

SCORCHED EARTH

written by

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A BLACK SCREEN.

SOUNDS OF WAR: The rumble of tanks, rapid gun fire, glass breaking, yelling in Pashto, explosions, hissing gas.

Slowly the screen is filled with a thick emission of vapor.

Pull out on the vapor to reveal it is...

INT. MAKE-UP ROOM - DAY

...a fog of hairspray over the coiffing of blonde hair.

SEAN HANNITY (V.O.)
Joining us now, author of six New
York Times best sellers...

CLOSE on the application of lipstick,

MIKA BRZEZINSKI (V.O.)
Conservative commentator, writer,
and syndicated columnist...

Red manicured fingernails scrolling through Twitter,

BILL MAHER (V.O.)
Always controversial and never
afraid to enter the Lion's Den,
here to discuss her new book...

The smoothing of a white pencil skirt over a toned ass,

RACHEL MADDOW (V.O.)
The book is titled...Are you ready
for this? *Aborting America*...

Christian Louboutins stepping onto a linoleum floor.

GLENN BECK (V.O.)
*Aborting America; How Liberals Are
Killing Patriotism.*

We follow the Louboutins down a hallway. CLICK CLICK CLICK.

GLENN BECK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Please welcome Allison Elkins.

JOY BEHAR (V.O.)
Miss Allison Elkins

ANDERSON COOPER (V.O.)
Allison Elkins

The Louboutins step through a swinging door and into the harsh lights of a television studio. The lights fill the screen then burn out to reveal...

INT. MSNBC NEWSROOM - DAY

ALLISON ELKINS, late-30s, conservative commentator, beautiful enough to be belittled for it, sits at a desk, with several political PUNDITS and a HOST in heated fast-paced debate.

HOST

Allison, your book says women---

ALLISON

No. Hold on.

HOST

It says...

ALLISON

What it says---

HOST (CONT'D)

That we should repeal the
19th amendment.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

No, it says that if we repealed the
19th amendment, Republicans would
have won every election since 1950.

PUNDIT 1

Goldwater---

ALLISON

With the exception of Goldwater in
'64, yes, but we'd have won every
other election and if we had
America would be better for it.

An explosion of outrage from other pundits.

PUNDIT 1

Women being denied the vote
would be better for America?

PUNDIT 2

White men, just say it, white
men.

ALLISON

Factually, yes, a white male
electorate would yield a more
conservative America, so yes, a
better America.

PUNDIT 1

Only for white conservatives,
not for Blacks, Latinos,
gays, immigrants...

ALLISON (CONT'D)

(laughing)
Surprise, I'm a white
conservative!

PUNDIT 2

This is the problem, Republicans have been stoking the flames of white nationalism for years, trying to suppress minority voters--

ALLISON

Oh, please, you're a hypocrite.

PUNDIT 2

I'm a hypocrite?

ALLISON

All Democrats are hypocrites when it comes to voter suppression. When Kennedy passed the Immigration and Nationality Act---

Pundit 2 tries to interrupt, but Allison steam rolls him.

PUNDIT 2

Republican-backed voter ID laws have led to two-thirds of all new registrants on a suspended voter lists---

ALLISON (CONT'D)

It was designed to change the demographics of America, grow peasant cultures who would remain poor for generations, remain on government support, and secure a solid block of Democratic voters.

Pundit 2 fumes, Allison "leans in" determined to win.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Liberals act holier than thou about voter-suppression. Meanwhile, 73% of Americans prefer consolidated elections, but Democrats champion off-cycle elections that benefit Democrat-aligned interest groups. You want to talk about voter suppression and manipulating the electorate, fine, but don't tell me Democrats want every voice heard!

Mic. Drop. The Pundits are ready to pounce, but Host cuts in.

HOST

(to Pundit 1)

I know you want to weigh in Tracy, but I have to move on.

(to Allison)

Allison, most Americans are familiar with your family's story.

The screens behind Host project art of Allison's late father and brothers in uniform. Allison looks up at them with pride.

HOST (CONT'D)

Your father, Colonel Thomas Elkins, was killed in Desert Storm.

ALLISON

Yes, when I was twelve.

HOST

A terrible thing for a child. Then your younger brother, Private First Class Matthew Elkins, was fatally shot in Iraq in 2007.

ALLISON

My siblings and I felt that the best way to honor our father was to serve our country; my brothers in uniform, my sister and I in the political sphere.

He nods. The screens now show grainy footage: a rescue mission in Eastern Afghanistan. The rumble of tanks, rapid gun fire, glass breaking, yelling in Pashto, explosions.

HOST

That leads us to 2012 when your elder brother, Captain Peter Elkins, was captured by rebel forces in Eastern Afghanistan.

Allison expertly conveys both sadness and stoicism.

HOST (CONT'D)

The entire nation mourned when he was tragically killed during the mission to secure his rescue.

ALLISON

And we'll be forever grateful for the prayers of the American people during our family's darkest days.

The Host's tone changes from empathy to interrogatory. Breaking News banners scroll across the screen.

HOST

Dark days indeed, but perhaps not the darkest. MSNBC has acquired never-before-seen video of Captain Peter Elkins...

Screens change to a low quality video of CAPT. PETER ELKINS.

HOST (CONT'D)
...recorded only two days before
American forces risked their lives
to save him.

Allison's heart stops, as a bearded Peter speaks to camera.

PETER
My name is Capt. Peter Elkins, 3rd
Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. My
fellow Americans, you are being...

He turns toward sounds of GUN FIRE and YELLING, then resumes.

PETER (CONT'D)
You think you know who the enemy
is...I...I assassinated U.S. Armed
Forces in order to destabilize the
government. You're being lied to.
The truth, America is the enemy.

Video freezes, CLOSE on Peter's face, weathered and bruised.

HOST (O.S.)
Allison, I have to ask, was your
brother a terrorist?

CLOSE on Allison's face, shock turning to sadness.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Do you believe he was feeding
American military intelligence to
our enemies in the Middle East?

CLOSE on Peter's deep green eyes.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
How do you respond to this tape?

CLOSE on Allison's eyes, the same deep green.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Allison, do you have a comment?

CLOSER on Allison's eyes, now glossy as she holds back tears.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Allison?

Her eyes fill the frame. She closes her eyes. BLACK.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. CAMPAIGN RALLY, BROWARD COUNTY FLORIDA - DAY

The end of a campaign speech. An enthusiastic crowd cheers on a polished political couple ISABEL HOLT, a Chanel sweater draped over her skeletal frame, and her husband, BROOKS HOLT, the candidate, all style, no substance.

BROOKS

And I am ready to stand with you,
to lead the fight! Thank you. God
bless you. God Bless the United
States. Thank you.

They wave and exit the stage. A handsome Campaign Manager, LOGAN, greets them at the bottom of the stairs.

LOGAN

Nailed it. They loved you both.

They hurry toward idling Town Cars. Brooks struts.

BROOKS

That felt good.

LOGAN

Isabel was right, no tie, sport
coat, you were more relaxed, very
approachable.

BROOKS

I felt more relaxed.

ISABEL

(to Logan sharply)
Do you have the headlines?

Logan passes her an iPad. She quickly walks flipping through news clips as the men follow. We stay on the iPad screen as Logan and Brooks continue their banter.

BROOKS (O.S.)

Maybe, I'll wear board shorts next
time, see how relaxed I can get.

LOGAN (O.S.)

We'd certainly see a bump in the
polls from women.

Isabel looks at a photo of her and Brooks next to a photo of his opponent with her husband and kids. Isabel stops at the car, her face soured. Brooks grabs her around the waist.

BROOKS

What do you think babe, should I
show some skin, see if it helps?

He kisses her cheek, opens the car door, and climbs inside.

INT. TOWN CAR - LATER

Brooks hands her back the iPad, which is still on the photo.

BROOKS

So what?

ISABEL

This matters. Values voters---

BROOKS

Conservatives aren't voting values.

LOGAN

He's right. They're voting taxes,
they're voting jobs, security---

Isabel shoots Logan a look, less about his participation in a
personal conversation and more about him not backing her up.

ISABEL

There is a point where not having
children becomes an obstacle to
political ascension. And I'm 32.

Brooks looks at his wife with surprise and compassion.

BROOKS

Hon, is this about the campaign
or...are you maybe getting a
certain urge? Some baby fever?

She lies.

ISABEL

Both.

She hates children, this is about optics. Brooks cluelessly
squeezes her. She forces a smile.

BROOKS

Let's do it. We're having a baby!

He kisses her, she eyes Logan. Then the iPad buzzes, news
alert. OFF Isabel's panic as she reads headline: "Capt. Peter
Elkins War Hero or War Criminal?"

INT. DELL BRADY RADIO STATION, STUDIO - DAY

DELL BRADY (60s) conservative talk show magnate leans into a an oversized gold microphone. He oozes a folksy smugness and southern drawl.

DELL BRADY

And what strikes me, folks, is how infallible liberals --- especially Millennial liberals --- believe the New York Times to be. Not just that it's the news authority. It's infallible! They think that NBC Nightly News or CBS Nightly News or ABC is infallible. This is dangerous folks! They believe it's gospel! And here is why it is so dangerous, here is why...

Dell sees his PRODUCER in the control booth talking to an INTERN. Producer looks at Dell with concern. Dell continues.

DELL BRADY (CONT'D)

When the New York Times prints that "another racist cop" has shot an "unarmed black man," they don't ask questions, they get out their hoodies and their tag board and start rioting and they attack cops!

