

THE SMART ONE

"Pilot"

written by

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"Pilot"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

SUPER: TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

A summer day, on a normal upscale suburban street, 1987. By the street in front of a home, a cheerful girl, CANDY (9) sets lemonade and cups on a table, as her sister JUDITH (10), more serious, comes down the driveway.

JUDITH

Why are you setting up here?

CANDY

Because Mom said we could.

JUDITH

Mom should do her research first.

She shows a binder of reports. Her little sister groans.

JUDITH (cont'd)

See? I've analyzed traffic patterns in the neighborhood to maximize the customer potential; I've surveyed rival lemonade concerns to see which might be ripe for takeover or franchise opportunities; and I've written up a business proposal in case we need a loan to float us through the difficult startup period.

(snaps binder closed)

That is how to sell lemonade. By using your brains.

Beat. Then Candy turns to the street and pulls up her shirt. Immediately, THREE BOYS riding by on bikes skid to a stop, and fight to buy lemonade. Judith SIGHS.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

SUPER: PRESENT DAY. JUDITH (JUDE) SWANN, the older girl now grown up, stares at election results on the TV, with her failed mayoral candidate ART HOLIDAY. Jude is beautiful, ambitious, used to being the smartest one in the room... but not a people person. With her is her

operative, MARTIN, good-looking, slick, a D.C. power-player who never betrays what he's feeling, if anything.

MARTIN

Jude. It's over.

JUDE

The polls don't close until 8.

MARTIN

It's 8:45.

JUDE

Thank you, Martin. When I fire you, you can get a job as a clock. Then you can stand by my bed every day and wake me with the sound of something obvious.

MARTIN

I would do that.

JUDE

If you ever watch me sleep, I'll have you arrested.

MARTIN

When that "Twilight" guy watched the girl sleep, it was romantic.

JUDE

He wasn't as creepy. He was just a vampire.

ON THE TV

VIDEO: a MAYORAL CANDIDATE, a beautiful, happy, confident woman, at a speech with her loving HUSBAND and young DAUGHTER by her side: The perfect family.

CANDIDATE

...My "Helping HANDS" program will turn our schools around, if we all just remember the five fingers:
(counts on fingers)
"Hope, Access, Need, Desire, Success!
HANDS!"

IN THE NEWS STUDIO is anchor BOB LONG.

BOB LONG

In Sacramento tonight, the big story of this special election is the surprise victory by this "outsider,"
(MORE)

BOB LONG (cont'd)
 a PTA mom and housewife who ran as
 the "Education Candidate" in this
 race for the vacant mayor's office.
 Becki Ramos is standing by live at
 Cooper Campaign Headquarters.

IN A BALLROOM we see BECKI RAMOS, a serious blonde
 reporter, with Cooper Campaign staffers behind her.

BECKI RAMOS
 Thanks, Bob, the mood here is giddy,
 as supporters wait for interim Mayor
 Art Holiday to concede the race to
 this former beauty pageant queen
 and one-time weekend weather
 reporter.

BOB LONG
 Yes, you two started together right
 here at KSCA back in the day. Nice
 when one of our own makes good, huh?

BECKI RAMOS
 (tight smile)
 Yes. It's awesome.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Art Holiday stands up.

ART
 I'm calling her. Where's my phone?

JUDE
 Did you look in your jacket?

ART
 Yes.

JUDE
 How about your butt? Did you look
 in your butt?

ART
 Give me back my phone, Jude. People
 are expecting me to concede.

JUDE
 No one's expecting anything of you,
 Art, except to jump off a bridge
 because you lost to a weather girl.

ART

She's not that bad. I kinda like her.

JUDE

Everyone likes her, Art. I like her. It doesn't make her a mayor. She won for being prettier than you.

ART

People respond to her. And her schools program makes a heckuva lot of sense.

JUDE

Art. Did you vote for her?

ART

No.

JUDE

Art?

ART

No. Almost. It was close.

Beat. Suddenly Art DIVES for the desk phone. Jude grabs it, and manages to wrestle the phone away. Then her CELL PHONE RINGS. Seeing the caller, she GROANS, ANSWERS.

INTERCUT:

INT. A HOME OFFICE - SAME

HELEN SWANN, Jude's mother but youthful, elegant and firmly in charge, talks on the phone in a private study.

HELEN

Judith Swann, stop this nonsense right now and let Art concede.

JUDE

Mom, come on --

HELEN

No. You have to accept it, she serves the people of Sacramento now.

JUDE

If she's serving them anything but curly fries, something is horribly wrong.

HELEN

Judith, enough. She is not your
opponent anymore. She's your sister.

Beat. Pained, Jude looks at the TV, where FILE FOOTAGE
shows Jude's sister CANDY at a campaign stop, grinning
in front of a "HELPING H.A.N.D.S." sign, and holding up
her open hands.

CANDY

"HANDS: You can COUNT on them!"

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE**FADE IN:****ON TV - FILE FOOTAGE**

CLOSE on Candy Cooper in a campaign speech.

CANDY

I have been a room mother, a PTA president, and president of the Educational Foundation, because I care about my daughter. Now, I want to make all of Sacramento my daughter!

CHEERS OF THE CROWD take us to --

INT. COOPER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Cooper family watches the TV on this election night: CANDY, clutching a phone; husband BUDDY, a handsome, easy-going family man and people-person; and daughter BAILEY, smart, turning out more like Jude than Candy.

BAILEY

Does that make Sacramento my sister?

CANDY

I don't even know why Art has to concede. When I won Miss Sacramento, no one had to concede, they just gave me my crown --

(at TV)

-- BECAUSE I WON!

BAILEY

If we watched the results from a suite at the hotel, we'd be right there for your victory party.

BUDDY

We're not hotel suite people. Your mom got elected because she relates to the lives of regular people.

BAILEY

Plus she doesn't trust you with the minibar.

BUDDY

Ten dollar cashews. Should be a crime. When you start making laws, hon, I hope that's the first one.

Candy takes Buddy's and Bailey's hands in hers.

CANDY

Hey, guys? This might be our last quiet moment for awhile, so I want to say thank you. We did this as a family, and this will not take me away from you. Bailey, I'll work from home a lot, I'll still be at your volleyball games, parents' night, chaperone Youth Group... you won't be neglected at all.

BAILEY

(beat; disappointed)
Really?

CANDY

Yep. Sorry.

BUDDY

(off TV)
Look, they're showing your party again.

CANDY

Okay, no need for us all to be late, you guys go and I'll meet you there.

BUDDY

No. Like you said, we won together, we stay together. As a family.

BAILEY

(off TV)
Dad? Is that a chocolate fountain?

BUDDY

(long beat)
Yes, Bailey. Yes, it is.

CANDY

(smiles)
Go. It's fine, really. I'll be along just as soon as my sister
(at TV)
stops being SUCH A BABY!!!

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Jude is pacing, yelling at Candy on the TV.

JUDE

Education candidate? It's like a legless man calling himself the Jogging Candidate. You'd still be in 11th grade if I hadn't taken your American History final for you.

(looking around)

Where's Art?

MARTIN

Bathroom.

JUDE

There's a phone in there.

As Jude bolts for the bathroom door --

INT. COOPER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Candy cleans the spotless kitchen, keeping busy. The phone RINGS. Candy pointedly ignores it, as Helen enters.

HELEN

Candy? Answer it, that's your call.

CANDY

(aloof)

So? Now I don't want to talk.

HELEN

Oh, for --

(answers phone)

Hold please.

CANDY

Not until she apologizes.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT (ON TV)

BECKI RAMOS

Bob, people here wonder why Holiday has not conceded, but often at this point the candidates are engaged in high-level policy negotiations.

INT. COOPER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

CANDY

She was mean about my hair on TV.

HELEN

(into phone)

Did you hear that, Art?

INTERCUT:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Outside the bathroom, Jude POUNDS on the door. She stops when Art opens the door and leans out with the phone.

ART
You have to apologize about her hair.

CANDY
(calls toward phone)
It's a perfectly cute style for this coast, we don't all live in Washington, D.C.!

ART
(to Jude)
She says it's a perfectly cute -- oh for god's sake, here.

Art shoves the phone into Jude's hand. Jude looks at it, bangs her fist against her head... then SIGHS.

JUDE
(into phone)
Hello?

Helen shoves the phone at Candy, who takes it, casually.

CANDY
Yes...?

JUDE
(mumbles)
'msorryaboutwhatIsaid.

CANDY
(starts to hand phone to Helen)
She doesn't mean it.

JUDE
Okay, yes! I'm sorry.

CANDY
You know I have a cowlick, my hairstyle options are limited.

JUDE
I know. I'm sorry. I really am.

CANDY
Okay.
(beat)
So how are you doing?

JUDE

(shrugs)

Eh. Don't worry about me. Go to your party. And congratulations.

CANDY

(beat)

Congratulations...

(silence)

Congratulations...?

JUDE

(sighs)

Mrs. Mayor.

Candy SQUEALS with delight; Jude hangs her head.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NEXT MORNING

There's a KNOCK on the door. Jude stumbles to the door and opens it to Helen. Helen reacts: Jude is a wreck, still in last night's clothes. Jude turns away, dully.

JUDE

Hello, Mother. Want some breakfast?

She heads back into the room and we reveal: THE ROOM IS A MESS, the mini-bar wide open, contents strewn around.

JUDE (cont'd)

There may be a Milk Dud under the chair.

HELEN

Oh, my. It looks like a bear got in.

JUDE

Obviously not. If a bear had gotten in, I would've eaten it.

HELEN

Sweetheart... are you alright?

JUDE

No. I drank a hundred dollars worth of mini-bar booze, and I couldn't even get a buzz on.

HELEN

Oh, those things hold barely a sip. It's like polishing off what's left in everyone else's glasses.

JUDE
Are you in the habit of --

HELEN
Not a habit. It's happened.

Jude curls up on the couch, looking like a little girl needing her mommy. Helen sits, holds her.

JUDE
Oh, Mom...

HELEN
I know, sweetheart...

JUDE
She came out of nowhere. So late and unexpected it was like riding a unicorn into battle -- everyone was so dazzled and shocked, they forgot to shoot.

HELEN
It'll be okay, you'll bounce back.

JUDE
No. They're gone. All of them.

HELEN
All of what?

JUDE
My clients.
(finds empty box)
And the Raisinets. I'm not happy about that.
(tosses box)
My clients all left, Mom. Even Martin left, he quit to take another job. Martin.

Jude looks as lost and low as Helen's ever seen her.

JUDE (cont'd)
Why would Candy do this to me?
Politics is my thing -- you don't see me with a sudden passion for holiday crafts.

Helen pats Jude's head. Beat. Then she CHUCKLES.

JUDE (cont'd)
What?

HELEN

Well, it's true, isn't it? The poor thing can't run a city, she can barely set her car's radio buttons.

JUDE

(grins)

Oh my god... remember when she tried to play Sim City on my computer?

COMPUTER SCREEN - FLASHBACK

A computer-generated city is completely in flames.

BACK TO SCENE:

JUDE

I can still hear the screams of tiny Sim-people in my sleep.

HELEN

It's a shame, really -- your sister has great passion and a feel for people, but no idea of how things get done. ...And here you are, apparently with time on your hands...

JUDE

Yeah... What? Whoa.

HELEN

Well, think about it -- you always get people elected and then just move on. Wouldn't you like to stick around and be a part of things? With your brains and her likability, you two could really do something.

JUDE

You don't think I'm likable?

HELEN

I do, but in the court of public opinion you wouldn't want it to go to a jury.

JUDE

(wheels turning)

I'd run things. I'd be the shadow Mayor. She'd be my puppet.

HELEN

Well, I don't know about puppet...

JUDE

Yeah, at best, she'd be one of those scary ventriloquist dummies that comes to life and kills its owner.

HELEN

(takes Jude's hand)

You have so much in the world, Judith. Respect, education, intelligence... you can afford to be generous and help your sister out. She needs you.

We see this really land with Jude: her sister needs her.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COOPER HOUSE - CANDY'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on Candy.

CANDY

She needs me?

REVEAL Helen, having an identical conversation with Candy.

HELEN

You should have seen the poor thing, wallowing in bottles and wrappers like something rolling around on the floor of your car. Work is all she has, poor thing... while you, you have so much in the world -- a loving family, popularity, power... you can afford to be generous, and help your sister out.

We see this also really touch Candy. Then --

BAILEY (O.S.)

Aunt Jude, hi...!

INT. COOPER HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Bailey's hugging her aunt Jude, as Candy and Helen enter.

BAILEY

I am so sorry for your loss. Today's electorate sadly values style and beauty over substance and experience.

CANDY

Yeah, a lot of it also values corporal punishment for kids. Get ready for school, Stinker.

Bailey exits. Then Jude notices another young woman there, working at the center island. This is NATALEE, young, gorgeous, sincere, enthusiastic, free-spirited.

HELEN

Oh -- Judith, this is Natalee,
Candy's Campaign Advisor.

JUDE

Yes, I saw you at the candidate forum.
Nice win. Are you with a local firm?

NATALEE

I have my own shop.

JUDE

Must be why we've never met before.
Who have you represented?

NATALEE

Oh, all the biggies: Paul Mitchell,
Sebastian... I'm thinking of bringing
in Frederic Fekkai.

JUDE

(beat)
You're a hairdresser.

NATALEE

Stylist.

JUDE

I lost to a hairdresser and a
housewife. Oh my god, I was the
bad guy in a movie about a spunky
coupla can-do misfits.

CANDY

Natalee's been doing my hair for
years. She always gives me great
advice, and I realized -- all day
long people sit in her chair and
open up about their lives, what
they want and care about...

NATALEE

It's true, I have my finger right
on the pulse of the people.

JUDE

(forced big smile)
Well... bet you couldn't find one
on me right now!

They all LAUGH, but only Jude knows she isn't kidding.

NATALEE

(to Candy)

Okay, hon, I'm gonna go sage your office and get things set up. 'Bye now!

She gives a finger-wave and exits. Helen pokes Jude, nods her head toward Candy -- get on with it. Jude turns to Candy. They look at each other with the intense, heartfelt, generous sympathy of the truly benevolent.

CANDY

So.

(takes Jude's hands)

You're here.

JUDE

(like a saint)

I am.

CANDY

(hand on heart)

And hey --

JUDE

Please. We're family.

CANDY

I know, right?

Pause. Silence, each waiting for the other. Helen jumps in to seal this deal:

HELEN

Okay then it's settled!

Buddy comes in.

BUDDY

What is?

HELEN

She just agreed to help her sister out!

Both girls shrug modestly, "it's no big deal..."

BUDDY

Awesome! Welcome to Team Candy.

Buddy tosses Jude a t-shirt with Candy's face on it.

HELEN

I'm going to bring in the papers
and we can all bask in Candy's
headlines.

Helen exits. Jude is studying the t-shirt.

BUDDY

Designed those myself: "Count on
Candy, Count on America." The first
ones just had her face and said,
"You Count!" But some jokers blacked
out the "O" in "Count," and well...

JUDE

You supplied these from your company?

CANDY

It was such a help, he saved my
campaign a fortune.

JUDE

Can you read me this label, Buddy?
The one behind the word "America"?

BUDDY

(squints at label)
"Made in Viet... Viet..." Man, my
eyes are getting bad.

JUDE

Vietnam! Made in Vietnam! You
outsourced her campaign materials.

CANDY

More savings.

BUDDY

Ka-ching!

JUDE

Yes, that might have been the name
of the child who made this. It
could have cost Candy the election
if anyone had noticed this earlier.

Pause.

CANDY

You're wishing you had, aren't you?

JUDE

Little bit. Sorry. But if I noticed
it, the press will be on it soon,
and they will come after you.

CANDY

(laughs)
Oh, trust me, I can handle a few
hard-nosed reporters. I was one.

JUDE

You reported the weather.

CANDY

And I was uncompromising.

JUDE

Buddy, round up every leftover
campaign shirt. I'll make this go
away somehow.

Buddy exits.

CANDY

Wow. It feels so good, after the
campaign, to know my sister has my
back.

Jude smiles; surprisingly, she likes it, too. Then Helen
enters, with the morning paper open.

HELEN

Well, you certainly made the
headline.

CANDY

Ooh, is there a picture, how do I
look?

HELEN

(reading)
"Historic Problem: New Mayor Never
Took Eleventh Grade Test."

She shows the headline -- everyone stares at Jude, who
is horrified at what she's done. Beat.

JUDE

(off paper, weakly)
Cute hair, though...

As Jude feels awful, and Candy stares daggers...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. COOPER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

As before, Candy glaring at Jude, who's really bothered.

HELEN

Judith, why would you tell the world
that about your sister?

JUDE

I didn't. It was Martin, he must
have leaked it as a last-ditch play.

CANDY

Wow, Martin made a wild guess that
you'd taken my History test for me?
Because he may be a witch.

JUDE

No, it just popped out, I'm sorry.

HELEN

How does that just "pop out?"

JUDE

I don't know, I really don't.

CANDY

I do. You want me to fail.

JUDE

Not at all.

CANDY

You want to bring me down.

JUDE

Not true.

CANDY

You don't think I'll be a good mayor.

JUDE

(beat)

Let's quit while we're ahead.

CANDY

See? Oh my god, you are so jealous --

JUDE

Jealous? Why would I be jealous?

CANDY

Because people like me, I won, and you have to call me Your Honor.

JUDE

I don't, actually.

CANDY

You do so or I can throw you in jail.

JUDE

Okay, have you even Googled the word "Mayor?"

CANDY

I am the education candidate -- don't you find it weird you said the one thing that would make me look stupid?

JUDE

No, I find it weird you think there's only one.

HELEN

Judith, is that helpful?

JUDE

Well, what about all the things I didn't tell? Spring Break in Cabo? The game show disaster? I ran Art's campaign with one hand tied behind my back for you and it cost me my career, where's the thanks for that?

CANDY

You want me to thank you?

JUDE

Well... not at this moment, no. We can put a pin in that.

HELEN

I just don't know why that incident came to mind after all these years.

JUDE

That's a very good question.

CANDY

Yes, it is.

JUDE

I just said it was. Maybe... maybe because that's how we got here.

CANDY

Got where?

JUDE

If I hadn't cheated for you, you'd be better off. But I let you skip a step. Like always. Let you skip through life with nothing but a smile and a flip of your hair and everything coming too easily.

CANDY

You think things come easy to me?

JUDE

Well, what do you think, Mrs. Mayor? You didn't really finish eleventh grade, never finished college, and you win as the education candidate?

Candy's daughter Bailey has entered, unseen.

BAILEY

You didn't finish eleventh grade?

JUDE

(beat)
Uh, oh.

HELEN

You didn't finish college?

JUDE

Oh, jeez.

CANDY

(to Jude)
Okay if I hold off on your thank you for a bit?

JUDE

Bailey was going to find out today anyway, it's in all the newspapers.

CANDY

She's a teenager, she can't even operate a newspaper.
(to Bailey)
Honey, let's go, we can talk about it in the car.

BAILEY

Mm, that's okay. School suddenly doesn't seem that big a deal.

Bailey's enjoying her upper hand. Candy turns to Jude:

CANDY

And now you've destroyed my family.

HELEN

(to Candy)

What do you mean you didn't finish college? I saw you graduate.

JUDE

No, I intentionally made us late to the graduation so you missed Candy's name not being called.

(to Candy)

You're welcome.

CANDY

Seriously?

(to Bailey)

Just get in the car, okay? Nothing's changed, you need to go to school so you get into college and make something of yourself.

She didn't see Buddy re-enter with a box of t-shirts.

BUDDY

I didn't go to college.

CANDY

Oh for god's sake...

BUDDY

I made something of myself, I have my own business.

BAILEY

And you didn't finish college, Mom, and you're the Mayor.

CANDY

Yes I am, and Sacramento can't have its mayor's daughter skipping school!

BAILEY

Sacramento will understand. We're like sisters.

CANDY

GET in the CAR!

(to Jude)

Oh my god, is there anything else you want to destroy before you go?

JUDE
No. I'm not going anywhere, I'll
fix this, I promise -- I feel bad.

CANDY
Yeah, well, you should.

JUDE
I just said I did.

Candy exits with Bailey. Off Jude, guilty and upset.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - BULLPEN - DAY

Moving guys are coming and going as Jude enters. She
sees Natalee, waving burning sage around the office.

JUDE
Natalee, hi. Good news, Candy wants
you to head up the transition team.

NATALEE
Ooh, exciting!

JUDE
And the first transition is me into
your job.

NATALEE
What?

JUDE
Okay, that's done. Don't be sad --
do you know how I got where I am?

NATALEE
Yes, you took my job.

JUDE
I listened, and I observed. That's
why I want you out on the front
lines, to see every face that comes
in, hear every voice that calls.

NATALEE
You want me to be the receptionist.

JUDE
And to get me coffee, please, it's
going to be a long day.

Jude goes into --

INT. JUDE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jude enters, and stops when she SEES A GUY at her desk: Martin, her ex-associate. He sees her and FREEZES -- actually holds real still, as if trying to avoid detection.

JUDE

I can see you, Martin.

MARTIN

Jude. Hi.

(beat)

Awkward.

JUDE

This is the job you left me for? I can't believe you, you went to the other side.

MARTIN

Well, so did you.

JUDE

Yeah, and I'm not real happy with me, either. Frankly, I'm disappointed in both of us.

MARTIN

I needed a job. I have student loans. And some Cartier earrings someone refused to accept and I can't return.

JUDE

(holds up newspaper)

Does Candy know she hired the guy who did this?

MARTIN

She didn't hire me, Mr. Charles did. Remember we wondered who was putting all that money behind her campaign?

JUDE

Wait. Nathan Charles? The developer?

MARTIN

And the guy you slept with all through the Pennsylvania primary.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Don't forget Wisconsin.

And NATHAN CHARLES is in the doorway -- a good-looking, charming, single, very successful businessman.

MARTIN

The Badger State.

Nathan smiles, goes back to THE BULLPEN. Jude follows.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

NATHAN

Hello, Judith.

JUDE

Long time.

NATHAN

Sorry about Pennsylvania.

JUDE

(shrug)

I just backed the wrong horse.

NATHAN

I'm not talking about the election.

JUDE

Neither am I.

Tight little smile. Some difficult history here.

NATHAN

You still think about me?

JUDE

Yes, Nathan, I do. After Pennsylvania, I got a dog named Nathan, and had a series of boyfriends named Nathan, then I had a baby with one and named him Nathan, who grew up and I married him and we had a baby named Nathan.

NATHAN

(beat)

I'm starting to recall why we didn't work out.

JUDE

And I'm starting to see why you used your money to put an inexperienced, longshot mayor in office. You want to bring a football team to Sacramento.

NATHAN

Football...? No, I brought my nephew's scout troop to the redwoods once, but...

JUDE

Cut the crap, I know your act. You need this city's machine behind you, so you picked a mayor naive enough to grease the gears. Except now I'm here to protect her from you.

NATHAN

And who will protect her from you?

He holds up the newspaper, with it's damning headline.

JUDE

A rough start, yes. I'll need you to use your legendary charm to get the press to back off, or this dance is over before the music's even started.

NATHAN

And in return, all I need you to do is take full responsibility and resign.

JUDE

Or... and I'm just now forming this idea, so bear with me... kiss my ass.

NATHAN

I remember a similar request in Maine.

MARTIN (O.S.)

The Pine Tree State!

Then Candy enters, sees Nathan, goes all poor-helpless-girl.

CANDY

Oh, Nathan! It's only my first day, and already they're picking on me!

NATHAN

I heard, it's awful. What can I do?

CANDY

Nothing... just be a friend.

She bites her lower lip and "absently" PUTS A HAND ON NATHAN'S ARM; Jude sees this and ROLLS HER EYES.

NATHAN

I do have some pull with the media.
Maybe I can persuade them to go
easy.

JUDE

What? No, that was my i--

CANDY

Oh! Nathan, you're an angel. You
are, you're my heaven-sent angel.

Nathan gives Candy a peck on the forehead, and exits, as Candy exits into the mayor's office. Jude sees Natalee watching.

JUDE

(to Natalee)

That's not.... never do that.
Flirting will not get you ahead.

CANDY (O.S.)

The big office is mine, right?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - JUDE'S OFFICE - LATER

Jude is gathering Martin and Natalee for a strategy meeting. She comes around the front of her desk, and sits on it.

JUDE

Okay, some fires to put out before
tomorrow's press conference --

Natalee sits on the front of the desk, too. Beat.

JUDE (cont'd)

Natalee. This is a one-chair salon.

Natalee frowns a teeny bit, but sits with Martin.

JUDE (cont'd)

First, did we find out who at Buddy's
company actually ordered the t-shirts
from Vietnam?

MARTIN

His plant manager, Hector Gallardo.

JUDE

Great. Buddy knew nothing about the shirts, and when he found out, he fired Hector. Done.

NATALEE

Oh, no, Buddy won't fire Hector.

JUDE

What if we got Hector another job?

NATALEE

Can we? Yay, it used to be so hard for illegal immigrants to find work.

Beat. Jude SIGHS.

JUDE

We'll circle back to that. Next: how to make this History test thing go away.

NATALEE

(hand up)

Ooh! Have the Mayor pass the same test now, to prove she can.

JUDE

Hm. Okay, that's not bad...

NATALEE

Yeah, like this one time in my shop --

JUDE

Natalee -- is this a hair story?

NATALEE

It takes more of a human interest turn.

JUDE

But mostly hair?

NATALEE

(admitting)

A lot of hair, yeah.

JUDE

So why don't we table it for now?

MARTIN

She does bring up a good point.

JUDE

How? She didn't speak.

MARTIN

In a short campaign like this, the Mayor could talk about what she knows. Tomorrow, the press will focus on what she doesn't know.

JUDE

(realizing in horror)
My god. We'll be there for days.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COOPER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jude is holding a tiny earbud device for Candy; Helen watches.

JUDE

It's an earbud. You put it in your ear, and I stand backstage during the conference and feed you the answers.

CANDY

No, that's not going to work.

HELEN

It will. If anyone tries to trip you up, just say exactly what Judith says.

CANDY

I mean I have large ear canals. What if it gets too deep and ends up in my brain?

JUDE

Then we'll have to explain the rattling sound when you nod.

CANDY

Ha, ha. It's okay, Nathan promised me the press won't ask hard questions.

JUDE

The mainstream media, maybe, but we're in a world of bloggers, now -- pasty creatures living in their moms' basements like albino cave spiders and angry there's no more Harry Potter. And I'm sorry, Candy, but this has gone viral.

She opens her laptop for Candy. Candy's eyes widen.

CANDY
 (in horror)
 The game show!

ON COMPUTER - "WHEEL OF FORTUNE" VIDEO (CIRCA 2000)

YOUNGER CANDY is a contestant. The clue is "a famous phrase."

YOUNGER CANDY
 Pat, I'd like to solve the puzzle.

VANNA WHITE is at the big board, where the puzzle reads,
 "THE BR_T_SH ARE _OM_ _ _! THE BR_T_SH ARE _OM_ _ _!"

YOUNGER CANDY (cont'd)
 (with confidence)
 "The British are homely, the British
 are homely."

From the audience, GASPS and LAUGHTER. Beat.

YOUNGER CANDY (cont'd)
 (defensive)
 Well, they are.

BACK TO SCENE

CANDY
 (getting it)
 Oh my god...

HELEN
 They'll come after you, Sweetheart.
 Please just wear the earbud and let
 Judith answer the questions.

CANDY
 In other words, cheat.

JUDE
 No, I want to help.

CANDY
 Help me cheat. Again. Is that
 your only move?

JUDE
 No. Yes. Maybe it is. But it got
 us here, let it get us out.

CANDY
 No. You were right, I've gotten
 this far on my charms alone, I want
 to speak for myself.

HELEN

But you don't have anything to say!

Shocked silence.

CANDY

Excuse me?

HELEN

(trying to fix it)

But you say it so beautifully...

JUDE

I know what Mom means. I watched your speeches during this campaign, watched people hanging on your every word. Even when most of the words were pronounced wrong. Or not even words. I've always envied how you connect to people, because they know you believe whatever it is you're saying.

(beat)

Me... I can't remember the last time I said anything I believed.

CANDY

(pause; touched)

You envy me? Really?

HELEN

Of course she does, and I'm sure you envy things about her, if you just let yourself admit it.

CANDY

You're right, I do. Like...

(long beat)

I'm sorry, I'm drawing a blank.

JUDE

I'm smart, okay? Try that.

CANDY

(defensive)

I'm smart, too. There are many kinds of smart.

JUDE

Yes, but none of them involve not knowing anything.

HELEN

Judith, let me handle this.

CANDY

Smart is not just spitting out facts like it's the only measure of intelligence. People don't want facts, they want truth!

(ramping up passionately)

Do you think facts kept the Founding Fathers warm through that long winter at Gettysburg, or facts helped Lewis and Clark defeat the Indians at the Alamo? It wasn't facts, but the American flag, that Charles Lindbergh carried with him as he sailed into Boston Harbor and told Francis Scott Key to not fire until he saw the whites of their eyes, and it wasn't facts, but courage, that allowed a young boy named Huckleberry Finn to make it up the Mississippi River to freedom!

Pause.

CANDY (cont'd)

(hopeful)

Anything?

JUDE

Nope.

HELEN

Not a one.

CANDY

Fine, gimme the ear-thingy.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. PRESS ROOM - MORNING

Candy is giving her first press conference to gathered media.

CANDY

Before we go on, let me first thank our former Mayor Cartwright for his time. He pledged to serve four years, and with good behavior, it should work out to just about that.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jude watches a monitor, wearing a headset. Martin is nearby. Nathan approaches.

NATHAN

Judith. It's going well, I think.

JUDE

Yes. There is one more wrinkle you can help iron. Seems Candy's husband hired an illegal immigrant to run his company.

NATHAN

Two scandals on Day One? Wow. Sounds like she may need a change of advisors.

Beat. Then Jude tries a new tactic: flirting. She LAUGHS at his joke, in a stilted try at light and lilted.

JUDE

You're so funny. And I'm such a ninny.

(flips her hair,
awkwardly)

I just wish I had your gift with people.

She reaches out to touch his arm, but it comes off less like flirting and more like trying to snatch his watch.

NATHAN

What are you --

JUDE

(embarrassed)
Nothing. Get out.

Nathan grins and exits, and we see Helen has arrived.

HELEN
I'm truly sorry I had to see that.

INTERCUT:

INT. PRESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A REPORTER stands.

REPORTER
Mayor Cooper, congratulations on
being elected to serve our city.

CANDY
Thank you very much.

REPORTER
Do you happen to know when it was
founded?

Jude is ready for the "gotcha" questions.

JUDE
(into mic)
1849.

CANDY
1849. Which I know from knowing
it.

JUDE
(into mic)
And because it's on your podium.

Candy leans over, sees the podium: the city seal says
"1849."

CANDY
Ta-da...

Backstage, Helen gives Jude a thumbs-up. In the press
room, a pudgy BLOGGER stands up, holding a Candy Cooper
t-shirt.

BLOGGER
Mrs. Mayor, your husband's company
made the t-shirts for your campaign,
right?

JUDE
(into mic)
Yes, but there's a firewall.

CANDY
Yes, but there was a fireball.

JUDE
(into mic)
Firewall, between me and his factory.

CANDY
There was a fire in the factory.
In the walls. But everyone's okay.

BLOGGER
Did you approve buying the shirts?

CANDY
(big smile)
Goodness. The last time a crowd
was this interested in my t-shirt,
I was getting water sprayed on it.

The reporters LAUGH.

CANDY (cont'd)
I won that contest too, by the way!

More LAUGHTER. Backstage, Jude ROLLS HER EYES and SIGHS
wearily. The t-shirt blogger does not back down:

BLOGGER
Mayor Cooper, do you know where
this shirt from your campaign was
made?

JUDE
(into mic, firmly)
No.

CANDY
Yes, I do. Give it here.

JUDE
(into mic)
Fine, I'm nothing, I don't exist.

The blogger tosses Candy the shirt, and she starts reading
labels, speaking off-the-cuff and with growing passion.

CANDY
The cotton was grown in Egypt. The
dyeing was done in Pakistan, the
tags are from China and the stitching
was done in Vietnam. Where was it
made? Where were you made? Where
was I made?

HELEN

(aside to Jude)

The Astro Drive-in, during "Smokey and the Bandit."

CANDY

The same place this country was made: out of threads from all over the world! Was this shirt made in America? No -- this shirt IS America!

The reporters scramble to write this down, impressed. Jude is also impressed: wow, she's good. The Blogger presses:

BLOGGER

Then why did your husband hire an illegal immigrant to run his company?

The other reporters stop, all ears.

CANDY

Hector? Well... um...

JUDE

(saving her; into mic)

His daughter.

CANDY

His daughter. Something about his daughter.

JUDE

(into mic)

To give her a better life.

CANDY

To give Hector's beautiful young daughter a better life. Because my husband is a father, and he wanted to share the American dream with another father, one who came to this country to make a better life for his little girl. If Hector can't work, where will that little girl be? Not in school like she is right now, making all A's, but working in a disgusting, horrible sweatshop somewhere, making t-shirts just like this one!

She angrily balls the shirt up like it's something foul. A SECOND BLOGGER stands, a serious young woman.

SECOND BLOGGER

So as the "education candidate,"
how would you explain to Hector's
beautiful young daughter that you
cheated your way out of 11th grade?

HELEN

(worried)
Here we go...

JUDE

(quickly, into mic)
"I think the people of this city
are more interested in their future
than in my past."

CANDY

(beat)
I would say I'm sorry.

JUDE

(into mic)
Hello, is this thing on?

CANDY

I would say I cheated myself. And I
hold myself accountable. You all
know that I ran for mayor because of
my daughter, Bailey. To make sure
she had the kind of education that
would serve her in life -- that would
teach her the value of learning.

She speaks directly at her camera, directly to Jude.

CANDY (cont'd)

Because Bailey doesn't have a big
sister, like I did. One who cared
enough to help me.

Jude reacts, surprised and touched. Candy ramps up:

CANDY (cont'd)

And now we all need to care. We
need to be big sisters to each other's
daughters. Fathers can be sisters
to their sons. Let's all follow the
lead of my husband in being sisters
to all the Hector's daughters of
Sacramento, to hold each other
accountable, for improving our
schools, caring for our children,
and for making AMERICA the greatest
country in the whole world! Can we
make it happen?

She holds up the shirt, with her face and "Count on Candy."

CANDY (cont'd)

Count on it!

Cameras FLASH, there's even some APPLAUSE, and Candy basks in it with her big, winning smile, and gives a little pageant wave.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Helen is teary; Jude is touched, and kind of amazed.

JUDE

Wow.

HELEN

I know. Judith... your head... her heart... the two of you can do something genuine, here, something real.

JUDE

I agree, Mom.

Helen gives Jude a kiss, and exits. Jude turns to Martin.

JUDE (cont'd)

Now go find Hector a daughter.

Martin nods, and as Jude exits after Helen...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW