

DYSON

Penelope Rose. Distinguished professor of statistics, Oxford, England. Would-be assassin.

He presses the button again. The slide features a bespectacled young man, taken from an old Polaroid.

DYSON

Ashley Rose. Brilliant postgraduate, elder brother of Penelope.

The button. This time the projector displays a newspaper, the "OXFORD EVENING MISSIVE". The headline reads "BRILLIANT POSTGRADUATE DIES TRYING TO SAVE LIFE OF EXCHANGE STUDENT IN TRAGIC BOATING ACCIDENT". A picture of Ashley is below.

A separate, unrelated headline reads "SPLIT INFINITIVES COST INDUSTRY MILLIONS -- OFFICIAL".

DYSON

The exchange student: Bradley Hawks.  
At the time, boyfriend, later to be  
husband, of Olivia Howard.

Powell and Fairbanks are both astounded and appalled.

FAIRBANKS

(raising hand)  
Sir: you mean that to revenge her  
brother, Penelope Rose intends to  
assassinate the, the...

The words are too awful to say.

DYSON

Very likely.  
(the button)  
Five years ago, Oxford, England: the  
president's brother Larry dies in a  
car crash.

The screen now shows a mangled jeep on the wrong side of the road. So that would be the right side, then.

DYSON

Oxfordshire constabulary take in  
Rose for questioning, but release  
her -- insufficient evidence.  
(the button)  
It's her second brush with the law.

A video still of student Penny at a demo occupies the screen.

DYSON

Anti-government riots. Magistrates  
fine Rose for her involvement. Now --

The button brings up the unflattering CCTV image of Penny seen on the news the night before.

POWELL

Sir: what's that item in her hand?

The button flicks to a very grainy close-up of Penny's flask.

DYSON

Experts identify it as a thermodynamically insulated vessel. Such vessels are utilized for the transport of toxic nerve agents.

FAIRBANKS

Sir: isn't this a matter for the Secret Service?

DYSON

Not according to the president.

POWELL

Sir: and the military?

DYSON

Senator Grant chairs the Armed Services Committee. Said she'd prefer it if Rose succeeded.

The lights come up. Dyson looks his gravest.

DYSON

Lady and gentleman. The contents of that flask could ravage half the population. Penelope Rose must be stopped.

INT. PENNY'S HOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

Tom closes the door behind him with a THUD. He turns...

...and sees Penny wearing a hotel bathrobe, toweling her hair dry as she stands adjacent to her huge bed.

TOM

(averting eyes)

Whoa! You said to come in!

PENNY

(tosses back her hair)

I'm not indecent, am I?

TOM

That depends what you're planning on doing next...

PENNY

I'm sorry, but I can't get dressed until my knickers are dry.

TOM  
 (looks in surprise)  
 Your what? I know High Card Pool  
 can be stressful, but --

PENNY  
 I washed them, Tom!  
 (off his blank look)  
 It's just one of those silly woman  
 things, we call it "personal hygiene";  
 don't worry about it.  
 (tosses towel O.S.  
 into bathroom)  
 How did your calls go, anyway?

Tom sits on the bed, but gazes politely away.

TOM  
 Well, I've fixed us up a car.

PENNY  
 (hopefully)  
 A fast one?

TOM  
 No, a regular, same-as-every-other-  
 car-on-the-road kind of car, one  
 that won't stand out. In blue.

PENNY  
 Don't you need to show a license to  
 hire a car?

She sneaks over to the bed without his seeing.

TOM  
 We're not "hiring", we're buying.  
 Well, my mother's buying.  
 (he notices Penny)  
 Don't do that!

PENNY  
 And I thought all Americans were  
 unembarrassable.  
 (smiles)  
 Wait -- your  
 (slight stammer)  
 mmmother is buying us the car? But  
 cars are expensive.

TOM  
 Uh, she doesn't mind -- she came  
 into some money recently.

PENNY

How did you explain why you wanted it? Did you mention the...

She nods towards the wall.

TOM

(looks)

The mini-bar?

PENNY

No, the sperm that I've put inside it, where it's nice and cool.

She gets off the bed and sashays over to the mini-bar.

TOM

(watching her sashay)

If I'd mentioned sperm to my mother, I'd still be on the phone...

PENNY

(raiding mini-bar)

Did you mention me?

TOM

I had to. She'd have figured there was someone soft and curvy involved sooner or later -- how else could I be in such a mess of trouble?

Penny takes a bite of what she's removed from the mini-bar, and pulls a puzzled expression. It looks like chocolate, it says chocolate on the label, but it tastes like wood chips.

PENNY

(shrugging)

So how far is it to Washington?

TOM

Only about three hundred miles.

PENNY

(horrified)

Only? Only three hundred miles? That's like London to Edinburgh! How can it be an "only"?

She sits beside him on the bed and passes him some chocolate. He shuffles up to make more room, even though there's plenty.

TOM

Oh! It isn't only three hundred. Forget I said it's only three hundred.



TOM (CONT'D)

It's nearer four hundred.

PENNY

Four hundred? Four? Hundred? Where did the other hundred come from? They suddenly moved Washington?

TOM

OK, let's try an analogy.  
(goes to the door)  
You stand over by the window.

Penny slinks to the window, a movement Tom wishes he didn't approve of quite so much. The bed is now between them.

PENNY

Here?

TOM

OK, so imagine I'm where we are now, and you're Washington, DC. Three hundred miles apart. Only, the bed is New York City.

INT. VAN -- DAY

Raph drives, while a recently-awoken Preston struggles to put on some socks. He's the man for whom the word "disheveled" was invented.

RAPH

So, I guess we try the airport first?

PRESTON

Damn, are these socks odd? Do they look like odd socks to you? -- Hey! Keep your eyes on the road!

RAPH

So what's our theory? Why is Newton hanging out with this English chick?

PRESTON

No theory, we keep an open mind.  
(yawns)  
Even if I do hate him to pieces.

RAPH

I figure she used some of that math stuff on his company's share price. Boosted it up, got it on a roll so everybody wants a piece.

RAPH (CONT'D)

When he sells, his three million is suddenly three hundred million.  
Bingo!

PRESTON

Well, you may not have an open mind,  
but at least it isn't an empty one...

INT. BUSINESS CLASS -- DAY

Powell and Fairbanks occupy the same seats Tom and Penny had yesterday. The flight attendant arrives with a cart.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Coffee? Tea? ... Cyanide pills?

FAIRBANKS

Coffee.

POWELL

Decaffeinated.

FAIRBANKS

Black.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

A cup each? Or are you the kind of Siamese twins that share a stomach?

She pours two cups.

FAIRBANKS

Excuse me, ma'am, but did you see this woman on a flight yesterday?

She holds up a photo. It's the one of young Penny.

The flight attendant holds out a tray with the cups on, and studies the photo. The two FBI agents take their cups and sip their coffee in unison.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Yes, she was sitting right here. Like many people, she said "thank you" when I brought her a drink.

POWELL

(unembarrassed)

Did she have with her a briefcase?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Did she ever! She even carried it with her to the john.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

The last time I saw such devotion to hand luggage, the guy had a sawed-off shotgun inside and wanted us to take him to Topeka.

Powell and Fairbanks give each other a knowing look.

EXT. AIRPORT -- DAY

Preston is showing a printed CCTV image of Penny to the limo driver who took her and Tom downtown.

DRIVER

That's him! That is him.

(nodding)

That's the hormone junkie.

PRESTON

Where did you take, uh, him?

DRIVER

Twelfth and Main. Then despatch said the real Blumberg and Kowalski were still here.

PRESTON

Twelfth and Main? Great -- thanks!

(shouts to O.S. Raph)

OK, back in the van!

INT. OVAL OFFICE -- DAY

A vexed Dyson stands in the middle of the room while Brad at the window and Olivia on the desk take turns to berate him.

BRAD

I completely agree with my wife. We can not give in to terrorists.

DYSON

Then should I inform the media?

OLIVIA

Just what do you know about this lone crazy? Who is he? Where's he from? What's he look like?

DYSON

I -- I.

(shoulders droop)

Can't tell you anything concrete.

BRAD

So what would you say to the media?

OLIVIA

(kindly)

Bill, I know you're concerned. But we need to know more before we can panic all of DC and half of wherever people think he'll strike instead.

DYSON

I'll work on it.

BRAD

Maybe you could find out exactly what's in his flask...

INT. PENNY'S HOTEL ROOM -- DAY

The flask sits next to a fully dressed Penny on the bed. She looks at the TV, pressing the remote control every second to iterate through channel after channel of USELESS PROGRAMS.

Tom's head pokes round the door.

TOM

Reception called: the car's here!

PENNY

(offs the TV)

And I was this close to finding a program between the commercials...

EXT. HOTEL -- DAY

A Ford Taurus painted the most screamingly noticeable shade of aquamarine possible sits expectantly in front of the hotel.

PENNY

Does it come with free sunglasses?

TOM

She told me blue! That's not blue, that's blue,  
(points to sky)

An OLD WOMAN in a blue dress rounds a corner.

TOM (CONT'D)

that's blue,  
(points to old woman)  
but that, that's... Hideous!

PENNY

It's good camouflage for if we ever  
need to hide in a swimming pool.

TOM

(resignedly)

Well if it gets us to Washington, I  
guess...

(dangles keys)

So who wants to drive?

PENNY

Me me me!

She snatches the keys from Tom and substitutes them with her  
flask.

She runs to the right-hand side of the car, opens the door,  
gets in and feels for the steering wheel. That's odd, her  
car at home has one... She looks to her left, yes, the  
passenger has a steering wheel, where's the driver's?

She gets out of the car, runs back to Tom, takes back her  
flask from his unmoved hand and replaces the keys.

PENNY

You you you!

They walk to the car, Tom giving her a consolation hug.

The old woman looks back from the hotel entrance. She makes  
a "catch you later" gesture that Tom and Penny don't see,  
then goes inside. Oh my word! It was Mr Knight in disguise!

INT. VAN -- DAY

Driving through the city, Preston is at the wheel drinking a  
soda through a straw -- it's from the airport pizza stall.  
He finishes it up with a GURGLE and tosses it into the pile.

RAPH

So why'd you give up newspaper work  
for TV? 'Cause it's more visual?  
'Cause people get to see you?

PRESTON

Because it's more superficial.  
(off his puzzled look)  
Son, I saw so many decent people  
eaten alive by scheming DC rats,  
hell, got so I was almost used to  
it. Then, something happened and I  
thought, that's it, I gotta get out.

RAPH

I -- Phil, I never realized. But what was it, made you leave?

PRESTON

A certain travesty of justice: Grant versus Meredith.

(shrugs)

Hey! Twelfth and Main!

INT. BOSTON AIRPORT -- DAY

Powell and Fairbanks march past souvenir shops and bars with Irish-sounding names. They approach two men in dark suits just like their own: MILHOUSE and O'CONNOR, fellow FBI agents.

MILHOUSE

Special Agents Fairbanks and Powell?

POWELL

Special Agents Milhouse and O'Connor?