CONTROL BOOTH

PRODUCER looks down at blinking lights of incoming calls. Frantically, he grabs a yellow legal pad and starts writing.

STUDIO

DELL BRADY (CONT'D)

You have to ask which inalienable rights are liberals really interested in? We're gonna take---

Producer slams yellow pad against the glass: TAKE NO CALLS! Producer signals to wrap up. Dell is confused, but nods.

DELL BRADY (CONT'D)

We're gonna take this on and more tomorrow. Until then folks, this is Dell Brady...Getting It Right!

Producer gives Dell the all clear signal. Dell is irritated.

DELL BRADY (CONT'D)

What the frog was that?

INT. DELL BRADY RADIO STATION, CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Dell, Producer, and Intern all hover over a TV monitor featuring news footage of Allison pushing her way through hungry press outside a NYC hotel, while an ANCHOR narrates.

ANCHOR (O.C.)

Conservative pundit and author Allison Elkins is the sister of the late Captain Peter Elkins, the decorated Army Ranger captured and killed in Afghanistan in 2012. A video of Captain Elkins released today shows him confessing to acts of terrorism and calling "America the enemy." The Elkins family has not yet released a statement.

Dell looks as if all the wind has been knocked out of him.

DELL BRADY

Son of a motherless goat.

INT. ONE AMERICA NEWS - DAY

KAYLEIGH KELLY (23), the picture of millennial entitlement, chases her News Director, CARL TAGG through the bullpen.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

A three minute segment!

CARL TAGG

This is One America, Kayleigh, not Snapchat.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

Every poll from Gallup to the Sitka Daily Sentinel says that Republicans have no shot, no shot, at winning back Congress without the youth vote. And we won't get it. And do you know why?

CARL TAGG

No, because sadly I let my subscription to the Sitka Sentinel expire last month.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

It's because we are seen as a party of crusty old white men and this network perpetuates that myth!

He stops, himself a crusty old white man. He looks around and sees RESEARCHERS now listening in on the conversation.

CARL TAGG
 Alright, let me ask you this...

She puffs up, finally being taken seriously. He squints.

CARL TAGG (CONT'D)
 Are you chewing gum?

He turns back around and starts walking. Kayleigh embarrassed, but not deterred, quickly looks for a place to put the gum then catches up with Carl.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY
 There are thousands of millennials who believe in the conservative agenda, but aren't being given agency within the party. Thousands of young conservatives who aren't watching your network because they aren't on your network.

Carl stops and looks at her, a pageant queen in a Brooks Brothers' blazer, but the idea isn't all bad.

CARL TAGG
 What's the pitch?

KAYLEIGH KELLEY
 3 minutes nightly on the 11 o'clock. I'll take on pop culture news with a conservative spin. Lena Dunham touting abortions, a Celtics point guard who refuses to stand---

Carl listens and nods, but something is distracting him over her shoulder. Kayleigh tries to get his attention back.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (CONT'D)
 We obliterate political correctness. We crucify the Hollywood elite. Carl! I could be the Allison Elkins of millennials.

Carl nods toward the TV. Kayleigh turns around to the breaking news of the Elkins scandal. Her face drops.

CARL TAGG
 You may wanna get yourself a new idol.
 (beat)
 Oh, and...I'm gonna pass.

INT. FLORIDA NEW TIMES - DAY

The same breaking news story plays on a TV. Three scruffy Reporters, ALEX, JOSH, and AMIR watch and eat Chinese food.

ALEX
(mouth full of lo mein)
It's Christmas morning watching
that racist cunt go down in flames.

JOSH
Did you see her on Hannity last
week? She equated a high school's
Gay Straight Alliance to the KKK.

ALEX
What I wouldn't give to have been
in that studio when it broke.

JOSH
My buddy Wes is a producer on
Maddow, told me they were popping
champagne in the halls.

ALEX
(laughing)
I bet. I fucking bet.

AMIR JAT (Pakistani-American), who hasn't taken his eyes off the TV, puts down his Chinese and goes to his cubicle. He starts looking through papers, then opens a browser.

JOSH
Peter Elkins, damn! Amir, who ya
think the Boss'll put on it?

Amir opens Reddit, begins scanning, looking for anything on the Elkins' story.

AMIR JAT
Ortega, maybe Bryant.

Alex and Josh enter Amir's cubicle. Alex is picking the water chestnuts out of his lo mein, dropping them on Amir's desk. Josh leans over the wall looking at the bull pen.

JOSH
Fuck. Ortega hates me.

Amir keeps typing, searching.

AMIR JAT
Could be Bryant.

JOSH
Bryant *really* hates me. Damn! Story
of the fucking year and we're gonna
be black-balled from it.

ALEX
I told you not to flirt with his
wife at the holiday party.

JOSH
But those tits...

They laugh. Amir spins his chair around.

AMIR JAT
What if this isn't the story?

Josh and Alex look at each other. They know what's coming.

ALEX
Dude, don't go there.

AMIR JAT
What seems more likely? America's
favorite son is a radical jihadist
or the tape is propaganda designed
to take down the Right's most
prominent family.

JOSH
So on one hand Elkins is a
terrorist and on the other...

ALEX
Democrats finally grew some balls
and learned how to effectively take
down their opposition.

JOSH
Elkins is a terrorist.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Yea, it's definitely that
he's a terrorist.

They laugh and start to leave. Josh hangs back.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Seriously man, no one is gonna
respect you as a journalist if you
keep chasing shit like this.

AMIR JAT
Said Bradlee to Woodward.

Amir takes Josh's Chinese food and goes back to searching the
internet. Josh smiles and leaves.

EXT. ELKINS' COMPOUND, PALM BEACH, FLORIDA - DAY

A 1920's Mediterranean-style mansion amidst elegant landscaping and towering palms. Beyond privacy hedges and iron gates, ravenous media ambush an approaching Escalade.

INT. ESCALADE - DAY

Allison sits in the backseat, unflappable, an icy stare despite the chaos, as the Escalade rolls through the gate.

ISABEL (PRE-LAP)
They can't do this to us!

INT. ELKINS' COMPOUND - DAY

Two cubes of ice drop into a crystal tumbler, bourbon follows. Allison coolly drinks, her back to the living room. Behind her, family and allies frantically strategize. Her sister, Isabel, rails on.

ISABEL
It's trash! Ross, can't we sue?

Allison's fiancé ROSS BRADY sits casually on the sofa.

ROSS
There might be a case for libel, Allison's career, and depending on how this impacts you and Brooks in the mid-terms...

ISABEL
You think we'll see a sizable drop?

The Elkins' publicist, GAIL SHIRLEY, 50s, clad in Eileen Fisher and accessorized by a Belvedere Martini, weighs in.

GAIL
7 points, maybe 10.

Isabel drops onto the arm of the wingback chair where Brooks sits, only now attentive.

BROOKS
10! Can we come back from that?

GAIL
I'm a publicist not a political strategist, but I'd say it depends.

ISABEL

It depends?! Thank god we're paying
you 10k a month, or we wouldn't
have that dazzling insight!

BROOKS

On what?

ROSS

What about Ally's new book?

BROOKS (CONT'D)

On *what* does it depend?

A BOOMING southern drawl pierces through the discord.

DELL BRADY

On whether or not he's innocent.

Allison sets down her glass with force.

ALLISON

He's innocent!

The room quiets and stills. Dell wrestles himself up.

DELL BRADY

Course he is, but the thing to do
now is distance yourself.

Allison turns around, locking eyes with Dell.

ALLISON

I won't disavow my brother.

Dell takes a handful of nuts and walks over to Allison.

DELL BRADY

You got played darlin. We can all
agree your shit-for-brains
publicist should'a never had you on
that liberal circle jerk MSNBC, but
what's done is done. Now, you gotta
speak to the base. Come on my show
Sunday and apologize.

ALLISON

Apologize? For what?

DELL BRADY

People feel betrayed.

ALLISON

Christ, I built the base, Dell. I'm
giving the keynote at CPAC. This
family created the conservative
movement!

DELL BRADY

And they'll turn on you faster than
a heifer in heat if you don't
disassociate yourself from Peter.

Allison looks around, expecting everyone to be as outraged by
Dell's suggestion as she is, but they're not on her side.

ISABEL

Ally, we have to be smart. There is
too much to lose.

GAIL

We step out of the limelight for a
while, cancel the book tour.

BROOKS

Suspend campaign appearances?

GAIL

Yes. Issue a press release "The
Elkins family asks for privacy
during this difficult time."

Allison looks up at her father's portrait on the wall.

ALLISON

No.

(beat)

We're not apologizing. We're not
cowering from a fight. "The first
rule of winning a war..."

She turns around and looks at her sister.

ISABEL

"Name your enemy."

ALLISON

We attack the left before the base
attacks us. Play the offense.

ROSS

Spin it as a lefty conspiracy.

ISABEL

Which it is!

GAIL

Get conservative media behind us.
It'll work. Hannity is already
bellowing the tape is a fake.

DELL BRADY
 You'll need click bait. Hire that
 kid from Utah, what's his name---

GAIL
 Finnigan...Finnial...Finnic

ROSS
 Finnicum, he did the, uh, the

ISABEL
 The Cory Booker flag burning.

ALLISON
 No. No fake news stories. It's not
 what we do. We got in this game to
 expose the hypocrisy and lies of
 Democrats, we got in this to tell
 the truth. And the truth is Peter
 is innocent.

Allison looks at each of them, some eyes drop to the floor.
 They may not believe her, but they'll follow her.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 The truth is...

Her polished media persona returns.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 ...that this is simply another
 unsubstantiated liberal attack on
 American patriotism.

GAIL
 That's the line. Run it!

The room is a furor of activity. Everyone on phones booking
 interviews, giving statements, repeating the line. Allison
 shoots her bourbon and begins to leave. Isabel stops her.

ISABEL
 Where are you going?

ALLISON
 To prove I'm right.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. VETERAN'S APARTMENT, LANTANA, FL - DAY

Allison takes in the reality of this dark dingy apartment, a fog of cigarette smoke fills the room. On a large, expensive, but dated TV, GERALDO RIVERA interviews Brooks and Isabel.

ISABEL (TV)

We're shocked liberals would stoop so low as to falsely attack a Gold Star family to win an election.

GERALDO RIVERA (TV)

Frankly, I'm not shocked. We've seen this kind of dirty politicking from the left before.

A vet, RUSTY, returns from the kitchen with two beers and turns down TV volume. A phone is ringing unanswered.

RUSTY

They're all calling now.

As he hands Allison a beer can, he spills some on her shoe.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Shit, my bad.

ALLISON

It's fine. You were stationed with my brother in Jalalabad---

Rusty plops himself on a black leather sofa.

RUSTY

Peter was a good soldier, a prick, but he saved my ass more than once.

ALLISON

You were the only survivor...

He removes his prosthetic leg and sets it aside. He sees her flinch, he takes a swig of beer. She feels his eyes on her.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Is there anything you can tell me about Peter's capture, they said...

RUSTY

That's a nice bag. Hermes?

Allison refuses to let him to see how uncomfortable she is.

ALLISON

Yes.

RUSTY

Bet you're wondering how I knew?

ALLISON

You have a girlfriend.

RUSTY

Ex. She never shut up about that bag, saw it in People.

He lights a cigarette. Allison takes another look around the apartment, amidst the despair a few high-end items losing luster: the dated tv, an empty salt-water fish tank, huge, dusty stereo speakers. The phone begins ringing again.

ALLISON

I won't pay you to tell the truth if that's where you're headed.

Rusty grabs his crutch and hops toward the phone.

RUSTY

I'm headed to the kitchen.

She stops him, places her hand on a cross tattoo on his arm.

ALLISON

If you allow your honor to be bought, you won't just betray Peter...you'll betray God.

He looks at her trying to determine if the sentiment is real.

RUSTY

Two things I never saw in that war lady, Truth and God.

(beat)

You can find your way out.

Rusty enters the kitchen. We hear him answer the phone.

Allison puts her beer can down on a dresser. She notices a framed photo of Rusty and Peter in uniform, something about it is off, *is that Afghanistan?* She takes out her cell phone and snaps a photo of it. She grabs her Hermes bag and leaves.

INT. FLORIDA NEW TIMES - DAY

CLOSE on the cover of today's Florida New Times "Palm Beach Family, Terrorist Sympathizers?" Peter's army photo next to an old photo of Allison, Ross, Isabel, and Brooks at a gala.

AMIR JAT (O.S.)

We have a responsibility---

Amir spills coffee over the paper. He hasn't slept, but is bursting with fervor. He hurriedly cleans up spill. His editor, JAVIER, annoyed, stands, brushes off his pants.

JAVIER

I'm not green-lighting a story based on a conspiracy theory.

Javier takes off for the bull pen. Amir rushes to keep pace.

AMIR JAT

I have a source.

JAVIER

Who can prove that Peter Elkins didn't die in Eastern Afghanistan?

AMIR JAT

Not exactly, not yet but---

Javier tosses a stack of red lined papers on a writer's desk.

JAVIER

Not exactly.
(to another writer)
Great copy Rosemary!

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)

My source says---

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)

(to Rosemary)

Hi, Rosemary.

(to Javier)

My source says Elkins wasn't deployed to Jalalabad.

JAVIER

This source, you found him in a Dungeons and Dragons chat room?

AMIR JAT

(annoyed)

4chan.

Javier scoffs. Amir follows him to the break room.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)
He's a solid source with ties to
the military. He says he has proof
the Elkins' tape isn't real.

JAVIER
He'll go on the record?

AMIR JAT
(hesitates)
No.

Javier pours himself coffee. Amir pushes.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)
Right-wing royalty, war hero, Peter
Elkins is a terrorist? Come on
Javier, tell me this doesn't stink?

JAVIER
It's fuckin' nuts, but this isn't
Breitbart, we don't print under-
researched stories with disregard
for journalistic integrity.

Amir drops the coffee stained paper in front of Javier.

AMIR JAT
Sure we do.

Javier stares at Amir, he should fire him, but he knows there
is a little truth in his accusation.

JAVIER
Allison Elkins thinks all brown
people should be deported. You
really want to help these people?

AMIR JAT
I want the truth.

He takes a sip of coffee. Finally, begrudgingly, he concedes.

JAVIER
Three sources, proof the tape is a
fake and a comment from the family.

Javier leaves. Amir excitedly gestures, then fumbles to catch
a series of items he's knocked over. Javier yells back.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
Don't fuck it up or you'll be on
obits until you write your own.

INT. ELKINS' COMPOUND, CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Allison enters the bedroom of her mother, CLAIRE ELKINS (60s, but looks much older). She appears catatonic except for her constant knitting. Allison pushes aside a TV tray of lasagna.

ALLISON
 Not hungry?
 (regarding knitting)
 This one's pretty. Who's it for?

No response. Allison pulls out some wedding magazines.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 I brought some magazines. It's been so busy, Ross and I haven't had any time to plan. I could really use your help. What do you think of this dress? Too young for me?

Claire stares unresponsive. Then slowly her eyes well up. Allison follows Claire's gaze to the TV on mute showing news coverage about Peter. She strokes her mother's hand.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 (softly)
 I'll fix it, Mama. I promise.

They both stare at Peter on the TV. Allison turns to Claire, wipes her mother's face, rises, and turns off the TV.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 Luciana!

The maid, LUCIANA, enters. Allison hands her the remote.

ALLISON
 No TV. From now on, read to her.

LUCIANA
 Misses?

ALLISON
 You can read, can't you?

LUCIANA
 Yes, misses.

As she leaves...

ALLISON
 She hates lasagna.

INT. KAYLEIGH KELLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kayleigh, in a bathrobe and full make-up, secures a sheet over her bookcase, moves a plant, adjusts lighting. Her friend BETHANY, reclines in a beanbag chair chewing a Twizzler and reading a piece of paper.

BETHANY

Are you sure you want to say this?

Kayleigh struggles to push a table across the room.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

(heaving between phrases)

If I want...to get noticed...I have to say...what everyone else is too scared to say.

Kayleigh looks at the set-up, approves. She disrobes and pulls on a tailored red dress.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (CONT'D)

There is an obligation, to the future of the party! A conservative has to speak up.

BETHANY

But she's like, your hero.

Kayleigh shakes off a brief pang of guilt.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

A story this big, if I can be the one to cut through the noise, wake people up, really get their attention, earn their trust...

Kayleigh pauses, lost in her own visions of fame.

BETHANY

You're gonna be a star!

Kayleigh smiles. Bethany reaches for help out of the beanbag. Kayleigh pulls her up. She adjusts her dress. Takes script.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

Okay, you know how to work the camera?

BETHANY

It's an iPhone.

Kayleigh sits behind her make-shift desk, puts on her serious face, and nods to Bethany who hits record. And she's ON!

INT. TOP OF THE POINT, MAITRE D' STAND - NIGHT

A WELL-DRESSED COUPLE discuss their missing reservation with a MAITRE D', when SIMON HOLT, 60s an imposing presence in an Italian suit enters. The MAITRE D' brushes off the Couple.

MAITRE D'

Mr. Holt, what a lovely---

Simon heads toward his table. Maitre D' scurries to keep up.

INT. TOP OF THE POINT, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Simon sits in a leather chair, his table has sweeping views of the Intracoastal Waterway. He leans toward his guest.

SIMON HOLT

Conservative media needs to pull back on defending Captain Elkins. You'll make it happen.

DELL BRADY

Well, I...I tried warning---

SIMON HOLT

The boy was a traitor, Dell. It's important we are clear about that.

Simon leans back, takes a sip of his drink.

SIMON HOLT (CONT'D)

Holt Energies is an *American* company. We can't be associated with a traitor. We have to protect ourselves. Who knows what else might surface.

It's clear *he knows* what else might surface.

SIMON HOLT (CONT'D)

It may be my name on the cow, but we've all got bellies full of milk.
(Suddenly, affable)
You hunt, Dell?

DELL BRADY

Oh, yea! Deer, wild turkey.

SIMON HOLT

I hunt big game. Leopards, kudu, elephants.

(MORE)

SIMON HOLT (CONT'D)

You should come with the boys and me next time we go to Zimbabwe. You know there is nothing quite like taking down a giant.

He clinks his glass against Dell's and smiles.

INT. FLORIDA NEW TIMES - DAY

Amir's cubicle is littered with take-out containers and story notes. He's exhausted. Josh drops some papers on his desk.

JOSH

You fuckin' owe me. Reports from the ambush in Nuristan when Elkins was captured.

Amir, perks up, frantically flips through the report.

AMIR

Holy shit, how did you---

JOSH

I've got an ex-girlfriend at DOD.

Amir stops, he stares at a report confused.

AMIR

This is an Army Aviation Accident Report for a UH-60 Black Hawk.

JOSH

Yeah. That's the heli Elkin's Ranger team was shot down in.

AMIR.

Yeah...so...why is the report in Portuguese?

They look at each other, puzzled.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Isabel waits in a doctor's office, around her are models of the female reproductive system and posters promoting self breast exams. She crosses her arms in front of her chest.

She looks at a wall of baby thank you photos, many twins and triplets, she lets out a deep breath as DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR

Well, your uterus looks healthy, no polyps, no scarring. Any infertility in your family history?

ISABEL

My mother had four children. My sister is unmarried.

DOCTOR

Any miscarriages?

ISABEL

No.

DOCTOR

Abortions?

ISABEL

(emphatically)

No. Of course not.

Doctor looks up at her for the first time, skeptical. She shifts in her seat, then with confidence.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

No abortions.

DOCTOR

And how often do you and your husband have sex?

ISABEL

Dr. Morris, I find this questioning both unnecessary and perverse.

DOCTOR

Well, I am sorry you feel that way Mrs. Holt, but I assure you it is all standard.

Isabel looks away, up at the face of the breast exam lady on the poster. He puts down his notes and clears his throat.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

That said, from what I can tell, you seem healthy enough to conceive. A little thin perhaps, but you can always gain weight.

Just the thought of weight gain makes Isabel nauseous.

ISABEL

So what's the next step?

DOCTOR
Your husband will need to come in,
we'll test his sperm and---

ISABEL
My husband can't come here. You can
understand, I hope, that discretion
is paramount.

Doctor gets up and walks to his cabinet. Isabel babbles.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
We are a highly visible family,
more now than ever, if the media---

He hands her a sperm cup.

DOCTOR
Take it home. Instructions on how
to collect and preserve the sample
are inside.

He smiles. Isabel relaxes for the first time, takes the cup,
nods in gratitude, and leaves.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

A larger than expected crowd has gathered for a reading of
Allison's book, media crammed behind them. Allison is at a
podium reading from *Aborting America*.

ALLISON
"Liberals are more concerned with
National Parks than national
security, more concerned with
political correctness than policing
our borders, more concerned with
the right to handouts than the
right to life. This is a..."

She notices an ARAB MAN in the crowd, nervous she loses her
place. For a moment they lock eyes. She looks away, composes
herself, then rhythmically she bangs her fist on the podium.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
"This is a call to arms, but that
sound isn't a drumbeat, it is
America's heart and unless we rise
up against the liberal elite, it
will...stop...beating."

With severity, she closes the book, then flashes a smile.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

If you wanna know how we're gonna
rise up, you have to buy the book.

Allison and the audience laugh. Applause, cameras flashing.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Thank you and God bless.

A few reporters begin shouting questions.

REPORTER 1

Will you respond to accusations
your brother was a terrorist?

ALLISON

That story is just another
unsubstantiated liberal attack on
American patriotism.

REPORTER 2

It's not solely the liberal media.
Conservative vlogger Kayleigh
Kelley has openly criticized your
family for not apologizing and said
- I quote "Oh man, The Elkins Klan
has finally been exposed for the
hypocritical elitists Kardashians
that they really are." Do you want
to respond?

ALLISON

(smug)

To a vlogger no one has ever heard
of, I don't think so.

REPORTER 1

Her latest video got over 2 million
views. In it she suggests your
family's money is linked to Saudi
Royals.

Allison is stunned. Cameras rapidly flash. Gail steps forward
and takes mic.

GAIL

Thank you for coming. Miss Elkins
won't be taking anymore questions.
The book signing, for fans, will be
on the lower balcony in 15 minutes.

Shouting continues from reporters, some fans yell back. Gail
hurriedly escorts her away. Allison fumes.

ALLISON
Who the fuck is Kayleigh Kelley?

INT. BOOKSTORE, BATHROOM - LATER

Gail and Allison huddle over an iPad watching Kayleigh's home-grown video now outfitted with MTV style graphics and thumping electronic music.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (VIDEO)
(fast, loud, aggressive)
Conservative Americans should be cheering as the unholy Elkins empire crumbles, but so far I'm the only conservative talking about their decades long exploitation of everyday American people. That's right, while we're out here trying to feed our families in a failing economy, they've made millions off a fake heroism narrative and relationships with Saudi Royals.

Allison gives Gail an exasperated look. Hits pause.

ALLISON
Am I supposed to take this moron seriously?

GAIL
It gets worse.

Gail plays video. We stay with video, but now we are in...

INT. DELL BRADY RADIO STATION, CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (VIDEO)
So, why is a 23 year-old blonde chick from Indiana...

PULLOUT to reveal Dell and his Producer watching on monitor.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (VIDEO) (CONT'D)
the only conservative with balls big enough to call out The Elkins family? That's a good question. I've got a message for my buds, Sean Hannity, Glenn Beck, and Dell Brady... Hey guys, man up and grow a pair! I'm Kayleigh Kelley...

DELL BRADY
Son of a...

INT. BOOKSTORE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

ALLISON
Bitch.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (VIDEO)
and that's my Straight Shot. God
bless you. God bless America.

Kayleigh smiles and twinkles her fingers in the air. Graphics swoop across screen: "Straight Shot with Kayleigh Kelley." Allison looks at Gail, shrugs, hands her the iPad.

ALLISON
Let's not over-react. She's a pair of tits and a big mouth. Pretty soon they'll figure out she doesn't know anything and she'll be back to scooping sundaes at the DQ.

GAIL
Let's not under-react either. You used to be just a pair of tits and a big mouth.

ALLISON
But it turns out I knew something.

Allison and Gail share a smirk. They don't hear the door.

BOOKSTORE MANAGER (O.S.)
Miss Elkins? They're waiting.

INT. BOOKSTORE, LOWER BALCONY - LATER

Allison sits at a table, a display of her books on one side, a cardboard cut-out of her in a tight red dress on the other.

A line of fans stretched before her. She is handed a book.

FAN
I've read all your books. Make it out to Annabeth. Annabeth Wayne. I'm so torn up over this news about Peter. I told my sister Agnes, he's too handsome to be a terrorist.

Allison politely smiles as she inscribes the cover.

FAN (CONT'D)

But, that video, it was so real. I
mean he has that beard---

Allison abruptly hands her the book.

ALLISON

(sharply)

Bless you for your concern.

Annabeth takes the book and leaves. Allison lowers her head
for a moment, another book is slipped onto the table.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

To whom should I---

She opens the book, an inscription already exists: "THEY'RE
LYING ABOUT PETER." Stunned, she looks up at the Arab Man.

AMIR JAT

Make it out to Amir.

Silently she scribbles "Amir". For a beat she is frozen then
she writes "Proof?" Before he can respond, Manager whisks in.

BOOKSTORE MANAGER

Thank you, sir. This way please.
Who's next? Keep it moving. Next.

Amir is swept away. Another book and fan is in her face.

She looks around for Amir, but he is gone.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. TURNPIKE TRUCK-STOP RESTAURANT - NIGHT

RESTAURANT DINER'S POV: Outside the window, a deluge of rain. A Land Rover pulls in and parks. A WOMAN, her face blocked by an umbrella, gets out and runs toward the entrance.

CHIMES of a door opening.

AT ENTRANCE

The umbrella closes revealing Allison. She walks through the store, passing dusty sea shell chandeliers, pecan logs, and alligator t-shirts, to the restaurant where she sees Amir sitting in a booth with a cup of coffee.

Allison sits across from him. A long silence. Amir puts his elbows on the table and leans forward.

AMIR JAT

Thank you for finding me.

ALLISON

You were the only Amir to recently sign up for my mailing list.

AMIR JAT

Here I was thinking I'd be the *only* Amir on your mailing list.

Allison is unamused. For a moment they sit in silence.

ALLISON

You said you had---

She is interrupted by a WAITRESS who drops a plate of eggs, grits, and bacon in front of Amir. Then looks at Allison.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Coffee. Black. Two Splendas.

Waitress leaves. Amir clumsily pours ketchup on his eggs.

AMIR JAT

I thought it would be less conspicuous if I ordered something.

She watches him take a bite of bacon.

ALLISON

I'm surprised the Florida New Times is interested in printing the truth about Peter.

AMIR JAT

They're not interested, I am.

He grins and shovels more food in his mouth.

ALLISON

That's also surprising. I've read some of your articles, they were unapologetically lefty.

AMIR JAT

I've read some of your work too, so I already knew I was a "flaming lefty, morally-corrupt elitist."

Allison doesn't appreciate smugness in others. He senses her intolerance for banter, stops eating, wipes his mouth.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)

Look, I'm interested because, politics aside, I think that the spectacle of a story shouldn't over-shadow the substance of it.

Allison, appreciates his response. He leans forward.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)

I have a source---

The Waitress plops the coffee down, before Allison can ask...

WAITRESS

Pink sugar's in the dish.

Allison, annoyed, fishes out some old Sweet-n-Lows and directs her attention to Amir, who lowers his voice.

AMIR JAT

My source says the tape is fake, a red herring, that it's part of a much bigger...conspiracy.

ALLISON

(skeptical)

Is he Government? Military?

AMIR JAT

We've only been in contact online, but he's definitely inside.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)
 (with growing fervor)
 He has knowledge about troop
 deployment, operations, budget
 discrepancies, Unocal, the shit he
 told me about the 9-11 cover-up!
 It's un-friggin-believable!

Amir leans back and shakes his head. Allison stares at him.

ALLISON
 It certainly is.

She puts cash on the table and starts to go. Amir jumps up.

AMIR JAT
 Whoa, whoa. Where are you going?

ALLISON
 Mr. Jat, I'm trying to find out
 what happened to my brother. I
 don't have time for internet
 conspiracies.

AMIR JAT
 Wait, please, listen, please.

She takes him in, there is a sincerity in his eyes. He begs.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)
 Please. I have proof.

She sits back down. He digs through his backpack and pulls
 out a mess of files, maps, articles, spreadsheets.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)
 I don't believe Peter died in
 Eastern Afghanistan in 2012.

ALLISON
 You think he's alive?

AMIR JAT
 I don't know...probably not...but,
 he didn't die in that rescue.

He pulls out a map.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)
 He was captured here, right? Then
 moved to the Badakhshan Province?

He draws a circle. Then an x. Then another x.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)

The rescue, was here in Baharak.

Allison notices the Waitress watching them. Amir places weather maps and photos on the table: mountains and villages covered in snow. Allison picks one up. Amir explains.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)

Badakhshan Province. February 2012, was their coldest winter in decades. 41 people froze to death.

He puts another photo on the pile, a still of Peter's video. Allison looks at it, first she notices nothing, then she sees it: outside the tiny window, mountain tops without snow.

ALLISON

There's no snow.

She looks up at Amir, a big grin on his face.

AMIR JAT

The tape is dated two days before the rescue in Baharak. Most of the region can only be traveled by foot or on mule. And to do it while hiding an American POW, they'd have to move even slower.

ALLISON

So, if Peter wasn't in Baharak where was he?

Amir is silent, he doesn't have an answer. Allison pulls out her phone. She begins scrolling through it.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

I went to see a soldier who was deployed with Peter to Jalalabad. He wouldn't talk, but I saw this.

She hands Amir her phone: the photo of Rusty and Peter.

AMIR JAT

Well, it sure ain't Jalalabad.

ALLISON

I think he was paid to keep quiet.

AMIR JAT

(re: photo)

Can I send this to myself?

Allison nods. He forwards the photo and hands back her phone.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)

I'll run it by my source, see if he can make anything of it.

Amir starts packing up his bag. He stops, looks at her.

AMIR JAT (CONT'D)

If Peter was alive after 2012, is there anyone he would have trusted to contact?

ALLISON

No. Only me.

Amir senses she is leaving something out.

AMIR JAT

Allison, I think we can help each other - my gut tells me your brother is innocent - but if it turns out he did desert or feed our enemies intelligence...I'm gonna print the truth, no matter what.

Allison looks up at him, her composure resumed.

ALLISON

Investigate the story Mr. Jat. The truth you'll find, is that my brother was a patriot.

She leaves a huge tip and exits back into the rainy night.

INT. BROOKS AND ISABEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A professionally decorated bedroom, a sterile homage to Restoration Hardware, muted art, bleached wood furniture. CLOSE on Isabel's face, cold, distant, bored, resting on her pillow. She stares at a water ring on the night table.

ISABEL

Did you put something on the night table without a coaster?

BROOKS (O.C.)

What?

PULL OUT to reveal Brooks on top of her, doing his best to get her pregnant. Isabel runs her finger over the water ring.

ISABEL

Did you put a glass here?

BROOKS

Damn it Iz, I'm trying to...

Brooks grunts, closes his eyes. Isabel watches him. For a moment he keeps pounding her then he stops, he's gone soft. He rolls off her. They sit up, an icy silence between them.

ISABEL

I could turn over.

Brooks climbs out of the bed, goes into the en suite.

BROOKS

You know maybe I could stay hard if you weren't so...

ISABEL

Female?

BROOKS (CONT'D)

Frigid.

Brooks glares at her, then slams the bathroom door. She picks up her cell, dials, rubs the water stain while she waits.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Hi. Would you please come upstairs?
Yes, now.

Isabel slowly dresses. Brooks emerges from the bathroom. Isabel hands him the sperm cup from her purse. A KNOCK. She opens the bedroom door. Logan stands waiting. She puts her hand on Logan's chest and looks back at her naked husband.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

(to Logan)
He's all yours.

INT. MORTON'S STEAKHOUSE, WEST PALM BEACH - NIGHT

Dell and Ross are surrounded by an excess of food. Dell tackles it like a prize fighter bulking up for a bout.

DELL

I'm saying the tide is turning.

ROSS

She can handle it.

Dell gestures with utensils, extensions of his hands.

DELL

She's tough as nails. I'm just saying you have a duty here, as her future husband, to guide her, to help her see that a little concession wouldn't be so bad.

Ross takes a sip of his Manhattan.

ROSS

Allison? Concede?

DELL

Son, I can only hold off the vultures for so long. I'm getting pressure. I'm not gonna be able to stay silent on this.

ROSS

She is standing by her family. The concept may be foreign to you---

Dell points his fork at Ross, feigned outraged.

DELL

Now hold on Son, don't accuse me of not being loyal. I practically raised those girls, I love 'em like my own, that's why I'm worried. Ally's got the temperament of an unbroke filly. You gotta pull on the reins or I'm gonna have to.

Ross puts his napkin on the table.

ROSS

You love the races, Dad. Who would you bet on? The tired old stallion or the unbroken Thoroughbred?

Ross gets up and walks out.

INT. ELKINS' COMPOUND, FOYER - NIGHT

Allison returns home, it is empty, quiet. She silently walks through her house. She looks at photos: her parents, her brothers in uniform, she picks up a photo of Peter's wedding.

LUCIANA (O.C.)

Misses!

Allison turns around. Luciana realizes she has startled her.

LUCIANA (CONT'D)
Lo siento, Misses. I no hear you.

ALLISON
Está bien.

Allison starts to head upstairs. Luciana remembers.

LUCIANA
Tu hermana esta aqui.

EXT. ELKINS' COMPOUND, POOL - NIGHT

Isabel swims laps with the form and force of a champion. Allison watches her for a while, then crosses to the pool. Isabel sees her, finishes her lap, and gets out. Allison hands her a towel.

ALLISON
Is something wrong with your pool?

ISABEL
This one's better for laps.

Isabel dries off.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
Where were you?

ALLISON
I met with a reporter tonight.

ISABEL
What reporter? What did you say?

ALLISON
I didn't say anything. He thinks the video of Peter is a ploy, that who ever released it is trying to cover up something bigger.

Isabel puts on a robe, looks at her sister with disbelief.

ISABEL
A cover-up? Of what?

ALLISON
I don't know. But he showed me proof Peter couldn't have died in the rescue and been on that tape. This could be it, a way to prove--

ISABEL

Allison, do you hear yourself? You have to stop. You have to stop this! We are losing this fight.

ALLISON

Don't be ridiculous. We're fine.

ISABEL

The campaign is hemorrhaging. Gail says your publisher started canceling stops on your book tour.

ALLISON

The campaign will bounce back.

ISABEL

No, Ally, it won't. Not if we don't apologize, distance ourselves from the story, change the narrative.

ALLISON

What do you think I'm doing Isabel? I'm trying to change the narrative, I'm trying to get to the truth, to prove Peter is innocent.

ISABEL

Damn it Ally, what if those aren't the same thing?

The betrayal of Isabel's words gut Allison. Isabel softens.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

I loved Peter too, but we have---

Allison turns and walks back to the house.

ALLISON

Go home to your husband, Isabel.

INT. AMIR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amir works on his laptop at a small messy dining table. He's in a private chat room with his source. Amir types. The camera stays on him as the text is overlaid on our screen.

AJAT82: Uploading photo now. Elkins and another soldier. Location unknown. Kabul? Can you identify?

Amir waits.

PRAVDA4791: Not Kabul.

AJAT82: ?

PRAVDA4791: How did you get photo?

AJAT82: Elkins' sister

Amir waits.

AJAT82: If not Afghanistan, where?

Amir waits. He picks up the Helicopter Accident Report.

AJAT82: Portugal? Brazil?

AMIR JAT

Come on!

More waiting. Amir is getting nervous.

PRAVADA4791 has signed off.

Amir SLAMS his laptop closed.

INT. CLUB COLETTE, PALM BEACH - DAY

Allison is lunching in an exclusive dining club with the CPAC Chairman, BOB LAPIN, a rotund man in his late 60s wearing an impressive amount of peach. They're surrounded by Palm Beach society folk, whom occasionally look over at Allison.

ALLISON

And Cassidy?

Bob gestures to a WAITER for more iced tea.

BOB

Wants to go to Morocco for her Spring Break. Can you imagine? A country where you can't get a decent drink. I asked her, what's wrong with St. Bart's?

ALLISON

St. Bart's is gorgeous in April. I'd be happy to call Jane and get her a villa at Eden Rock.

He waves a piece of salmon around, then pops it in his mouth.

BOB

Thanks but she's more stubborn than I am.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)

She's determined to ride a camel
and hear authentic Berber music,
whatever the hell that is.

He puts down his fork and knife.

BOB (CONT'D)

Listen Ally, I need to talk to you
about this, well you know, you're
in some hot water now---

ALLISON

Bob, you knew Peter his entire
life. Do you honestly believe---

BOB

No, of course not, but hell, you
know politics isn't about reality
it's about perception. And the
committee feels it would be better
if you were less visible this year.

ALLISON

Well, fuck the committee Bob!

The WOMEN behind them turn and look soured faced at Allison.

ALLISON

I nominated you. I lobbied to get
you elected CPAC Chairman.

BOB

And I appreciate that honey, but
you need to appreciate that I have
a responsibility here. This is a
delicate time for conservatives.

ALLISON

Yes, delicate indeed. They're too
"delicate" to defend a prominent
conservative family when they're
being smeared by the press.

BOB

We've got mid-terms, a Democratic
majority in Congress, and liberals
pushing everything from gun control
to transgender bathrooms in
kindergartens down our throats. The
last thing I should be doing is
elevating this scandal. Now, I'm
sorry Ally, I really am, but we're
gonna give the keynote to someone
else this year.

Allison stares at him, then slowly she smiles.

ALLISON
Well. Bob. If that's what you feel
you have to do.

Allison collects her purse and sweater and stands.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Out of curiosity, who did you get
to replace me?

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (PRE-LAP)
Shut up! You're kidding me?!

INT. ONE AMERICA NEWS, BULLPEN - DAY

Kayleigh is on her cellphone freaking out!

KAYLEIGH KELLEY
No, absolutely. I'm honored. Yes.
Awesome. Thank you so much.

Kayleigh hangs up and fidgets with excitement. She looks around for someone to tell, but she has no friends at work. She sits back at her desk and twirls in her chair. Then an angry bellowing voice...

CARL TAGG
Kelley! Get in here!!

INT. ONE AMERICA NEWS, NEWS DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Kayleigh stands as Carl watches one of her videos.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (VIDEO)
They're all for "female
empowerment" as long as the female
in power isn't conservative, cute,
or carrying a gun.

CARL TAGG looks up over his glasses at Kayleigh then back to the video which we can see has over a million views.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (VIDEO) (CONT'D)
Well I've got news for the mean
mugging, pantsuit wearing, basic
bitches coming after me, *this* isn't
my only weapon.

ON VIDEO: Kayleigh posing with a semi-automatic rifle.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (VIDEO) (CONT'D)
 I've got a brain and a mouth and
 both are locked and loaded. I'm
 Kayleigh Kelley and---

CARL TAGG stops the video and leans back in his chair.

CARL TAGG
 You actually believe any of the
 shit you say in these videos?

KAYLEIGH KELLEY
 Are you questioning my integrity?

CARL TAGG
 You think that's journalism?

KAYLEIGH KELLEY
 It's political commentary. It's no
 less journalism than an op-ed.

CARL TAGG
 Cronkite said "Objective journalism
 and an opinion column are about as
 similar as the Bible and Playboy."

KAYLEIGH KELLEY
 I haven't read Playboy, but my
 Bible says "rebuke them sharply,
 that they may be sound in faith."

He thumbs through a few printed articles about Kayleigh from
 websites: "Young, Loud, and Right!" "Kayleigh Kelley doesn't
 skirt the issues." "Conservative Cutie Cuts Deep."

CARL TAGG
 Kayleigh, I'm trying to run a
 reputable news network and---

Kayleigh cuts him off, firing off a defensive tirade.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY
 Look, I didn't invent social media
 algorithms that push divisive,
 short form, and, yes, sexy content,
 but I'm certainly not going to
 apologize for taking advantage of
 them. If you're gonna fire me for--

CARL TAGG
 I'm not firing you. I'm promoting
 you. On air commentator.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

Really?

CARL TAGG

Really. 3 minutes on the 11 o'clock. You pick the topics, I have final approval of content. But I want some actual facts amidst the pop music and push-up bras.

Kayleigh takes a piece of gum from her pocket, unwraps it, and pops it in her mouth. He watches annoyed, but continues.

CARL TAGG (CONT'D)

Danny will produce the on air. You'll get priority placement online, the home page of the OAN site, social media push etc.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

(coily)

Wow. That's a great offer.

She picks up one of the articles with her picture on it.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (CONT'D)

But, I'm gonna pass. You were right Carl, OAN isn't SnapChat...*Snapchat* has a 150 million users.

She starts to walk out, but stops at the door.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (CONT'D)

I want to thank you for the advice.

She takes out her gum, affixes it to the back of the article.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (CONT'D)

I did find myself a new idol to worship.

She sticks HER ARTICLE up on his wall and struts out.

INT. FLORIDA NEW TIMES - DAY

Amir has spread out his research across Javier's desk. He waits impatiently, as Javier takes a long thorough look.

JAVIER

It's good work, Jat.

(beat)

But, you don't have it yet.

AMIR

What! Are you kidding me---

JAVIER

You've got a weather map and a half-baked theory about a crashed helicopter in Brazil. It's not ready. I'm not running it.

AMIR

Javier, come on!

JAVIER

You see this?

Javier turns up TV volume. Footage of Peter's confession tape plays (the moment he turns to the gun fire) as a CNN ANCHOR interviews a GENERAL and a PROFESSOR.

GENERAL (TV)

...the gun fire is from Kalashnikov assault rifles.

ANCHOR (TV)

That's a common Taliban weapon?

GENERAL (TV)

It is. It's also the same weapon we hear on body cam footage from the attempted rescue of Capt. Elkins.

ANCHOR (TV)

And Professor Eriz, can you tell us what they are yelling?

PROFESSOR (TV)

It's hard to decipher under the gun fire, but I believe they are yelling the Pashto word "shkhérre" which means, fight.

AMIR

It's bullshit. That's not even what shkhérre means, it means fight, but not, it's a noun, like an argument.

Javier turns off TV, looks back at Amir.

JAVIER

They've got a Four Star General and a Georgetown Professor both confirming the tape is real. Get me a source with a chest full of metals or a Phd and we can talk.

EXT. SCOZZARI HOME - DAY

Allison and Amir walk up a stone path toward a modest home.

AMIR JAT
So you lied.

ALLISON
(indignant)
No.

Allison stops mid-path and looks at him.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
I didn't lie. You asked if there
was anyone he would have trusted, I
don't believe he would trust her.

Amir slurps a big gulp. Allison resumes walking.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
She was crazy after he died. She
wouldn't accept it. It was hugely
embarrassing for the family.

They stop at the door.

AMIR JAT
Cause she didn't think he was dead?

Allison recognizes the paradox. Amir smirks and slurps his
big gulp again. Allison knocks.

ALLISON
Would you get rid of that?

Amir sticks it behind a plant as the door opens to reveal
NATALIE SCOZZARRI (40s), Peter's widow, a striking brunette in
a Miami Dolphins' jersey, smiling until she sees...Allison.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Hello, Natalie.
(beat)
This is my friend, Amir.

Natalie looks at Amir, *Friend? Yea right?* Amir jumps in.

AMIR JAT
Mrs. Elkins, I'm a reporter for the
Florida New Times.

NATALIE
Scozzari.

AMIR JAT

I'm sorry?

ALLISON

She remarried.

NATALIE

Yes, I did. And I don't speak to reporters and I certainly don't want to speak to her.

Natalie begins to close the door. Allison stops her.

ALLISON

Natalie, listen to him. It's about Peter's rescue...you *may* have been right. If you could give us---

Natalie cuts her off, holding back an avalanche of rage.

NATALIE

Give you what? What haven't I already given you Allison? My dignity? My privacy? How dare you--

ALLISON

Oh please, you were acting insane, what did you expect me to do?

NATALIE

So you go on TV and call me *damaged!* You told the world I was crazy. I lost *everything*, my husband, my job...for what, so you could get a book deal.

ALLISON

Can you stop playing victim long enough to listen---

AMIR

Mrs. Scozzari, I understand your hesitation, but if we could talk---

Natalie tries to hold back the tears welling up.

NATALIE

Why? So you can tell me I *may* have been right. I know I was right.

ALLISON

Natalie---

NATALIE

Don't ever come here again.

Natalie closes the door. Amir and Allison stand in silence.

INT. LAND ROVER - LATER

Amir and Allison pull into the parking lot of his apartment building. Amir grabs his back pack then breaks their silence.

AMIR JAT

We have to go back and try again.

ALLISON

There's no point. She won't talk.

AMIR

Can you blame her? I mean, shit Allison, you could have at least apologized. Show some remorse. She was our best lead and you blew it.

ALLISON

Remorse? I did what I had to do to protect my family. You have no idea what it's like to be in the public eye, to face that kind of---

AMIR JAT

We need her! I've run down every lead I have and none of it adds up.

ALLISON

What about your source?

AMIR

My source? My source went dark the second I mentioned I was working with you!

ALLISON

Why?

AMIR

Well, maybe he doesn't think I should trust you.

ALLISON

What is that supposed to mean?

AMIR

It means...that we're nowhere.

Allison stares out at the dimly lit parking lot.

ALLISON
 Maybe we're nowhere because...there
 is nothing to find.

AMIR
 What?

ALLISON
 What if the date is wrong on the
 tape, I mean, that happens. And
 even if the tape wasn't shot in
 Badakhshan it's still *him* on it.

AMIR
 Which is why we need more
 information. Why we have to keep
 trying to find---

ALLISON
 I can't keep trying to find a truth
 that doesn't exist. I'm losing my
 career, my fans, my family.

She looks at Amir, his disappointment in her is palpable.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry, but I'm done.

Amir gets out of the car and watches her drive away.

EXT. AMIR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

KENYAN WOMAN
 Aisha, shika, shika!

A KENYAN WOMAN is yelling at a young BLACK GIRL in a tree.
 Amir stops, he quickly turns around to the Kenyan Woman.

AMIR
 Mrs. Mutua, what did you just say?

KENYAN MOTHER
 I tell her to get down, girls don't
 belong in trees like monkeys.

AMIR
 Get down, shika. It's Swahili!

Amir's eyes widen, he kisses her cheek, and bolts upstairs.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. THE LAWRENCE WASHINGTON SHOW - DAY

Allison is back to her polished pundit self in an interview with liberal media icon, LAWRENCE WASHINGTON (40s African-American). He delights in arguing with her.

LAWRENCE

So you *don't* think character critiques should be part of political discourse?

ALLISON

No. I think ideas should---

LAWRENCE

But you've done it. You've attacked numerous Democrats for philandering. You've questioned whether a candidate was born in America. You've---

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Are you going to let me speak? Or did you only invite me on your show to hear yourself? Well, if Democrats stopped philandering I'd stop attacking them. Are you done?

Lawrence chuckles and gestures that the floor is hers. The live audience is foaming at the mouth. Allison is fearless.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Character critiques are fine, they're necessary, when they are based on facts---

LAWRENCE

A video tape isn't fact?

Audience applause.

ALLISON

Hold on, hold on. No. Not when we have no proof it wasn't doctored.

The audience boos and shouts. Lawrence waves them quiet.

LAWRENCE

Alright, alright, be nice.

ALLISON

All I'm saying is this is an unsubstantiated story that the liberal media is perpetuating---

LAWRENCE

We've heard that from you before.

INT. FLORIDA NEW TIMES - DAY

The interview continues in the background on a TV as Amir sits at his desk headphones on, replaying Peter's tape again and again. Josh yells from across the bullpen.

JOSH

Hey Jat, your girlfriend's on TV.

Amir takes off his headphones and looks up at the screen.

ALLISON (TV)

Because it's true Lawrence. If this tape was factual, if my brother was really in some secret alliance with terrorists, wouldn't there be an investigation of some kind?

Amir returns to his research. He googles "Mozambique 2012" a series of articles: "Civil Unrest or Genocide?," "Mozambican President Assassinated," "Aid Workers Flee as Country Burns."

Amir rushes to the desk of another reporter, ROSEMARY (50s), almost knocking over her Diet Coke.

ROSEMARY

Hey, watch it.

AMIR

Rosemary, didn't you write a piece about 6 dead in Mozambique?

ROSEMARY

Yea, IAM aid workers. Their helicopter had mechanical failure, it crashed north of Maputo.

AMIR

When was that?

ROSEMARY

I don't remember.

AMIR

(imperious)

Well, can you look?

Rosemary is annoyed, but turns around and searches her computer. Amir watches Allison on TV. *What is she doing?*

LAWRENCE (TV)

So you'd support an investigation?

ALLISON (TV)
Sure, bring it on.

LAWRENCE (TV)
Well she ain't afraid folks. You
gotta give her that.

Applause on the TV. Rosemary finds the article.

ROSEMARY
Here it is...January 14, 2012.

Amir looks at the Helicopter Report, 14 Janeiro 2012, 6 dead.

AMIR
Holy shit.

Amir smiles up at Allison on TV as if she could smile back,
share in this moment of finding their next clue, but instead-

ALLISON (TV)
My family would offer our full
support to any investigation of
these accusations. Heck Lawrence,
I'll even tell them where to start.

AMIR
No.

ON TV: Still of Peter's video zoomed in on the window.

ALLISON (TV)
This is a still of the Badakhshan
tape. February 2012 was the coldest
winter in 15 years in Badakhshan
province. The average temperature
was -16° Celsius or 3° Fahrenheit.
41 people froze to death, another
153 died in avalanches.

LAWRENCE (TV)
So it was cold, what's the point?

ALLISON (TV)
Look through the window on the tape
Lawrence and tell me, how come
there's no snow on those mountains?

Amir throws his story notes and lets out a frustrated scream.

AMIR
Fuuuuuuck!

INT. HOTEL SUITE, NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

Allison, naked, close to orgasm grabs at the headboard of a hotel bed. She is riding someone hard, in control, until she orgasms. For a moment she is still, breathing, savoring the release, then she leans down and kisses...Lawrence.

LAWRENCE

Not bad for a philandering
Democrat.

ALLISON

Just like a liberal, we do all the
work and you take all the credit.

He laughs. She snuggles into the nook of his arm. They have a real intimacy, the kind Allison shares with no one else.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

You think I was foolish? Calling
for an investigation?

LAWRENCE

You changed the narrative, forced
the media to start asking some real
questions. But I don't know if it's
gonna make anything easier for you.

ALLISON

I betrayed someone today.

LAWRENCE

Who?

ALLISON

The only person who believes Peter
is innocent.

Lawrence takes her face in his hands.

LAWRENCE

You believe Peter is innocent.

He's right, destructive and irrational as it seems, she does. He kisses her and climbs out of bed. She turns on the news.

ALLISON

I've certainly started her career.

Lawrence looks at TV. Kayleigh Kelley giving an interview.

LAWRENCE

Conservative Barbie?

ALLISON

Book her on your show, put us head-to-head in a debate. Your audience will love it, a "Conservative Catfight."

LAWRENCE

You're not gonna take down Kayleigh Kelley in a debate. Her fans don't care that what she says isn't factual, or even literate half the time, they like *how* she says it.

ALLISON

Guns and American flag bikinis?

He starts getting dressed.

LAWRENCE

They like that she's angry, they don't really know or care why, they just know that they're angry too.

ALLISON

So how do I beat her?

LAWRENCE

That's the rub, a character critique.

ALLISON

Gail and Ross already vetted her, there's nothing there.

He takes her bare leg, kisses his way down it to her ankle.

LAWRENCE

It's my favorite part of you.

ALLISON

My leg?

LAWRENCE

Your achilles heel. You are the only honest believer.

Lawrence gives her a final kiss, grabs his wallet, and goes. Allison turns back to the television. She stares at Kayleigh, a worthy, if unexpected, adversary. She picks up her cell.

ALLISON

Gail. Get me the fake news kid in Utah. Yeah, Finnicum.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Isabel waits, flips through Facebook on her phone, clicks on a story. Smirks. The Doctor enters.

DOCTOR

Mrs. Holt, nice to see you again.

She nods. He takes a seat behind his desk.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

We analyzed your husband's sample and I believe we know why you've struggled to conceive.

Isabel has a stream of irrational thoughts: *Can they tell he's gay from his sperm, is it HIV?* The Doctor continues

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Low motility.

ISABEL

What?

DOCTOR

Unfortunately, your husband's sperm is pretty sleepy. Now usually with motility even as low as 30% I'd suggest IVF as an option, but Mr. Holt's sample was only 18%. It would be futile.

Isabel's face is ghostly. The Doctor hands her a brochure.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

There are alternatives. We could look at donors. It's very common and you'd be surprised at how closely you'll be able to match---

Isabel, stone-faced, gets up and walks out of the office.

INT. HOLT MANSION - DAY

Isabel, Brooks, and Simon Holt, whom we will now understand is Brook's father, are having drinks in the sitting room.

SIMON HOLT

I saw the numbers. You're trailing.

BROOKS

Really, Dad? You're checking on my polling?

Isabel interjects.

ISABEL

We expect them to improve in the next round, the narrative is starting to change and we're getting back on message.

Logan enters, gives Brooks a note.

LOGAN

Excuse me.

Isabel lowers her eyes. Simon notices. Logan leaves. Simon starts walking around the room, mostly to take up space.

SIMON HOLT

I don't know. Karen Frankel is well-respected, smart.

BROOKS

(petulant)

Are you implying I'm not.

SIMON HOLT

Don't be such a child, Brooks. I'm saying it's a tough race.

BROOKS

I know It's a tough race, I'm the one in it. Isabel told you that's being dealt with, the numbers will...like what?

SIMON HOLT (CONT'D)

You got this shit with Peter hanging round your necks, I'm only saying you need to be careful of any more scandals.

SIMON HOLT (CONT'D)

Like you being a faggot!

The air is sucked out of the room. Brooks stands.

BROOKS

I have an interview with Channel 5.

Brooks leaves. Simon goes to the bar cart, pours vodka. He crosses to Isabel, hands her the glass and tilts up her chin.

INT. GUN CLUB - DAY

Bob Lapin walks down a firing line and into a stall. He unpacks a handgun. In the next stall someone shoots 5 rapid rounds, all on or near the bulls-eye. The target's pulled in.

BOB

Nice shooting.

Allison steps back from her stall.

ALLISON
Thanks, Bob.

He's displeased by the surprise meeting.

BOB
I already told your publicist, our
position hasn't changed.

ALLISON
What if I told you I planned to
apologize to the base in my speech,
to disavow Peter?

She can tell she has piqued his interest. She leans close.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
And then from my knees I will bring
them to their feet. Rile them up
against the beltway bureaucrats who
have forgotten our sons and the war
they sent them to fight.

She whispers right into his ear, we stay CLOSE on her mouth.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Bob, I will point to our enemies
and call on our God and make that
room shake with a fury of
conservative ideology.

She steps back. He clears his throat.

BOB
We already gave the keynote to---

ALLISON
Oh, Bob, haven't you seen the news
today?

She smiles coyly. Bob fumbles for his phone. We hear the
PRELAP of a "girl power" pop song as Allison walks out.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Consider it a warning shot.

INT. KAYLEIGH KELLEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

"Girl power" song plays on a speaker. Kayleigh is dancing,
singing, trying on outfits for CPAC. She yells over music.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

I'm thinking my speech should be about political correctness, ya know. How liberals use it to distract from real issues like Mexicans stealing our jobs.

Bethany is only half paying attention. Kayleigh poses.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY (CONT'D)

What do ya think?

Bethany is reading something on her phone.

BETHANY

Political correctness, sure.

KAYLEIGH KELLEY

The dress Bethany.

Bethany turns off the music, looks up at Kayleigh.

BETHANY

You need to see this.

She takes phone, reads. ON Kayleigh shock turning to sadness.

EXT. ELKINS' COMPOUND, LANAI - DAY

Allison, in an evening gown, lounges on a chaise, triumphant. Ross, in a tux, hands her a crystal tumbler of bourbon.

ALLISON

Turn it up, would you?

He turns up the volume on speaker. We hear Dell's voice.

DELL BRADY (V.O.)

This is all over the internet, millennial mud-slinger Kayleigh Kelley had an abortion at 15.

INT. DELL BRADY RADIO STATION, STUDIO - DAY

DELL

It's a problem friends, when anyone with a SnapCHAP can call themselves the voice of conservative America, we're in trouble. Let's take some calls. You're on with Dell Brady.

Dell gestures to his Producer who puts through a call.

CALLER 1

It's disgraceful Dell. I've got three daughters. These women strutting around in hooker heels calling themselves conservatives, Kayleigh Kelley, Allison Elkins, they're not role models!

DELL

Folks, you do have to ask what is happening to the women of the conservative party? We've got Lee in Huron, Ohio on line two.

CALLER 2

Dell, I'm a veteran and I wanna know what's gonna be done.

DELL

Thank you for your service, Sir. Now do you mean about Miss Kelley?

CALLER 2

No, everybody knew she was a whore. I mean Elkins, he had a military funeral. Now that ain't right.

DELL

Lee brings up a good point. We've got a military deserter, possible terrorist, buried at Arlington.

EXT. ELKINS' COMPOUND, LANAI - DAY

Allison rises and walks slowly to the edge of the veranda.

CALL 2 (V.O.)

It's disrespectful to keep him there with real American heroes. I say dig 'em up!

DELL (V.O)

Dig him up. I have to agree, Lee. What do you think, friends? Should Captain Elkins' body be exhumed?

Ross shuts off the radio and touches her shoulder. Allison stares down at the bourbon. Slowly she twirls the glass, looking at the light dance through the crystal.

SOUND OF A STRING QUARTET, rapid, intense.

Allison, intentionally, drops the glass over the balcony. It falls through the air toward the black slate patio. The crystal glass shatters and becomes a BALLERINA.

INT. KRAVIS CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, BALLET - NIGHT

We are looking down on a contemporary ballet. The music crescendos and continues...

The Ballerina, in vaguely Grecian costume, performs a duet with a SECOND BALLERINA. It is an argument, but also soft.

Allison and Ross watch from the orchestra. A glimpse of a program reveals the Ballet's title: Antigone. It continues...

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. SCOZZARI HOME - NIGHT

Natalie opens the door to Amir. She wants to send him away, but he hands her the Mozambique article. She lets him in.

An army of MALE DANCERS ominously dance behind the Ballerinas. The Second Ballerina, in fear, runs off.

INT. HOLT MANSION - NIGHT

Simon helps Isabel with her coat. She looks up at her father-in-law, he holds her, she kisses him with desperate passion.

The Ballerina spars with a MALE DANCER. It is volatile.

INT. KAYLEIGH KELLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kayleigh distraught, drinking wine, scrolls through nasty comments about herself online.

The Male Dancer tosses Ballerina across the stage, but she is fearless, repeating a series of movements he forbids.

INT. MORTON'S STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

Dell eats a steak alone.

The ballerina runs to the dead body of a soldier.

INT. SCOZZARI HOME - NIGHT

Amir waits on sofa. Natalie brings him a box.

INT. KRAVIS CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, BALLET - NIGHT

Ballerina repeats the series of forbidden movements over the body. They are intercut with fast, short, scenes:

- Simon and Isabel thrash against antique furniture and priceless art, tearing each other's clothing off.
- Kayleigh rips down the sheet/backdrop of her makeshift studio. She throws it on ground and starts marking it up.
- Amir opens the box. Postcards pour out.
- Allison's face watching the ballet, captivated, moved.
- Isabel's face, ecstasy, lust.
- Dell's knife cutting through rare steak.
- Amir flips over postcards, blank. He looks at postmarks.
- Kayleigh hangs her sheet back up. It now reads: DIG HIM UP!
- Isabel cries out in orgasm.

Ballerina cries out in grief.

The ballerina slowly anoints the soldier's body, a ritualized burial dance. Finally, the Ballerina lays herself on top of the body of the dead soldier. She is at peace.

Allison watches, also strangely at peace.

4 male dancers glide across the stage and lift up the ballerina, they carry her away.

The ballerina is in a small cage of light. She unravels her Grecian costume and hangs herself with it. Blackout.

All around Allison, the audience stands and applauds. Allison sits, frozen, affected, resolved.

INT. CPAC CONFERENCE, BACKSTAGE OF BALLROOM - DAY

Ross and Gail stand with a focused Allison.

ROSS
You'll be fine.

GAIL
The speech is great. Humble,
apologetic, but strong.

We can hear muffled chanting from the ballroom "Dig Him Up, Dig Him Up." Ross and Gail exchange a look of concern. Allison is unfazed. We hear an introduction.

BOB (O.C.)
...keynote speaker Allison Elkins.

INT. CPAC CONFERENCE, BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Allison crosses the stage, waving to a hostile audience, she smiles, shakes Bob's hand, and takes the podium.

"Dig Him Up! Dig Him Up!" The room is full of banquet tables, what should be a civilized luncheon, has become a guillotining. Isabel and Brooks nervously look around from their table. Dell calmly eats. Kayleigh chants "Dig Him Up!"

EXT. STREET, WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Amir rushes out of cab, fumbling, running toward a building.

INT. CPAC CONFERENCE, BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Allison looks at her notes, waits for the room to quiet. When it doesn't she leans into the microphone and states:

ALLISON
Peter Elkins is a terrorist.

INT. CPAC CONFERENCE, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Amir runs, dropping his backpack, picking it up, running again, he gets to the Ballroom door, but it's locked. Inside he can hear the audience shouting. A GUARD approaches.

GUARD
Sir, this is a closed event.

AMIR
I'm press. I'm a journalist.

GUARD
North entrance, other side.

Amir takes off running.

INT. BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

ALLISON
Truth has become inconsequential,
inconvenient in our pursuit to be
right. To appear righteous.

Gail tosses her notes in disbelief. Allison gestures to Bob.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Bob Lapin is a pedophile.

Bob spits out his water. Allison leans on the podium.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
It's a good headline. Is it true?
Kayleigh Kelley had an abortion.
It's a good headline. Is it true?
Peter Elkins is a terrorist.

Allison looks at the unswayed crowd. Someone yells "Dig Him Up!" She knows she can't win, so she might as well lose.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
I was invited here to apologize.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Amir is running, trying to find the North Entrance, his frustration building, in an endless maze of doors and halls.

INT. BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Allison shouts over a booing crowd.

ALLISON
I'm sorry we abolished bilateral
debate and replaced it with vitriol
and rumor. I'm sorry we stopped
listening and started lynching.

The chanting resumes. Someone throws a dinner roll at her.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Amir finds the North Entrance, it's locked. He is greeted by a sweet, southern, female VOLUNTEER.

VOLUNTEER
Sir, you can't go in there.

AMIR

I'm press.

VOLUNTEER

AMIR (CONT'D)

Well then, we're gonna have to check you in. Come on over here to the press table. Ma'am may I please just go in?

VOLUNTEER (CONT'D)

Noooo siree, sorry, not with out checkin' in. Now, what's your name?

Amir exasperated, gives in and joins her at the check-in.

INT. BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amir bursts in, but it's over. He looks for Allison. She's gone. The ballroom is in an uproar, people are still yelling, chanting. Reporters start filing out. He stops one.

AMIR

What happened?

REPORTER 1

Allison Elkins committed suicide.

AMIR

What?

REPORTER 1

Yea, she pretty much told the conservative party to go fuck itself. It was awesome.

Amir stands in the chaos, a proud smile growing on his face.

EXT. STAIRS - NIGHT

TIGHT on Allison sitting on stairs, alone with her thoughts.

VOICE (O.C.)

All American hot dog?

She looks up and sees Amir holding two hot dogs. He sits next to her and hands her one. She takes it, amused.

ALLISON

You're the only Muslim I know who eats pork.

He raises an eyebrow. She rolls her eyes. *Okay, fine.*

ALLISON (CONT'D)
You're the only Muslim I know.

He takes a bite.

AMIR
I'm an atheist.

ALLISON
(laughing)
So much worse!

AMIR
I heard what you did at CPAC. It
was really admirable.

ALLISON
I destroyed my reputation. My life.

AMIR
Yea, well I guess now you'll have
to prove you were right.

He hands her a file folder. She's looks at him.

ALLISON
What is it?

AMIR
It's not the whole truth yet, but
it's a start.

Allison reads the contents, her eyes widen, she looks at him.

ALLISON
Mozambique?

AMIR
Allison.
(beat)
Peter's alive.

She looks at him, the same glossy green eyes from the Teaser,
this time she allows a tear to fall. She smiles at Amir.

The camera pulls out, wider and wider until we see they are
on the steps of the illuminated, glorious Lincoln Memorial.

THE END