MILHOUSE

M.I.T. experts have analyzed the suspect's psychological profile.

O'CONNOR

They suggest that an English female academic out to kill an occupant of the White House with toxic nerve agent in revenge for the death by drowning of her brother would attempt to do so in Washington, DC.

Powell and Fairbanks exchange an understanding glance.

O'CONNOR

(holds out an envelope)

Here are two business-class tickets back to Washington. Good luck.

INT. BUSINESS CLASS -- DAY

Exactly as before.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

What is this? Groundhog Day?

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

The bright blue Taurus is a real head-turner as it zips along at exactly fifty-five miles per hour.

INT. CAR -- DAY

Tom drives, as huge truck after huge truck trundles past.

TOM

So you'll be walking right up to the front door of the White House and knocking? Or do you have a plan where you don't get shot by marines?

PENNY

I'll let Libby and Brad know I'm stuck, they'll figure out something.

TOM

But you can't phone them -- even their private lines are screened. "Hi, this is the sperm delivery girl, special order for the president".

PENNY

No, you'll get your  
(slight stammer)  
mmmother to email them.  
President@whitehouse.gov.

TOM

Are you nuts? They don't read those -- they get tens of thousands a day! They have a scanning program to compose stock replies based on keyword matches. It's all automated.

A huge truck pulls along Penny's side of the car.

PENNY

Yes, and one of the keywords means "This is from Penny, please forward direct to the president."

TOM

(stunned)  
That's ... a level of competence I hadn't considered possible in the context of United States government.

The huge truck is taking an unusually long time to overtake.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The huge truck paces the car. A hand gripping an odd-shaped handgun reaches out.

PENNY (O.S.)  
Well it was my idea, actually, so  
don't be too impressed.

The truck's DEAFENING HORN sounds. Simultaneously, the roof  
of the car bends and flexes as something FIRES into it.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

TOM  
(swerving)  
What the -- ?

The huge truck slows down.

PENNY  
(looking back)  
Why did he do that? Is he a salesman  
for heart attack remedies?

TOM  
He's a trucker, who knows? Strange  
voices on his CB tell him to do things --

INT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

A HAND turns the dial on a curious device with weird aerials  
and a speaker and wires and stuff.

TOM (O.S.)  
(through speaker)  
-- and he has to obey.

Embedded in the roof of the Taurus is a transmitter.

The hand makes a "catch you later" gesture.

INT. HOOCH'S BAR -- DAY

At their usual table sit Jake, Hotshot and Svengali. Raph  
stands next to them, while Preston brings over a tray with  
three pitchers of some god-awful cloudy brew on it.

HOTSHOT  
(watching the pitchers)  
Of course, we realize now she had a  
powerful computer concealed someplace.

RAPH  
And how much did she, uh, rip you  
off by?



JAKE  
 (hurriedly)  
 Oh, next to nothing, we were onto  
 her pretty soon.

Preston places a pitcher in front of each of the three locals.  
 To Raph's disquiet, they eagerly quaff the contents.

RAPH  
 (still unsettled)  
 So is that, say, more than ten bucks?

JAKE  
 (wipes mouth on sleeve)  
 Uh, more than ten, yeah.

RAPH  
 More than twenty?

Jake looks to his partners, they're both nodding.

JAKE  
 More than twenty? Yes? Yes, I think  
 it was probably more than twenty.

PRESTON  
 More than fifteen hundred?

There is a ghastly silence.

JAKE  
 (uncomfortably)  
 Er, well, maybe fifteen hundred sounds  
 about right, huh guys?

SVENGALI  
 (nodding)  
 Fifteen hundred, 'bout, 'bout right.

RAPH  
 (hand on Jake's back)  
 OK, well thanks for your time fellas,  
 great helps. Enjoy your... that.

EXT. HOOCH'S BAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Preston closes the door.

RAPH  
 Did I imagine it, or were those guys  
 drinking piss?

PRESTON  
 No, piss is warm, that was cold.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

So, it's ten at night, you're from out of town, you've been on the run all day, you have fifteen hundred in cash. What do you do?

RAPH

(nods)

OK, let's check out the hotels...

EXT. DINER -- DAY

The bluest car of all time pulls into the parking lot of Family-Friendly Diner (TM) restaurant number eighty-seven.

TOM

(peers at building)

Looks cool. Want to break here?

PENNY

Please, I'd love a nice cup of tea. But what they give me here when I ask for one will probably do instead.

TOM

(unbuckling belt)

You're taking the sperm, of course? We don't want some passer-by with a portable DNA testing lab to bring down the president....

INT. CLAUDETTE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Claudette and Calhoun have their ears to a small speaker and their eyes wide open at what they just heard.

PENNY (O.S.)

(through speaker)

A handbag, that's what I need; a place to hide the flask so it's not quite as obvious.

There is a CLANKING and SCRAPING through the speaker.

CLAUDETTE

(gleefully)

Joy of joys! The most popular president on record is bring-downable!

PENNY (O.S.)

(through speaker)

What is that? Why would a sparrow be wearing body armor?

TOM (O.S.)  
(through speaker)  
Maybe it heard what happened on our  
flight yesterday. Just let me...

Claudette and Calhoun dive away from the speaker, hands to ears, as a FEEDBACK WAIL of incredible volume lashes out.

EXT. DINER -- CONTINUOUS

From the device, Tom removes the ball-point pen with which he disabled it (and, collaterally, the eavesdroppers' ears).

PENNY  
The police in England don't have  
equipment as sophisticated as that.

TOM  
(examining device)  
Neither do the police in America...

INT. BRIEFING ROOM -- DAY

Fairbanks and Powell stand, as Dyson paces back and forth, shaking his head.

DYSON  
No, it is not "just" a roadblock.  
It's a roadblock of all Northern  
approaches to New York City.

POWELL  
If the suspect is headed for DC, she  
has to drive through New York City.

FAIRBANKS  
It would add another hundred miles  
to her journey if she detoured round.

DYSON  
She could already be in New York  
City. You heard of the railroad?

Powell looks to Fairbanks, who nods.

POWELL  
We'd like to modify our request for  
a road block, sir.

FAIRBANKS  
All major routes into Washington DC.  
Including rail connections.

INT. HOTEL RECEPTION -- DAY

Raph observes as Preston leans on the counter and sweet-talks the RECEPTIONIST. She's approaching middle-age and under no illusions, but she's sufficiently grateful for the flattery of a TV reporter to be putty in his hands.

RECEPTIONIST  
Bluest car you ever saw. We're  
talking capital B, capital L, capital  
U, capital E here.

PRESTON  
Surely not as blue as your eyes?

Raph turns his back -- it's more than mortal flesh can bear.

RECEPTIONIST  
(smiling coyly)  
Aw, you! Do you really think so?

PRESTON  
And they picked it up around ten?

RECEPTIONIST  
Yes, I had to sign for it.

PRESTON  
And a tellingly confident signature  
I'm sure it was.  
(off her blush)  
So I guess someone as good at her  
job as you would have kept the  
delivery docket?

RECEPTIONIST  
(pleased)  
Sir, I have it right here, just wait  
a teensy moment.

She fishes about in a file cabinet below the desk, and retrieves a yellow piece of paper.

PRESTON  
(reading note)  
Catherine Meredith.  
(smiles)  
So his mom bought it for him.

INT. DINER LOBBY -- DAY

Tom listens on the phone, one finger in his ear, while Penny stands beside him. By the pained expression on Tom's face, he can only be conversing with his mother.

TOM

(to phone)

OK, read that code word back to me.

(listens)

Yes, OK, yes. Yes that's right, Mom.

(listens)

Yes, she's here now. No, no I don't think so. Ask? Uh...

(to Penny)

Penny, are you married?

Penny holds up her hand, showing a complete lack of rings.

TOM

(to phone)

No, she isn't married. Does -- does she what?

(listens)

Uh, Penny, do you have any children?

PENNY

No. I'm quite sure I'd have noticed.

TOM

(to phone)

No, she doesn't have any children.

(listens)

Yes, she is sure.

(listens)

Well how would I -- ?

(sighs)

Yes, OK, I'll ask...

(to Penny)

She wants to know why not.

PENNY

Tell her I was so overcome with grief when my brother died that I threw myself into my work and never got around to boyfriends.

TOM

(to phone)

Uh, you get all that, Mom?

(listens)

Yeah, OK, I'll tell her, yes, yes, we'll be fine. OK, Mom, got to go, love you.

(listens)

Yes, I'll change my underwear. OK, must go, bye.

He hangs up, the relief on his face immeasurable.

PENNY  
You'll tell me what?

TOM  
Uh? Oh, she said that work stops  
when you're on vacation.

INT. OVAL OFFICE -- DAY

Brad holds a framed snapshot as he stands by the window. It's of Penny, smiling in front of the Lincoln memorial.

Olivia enters carrying a memorandum. She's wearing a different outfit today, but it still has pants.

OLIVIA  
(sniffs the air)  
What's that smell? Did one of your  
researchers overdose on cologne again?

BRAD  
No, it's air freshener. Claudette  
Grant was here earlier making strange  
small talk about genealogy.

He stands the snapshot on the pride-of-place table behind the desk.

OLIVIA  
But she knows the Oval Office is  
strictly non-smoking!

BRAD  
She wasn't smoking, she was just  
Claudette.

OLIVIA  
(nods)  
I take your point.  
(raises memorandum)  
Look, Dyson's request for a block on  
every road into the city -- it's  
ridiculous! He must only want one  
or two watched and expects to haggle.

BRAD  
(returning to window)  
So I figured. When I pushed, he  
indicated a preference for interstates  
ninety-five and two-seventy.

OLIVIA  
He thinks this lunatic with the nerve  
gas will come from the North?

BRAD  
 (mildly concerned)  
 Libby, you don't suppose..?

OLIVIA  
 (reading his mind)  
 Penny?  
 (shakes her head)  
 Surely that's taking paranoia too  
 far....

INT. DINER -- DAY

Tom and Penny sit opposite one another, sipping coffee and tea respectively. Prominent on the table is The Flask.

It's not much crowded here today, the Family-Friendly Diner Corporation's current advertising campaign not generating quite the same kind of buzz as the classics of '89 and '97.

TOM  
 (rising to feet)  
 Excuse me, I have to visit the  
 bathroom.

PENNY  
 Yes, conversations with  
 (slight stammer)  
 mmmothers can have that effect.

Tom leaves, in a hurry.

Penny looks around, aimlessly. Family-Friendly Diner eighty-seven is as corporately homogenized as Family-Friendly Diners one through eighty-six.

A WAITRESS appears and refills her cup.

PENNY  
 No, I didn't want --

WAITRESS  
 (shrugging)  
 So save it for later?

The waitress leaves. Penny considers for a moment, then unscrews the lid of her flask. She looks inside, then pours her tea into it and screws back the lid.

A MOTORCYCLE COP strides through the door: reflective shades, dusty uniform, badly-advised mustache...

He stops at the restaurant's limited selection of candy bars, eyes them for a moment, then makes his choice.

The CASHIER sits beside a display of wicker, briefcase-sized picnic baskets, one of which is open to show the quality selection of gaudy orange dining requisites within. Oh, could that be a vacuum flask strapped in the middle there?

The cop approaches the pay point with a dollar bill. While he's waiting, he glances around. He sees Penny.

Penny turns away, but too late -- he's coming over!

MOTORCYCLE COP

Excuse me, ma'am, but are you English?

Penny shakes her head.

MOTORCYCLE COP

Only, if you are, there's a seven thousand dollar reward...

Penny shakes her head again, and looks hopefully to a door that bears the symbol of a man. What's taking Tom so long?

MOTORCYCLE COP

(picking up flask)

Now hey, what's this? It looks like one of them high-tech vacu-um flasks.

(he tests the lid)

Maybe I should open it?

Penny is about to say no, but thinks better of it.

MOTORCYCLE COP

Don't want me to, huh? Something inside that a cop shouldn't see?

Penny really, really wants to say something, but if he hears her accent she's doomed! Where's Tom?

MOTORCYCLE COP

OK, I'm taking this to headquarters for analysis. Let's see your ID.

(no response)

Hey, you are English, aren't you?

They stare, eye to reflective lens. He won't give, she won't give, he won't give, she won't give, he won't give -- oh god, she's got to say something!

PENNY

(John Wayne accent)

The hell I am!

The cop juts his jaw, but, strangely, doesn't push it. He withdraws and heads for the door, flask in hand.



He picks up his change from the cashier, glances back, and gives Penny a "catch you later" gesture. Yes -- Mr Knight!

Tom appears in the meantime.

TOM

Hi, sorry I took so long, this guy lost his phone down the bowl then flushed his arm trying to find it.

(sees Penny's face)

What happened here?

PENNY

(shaking)

A -- a policeman, he recognized me, I'm sure of it. It's just a matter of time before --

TOM

(getting out money)

A disguise, we should get you a disguise. Come on -- hey, the flask?

PENNY

The policeman took it, don't ask me why, I don't know.

Tom holds out his hand. Penny takes it and stands. She carries a padlocked picnic basket that was under the table.

PENNY

Tom, I -- you're so good...

She pulls him closer and looks into his eyes, exuding vulnerability.

PENNY

Why are you helping me?

TOM

You already know.

(off her look)

Because you're a maiden in distress.

With Penny clutching Tom's arm and the basket, they leave.

INT. VAN -- DAY

Preston drives down the highway. Raph switches off the cell phone.

PRESTON

How long have you had those kinda contacts, Raph?

RAPH

They're not contacts, they're just  
guys I met at college.

PRESTON

Guys who work for the phone company...  
That makes them contacts.

RAPH

Whatever, they said that Meredith's  
mom took a call from a pay phone not  
a half hour ago.

PRESTON

And did they say which pay phone?

RAPH

A Family-Friendly Diner, about forty  
miles up the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The Channel 24 van speeds towards the horizon.

INT. CLAUDETTE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Claudette has a phone in one hand and a nearly-finished cigar  
in the other. Today's sartorial assault on the senses is a  
blindingly yellow suit with a red lily pinned to the lapel.

CLAUDETTE

(to phone)

Yes, that's right, the whole legal  
team. I want everything ready for  
when the labs have run the tests.

(listens)

No, I don't know what they'll find.  
I don't care so long as it discredits --

(draws on her cigar)

Yes, press releases, interviews, all  
that PR roll-out... Just say I have  
a serious announcement to make.

(nodding)

Five hundred thousand, to Knight  
Security, when I give the OK.

She hangs up and adjusts the angle of her computer screen.  
Is that a piece of cotton wool stuffed in her right ear?

She CLICKS the computer's mouse a couple of times, then stops.  
Something seems to be unusually interesting... The more she  
reads, the smugger she becomes.

She picks up the phone again and BUZZES her secretary.

CLAUDETTE

Page this message to Mr Calhoun...

INT. OVAL OFFICE -- DAY

A giggling INTERN with huge hair leaves just as Olivia arrives. The two exchange glances as they pass in the doorway -- the intern's is self-satisfied, Olivia's is one of contempt. Brad occupies his usual position by the window.

OLIVIA

How many times? Be careful! She could have had an entire armored division hidden in that hair!

BRAD

They wouldn't be going anywhere, the amount of spray she uses.

OLIVIA

Never mind.  
(dismissive gesture)  
Good news! Penny sent us email.

BRAD

Penny? Is she OK? Not being bugged by lawyers for a cut of her reward?

OLIVIA

She's being bugged, but not by lawyers. It's someone with illegal surveillance technology.

BRAD

That news isn't so good.

He walks over, frowning in thought.

OLIVIA

She hopes to be here with the goods tomorrow, and asks what to do.  
(sits on the desk)  
My mind screams that she should stop and go home, but my body...

BRAD

She wouldn't abort, she's Penny; she knows what this means to you.  
(puts arm round her)  
What engagements have we tomorrow?

OLIVIA

There's the Italian ambassador in the morning, then -- oh, aren't you

OLIVIA (CONT'D)  
speaking at the Tall Women of America  
rally in Baltimore?

BRAD  
Damn, that's going to be hard to  
cancel. Those tall women asked for  
me months ago, they'd be real upset.

OLIVIA  
Well we don't want to disappoint the  
tall women, do we?  
(sighs)  
OK, I'll meet Penny alone. I can  
sneak out after lunch when the secret  
service guys get sleepy.

BRAD  
With a killer in town? Honey!

OLIVIA  
And your better suggestion is..?

INT. DINER -- DAY

Raph's attempts to sweet-talk the cashier are failing miserably. Preston wanders among the tables, offering no moral support whatsoever. The waitress takes an order.

RAPH  
They were driving a blue car. That's  
blue, uh, like your beautiful eyes.

CASHIER  
My eyes are gray-blue. Not blue,  
gray-blue. See?  
(she shows him)  
Gray-blue.

RAPH  
Yeah, well the guy looks like this.

He shows her a photo of a surprised-looking Tom.

CASHIER  
See, his eyes are blue.  
(looks closer)  
Or maybe they're brown? Or green?

RAPH  
(sighing)  
Well was he here or not? Maybe a  
half hour ago?

CASHIER

How would I know? All you customers  
look alike to me.

Preston arrives.

RAPH

For cryin' out loud, it was a half  
hour ago! A half hour! Is your  
attention span so short that --

PRESTON

(cutting in)

I'm sorry, ma'am, he gets like this  
if he doesn't take his medication.

He holds Raph firmly by the elbow and leads him gently away.

CASHIER

Yeah, jerk! Take your medication --  
I take mine!

RAPH

Phil, what -- what are you doing?

PRESTON

(low)

The waitress says some woman with an  
English accent left twenty minutes  
ago after a set-to with a traffic  
cop.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM -- DAY

The lights down, a map of Washington and environs projects  
on the screen. Dyson sits facing it, hands touching at the  
fingertips in a gesture that the FBI body language course  
describes as meaning "deep thinker".

Fairbanks and Powell stand either side of the screen,  
outlining their cunning plan to capture Penny.

POWELL

We impose the road block at oh-nine-  
oh-five tomorrow morning, for minimum  
disruption to commuters.

FAIRBANKS

We maintain the road block until oh-  
four-fifty-five.

DYSON

That's sixteen-fifty-five.

Powell and Fairbanks exchange a glance. Damn! He's smarter than he looks.

POWELL

Associate Director Calhoun's information indicates that the suspect will arrive on Interstate two seventy within this time frame. Window.

FAIRBANKS

Frame.

DYSON

Don't get me wrong. Presidential consent to block one arterial road into DC is easier to obtain than for two or three. But where did Associate Director Calhoun get his information?

Powell and Fairbanks look at one another. Isn't it obvious?

FAIRBANKS

From his sources, sir, of course.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL -- DAY

Of the hundreds of cars parked outside, only the newly-arriving so-blue-it-hurts-your-eyes one makes an impression.

INT. SHOPPING MALL -- DAY

Tom yanks the reluctant Penny through the main doors, hoping her natural shopping instincts will overcome her desire to flee. She has the picnic basket.

PENNY

I can't do this, I can't do this!

TOM

Stop being so English!

They approach a hairdresser's.

TOM

OK, hair first!

PENNY

Hair? Not my hair, nooooo!

She clams up as he drags her through the salon's entrance.

INT. HAIRDRESSER'S -- DAY

You know how some people don't take off the old wallpaper when they redecorate, they just add a new layer on top of it? That's the make-up on the face of the blonde HAIRDRESSER who's waiting for her next, lucky customer inside.

HAIRDRESSER

Hi! And what can we do for you today?

TOM

Take this woman, color her hair blonde, and style it like she comes from Wisconsin.

PENNY

Blonde? Please not blonde! It's so --

HAIRDRESSER

(fingers own hair)

It's so ... what?

PENNY

It's so, er -- so not me?

TOM

Precisely.

(to hairdresser)

How long does this kind of thing --

HAIRDRESSER

I'll have her back to you in fifty minutes looking ten years younger.

PENNY

Younger? Hmm...

TOM

Hey, you pushed her vanity button! What a great move!

HAIRDRESSER

Of course, sir. I'm a highly trained professional.

INT. VAN -- DAY

Raph drives. Preston attacks the toasted sandwich and pretzels he bought at the Family-Friendly Diner.

RAPH

So we're on the lookout for an innocuous, dazzlingly blue car?

PRESTON  
(between bites)  
They gotta stop somewhere, they didn't  
eat at the diner.

RAPH  
But they're on the run, they might  
not stop again until Washington.

At the mere mention of the name of that city of sin, Preston  
nearly chokes on a pretzel.

RAPH  
(concerned)  
Phil, you OK?

PRESTON  
(hands on dashboard)  
Yes, yes...  
(coughs)  
Just went down the wrong way.

RAPH  
What is it with you? Every time  
someone says the W word, you flip.

PRESTON  
(recovering)  
Guess I just hate the place so much,  
what happens there.

RAPH  
Gimme a for instance.

PRESTON  
You don't want a for instance...

RAPH  
I do so too! For instance: what was  
so bad with the Meredith court case  
that you threw your career and moved  
to Connecticut?

INT. HAIRDRESSER'S -- DAY

Penny has endured the Hairdresser's attentions with stolid  
British resolve, for which she has been rewarded with a very  
competent job. Her hair now looks almost natural blonde,  
and like she's worn it the way it is for the past always.

She sits in front of the mirror with her eyes shut.

TOM  
OK, you can open them now.



She opens her eyes. Oh.

PENNY

This mirror is faulty. It's showing me someone else's reflection.

TOM

No, I think it really suits you!  
(to hairdresser)  
So what's next? A beautician?

MONTAGE -- PENNY'S MAKE-OVER

-- Tom pushes Penny into a beautician's.

-- Penny emerges looking at her freshly-varnished nails, wearing make-up that now matches her new hairstyle.

-- Tom, waiting outside and sporting a new jacket, nods in approval. He gives Penny a big, fat purse, but keeps hold of the picnic basket himself.

-- Walking backwards, protesting, Penny finds Tom has maneuvered her into a clothes shop. She's wearing the purse.

-- Penny stands outside the changing room in a variety of different outfits:

-- Summery prairie dress

-- sweatshirt ("UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD") and jeans

-- jogging shorts and vest

-- all frills and flounces and huge earrings

-- 70s revivalist Abba groupie

-- leather and chains, keeping a cigarette at arm's length

-- like she's going to a wedding

-- 1960s mini-skirt and flower-power pantyhose

-- a mid-80s grunge look, big boots and all

-- a Libbyesque trouser suit -- this one could almost work

-- casual sweater, casual pants, casual shoes -- the winner!

INT. BOUTIQUE -- DAY

Tom, with Penny's purse under his elbow, and a SALES ASSISTANT applaud. Bravo! Penny performs a mock curtsy.

She is almost unrecognizable from the Penny of yore.

TOM

(handing back her  
purse)

That's the one! Absolutely perfect --  
not that you weren't perfect before...

PENNY

Are you sure? Don't these trousers  
make my hips look big?

TOM

No, Pen, they do not make your hips  
look big -- and before you ask, they  
don't make them look skinny, either.

PENNY

Only I haven't tried on that red,  
velvet dress over there...

INT. VAN -- DAY

As before, with Preston looking even grimmer and moodier.

PRESTON

Meredith -- Newton as he now calls  
himself -- was an I.T. consultant  
hired by Senator Donald O'Hare.

RAPH

O'Hare? I remember him -- war  
veteran, good guy. Didn't he resign  
in some kind of scandal?

PRESTON

That's him, straight as they come;  
he quit because he felt it was  
ultimately his responsibility that  
a pervert got on his staff.

RAPH

But what did Newton actually do?

PRESTON

(sighs)

O'Hare had an assistant, Claudette  
Grant. Late one night in the office,  
Newton goes nuts. He assaults her --  
makes her perform all kinds of debased  
acts. He does everything short of  
actual rape.

RAPH

(shocked)

Damn, but those quiet-looking guys,  
they keep it all canned up inside...

PRESTON

He took the fifth when it went to  
court. Claudette was heroic in the  
witness box, but without hard evidence  
it was just her word against his.

RAPH

So he walked?

PRESTON

Yeah, he walked. For all Claudette's  
courage, he walked.

(shakes head)

There's no such thing as justice.

His face says it all: but there will be, if I have anything  
to do with it.

RAPH

And now she's a senator herself.

PRESTON

The party gave her O'Hare's  
nomination, the only way it could  
counteract the negative publicity.

(laughs cynically)

Her experience hasn't held her back,  
anyhow: chair of the Armed Services  
Committee, eyes on the presidency.  
She's done OK.

RAPH

But so's Tom Newton. You think he's  
out for revenge?

PRESTON

Whatever he's up to, it won't be  
good. Remember, in Washington  
hitting below the belt is the norm.

RAPH

We ought to warn Senator Grant.

PRESTON

Story first, then Claudette. That  
way, no-one on Newton's payroll gets  
the word out before we can nail him.

(he grimaces)

You still like investigative work?

Raph doesn't answer; he's beginning to have doubts.

PRESTON

Only, there's a bright blue Ford  
Taurus parked at that mall...

INT. RESTAURANT -- DAY

Penny and Tom have just finished dessert.

PENNY

(John Wayne accent)  
Why, thank you, ma'am.

She frowns, while Tom shakes his head.

PENNY

(Bugs Bunny accent)  
Nyaah, thank you, kind sir.  
(Shari Lewis/Lambchop  
accent)  
Thank you ev'ybardy.

TOM

OK, I'll qualify that question: can  
you put on an American accent that  
an American might actually use?

PENNY

But I'm hopeless at accents! Can't  
I just pretend I've had my tongue  
torn out in a black magic ritual?

TOM

You said "Connecticut" yesterday,  
that sounded good.

PENNY

I was only copying you.  
(Tom-American accent)  
You said "Connecticut" yesterday,  
that sounded good.

TOM

(staggered)  
But that's just right! You sound  
exactly like an American! Say  
something else.

PENNY

(Tom-American accent)  
But that's just right! You --

TOM

No, don't just echo me! Look, here comes the waiter, order two coffees.

PENNY

But I want a cup of tea!

TOM

Think American. Americans drink coffee. We gave up tea after Boston.

The waiter arrives. Like all waiters in their late 20s, he's a bitter and twisted actor who hasn't had the breaks...

WAITER

Would that be two coffees, people?

He clears up the dessert dishes and looks from Penny to Tom. Tom gestures that Penny is the one with the answer.

The waiter waits for her to speak.

PENNY

(Tom-American accent)

Er, yes. Two coffees.

WAITER

Two coffees it is, ma'am.

PENNY

(Tom-American accent  
surprising herself)

Make those iced double tall skinny raspberry mochas.

TOM

But I don't want --

PENNY

(Tom-American accent)

Tom, you do.

(smiles at waiter)

He does.

The waiter nods and leaves. Tom is looking stunned.

PENNY

I can't believe I said that!

TOM

I can't believe I heard it...

PENNY

(Tom-American accent)

You want American, dear -- you got American!

Unless stated otherwise, Penny now speaks with an American accent just like Tom's. Lord help her.

EXT. CAPITOL HILL -- DAY

Claudette trots up the steps accompanied by a squad of LAWYERS and PR PEOPLE. She's on the phone, and she's not happy.

CLAUDETTE

(to phone)

Mr Knight, I told you not to open the flask! Does "not" means something different in your part of the world?

(listens)

Earl Grey tea?

(listens)

I have forty-three lawyers and a team of medics on standby to prove that the president is related to a beverage?

(she stops walking)

Yes, OK, you can crash the damned helicopter -- just get me that sperm!

EXT. SHOPPING MALL -- DAY

The Channel 24 van lurks four spaces away from the world's only mutant production-line Ford Taurus.

INT. VAN -- DAY

Raph strokes the camera on his lap like it was a pussy cat. Preston has somehow made himself TV-acceptable.

RAPH

(looks at watch)

It's been two hours, now, Phil.

Can't just one of us go look inside?

PRESTON

He has to return to the car eventually. We wait, we get him.

(shrugs)

Trust the voice of experience.

RAPH

But -- Oh, hey, here he comes! And with a new girl -- what a creep!

EXT. SHOPPING MALL -- CONTINUOUS

Tom appears through the doorway first, pursued by Penny.  
He's holding the picnic basket -- ooh, she must trust him!

TOM

(low)

Care to explain why you embarrassed  
me like that, Miss Personality Change?

PENNY

Promises made to parents are sacred.  
You should never renege on them.

TOM

But telling the entire store that I  
was wearing soiled underwear...

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

PRESTON

OK, this is it! Let's do it!

Preston and Raph open their doors.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL -- CONTINUOUS

PENNY

It worked, didn't it dear? You bought  
some new shorts.

(surprised)

Hey, I said "shorts" instead of  
"pants" -- I'm getting good!

Preston strides up, with Raph filming from behind.

TOM

At least there's no chance that anyone  
will recognize you now.

PRESTON

Mr Tom Meredith? Hi, I'm Phil Preston  
for Channel 24 news.

Tom gapes: utterly, open-mouth stupefied.

RAPH

(to Preston)

What's with the picnic basket?

PRESTON

I wonder if you'd mind answering a  
few questions -- such as, what's  
with the picnic basket?

Penny swiftly puts an arm between Preston and Tom, then steps forward as Tom steps back.

PENNY

Excuse me, but are you wearing padding  
or a sporting appliance of any kind?

PRESTON

Er, no, ma'am, I'm not. Why?

Penny delivers a punch to Preston's groin of such power that it's scarcely believable his balls haven't bounced into orbit.

Both Tom and Raph are mortified.

Both Tom and Raph are grateful that she didn't do it to them.

Tom takes Penny by the hand and drags her away with him.

PENNY

(as she goes)

Would you like to ask Mr Newton your  
question again?

From the pitiful, barking noises Preston is making, it's clear he won't be capable of dialogue for some time.

INT. CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Tom tosses the picnic basket into the back as they get in.

TOM

(starting car)

My god, he's on his knees! That  
must have hurt real bad!

PENNY

(looks at her knuckles)

It stung a bit, but I'll be fine.  
Why did he call you Tom Meredith?

EXT. SHOPPING MALL -- CONTINUOUS

Raph helps Preston to his feet.

RAPH

When you said that hitting below the  
belt was the norm, I didn't think...

PRESTON

(helium voice)

Damn ... female ... bodyguards.



RAPH

Let's get you to the van. Least we  
know they won't get far.

EXT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

There's a Family Friendly Diner sandwich and who knows what  
else jammed into the exhaust of the blue Ford Taurus.

INT. CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Unusual SPLUTTERS are coming from somewhere as the engine  
keeps missing and surging.

PENNY

(English accent)

It's the exhaust, beyond the silencer.

TOM

American.

PENNY

It's the exhaust, beyond the muffler.

TOM

They must have blocked it!

PENNY

(looking back)

Tom! They're after us!

TOM

Gee, if only this automobile had  
three separate mirrors for the driver  
to look in, I'd have known that.

(off her anxious look)

I'm sorry, I just...

The car SHUDDERS, and the engine CUTS OUT. Tom freewheels  
it to a stop. They didn't even get out of the parking lot.

PENNY

If we run, they'll only follow.

TOM

Yes, but one of them can't run.

They exchange a look, then simultaneously open their doors.

EXT. LINE OF TREES -- CONTINUOUS

The pair scramble out where a small rise and a line of  
screening trees prevent curious or incredibly poor drivers  
from visiting the adjacent fields.

Penny opens a rear door and struggles to take the picnic basket off the back seat.

TOM

No --

The sight and SOUND of the van bearing down distracts him.

Penny runs up alongside, picnic basket in hand.

PENNY

Come on!

INT. VAN -- MOMENTS LATER

Raph drives while Preston holds the camera -- he's too sensitive to rest it on his lap. They watch through the windshield as Penny and Tom run into the trees.

RAPH

Damn! We have to follow on foot!

PRESTON

Leave me, take the camera. This is your show now, Raph.

Raph touches Preston on the arm, and gives an "I'll never forget you" kind of look. He then tugs away the camera, oblivious to the groaning pain this roughness causes Preston.

EXT. LINE OF TREES -- CONTINUOUS

Raph heads off into the trees, holding the camera by its carrying handle.

EXT. SIDE OF FIELD -- MOMENTS LATER

Penny and Tom emerge from the trees to be confronted by a wooden fence. Tom vaults over it, and helps Penny follow.

From here, the HIGHWAY can be heard, vehicles rushing past.

Penny and Tom head off across the dirt.

EXT. NEXT TO FIELD -- MOMENTS LATER

Raph comes through the trees about twenty yards from where Penny and Tom did. He can see them racing off.

He levels his camera and films.

EXT. MIDDLE OF FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

Penny looks back and sees Raph with this big, black thing with a handle that could be a bazooka for all she knows.

Tom gets ahead. Penny stumbles trying to catch up, but she doesn't go down. Her purse falls from her shoulder -- it looks like she'll abandon it but no, she hooks back the strap.

The sound of a HELICOPTER drowns out that of the highway.

EXT. NEXT TO FIELD -- MOMENTS LATER

Raph changes angle and films a four-seater helicopter as it lands in the field, its down draft throwing a cloud of dust.

EXT. MIDDLE OF FIELD -- MOMENTS LATER

Penny and Tom can barely see for the dust nor hear for the still-rotating BLADES.

The PILOT of the helicopter leans over -- visor, big earphones, short-sleeved shirt with "ARMSTRONG" name badge. He opens the door.

The billowing dust still blinds Penny and Tom.

PILOT (O.S.)  
Sir? Ma'am? I'm here to help.

Tom's eyes clear. He can make out the pilot.

PILOT  
We don't have much time, if you could just step inside, please?

PENNY  
Tom?

TOM  
I'm here, Pen.

He takes Penny by the arm, leads her over. The pilot leans across and helps them inside, then Tom shuts the door.

EXT. NEXT TO FIELD -- MOMENTS LATER

Raph films as the chopper takes off throwing up another huge cloud of dust.

It flies directly over him, and heads away.

RAPH  
(lowering camera)  
I'll be damned...

He waves.

INT. CHOPPER -- DAY

The pilot sits in the right front seat, with Tom in the left, looking out of the window. Penny perches behind Tom, the picnic basket on the seat beside her.

TOM  
... waving at us, can you believe that?

PENNY  
(brushing off dust)  
You didn't tell me you had fans.

TOM  
(nods at pilot)  
You mean he's not one of yours?

PILOT  
Can I check that I've picked up the right people here? You are?

TOM  
Tom Newton and --

PENNY  
(hand on Tom's arm)  
No, tell us who we should be.

PILOT  
Tom Newton and Penelope Rose.

TOM  
(relieved)  
That's a --

PENNY  
And who sent you?

PILOT  
Why, the president, ma'am.

Penny looks at Tom, very worriedly. He and the pilot both sense that "the president" was the Wrong Answer.

The pilot's polite demeanor disappears in a trice. He reaches down the side of his seat and pulls a pistol.

PENNY

If "the president" was an OK answer,  
you'd be Air Force One and this would  
be yesterday.

PILOT

I hate these politicians, always  
playing games...

He reaches back for the picnic basket, not taking his eyes  
off Tom, who is evidently considering wrestling for the gun.

Penny snatches up the basket and hugs it tightly to her.  
The padlock on it is plain to see.

PILOT

(to Penny)  
I could just shoot you.

PENNY

Where exactly inside is the flask?  
You want to risk hitting it?

The pilot grabs hold of the handle, and tugs.

PENNY

I won't let go.

PILOT

We'll see.

He kicks some kind of hidden lever under the instrument panel.  
The door at Tom's side BLASTS off, and a mechanism under his  
seat flips both the seat and Tom out through the gap.

Penny drowns in a wave of hideous anguish.

PILOT

He seemed fit enough. Maybe he got  
hold of one of the skids? Maybe,  
right now, he's hanging on, hoping  
he can keep his grip just long enough  
'til someone hauls him back up?

Penny looks him eye to reflective visor.

She doesn't hesitate. She releases the basket and scrambles  
over to where the door was. She looks out.

EXT. CHOPPER -- CONTINUOUS

Tom, indeed, holds onto one of the skids, hanging on, hoping  
he can keep his grip just long enough 'til someone hauls him  
back up.

The chopper rises relentlessly. Cars and trees become tiny.

TOM  
(shouting)  
You're right, that falling from the  
sky deal really sucks.

Penny, almost in tears, manages a short laugh at this. She tries to reach him, but he's too far away.

She removes her purse and lowers it down for Tom to take hold of. Tom seems a little more wary of grabbing it than he ought to, but grab it he does.

The chopper sways violently.

INT. CHOPPER -- CONTINUOUS

Penny looks over to the pilot -- he's donned some kind of peculiar parachute harness.

He gives her a "catch you later" gesture and jumps out with the still-locked picnic basket. Yes! All along, it was ... aww, you know the drill.

The chopper panics as it realizes it has no-one at its controls.

Tom pulls himself onto the skid, but he still needs to hold Penny's purse. Now, she's having a hard time keeping a grip on it.

TOM  
(shouting)  
OK, I'm going to try to stand.

Penny closes her eyes and moans with superhuman effort.

EXT. CHOPPER -- MOMENTS LATER

Tom pulls himself up to a standing position.

INT. CHOPPER -- MOMENTS LATER

Penny rolls out of the way, letting go of her purse, relief wrought on her face, her fingers white.

Tom tosses the purse inside first, then gets one arm in, pulls himself up, finds a handhold for the other arm, and drags himself through the doorway.

All this change to the center of gravity makes the chopper lurch all the more.

PENNY

We have to land this thing.

She hops into the pilot's seat and makes to hold the direction control stick (cyclic). There isn't one. She looks to the passenger/co-pilot's seat. There isn't one there, either.

PENNY

He took the control stick! Tom!

Tom looks everywhere for anything.

TOM

He was a high-tech guy, this is a high-tech chopper -- there has to be something...

Penny pulls and pushes on the height control (collective). The copter lurches up and down in response, violently.

TOM

He had the co-pilot's chair rigged...  
(inspired)  
An ejector seat!

He clambers over to Penny's seat and looks at the mountings.

PENNY

In a helicopter? We'd hit the rotors!

TOM

No, it has lateral thrusters, it should throw us clear.

Penny gets out of the way so Tom can sit down first. She plops herself on his lap as he pulls round the belts, then she buckles them up. Tom stretches behind and takes hold of her purse from where it fell.

PENNY

It's not built for two, it might not be strong enough!

TOM

You're right. I'll get out.

He reaches to release the buckle.

PENNY

No!

She kicks at a black and yellow lever beneath the instrument panel. The door BLOWS open and the whole machine tips brutally in reaction to the ROCKETS which blast them outside.

EXT. NEXT TO FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

Raph films everything, with Preston also looking skyward as he hobbles up alongside.

The ejector seat erupts from the side of the chopper, carrying its occupants just wide of the rotors, before rockets underneath it kick in and propel it upwards.

Subjected to such abuse, the helicopter gives up and spins uncontrollably to the ground, finding somewhere just out of sight where it can peacefully explode in a ball of flames.

PRESTON

You got it all?

A parachute opens, and the ejected seat begins its descent.

RAPH

Still rollin'.

PRESTON

(horrified)

What if someone was in that chopper?  
We gotta help!

He sets off with a limp ("a limp what?"), across the field towards the downed machine.

Raph looks at the camera amazed, like it was some parasite controlling his body. He drops it in horror, then sprints off towards the crash site.

EXT. MIDDLE OF FIELD -- DAY

The parachute, with ejector seat, Tom and Penny attached, lands with a bump.

EXT. MIDDLE OF FIELD -- MOMENTS LATER

They look a little worse for wear, but aren't hurt. Penny unbuckles the straps. Tom still clutches her tightly.

PENNY

You can let go, dear, I promise not  
to run away.

Tom immediately does so, embarrassed and worried.

TOM

I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I hadn't  
realized I --



PENNY

Hey, I was only teasing!  
 (standing)  
 Good, this planet has oxygen!

TOM

(recovering)  
 No broken bones, that's nice. Boy,  
 am I glad I bought that new underwear.  
 (he stands)  
 How about you? You OK?

PENNY

A few bumps and bruises -- I won't  
 be recommending this theme park to  
 my friends.

TOM

So, back to the car? That burger in  
 the exhaust should be just about  
 done.

PENNY

(shakes head)  
 No, we may as well face those  
 reporters -- there's no point in  
 running any more. The bad guy won.

They set off walking, leaving the parachute fluttering behind.  
 Tom leads. He doesn't notice that Penny looks upset.

TOM

How can you say that? We're alive,  
 aren't we? Unless we died and we're  
 some kind of Sixth Sense ghosts.

Penny sniffles, and begins to cry, quietly.

TOM

(shakes head)  
 No, I don't feel like I'm a character  
 in a movie with a lame surprise twist  
 near the end...

They walk some more.

TOM

Of course, the realization that  
 someone really wants to kill us may  
 be distracting me.

When the witty response he expects still doesn't come, he  
 turns round, puzzled, to see Penny in tears.

TOM

Pen?

Quickly, he puts his arm around her and gives her a hug.

TOM

Hey, what's the matter?

PENNY

I -- I wanted to be an auntie!

She stops walking, buries her face in Tom's shoulder, and SOBS her little heart out. Tom keeps on hugging and being supportive, but it's a new, awkward experience for him.

Nevertheless, he did the right thing. Penny begins to pull herself together, but she's still very upset.

PENNY

Tom, the rumors are true: Brad lost both testicles in a golfing accident when he was fifteen.

TOM

All those jokes about missing balls...  
But Olivia wants children?

PENNY

(nods)

Brad figured that since my brother Ashley died saving his life, if anyone was going to make Libby pregnant it ought to be him.

TOM

Ashley having conveniently made a deposit at the sperm bank?

They start walking again, Tom still holding her close.

PENNY

All the boys did, it was easy money.  
Well, except for Brad, of course...

TOM

So you know the president through losing your brother... I see now why you --

PENNY

No, no, I knew Libby already -- since forever. We lived next door when we were little, we were best friends.

TOM

Uh? But how can you have ever lived over here when you don't know the soaps and you never heard of brats?

PENNY

(sighing)

Libby lived in Oxford. Her parents were professors. She was nine before she moved to America, after her -- her

(slight stammer)

mmmother died.

TOM

She lost her mother at age nine?

(shakes head)

I -- I didn't know.

PENNY

There's a lot about Libby Hawks that people don't know. She's a fun person, she just has

(sobbing)

responsibilities.

TOM

(hugging her)

Hey, hey...

Penny recovers. He's getting good at this.

PENNY

She lodged with us when she came back to Oxford for her PhD. Then Ashley introduced her to Brad, whom he'd met in a book shop.

TOM

So six days ago you visited the sperm bank and made a withdrawal?

PENNY

(wiping tears)

I did. But not of Ashley's sperm.

TOM

(confused)

Uh? Not Ashley's? Then, whose?

They reach the fence. Tom isn't quite so athletic as he crosses it this time.

EXT. SIDE OF FIELD -- MOMENTS LATER

PENNY

Then Larry's.

TOM

Larry's? Who the -- whoa! Wait, Larry, the president's brother? The one who died in --

PENNY

-- in a car crash, yes. It's his name etched on the tubule. I had to get a court order before they'd release it to me.

TOM

This has to be some kind of medieval law hang-over thing. They don't let men through the gates of Oxford unless they pay the Sperm Toll...

PENNY

An analysis ought to show a fifty percent match between Larry and the president, correct?

TOM

And as the presidential DNA is a matter of public record, any lab could run a comparison.

PENNY

But it wouldn't -- it wouldn't show any relationship. An analysis of Ashley's sperm, however, would.

TOM

(appalled)

Ashley? Your brother? But you're English! That means the president is English!

PENNY

Don't sound so affronted! If England can manage with a German royal family for two hundred years, I'm sure that America can cope with just one English president.

Tom takes Penny by the shoulders and looks her in the eye.

TOM

Penny, you have got to get that sperm  
to the White House!

PENNY

(angry)

Tom, you think I don't know? You  
think I don't know that? I tried, I  
really tried, but I failed. Mister

(Mr Knight's gesture)

took it, I'll never see it again.

(starts to cry)

I've let everybody down. Libby,  
Brad, my folks, everybody...

Tom pulls her close to him and they hug tightly. There's  
nothing awkward about it this time.

TOM

You don't know, do you?

PENNY

I do, it's hopeless...

TOM

No, I mean you don't know what's in  
your purse.

She unhugs, and stares at him wide-eyed in disbelief and  
searing hope. She tears open her purse.

TOM

You said you wanted to put the flask  
in a "handbag". So when I bought  
you one, I transferred it.

She digs about, and pulls out the gaudy orange flask in a  
mixture of astonishment and untold joy.

PENNY

Tom! Oh, Tom!

She gives him a huge hug and a kiss. She starts to cry again,  
but this time the tears are those of happiness.

TOM

Hey, steady!

He gently pries her off him, which confuses her a little.

TOM

(laughing)

Come on, let's find that car.

INT. CLAUDETTE'S OFFICE -- DAY

As usual, Claudette jaws on the telephone and a cigar. She's in a foul mood, so there's nothing new there, either.

CLAUDETTE

(to phone)

Yes, you heard it right, you're through!

(listens)

I don't care that it had a Japanese padlock! You screwed up!

(listens)

No it's not about killing the helicopter -- it's about you. You blew it once too often.

(listens)

Yeah, well I'd rather be an asshole than what comes out of one.

She hangs up with a desk-shaking SLAM.

EXT. LINE OF TREES -- DAY

Preston and Raph emerge from the trees. Raph has recovered his camera, and Preston has recovered his ability to walk.

RAPH

Yep, his car's gone. I guess we'd better check the exhaust on ours...

PRESTON

I call dibs if they used the sandwich.

EXT. MOTEL -- NIGHT

The Taurus doesn't look so blue under the sodium lamps that illuminate the parking lot. It pulls into a space invisible from the road, and the ENGINE switches off.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

Penny sleeps, her head resting on Tom's shoulder. She looks ever so peaceful.

Tom moves a strand of her hair that's fallen across her face, and is struck by how beautiful she is. He gives the hint of a motion to gently kiss her, but stops. It's not right.

He COUGHS loudly instead, causing her to stir.

TOM

We're an hour or so from DC -- we can drive it after breakfast tomorrow.

TOM (CONT'D)

I thought we'd stay here the night.

She looks up, smiling sleepily.

TOM

That's in the motel, not in the car...

She pulls herself up straight.

TOM

I'll also tell you why the TV guy called me Tom Meredith.

PENNY

I was having such a nice dream...

INT. DYSON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Dyson has a big old desk covered in all manner of papers in various trays. There's probably a computer under them somewhere. There's certainly a phone, because it RINGS.

DYSON

(answers phone)

Dyson.

(listens)

Sir Alistair! Very well, thank you.

(listens)

You have? This soon? Well that's terrific! Yes?

(listens, nodding)

A fertility clinic?

(listens)

Containing what?!

(his eyes dart)

Yes, yes. Uh, thank you very much.

I'd ... better go. Best wishes to Lady Caroline.

He hangs up, frowning deeply, then a moment of thought later he picks up the handset again and dials a number.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY -- DAY

Fairbanks and Powell talk next to their big, black, "I am an FBI car" vehicle, while a number of uniformed police officers swarm about preparing to implement a road block.

The FBI/police radio in the car BEEPS.

FAIRBANKS

(answering)

Fairbanks.

FAIRBANKS (CONT'D)

(listens)

Yes, director, we're ready to go.

(listens)

Cancel it? I'm sorry sir, but we're unable to comply.

(listens)

I understand, no nerve gas assassin.

(listens)

Because we have orders not to remove the roadblock until ten a.m.

(listens)

You can't countermand them, sir.

They were from a higher authority.

(listens)

No, I don't, other than we are not to remove the roadblock.

She listens, then switches off the radio.

Powell looks to her. She nods, and Powell signals the police to begin. She looks at her watch: "09:05:01".

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

The monumental build-up of traffic tails back into last week. There, in the middle, shines an easy-to-spot blue car.

INT. CAR -- DAY

By applying secret techniques known only to women, Penny has maintained the make-over she received the day before.

By applying secret techniques known only to men, Tom has forgotten to shave.

PENNY

We haven't moved for forty minutes. Washington's rush hour must be truly phenomenal if this is what missing it is like.

TOM

The road's blocked. Probably two groups of activists arguing over who gets to riot first.

PENNY

(matter-of-factly)

I was once arrested for rioting.

TOM

You?



TOM (CONT'D)

(gapes)  
I'm utterly staggered!

PENNY

The government planned a bad tax.  
(proudly)  
I was fined ten pounds.

TOM

But you're British. The British  
don't riot -- you hate change!

PENNY

That's correct. In Britain we riot  
to keep things the same.

Tom's expression freezes. He turns his neck slowly so he  
looks dead ahead, then he bangs his head down on the wheel.

TOM

Please, traffic, move. She's starting  
to make some weird kind of sense.

PENNY

I hope it listens. If this sperm  
(patting her bag)  
doesn't find itself at below seventy-  
seven Kelvin tonight, it won't feel  
very well at all.

TOM

I'll check the radio.

He pushes himself up and switches it on.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

Raph, at the wheel, leans back having just switched on the  
radio. It's playing "LOLA" by The Kinks. He stretches.

PRESTON

Now that was a wasted seven thirty  
alarm call. Wake me up when we move.

RAPH

I wonder how many soda bottles they  
spilled this time?

A DRONE becomes noticeable, steadily increasing in volume.

Raph glances to Preston, who shrugs and opens his door. The  
DRONE becomes consequently louder as he does so.

Raph instinctively reaches for his camera, which is on the floor by the passenger seat, then he gets out too.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The DRONE is deafening now, with every motorist out of their vehicle, shading their eyes looking East for its cause.

Raph raises his camera.

EXT. OVERHEAD -- MOMENTS LATER

A flight of fifteen military helicopters passes overhead in an unusual, but definite, L formation.

EXT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Tom and Penny look down and stop shading their eyes. Penny smiles excitedly.

TOM

Aren't you supposed to be mentally scarred by the sight of helicopters after yesterday?

PENNY

(getting in car)  
I've visited Washington only once before, five years ago. Libby and I arranged to meet at the Lincoln Memorial. See? L for Lincoln.

TOM

That was a message?  
(shrugs)  
If you don't have a pager...

He climbs into the car.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

TOM

So what time did you and Olivia meet?

PENNY

Three o'clock -- ages yet!

She turns up the volume on the radio.

RADIO

...at ten o'clock, and federal agents have just announced that they are lifting the road block that has

RADIO (CONT'D)  
 paralyzed Interstate two-seventy  
 this past hour.

INT. CALHOUN'S OFFICE -- DAY

The nameplate on the desk says "MARK CALHOUN, MBA", but he's lounging with his feet on it in an easy chair, sizing up a paper airplane he just made.

He's speaking on an olde red telephone with a loooong cord. In his left ear is a piece of cotton wool.

CALHOUN  
 Yes, I know you're chair of the Armed Services Committee, I put in the bribes, remember?  
 (listens, nods)  
 The president had those choppers buzz -- ?  
 (listens)  
 So, that's L for Libby, then. They're saying "come to the White House"?  
 (listens)  
 But a ton of stuff begins with L!

He listens some more, then bursts into mocking laughter.

CALHOUN  
 What kind of sad jerk memorizes every single photo in the Oval Office?  
 (listens)  
 Oh. No, I don't think you're a sad jerk, not at all. Yes. It was a stupid remark. Yes.  
 (listens)  
 But why go personally? Send Mr Knight, you pay --  
 (listens)  
 I see... Well OK, I can watch the White House.  
 (listens)  
 Yes, of course. I'll use Fairbanks and Powell -- they're on the scene and they do as they're told.

He throws the paper airplane. It crash-dives immediately.

INT. VAN -- DAY

The van is moving now. Raph is driving, and Preston is smiling with the serenity of a condemned man.

RAPH

Here we are: beautiful, if humid,  
Washington DC. And the world's bluest  
car could be anywhere.

PRESTON

If Newton was expecting to arrive  
two days ago, wherever he wants to  
be, he'll go straight there.

RAPH

So the question is, where would a  
crooked businessman with a picnic  
basket full of cash and a connection  
with a major senator be headed?

He looks at Preston, who nods, sagely.

RAPH

Capitol Hill...

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

Powell uses the radio while Fairbanks speaks to the cops.  
Traffic flows freely behind them.

POWELL

Yes, sir, we're just about done here.  
The highway is clear of all units.  
(listens)  
A very blue Ford Taurus?

EXT. WHITE HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Calhoun and a couple of the FBI's finest HEAVIES stand in  
front of the building where the tourists all like to take  
their photos. He's the one speaking on a handset to Powell.

CALHOUN

Yes, very blue. It contains two  
from the Most Wanted list.  
(listens)

He doesn't see Dyson walk up behind, frowning. Dyson nods  
to the heavies, who step back to a discreet distance.

CALHOUN

Plastic surgery! So when you see  
it, I want you to stop the --

DYSON

(taking handset)  
I'll take it from here.

DYSON (CONT'D)  
(to radio)  
Hello?

Dyson hands the angry and confused Calhoun an envelope.

DYSON  
Ah, Special Agent Powell. Listen.  
Disregard the instructions of, uh,  
former Associate Director Calhoun.  
(listens)  
Covertly follow the vehicle he  
described, but do not stop it or  
detain its occupants.  
(listens)  
Keep me informed. Out.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Powell offs the radio as Fairbanks materializes beside him.

FAIRBANKS  
We're staying here?

POWELL  
Very blue Ford Taurus.

At that moment, Penny and Tom drive past. What dumb luck.

Fairbanks and Powell exchange a glance, then wordlessly get into their car to follow, Fairbanks driving.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Calhoun makes a scene, although what with the road block earlier there aren't many tourists around yet to witness it.

CALHOUN  
This is -- it's outrageous!

DYSON  
It's procedure.

CALHOUN  
You can't can me that easily, Dyson --  
I have powerful friends.

DYSON  
This  
(reaches in pocket)  
is a fully authorized warrant to tap  
your security class Alpha telephone  
line. And this

DYSON (CONT'D)  
 (from another pocket)  
 is why you won't be talking to your  
 powerful friends.

He's produced a mini tape player, and he switches it on...

CALHOUN (O.S.)  
 (on tape)  
 Yes, I know you're chair of the Armed  
 Services Committee, I put in the  
 bribes, remember?

EXT. CAPITOL HILL -- DAY

Claudette, in vivid green today with a hefty briefcase, leaves the side of the building overlooking the National Mall.

Raph and Preston are standing on the road next to their van, arguing with an OFFICIAL.

CLAUDETTE  
 Are you slobs a news team?

PRESTON  
 (looking up)  
 Sure, Channel 24 news. I'm Phil --

CLAUDETTE  
 Come with me, we're going to the  
 Lincoln Memorial.

A big, white limo with plain glass windows pulls up.

RAPH  
 We are?

CLAUDETTE  
 (impatiently)  
 Yes, we are. Jump into your little  
 van -- we have a president to expose.

She flows into the waiting limo.

RAPH  
 What's she talking about?

PRESTON  
 (shrugs)  
 No idea, but I'm betting Tom Meredith  
 is somehow involved...

EXT. PARKING GARAGE -- DAY

The bright blue Taurus pulls up at the barrier. Tom takes a ticket, the barrier rises, and in they go.

Seconds after they're inside, Fairbanks and Powell's car arrives. Fairbanks shows her warrant card to the ticket machine, and the barrier rises in compliance.

INT. CAR -- DAY

Tom and Penny have found a spot to park.

TOM

Oh-oh, my breakfast just wore off.  
How about we eat before discovering  
what Mrs Hawks has arranged for us?

PENNY

My last meal before surrendering to  
the cops...  
(sighs)  
So long as it doesn't involve brats.

TOM

Or iced double tall skinny raspberry  
mochas.

INT. DINING ROOM -- DAY

Olivia and Brad wave goodbye to the ITALIAN AMBASSADOR. The dining table where they just ate is large, draped in immaculately-pressed cloth and carrying a ton of silverware. As, coincidentally, is the Italian Ambassador.

BRAD

(loudly)  
Arrivederci!  
(low)  
An Italian who doesn't like pasta?  
Is he for real?

OLIVIA

He ate four helpings of the zabaglione  
and kissed me behind the ear.

BRAD

I guess he is, then.  
(looks at watch)  
OK, well I'd better head off for  
Baltimore and the Tall Women.

OLIVIA  
 And I'd better stay home watching TV  
 the whole afternoon.

They smile, and kiss with genuine affection.

INT. CAFETERIA -- DAY

Fairbanks and Powell are at one side of the room, observing Tom and Penny eating at the other. Fairbanks is on the radio.

FAIRBANKS  
 (to radio)  
 We're in the cafeteria of the National  
 Air and Space Museum. The male  
 suspect is eating a starter of ...

POWELL  
 Waldorf.

FAIRBANKS  
 ... Waldorf salad. The female suspect  
 went for the soup du jour.

A loud SHOUTING can be heard through the radio. It's Dyson's voice, but his words are (thankfully) indistinct.

FAIRBANKS  
 Less detail, yes sir, of course.

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- DAY

Claudette leads Preston and Raph up the steps at the front. There are lots of late-arriving tourists milling about now.

Raph carries his camera, but doesn't use it -- he's in awe of the building. Abe's statue is right up ahead.

RAPH  
 Beautiful... Just beautiful.

CLAUDETTE  
 Are you kidding? He's plug ugly!  
 With a face like that, I'm amazed he  
 wasn't shot sooner.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE -- DAY

A heavily disguised Olivia -- wig, dark glasses, omigod a skirt and sleeveless top -- enjoys her freedom.

Her portable phone RINGS. Aww for shoot! --

She reaches into her bag, retrieves the phone, and answers.



OLIVIA

(listens)

Yes, Mr Dyson, I have gone for a stroll.

(listens)

No, Mr Dyson, I will not tell you where I am headed.

(listens)

Yes, Mr Dyson, I have told my husband.

(listens)

Yes, Mr Dyson, I have deactivated my phone's global positioning transponder. And, because I am aware how quickly cellular radio signals can be triangulated, I shall shortly be deactivating the rest of it, too.

(listens)

Five o'clock at the latest.

She switches it off, smiling. Oh sweet land of liberty!

EXT. MUSEUM -- DAY

Tom and Penny come out on the traffic side of the building.

TOM

Yes, we could walk it, but in this humidity that's what cabs are for.

PENNY

Perhaps the next time America needs a capital city, someone will think not to build it on a swamp.

TOM

(making the gesture)

Taxi!

EXT. MUSEUM -- MOMENTS LATER

Powell and Fairbanks are in non-telepathic discussion as they watch Penny and Tom get into a cab a few yards away.

POWELL

Taxicab rides are a level C expense.

FAIRBANKS

Is this pursuit hot?

They exchange glances, and nod.

POWELL

(making the gesture)

Taxi!

EXT. NATIONAL MALL -- DAY

Libby stops, pulls some sunscreen from her bag, and applies it to her arms and nose. Mad dogs and Anglophiles go out in the mid-day sun.

Smiling, she heads towards the Washington monument.

She's just one of many, many, many people enjoying the day.

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- DAY

Raph sits on the steps doing his impersonation of Lincoln's statue while Preston captures it on camera for posterity.

CLAUDETTE

Will you two stop that? I don't  
want you running out of tape!

She lights a cigar and smiles artificially at nearby tourists.

EXT. NEAR LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- DAY

Penny and Tom's taxi drives away. Tom looks at his watch.

TOM

We're a few minutes early, but hey!  
While we wait, we can check that our  
pennies aren't counterfeit!

He fishes a penny from his pocket and looks at the tails side, then at the memorial.

TOM

This one's good.

He suddenly grabs hold of Penny by the shoulders and looks at her, then at the memorial, too.

TOM

Not sure about this one.

They laugh.

As their eyes meet, melancholy smiles replace the laughter.

TOM

The world changes when we reach those  
steps...

PENNY

And us? Must we change with it?

EXT. NEAR LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- MOMENTS LATER

The FBI have also arrived, but the TAXI DRIVER is still waiting to be paid. Fairbanks hands him a credit card.

FAIRBANKS

Sorry, we're not tip-authorized.

TAXI DRIVER

Cheapskate FBI, huh? CIA always give a tip, why can't you guys?

FAIRBANKS

I'm a girl.

TAXI DRIVER

Uh? Oh, so you are.

INT. HALL -- DAY

Brad steps onto the podium to rapturous APPLAUSE from the Tall Women of America. They love him! He's all smiles, waving, and the clapping just goes on and on.

BRAD

(into microphone)

What a fantastic reception! I wasn't expecting a -- a standing ovation!

The applause CUTS OFF instantly. A chair SCRAPES at the floor.

The Tall Women of America are all seated.

EXT. NEAR LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- DAY

Penny and Tom approach, then stop. Raph, Preston and Claudette are clearly visible, and scanning all directions.

PENNY

Tom, please tell me those people don't look familiar...

TOM

But -- but this isn't true! The TV man is with Claudette Grant!

PENNY

She's the one you told me about? Why you had to change your name?

TOM  
 (steps back)  
 Maybe we should wait until we see  
 what Olivia ... has ... planned.

Raph has shouldered his camera and is pointing it at them.

PENNY  
 (resignedly)  
 Too late?

She looks behind. Powell and Fairbanks are nearing.

PENNY  
 Would those robo-suits be cutting  
 off our retreat, by any chance?

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- CONTINUOUS

Claudette struts around. She sees Raph filming the approach of Tom and Penny.

CLAUDETTE  
 What are you doing with that camera?  
 Didn't I tell you not to --

She spots Fairbanks and Powell coming up, too.

CLAUDETTE  
 No, wait, keep going -- this is who  
 we're waiting for.

She drops her cigar and grinds it into the pristine floor.

RAPH  
 (to Preston)  
 It's him -- you were right!

PRESTON  
 (to Raph)  
 But where's the money? Why does she  
 need us?  
 (frowns)  
 Keep shooting...

Tom and Penny arrive for the showdown.

PENNY  
 (to Preston)  
 Hi again. Walking better today?

PRESTON  
 Yes -- and wearing a kevlar jock-  
 strap, too.

CLAUDETTE  
 (butting in)  
 OK, hand it over!

PENNY  
 You'll have to narrow that "it" down  
 to something more specific than the  
 infinite number of things it could  
 refer to at the moment.

CLAUDETTE  
 You know exactly what I mean -- that  
 sperm you have in your bag!

RAPH  
 (low, to Preston)  
 You were lucky she only punched you...

PRESTON  
 (low, to Raph)  
 Just keep filming -- Claudette hasn't  
 recognized him. This is all wrong...

Fairbanks and Powell arrive. Although the sun beats down,  
 they're not breaking sweat at all in their FBI suits.

CLAUDETTE  
 Ah, Special Agents Fairbanks and  
 Powell, if I'm correct?

FAIRBANKS  
 He's Powell.

POWELL  
 She's Fairbanks.

CLAUDETTE  
 (smiling nauseatingly)  
 Would you be so kind as to arrest  
 this woman, please?

Fairbanks and Powell exchange a glance.

FAIRBANKS  
 On what charge?

CLAUDETTE  
 She's carrying a container of sperm  
 which proves that the president is  
 guilty of a high crime and  
 misdemeanor, or maybe even both.

The agents and Penny are shocked to their bones, albeit for  
 different reasons.

Raph is getting it all on camera.

POWELL

That may be true, Senator Grant, but we can't arrest her for it.

CLAUDETTE

So? You can at least impound the sperm as evidence, can't you?

They exchange a glance.

FAIRBANKS

Yes, that's possible, but we'd need --

Claudette produces a sheaf of papers from her briefcase with a flourish.

CLAUDETTE

Here are the necessary legal forms --  
 (smiles to camera)  
 -- warrants, subpoenas, things with Latin names...

She hands them the papers. They start to read.

CLAUDETTE

Just take the sperm straight to my lawyers, their addresses are on the documents. All of them.

POWELL

Everything looks to be in order, senator. We can indeed impound the evidence as requested.

CLAUDETTE

Well..? So impound it then!

Penny steps back into Tom's arms, and he hugs her protectively. Preston is very surprised -- doesn't she know what kind of a guy he is?

FAIRBANKS

(to Penny)

Ma'am, we have information that indicates you may be in possession of materials deemed evidence in an upcoming impeachment trial.

POWELL

We require you to hand such over.

PENNY  
 (defiantly)  
 I won't.

She looks into Tom's eyes for support. He smiles her it.

Preston shakes his head.

RAPH  
 (low, to Preston)  
 Who's the bad guy here?!

Preston cuts him off with a gesture.

PENNY  
 I'm a British citizen, and I insist  
 on speaking to the British Consul.

CLAUDETTE  
 You don't sound British to me! You  
 sound ... New England!

PENNY  
 Uh? Oh!  
 (English accent)  
 I do apologize, is this better?

Penny's default accent is her English one from now on.

Tom seems to be distracted by the tourists behind Claudette.

FAIRBANKS  
 Ma'am, we will issue you a receipt  
 for the sperm.

POWELL  
 And you can contact the British Consul  
 at your earliest convenience.

TOM  
 (suddenly)  
 Wait! She has diplomatic immunity!

CLAUDETTE  
 No she doesn't.

PENNY  
 No I don't.

TOM  
 Yes you do, the president appointed  
 you a diplomatic courier.

PENNY  
 (concerned)  
 Tom!

CLAUDETTE  
 (laughing)  
 No way! Where's your proof?

POWELL  
 We do require corroboration, sir.

CLAUDETTE  
 Agent Powell, seize that sperm!

TOM  
 (to Powell)  
 No, don't, it's true -- ask the  
 president!

CLAUDETTE  
 Well in case you didn't notice, sonny,  
 the president isn't here.

Olivia steps forward, removing her sunglasses and wig.

OLIVIA  
 I think you'll find she is.

Everyone but Tom is thunderstruck.

PENNY  
 Libby?  
 (joyously)  
 Libby!

She runs to Olivia in delight and the two embrace. Tears of  
 happiness begin to flow.

OLIVIA  
 Penny, look at you! You look great!

PENNY  
 Libby, Libby! I have so much to  
 tell you!

They hold each other tightly again.

Claudette has walked up to Fairbanks and Powell.

CLAUDETTE  
 (to Powbanks, angrily)  
 Are you two just going to let this  
 happen?!



POWELL

She is the president, senator.

FAIRBANKS

So yes, we are.

Preston suddenly steps up to Claudette, taking a mike from his pocket while giving Raph a signal that says "trust me".

PRESTON

Senator Grant, is it true that you've attempted to acquire frozen sperm before?

CLAUDETTE

(shocked)

What? No! Of course it's not true! Why, the very suggestion --

PRESTON

Only rumors abound that you put it on a stick and suck it like a Popsicle.

Penny and Olivia turn in mutual amazement to watch this.

CLAUDETTE

(protesting)

I do not! What is this?

PRESTON

A lot of viewers will be wondering, senator, just what it is about the taste of sperm that you like?

CLAUDETTE

(disgusted)

Icky-ick! How would I know? I've never tasted sperm in my life -- nor do I ever want to!

PRESTON

(to Raph)

Was that clear enough?

Raph makes a "so-so" gesture with his hands.

PRESTON

(to Claudette)

Would you like to say that again for the camera?

CLAUDETTE

(indignant)

Sure... You pervert.

(she takes the mike)

I hereby state, categorically, that at no time in my entire life has sperm ever passed between these lips of mine -- and I'll sue anyone who suggests otherwise!

PRESTON

(taking back mike)

Are you sure?

CLAUDETTE

I'm most certainly sure!

PRESTON

Thanks! Of course, that would mean you were lying at the Meredith trial.

Claudette freezes, eyes wide with the awful realization that she just screwed herself over...

TOM

I think I feel a counter-suit coming on...

CLAUDETTE

Is that -- Thomas Meredith?!

(twitches weirdly)

No, I can explain, I was, I was -- help me someone?!

PRESTON

(to Raph)

You know, that felt good!

OLIVIA

Special Agents Powell and Fairbanks, Senator Grant seems in need of assistance. If you could perhaps convey her to her lawyers?

Fairbanks and Powell nod, and lead off the stunned Claudette.

EXT. NEAR LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- CONTINUOUS

Claudette walks like she's experiencing gravity for the first time.

POWELL

Special Agent Fairbanks, do I know your first name?

FAIRBANKS

B.J.

POWELL

Really? Mine too!

CLAUDETTE

(confused)

What pretty flowers...

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- MOMENTS LATER

TOM

(to Preston)

I don't know how to thank you for what you just did. It's as if I've been relieved of a tremendous burden.

PRESTON

Yeah, well, maybe I've relieved myself of one, too. But what really happened that night between you and Claudette?

TOM

She tried bribing me to make it appear O'Hare was embezzling. When I refused, she hit her face with a keyboard, tore at her clothes, then ran to security screaming assault.

PRESTON

So, uh, why didn't you say this in court?

TOM

Because it's wrong to accuse people without any evidence.

PRESTON

But you could have gone to jail!

PENNY

(Eyes wide)

Jail!

(shouting to FBI)

No, FBI people, wait!

EXT. NEAR LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- CONTINUOUS

Powell and Fairbanks turn round, but don't move to return.

A firm hand from Fairbanks stops the bewildered Claudette from wandering off.

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL -- CONTINUOUS

PENNY

(shouting)

I wish to relinquish my diplomatic immunity for the specific crime of manslaughter, which I committed two days ago at some dumb airport in (American) Connecticut.

As one, the tourists at the memorial stop and stare at her.

PENNY

(to tourists)

Want me to commit some more?

They instantly return to being entranced by architecture.

PRESTON

Manslaughter? Connecticut?

(he frowns)

Darken the hair, add a business suit, the English accent... You don't mean Mikey Zale, do you? The guy who fell from a balcony?

PENNY

After I assaulted him with a thief-resistant briefcase, yes.

PRESTON

(laughing)

Well one, he's not dead, and two, he was an escaped cop-killer. You're a heroine, you get a reward, the works!

Penny stares at Preston a moment.

PENNY

You're the man off the TV news in the bar.

(shouts to FBI)

It's OK, false alarm!

Fairbanks and Powell take Claudette out of sight.

PENNY

A reward! How much? Am I rich?

PRESTON

I think it's about ten grand now. Not in the same league as Mr three-hundred-million here, but a start.

PENNY

What?  
 (looks at Tom)  
 Him?

PRESTON

He's a multimillionaire, didn't he  
 tell you?

Penny gapes open her mouth, but words won't come out.

PRESTON

I guess not...

PENNY

(still amazed)  
 Tom! Is this true? Are you the  
 richest person I ever met?

TOM

Er, it might be?

RAPH

(to Preston)  
 Damn! There goes my share-price  
 theory...

PENNY

But why didn't you tell me?

TOM

(embarrassed)  
 It would be boasting. I didn't really  
 do anything, I just worked hard every  
 day for ten years and it ... happened.

PENNY

(happily)  
 Oh Tom, if I didn't love you already,  
 I would have fallen for you right  
 now.

She hugs him.

PRESTON

(to Raph)  
 Isn't it great when that happens?

TOM

(astonished)  
 You -- what? Oh but this is -- !  
 You love me? That's just -- but  
 this is, oh yes! Penny, I feel the  
 same way about you!

PENNY

English.

TOM

(Penny-English accent)

Penny, I love you.

(American)

I can't believe I said that!

PENNY

(beaming)

I can't believe I heard it...

They embrace some more. Over Penny's shoulder, Tom sees Olivia, waiting patiently and smiling happily. Oh dear...

TOM

(sadly)

Er, Pen, don't you have something to explain to Madam President?

PENNY

(turning, hand to mouth)

Oh! But Libby, I have some terrible news!

OLIVIA

(nodding, stoically)

Don't concern yourself, Penny. It was a long shot anyway; Brad and I will be OK, sperm or no sperm.

PENNY

Oh I have the sperm.

(takes it from bag)

Only, it's your brother's.

OLIVIA

My brother's? Larry's? You brought me Larry's sperm?

(she's confused)

But I can't use my own brother's sperm for IVF...

PENNY

But that's what's terrible, you can -- Larry wasn't your brother. Ashley was your brother. It was only when I told my mother I was getting you Ashley's sperm that she confessed.

OLIVIA  
 (with dread)  
 Confessed to what?

PENNY  
 (to Raph)  
 Could you stop filming, please?

Raph looks to Preston, who nods. He lowers the camera and switches it completely off. Penny smiles at him as best she can, in appreciation.

PENNY  
 Libby, we were switched at birth. By the time our parents realized, they loved us so much they didn't want to swap back. So they kept us -- but they didn't tell us, in case that stopped us from loving them. They didn't tell anyone.

OLIVIA  
 My mom ... wasn't my mom?

She's visibly upset. Penny's tears begin too -- for Libby.

PENNY  
 Shortsightedness runs in my mother's family. Everyone needs glasses from being a baby. Except me.

OLIVIA  
 (murmuring)  
 I've had myopia all my life...

PENNY  
 So I couldn't let you use Ashley's sperm. But as Larry had also donated sperm, and a DNA test proved I was his next of kin...

OLIVIA  
 But -- So I'm English?

PENNY  
 Natural born. And I'm American.

Olivia draws herself up, momentarily, looking every inch the president. She knows full well the gravity of this news.

OLIVIA  
 I'll call the vice president and hand over immediately. The Supreme Court will have to rule on my status.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

(to Preston)

Sir, if you'd like to do a Pulitzer-winning interview shortly, I'm sure Mr Meredith will lend you his jacket.

INT. BUSINESS CLASS -- DAY

The usual seats, the usual flight attendant. Penny has kept the new hair and face, but has dropped the Captain Casual outfit.

PENNY

You'll love it in England -- the tea tastes of tea! And my parents are so sweet, they'll adore you to pieces.

TOM

Hey, isn't it about time for the State of the Union address?

He starts to unpack the screen from the chair arm.

TOM

If I'm going to spend two months in the land that gave the world the Teletubbies, I need every fix of U.S. culture I can get...

PENNY

U.S. culture -- now there's an oxymoron...

She gets out her little screen, too. The other passengers already have theirs in position, but then they're not in love...

The flight attendant arrives, bearing a red rose.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(gives Penny the rose)

This is for you, an anonymous gift. Don't eat it all at once.

PENNY

That's nice, I wonder who sent it?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Did I say it was an anonymous gift? I meant to say it was an  
(loudly)  
anonymous gift.

She leaves. She has many other passengers to abuse.



Penny eyes the rose with great suspicion.

TOM

A secret admirer? So isn't a non-secret one enough for you?

PENNY

With a surname like mine, I've come to know a lot about roses...

She opens up the wide bit just behind the head, and finds a small electronic device with an aerial threading the stalk.

PENNY

(handing it to Tom)

Tom, can you do that thing you do with a pen?

Tom produces a pen from nowhere, and fiddles with the bug.

There is a sudden WAIL of pain.

A GUY across the way leaps from his seat, tearing off his headset and pounding on his ears.

The flight attendant storms over to him, pausing only to take a pair of handcuffs from her cart.

Penny gives Mr Knight a gesture, "catch you later".

TOM

(looking at screen)

Pen! It's starting!

They settle down to watch history being made.

INT. OVAL OFFICE -- DAY

On the screen, Olivia looks like she just threw up. She peers over the top of her glasses like a schoolmarm, then begins, deadly serious.

OLIVIA

My fellow Americans...

She frowns, and glances down at her notes.

When she looks back up she is beaming the biggest smile ever.

OLIVIA

... I'm going to have a baby!

INT. BUSINESS CLASS -- MOMENTS LATER

A cheer goes up throughout the plane, and the passengers burst into spontaneous applause. Tom and Penny smile happily at both the news and the warmth of the reaction.

People are still whistling and cheering as Tom and Penny, close into a clinch, bring their lips together, and begin a kiss that will last for the next hundred years...

FADE OUT: