

NO NEWS

By Spencer Meade

COLD OPEN

INT. LIBERAL ACTION NEWS OFFICES - DAY

TYLER SAUNDERS, 30, our wide-eyed hero with dreams of being a big-time news anchor, knocks quietly on an open office door. The room is filled with Hillman Awards for Broadcast Journalism and posters of NETWORK PERSONALITIES.

His producer STEPHEN, 43, sips a latte at his desk; unaware of Tyler's presence. Tyler knocks once more, but again goes unnoticed. He finally winds up and slams his fist on the door, causing Stephen to jump and spill his drink. Tyler enters wincing at his throbbing hand.

STEPHEN
(cleaning up the spill)
My vanilla-peppermint matcha!

TYLER
Sorry Stephen. Can we discuss the piece I handed in this morning?

STEPHEN
Before you ask, Tyler, I can't put you on as a guest.

TYLER
But I took a criminal law seminar at Yale. Who better to discuss the gay panic defense?

STEPHEN
A gay who won't cause panic when the cameras are on.

Stephen turns his computer monitor to show an article titled "Writer Suspended After On-Air Gaffe."

TYLER
Oh come on! All I said was that Obama wasn't a perfect president.

STEPHEN
Big little ears, Tyler!

Stephen covers the ears of an Obama figurine on his desk.

TYLER
Steve, it's been four years and I'm still rotting in the writers room. If I don't get guest spots I'll be stuck for the rest of my career.

STEPHEN

I can't do it. You lost us funding from The Association For The Advancement Of White Fiscally Unscrupulous Liberals.

TYLER

That's AAWFUL!

STEPHEN

I know! Nancy Pelosi won't even give me stock tips anymore.

TYLER

Please! I've dreamed of being an anchor since I was 8 years old interviewing neighbors when bikes went missing. I stayed up to watch Anderson Cooper report from Bosnia while his nipples peeked through his polo shirt. I was abstinent at Teen News Camp to focus on work!

STEPHEN

My God...those camps are depraved. I'm sorry. My hands are tied.

TYLER

Wow. You sound just like the campers who were into BDSM.

INT. TYLER'S CUBICLE - DAY

Tyler sits in a shared space decorated with a photo collage of Dan Rather, Rachel Maddow, and Simpsons' Kent Brockman. His computer screen is open on a draft titled "Crime Is Conservative." He looks at a wedding photo of himself and DAN BROWNLEY, 44, a handsome nerd, as his phone gets an alert.

TYLER

I'll be back in an hour, guys.

INT. CHARLIE HARDING SHOW SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

ANNABELLE GUTMAN, 50, the show's no-nonsense producer, walks Tyler through a studio filled with PRODUCTION STAFF.

ANNABELLE

As you know, we're hiring a new contributor and our viewers want someone with a gay perspective. It seems Ellen had an effect on them.

TYLER

Was that before or after they found out she was a toxic boss?

ANNABELLE

I think you know the answer.

Tyler spots CHARLIE HARDING, mid-50s, the show's anchor and unabashed man-child, sitting at a desk across the room.

TYLER

Wow. They say he's single-handedly ruining the country.

ANNABELLE

Yup. That's Charlie; a political deviant who spends his Saturdays at Dave and Buster's.

Tyler gives her a confused look. She puts him in position near Charlie's desk and hands him a microphone.

ANNABELLE (CONT'D)

This'll be simple. Just chat with Charlie as if we're on the air. You'll be great. Even with your background you had the best tape.

TYLER

Really?

ANNABELLE

I honestly don't remember. And we're starting in 10...

She backs away behind the cameras as Tyler hypes himself up.

TYLER

(to himself)

You've got this. Forget that the show might be causing the downfall of society. Just talk like Dad when he's with his Navy buddies and-

CHARLIE

Today's pizza day!

Tyler, surprised by the outburst, looks over to see Charlie staring directly at him.

ANNABELLE

Action!

Charlie puts on his anchorman persona and turns to camera.

CHARLIE

Democrats just aborted our
democracy at 12,908 weeks. This is
The Charlie Harding Show where
we're packin' heat and eatin' meat.
Please welcome Tyler Saunders.

TYLER

Good to be here, Charlie. City sure
isn't what it used to be.

CHARLIE

I hope your commute was better than
mine. I had to travel through
communists, addicts, and a baby
stroller with a "COEXIST" sticker.

TYLER

Ugh. If Jesus wanted us to coexist
he would've said so in the Bible.

Charlie chuckles. Tyler looks impressed with himself.

CHARLIE

Tyler, as our gay, what do you say
to those who think people like you
can't be conservative?

Tyler takes in the question; knowing his answer will decide
his fate. His heart races, ears ring, and he nervously scans
the room. He hallucinates Annabelle holding up a large photo
of Anderson Cooper's nipple and gets a burst of inspiration.

TYLER

I'd say the left doesn't care about
us, Charlie. They want allegiance
while they take our disposable
incomes, put microchips in our
Prep, and tell us Pete Buttigieg is
a daddy when he's at best an
Indiana 6. They want us to be
sheep, but we're hairy, muscular
wolves. So let's be leaders. The
right's not just for breeders!

ANNABELLE

And we're out!

The crew applauds. Tyler is stunned at his own words.

TYLER

Where did that come from?

OPENING CREDITS

ACT ONE

EXT. SIXTH AVENUE SIDEWALK - MORNING

Tyler, carrying a box of office decorations, walks with Dan.

TYLER

Big week for both of us. I have a new job. You're turning-

DAN

Don't say it!

TYLER

You're too self-conscious about your age, Dan. Embrace it!

DAN

You say that because you're young. You don't get testosterone from a syringe. You're-

TYLER

Ineligible for AARP membership?

DAN

How dare you!

They arrive at the Conservative One News building.

DAN (CONT'D)

I can't believe you're doing this. This place emanates evil.

TYLER

That's a little dramatic.

They watch as a pale, dead-eyed man in a three-piece suit menacingly exits the building and walks between them.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Okay, but I had no choice. The liberal networks don't want me.

DAN

But Charlie Harding? That guy yells about cancel culture turning the red Starburst into a lesbian.

TYLER

That's crazy. Pink is the lesbian. Plus, you're not saving the world.

He walks to a news stand, grabs a copy of the Hudson Tribune, and opens to a front page covered in ads for BP. Dan sighs.

DAN

Ever since we were bought by that conglomerate I have no say anymore.

TYLER

Sounds like we both have our work cut out for us.

DAN

We do...so maybe we don't tell our employers that we're working for diametrically opposed media outlets until we have a handle on it.

TYLER

Ok. Looks like we're back in the closet, Dad-

Dan grabs Tyler's mouth before he can finish his sentence.

DAN

If you call me Daddy I'll smother you in your sleep.

INT. CHARLIE HARDING SHOW LOBBY - MORNING

Tyler walks to the front desk and finds GENE, 60, the cantankerous intern (That's right - a 60 year old intern!). He glances at Gene's name tag and notices his job title.

GENE

Take a picture. It'll last longer in the deep state archives.

Annabelle appears and walks towards them.

ANNABELLE

Don't mind him. He wanted your job even though he's NOT GAY.

GENE

I didn't know we were woke all of a sudden. Where's the representation in media for people like me?

ANNABELLE

Dateline.

(to Tyler)

Come on. I'll show you around.

INT. NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Annabelle walks Tyler through the open-concept section of the newsroom filled with EMPLOYEES in their shared cubicles.

TYLER

This place looks so similar to my old newsroom.

ANNABELLE

I'm sure it is, but you may find our culture more competitive.

Employee 1 turns and addresses the room.

EMPLOYEE 1

Did any of you take my pens?

EMPLOYEE 2

Coming through! I have breaking news for the desk!

Employee 2, holding a piece of paper, gets out of their chair and is immediately tripped by Employee 3.

EMPLOYEE 3

Now you don't.

Employee 3 grabs the paper and runs passed Annabelle and Tyler, but Employee 2 catches up and throws him into Employee 1's cubicle. Tyler looks on in horror as the cubicle crumbles onto Employee 1. Employee 2 grabs the paper and runs.

ANNABELLE

But you'll get used to it.

EMPLOYEE 1

There they are!

INT. NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Annabelle leads Tyler to the contributors' office spaces.

ANNABELLE

Here's where all of the contributors sit.

Tyler stares in awe as he sees his name on a placard next to his office door. He puts his box down on his new desk.

Annabelle finds KATE MOURNING, 35, a chaotic trans woman, sitting in her office in the dark. She hisses as Annabelle turns on the light. Tyler follows into the office.

ANNABELLE (CONT'D)
And this is Kate. She's our Senior Contributor and the first trans woman to win Olympic gold.

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. AQUATIC CENTER - DAY

Kate, in a wetsuit, stands at a podium with the gold medal around her neck.

KATE
I will not stop until sports are equal for everyone, which is why I demand the Olympic Committee ban all trans women except for me.

She raises her arms to thunderous applause.

BACK TO:

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

As before.

TYLER
Hi. It's nice to meet you.

KATE
You too. Sorry. I just have a lot of stuff to get to this morning.

We see her computer screen on a rousing game of Settlers of Catan. Annabelle and Tyler exit, and Kate glares after them.

KATE (CONT'D)
You've made a grave mistake, fellow LGBTQIA.
(pronounced luh-juh-buh-tuh-quoi)
I'm the office token, and I'll make sure you don't last the week.

EXT. CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Annabelle and Tyler pass a massive cafeteria.

ANNABELLE
Lunch and dinner are catered. Just don't get salad. It shows weakness.

TYLER
I haven't seen a bathroom.

ANNABELLE
Our last CEO turned them into smoke
rooms. He believed holding it in
made employees more resilient.

Annabelle stands next to a blown-up photo of BILL HENSON, 73,
a powerful-looking gentleman.

TYLER
Where's he now?

ANNABELLE
He died of kidney failure.

JAMES (O.S.)
Annabelle!

JAMES CASTLE (40s), a handsome anchor in a well-fitted suit
walks towards them.

ANNABELLE
Tyler, this is James Castle. He
used to work for us and now he
hosts our lead-in time slot.

JAMES
And I've been crushing you in the
ratings ever since.

ANNABELLE
Yes...well. We're so happy for your
success, James.

JAMES
Nice to have another one of us
here. Let me know if you get tired
of being on the losing side.

James reaches out and shakes Tyler's hand before he exits.

TYLER
So that's why you hired a gay guy.

ANNABELLE
I want you to destroy him.

EXT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Annabelle and Tyler, holding a notebook, enter a room
labelled "Conference Room."

ANNABELLE

Feel free to settle in here.

Annabelle exits. Tyler sees LUCY DAWSON, 25, an ambitious blonde, sitting alone at the table taking a photo of herself.

TYLER

You're Lucy Dawson! You do those conservative bits on the sidewalk.

FLASH BACK TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Lucy, in a Tiktok-style live stream, walks down the street.

LUCY

Why are we, as women, working when we could be out chucking fruit at drag queens?

Lucy throws a chunk of chopped mango at a DRAG QUEEN but misses badly and is immediately chased.

BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As Tyler sits down, Kate and OTHER CONTRIBUTORS enter. Lucy notices that Tyler's notebook says "I Love Minnetonka."

LUCY

Shut up! You're from Minnesota too?

TYLER

I grew up there.

LUCY

Do you know Gabe Segal?

TYLER

We dated in high school. He dumped me after he "found God."

LUCY

We dated in college after he went to conversion camp. I dumped him after he caught me with the Dean.

LUCY AND TYLER

Worst I've ever had.

LUCY
We're gonna be best friends.

KATE
Great. TWO corn-fed hillbillies.

INT. ANNABELLE'S OFFICE - LATER

As Annabelle gathers her things, Gene runs into the room and hides behind the door.

GENE
They've come for me!

A UPS EMPLOYEE, holding a box and clipboard, walks by.

ANNABELLE
Gene, should I call someone? Maybe a loved one or Bellevue?

GENE
I'm not crazy. I've worked here since I snuck into the building in 1980 and cornered Bill Henson in the bathroom to pitch my ideas.

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

The room is filled with smoke. A young Gene stands behind Bill Henson as he uses a urinal and smokes a cigar.

YOUNG GENE
So he's a newsman AND a monkey.

BILL
Fine. You can intern. Just leave.

Bill snaps his fingers and ASSISTANT hands Gene a contract.

YOUNG GENE
You have interns sign contracts?

BACK TO:

INT. ANNABELLE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

As before.

GENE

And I've been tricked into re-signing every year. You even got me to sign a fake check by telling me I'd won Publisher's Clearinghouse.

ANNABELLE

That was real, Gene. You bought a boat, sailed in a Nautical Straight Pride Parade, and sank it.

GENE

But my deal's up on Friday, and if I don't get promoted everyone will know where the bodies are.

UPS Employee appears behind him.

UPS EMPLOYEE

Can someone sign for this package?

Gene squeals and runs out of the room.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

BEN HUGHES, 32, an overconfident finance bro and the product of extreme family wealth, enters.

BEN

Traffic was awful.

LUCY

To the helipad? It must be so hard having a dad who owns the company.

BEN

Hey! I worked just as hard to get here as everyone else!

A BLACK SCREEN displays the message "Footage Not Available."

Ben sits down next to Tyler and pats him on the shoulder.

BEN (CONT'D)

You must be the new guy! Excited to have more testosterone in the room.

KATE

He's gay.

BEN

Nevermind.

Annabelle returns and closes the door to signify the start of the meeting. The contributors begin taking notes.

ANNABELLE

I need new monologue pitches.
Nothing over two syllables. Our top
story for tonight is how grape
jelly is turning sandwiches into
betas, and Tyler has his first
assignment!

The room applauds. Kate does so half-heartedly.

ANNABELLE (CONT'D)

Apart from writing the show you get
a weekly segment. You're in charge
of research, writing, and
coordinating with production.

TYLER

I can't wait to get started!

Annabelle passes him a packet labelled "A Liberal Failure."
He opens it and sees a photo of a group of people, including
Dan, outside The Hudson Tribune. He looks on in shock.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Can I do pink starburst instead?

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BREAK ROOM - LATER

Lucy, Kate, and Ben sit at a table watching the network's morning show hosted by TWO CHIRPY ANCHORS who have a not-so-subtle chemistry between them.

LUCY

I heard it from a reliable source.

BEN

Your boyfriend in the nursing home?

LUCY

He's the CEO of Time Warner and
it's an assisted living facility.
And no. I heard it from Dennis.

DENNIS, 68, the floor's lovable janitor, walks by pushing a supply cart. Kate stares blissfully at the television.

KATE

I can't believe they gave each
other chlamydia. Respect.

Tyler enters.

TYLER

Hypothetically...would anyone want
to switch assignments with me?

LUCY

Sorry bestie. I finished mine and I
have to go to the opening of Mät
tonight. It's this new Swedish
restaurant that pays servers a fair
wage. I'm gonna make a scene.

Kate notices Tyler's defeated look.

KATE

Give it to me. It breaks my heart
to see a cis gay in distress.

TYLER

Thank you, Kate. I'm so relieved.

KATE

Sure. We should stick together.
Plus, mine's due tomorrow so this
works out for me.

They exchange files. Tyler looks at his new folder titled "How Trans Women Are Ruining The Fishing Industry." He opens it and finds a bound, thick sheath of single-spaced writing.

TYLER

This a draft of your autobiography.

KATE

(leaving the room)

You're welcome.

INT. TYLER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Tyler pours over research. His computer is open on an article titled "Are Trans Women Really Serving Fish?" He sighs and picks up his phone.

INT. TYLER AND DAN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Dan sits in bed reading a book titled Help! I Married A Republican as he sees a text notification.

TYLER (TEXT)

Pulling an all-nighter here. I'll see you tomorrow.

Dan sighs as he stares at the empty space next to him.

DAN (TEXT)

Okay. Good luck!

He puts the phone back down and returns to his book.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh honey. Nobody looks good in an American flag tunic.

EXT. RED HOOK DOCKS - MORNING

An exhausted Tyler stands next to CAMERAMAN as he sets up the shot. FISHERMAN stands on his mark.

TYLER

I didn't realize how contentious this issue was.

FISHERMAN

Me either.

TYLER

What? You're our fishing expert.

FISHERMAN

Today. Yesterday I was a city council member. Tomorrow I'm the Coney Island Cyclones mascot.

CAMERAMAN

We hire him when we can't get a real expert. Viewers never notice.

A black car pulls up. Kate, in a fur coat, exits the vehicle.

KATE

Ugh. I haven't been put out in the cold this early since Ron Desantis' wife made a surprise visit.

TYLER

What are you doing here, Kate?

KATE

I'm filming my segment.

TYLER

No...we switched. Remember?

FISHERMAN

Did someone say switch?

Fisherman rips off his outfit to reveal a mascot costume. He grabs a giant bird's head from behind a shipping container.

KATE

Ty Ty, I'm surprised. Annabelle doesn't let us trade segments, and I could never deny you the right to rip your husband's paper to shreds.

Tyler looks at her in shock.

KATE (CONT'D)

You didn't think we knew? Aww, Tammie Gay Baker. Your first six Google results are your wedding photos. Rainbow cufflinks? Tacky.

TYLER

So you let me do all the work knowing I couldn't turn it in.

KATE

Don't take it personally. My first week I was sent to interview the president of Guatemala only to discover that country's not real.

TYLER
It has 17 million people.

KATE
You'll be fine. You did this in one
night. Think of how much you can
ruin your marriage with three days.

Kate slyly smiles as she walks towards the team; leaving
Tyler incredulous.

KATE (CONT'D)
Rick, get back in the fish costume.

INT. CHARLIE HARDING SHOW LOBBY - LATER

Dan, trying not to be seen, wanders in with a garment bag and
bag lunch. He approaches a cautious Gene at the front desk.

DAN
Hi. I have a few things to deliver-

GENE
You'll never catch me!

Gene runs away from the desk as Dan looks on in disbelief.

DAN
...to Tyler.

Charlie, chewing mints from a bowl on the desk, overhears.
Dan recognizes him immediately.

CHARLIE
You're looking for Tyler?

DAN
(suspicious)
Yes.

CHARLIE
Oh goodie! I can take you.

EXT. CONTRIBUTORS' OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Charlie leads Dan towards Tyler's office.

CHARLIE
You must be proud of your son.

DAN
We don't need to talk.

Lucy laughs as she leaves Tyler's office. She walks down the hallway in the opposite direction as Tyler emerges.

TYLER

Dan? What are you doing here?

DAN

I thought you could use some things since you didn't make it home.

TYLER

Aww. Thank you.

Tyler gives Dan a kiss and the two enter his office.

CHARLIE

Whoa. They must be really close.

INT. TYLER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

As Tyler puts on fresh clothes, Dan notices pain in his face.

DAN

I haven't seen you this upset since Mean Girls left Netflix.

TYLER

It's this segment.

DAN

What's it about? No. Don't tell me. That could cause a conflict of interest.

TYLER

It'll definitely cause a conflict. The one I stayed up finishing was taken from me.

DAN

What!? You need to go to HR.

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Tyler walks down a deserted hallway with flickering lights.

TYLER

Hello? Is anybody down here?

BACK TO:

INT. TYLER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

As before.

TYLER

Yeah...their budget got slashed to pay for defamation suits.

DAN

Reminds me of my new boss. Budget cuts and vetoing stories.

TYLER

On a brighter note, I've decided how I'm going to make it up to you for not coming home last night.

He holds up a flyer of a Star Trek cake from a local bakery.

DAN

The Starship Enterprise chantily cream with fondant tractor beam!?! My book club will be so jealous.

TYLER

It's the least I could do. Now get to work before you're spotted here. I'll see you at dinner.

Dan kisses him on the forehead and giddily exits. Tyler stares helplessly at the picture of Dan at the Hudson Tribune.

His television shows a clip from L.A.N. with the title "The Gay Panic Defense." Stephen sits on the panel as he shouts liberal buzzwords at OTHER PANELISTS. Tyler's jaw tenses.

He changes the channel to a clip of a reporter interviewing people on the street. He gets an idea and picks up his phone.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Scott, meet me downstairs in 5.

INT. CHARLIE HARDING SHOW LOBBY - LATER

Dan walks into the elevator as Lucy pushes the Lobby button.

LUCY

You're Tyler's husband! I recognize you from stalking his Instagram.

She grabs Dan's arm and puts her arm through it.

LUCY (CONT'D)

We're planning a dinner at your place with my new BF. He's a part owner of the Mavericks, but isn't annoying about it.

DAN

As fun as that sounds, Tyler's not allowed to bring home stray TERFs.

LUCY

Drag me, Dan.

She walks into the building lobby and snaps a photo of herself. Dan walks behind her in disgust.

EXT. HUDSON TRIBUNE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Tyler stands on the sidewalk in front of a camera operated by Cameraman. PRODUCTION ASSISTANT stands out of the shot.

TYLER

It's perfect! If I let other people bash the Tribune I'm not betraying Dan. I'm just holding a microphone.

CAMERAMAN

Okay. Ready when you are.

TYLER

(to camera)

Hi Charlie. I'm at the Hudson Tribune to get real people's opinions on this failing dinosaur.

He turns to PASSERBY 1 as they walk in his direction.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Hello, any thoughts on-

PASSERBY 1

Sorry, I don't have any change.

Passerby 1 walks past him. He moves on to PASSERBY 2.

TYLER

Excuse me. Do you have any thoughts on the Hudson Tribune?

PASSERBY 2

I love the Hudson-

He pulls the mic from their mouth and pushes them away.

TYLER

Well, that wasn't a real person.

He stands in the path of ELDERLY WOMAN.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Hi Ma'am. Do you have a se-

She punches him in the stomach as she passes. He recoils.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(in pain)

Would any pacifists like to talk
about the Hudson Tribune?

PASSERBY 3, 4, and 5, three women from New Jersey, emerge.

PASSERBY 3

What's the Hudson Tribune?

PASSERBY 4

That's that kiosk at the airport
where you buy \$10 waters.

TYLER

That's Hudson News.

PASSERBY 5

I know the Hudson Tribune! I saw
their editor, Dan Brownley, at the
92nd Street Y. He's so hot. That
man can sit on my f-

TYLER

And cut.

EXT. MIDTOWN SIDEWALK - EVENING

Tyler, Cameraman, and Production Assistant roam the streets.

TYLER

I've never seen New Yorkers pass on
the chance to criticize anything.

CAMERAMAN

Let's get back. My battery's dying.

Tyler checks his phone and sees he's late for dinner. He
gasps and increases his speed, turns a corner, and is bathed
in white light. Is this the answer to his problems?

TYLER

It's beautiful.

MAN IN RED HAT walks towards him while eating a can of baked beans with a plastic spoon.

MAN IN RED HAT
The food in this city is terrible.

WOMAN IN RED HAT (O.S.)
Clevis, slow down!

A wave of PEOPLE IN RED HATS bathed in heavenly light eating baked beans emerge. "The Hallelujah Chorus" plays.

TYLER
Jackpot!

INT. DAN AND TYLER'S HOME - NIGHT

Dan eats dinner alone while watching an episode of Star Trek.

DAN
Oh Riker, you cad.

He smiles to himself, looks over at the plate he made for Tyler, and lets out a sigh.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

Cameraman inspects the footage as Tyler talks to the People In Red Hats.

TYLER
I can't thank you all enough.

MAN IN RED HAT
It's our pleasure. We love Charlie Harding. He's our favorite mid-late night ranting talk show host.

TYLER
Is there anything I can do for you?

WOMAN IN RED HAT
Can you get us on Blue Bloods? We love that show!

POLICE OFFICER 1 (O.S.)
You're all under arrest!

POLICE OFFICERS show up to arrest the People In Red Hats.

WOMAN IN RED HAT
Wow, that was fast!

POLICE OFFICER 1
Stand back! These people just tried
to bomb a contortion club.

TYLER
Where they train circus performers?

POLICE OFFICER 2
They thought it was an abortion
clinic.

WOMAN IN RED HAT
(wrestled to the ground)
Save the unborn!

TYLER
Oh God. Is everyone ok?

POLICE OFFICER 1
Yes. They're flexible. Plus, the
bombs were filled with baked beans.

Tyler looks horrified as the police take them away.
Production Assistant emerges behind him.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
So...we didn't get their waivers.

TYLER
Tell me you're joking.

Tyler turns to Production Assistant holding blank forms.

TYLER (CONT'D)
(frantic)
We can still use the footage,
right? Nobody will even notice.

Tyler tries to grab the camera from Cameraman's hands, but is
quickly overpowered. Cameraman deletes the footage.

CAMERAMAN
Absolutely not. I already have two
strikes after the capitol incident.

TYLER
God, what did I do to deserve this?

Tyler gets on his knees and cries to the heavens. He looks up
and sees a billboard of himself with the quote "Putting The
Serv in Conservative." He's overwhelmed with embarrassment.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Touché.

INT. BREAK ROOM - MORNING

Kate, Lucy, and Ben sit at the table eating breakfast and watching TWO NEW CHIRPY ANCHORS on the morning show.

LUCY

I heard they got fired because they started an outbreak.

BEN

How do you know everything?

LUCY

People tell me things. I think it's because I'm a Libra.

Gene runs into the room in a frenzy.

GENE

Hide me. Charlie's trying to trap me with a rouse that his niece is selling Girl Scout cookies.

He opens the garbage can and climbs inside.

KATE

Maybe we can add a certain someone to the list of firings.

BEN

Maybe you should chill, Kate. This vendetta's gotten weird. You got people arrested.

KATE

Maybe you should go too. Then *I* can be in charge! It'd be The Nightly Show With Kate Mourning.

LUCY

Oh we're definitely going.

Ben and Lucy stand up and exit the room. Charlie enters; holding a clipboard and eating a box of Thin Mints. Kate points to the garbage can. Gene squeals as Charlie opens it.

CHARLIE

Can I put you down for Samoas?

INT. TYLER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ben enters as Tyler plugs an external drive into his computer.

BEN
Hey bro. How's it going?

TYLER
Surprisingly good! Dan mentioned a mass exit at work so I took his address book and got some interviews. I just have to get this edited by 6. We rented a theater to watch his favorite movie.

Tyler looks at the clock that says 2:15 pm.

BEN
I know just what you need!

Ben opens his backpack to reveal a pharmacy of drugs.

TYLER
What in the world is all that for?

BEN
That's a dumb question. These are for snorting. These are-

TYLER
Put that away. I don't want drugs.

BEN
Just take some Adderall. It'll help you focus.

Ben hands him the bottle and exits. Tyler thinks for a second, takes two pills, and returns to his desk.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Dan stands outside a theater with a marquee labelled "Private Screening - Mommy Dearest (in French)." He looks at his watch and walks in; clearly agitated.

INT. TYLER'S OFFICE - MORNING

Tyler wakes up as Annabelle stands over him.

ANNABELLE
Good Morning, sunshine!

TYLER
Morning!? How is that possible?

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

Lucy and Ben watch television. Kate cackles while secretly switching the labels on Ben's Adderall and Ambien bottles.

KATE
Bye bye, fa-

BACK TO:

INT. TYLER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

As before. Tyler sees a host of messages from Dan and starts panicking.

ANNABELLE
I'm just checking in to make sure
you're ready for tonight.

TYLER
Sure. I have a bunch of footage to
edit, but once that's-

Tyler opens his drive and sees all but one file has been deleted. He opens it and is greeted by an animation of Kate singing "So Long, Farewell" from The Sound Of Music.

ANNABELLE
Is this a joke?

TYLER
Not a very creative one.

ANNABELLE
I had high hopes for you, Tyler.
You've really let me down.

TYLER
Annabelle, wait.

She leaves as the song continues. A devastated Tyler starts packing his things; convinced she's going to fire him. As he does so he looks back at the screen.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Jib Jab's really fallen off.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. TYLER AND DAN'S HOME - LATER

Dan makes breakfast in the kitchen as a dejected Tyler enters with his box of things from the office.

DAN
So he IS alive!

TYLER
Don't remind me.

FLASH BACK TO:

EXT. BAKERY - MORNING

An exhausted, disheveled Tyler tries to open the door, but rams his body into the glass before noticing a CLOSED sign.

TYLER
No! This can't happen. I need that cake!

Desperate for a win, he pulls out a decorative snow globe from his box and winds up to throw it at the glass.

ANDERSON COOPER (O.S.)
What are you doing?

Tyler, too stunned to move, sees ANDERSON COOPER staring directly at him. After an awkward beat, Anderson rolls his eyes, walks to Tyler, and takes the snow globe from him.

ANDERSON COOPER (CONT'D)
Get some help, buddy.

BACK TO:

INT. TYLER AND DAN'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

As before.

DAN
Now what? Are my guests supposed to eat Fudgie the Whale like fourth graders?

TYLER
I like Fudgie!

DAN

I didn't think my expectations
could be lower after last night.
Even on my birthday all we talk
about is Tyler. Tyler doesn't want
to visit Middle Earth for
Christmas. Tyler has early onset
ED!

TYLER

You said that didn't bother you!

DAN

I lied!

Tyler sits on the couch overwhelmed by having failed at his
job and in his marriage.

TYLER

I've made a mess of everything.

DAN

Stop that! You're making me feel
bad for being upset at you.

Dan looks inside the box Tyler was carrying. He sees their
wedding photo and other trinkets from Tyler's desk.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh honey. I'm so sorry.

TYLER

I saw the writing on the wall. I
left before they could fire me.

Dan sits down and comforts him.

DAN

Someone will appreciate you for how
smart and hardworking you are.

TYLER

I'm sorry about the cake.
(he takes a deep breath)
And for working on a hit piece
against your paper.

DAN

Is that why my old employees asked
if I was calling from your phone?

TYLER

You were right about having to
compromise myself to be there.

DAN
Well I wish you'd told me...

Dan picks up a giant box of files and research.

DAN (CONT'D)
...because I did some digging on
the conglomerate that bought us. I
was going to leak this to CNN.

Tyler's mouth is agape. Dan looks at his phone and puts his
breakfast in a to-go container.

DAN (CONT'D)
I gotta go. See you at my party.

Dan gives him a kiss and exits. Tyler examines the box, looks
up, and smiles.

INT. ANNABELLE'S OFFICE - LATER

Annabelle sits in her office and hears a commotion outside.

BEN (O.S.)
Kate, chill.

KATE (O.S.)
Get back! This is my Stonewall!

Annabelle emerges to find Kate holding a Taser and blocking
Tyler, Ben, and Lucy's entrance into Tyler's office.

ANNABELLE
What is going on out here?

She walks up to Tyler as he motions to the box of evidence.
She grabs a piece of paper, looks it over, and smiles.

ANNABELLE (CONT'D)
Well get to it then.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - AFTERNOON

MAKEUP ARTIST gives Tyler a touch up as Annabelle briefs him.
At his desk, Charlie puts a Fruit by the Foot on his tongue.

ANNABELLE
You nervous?

TYLER
At this point I'm running on
adrenaline and kombucha.

ANNABELLE

You should be proud of yourself.
It's going to be great.

TYLER

How are you so sure?

She motions for Makeup Artist to leave and adjusts his tie.

ANNABELLE

Because you're smart, capable, and
if I have to sit through one more
self tape about how hard it was to
be a gay republican at Cornell I'm
gonna shove that camera in a place
your husband forgot existed.

Tyler's eyes widen. Annabelle walks behind the camera.

ANNABELLE (CONT'D)

Alright. We're on in 10!

CHARLIE

Hey Tyler!

Tyler looks over at Charlie as he peels the candy off his
tongue and reveals a temporary tattoo.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

It's an avocado.

ANNABELLE

Action!

CHARLIE

(in newscaster mode)

It's 8:00. Do you know where your
taxes are? Welcome back to Charlie
Harding. For today's spotlight
we're joined by our newest team
member. Tyler, take it away.

TYLER

(to camera)

That's right, Charlie. I dove into
one of our country's biggest
scourges: liberal media...and what
I found was deceit, corruption, and
a lot of bad hair.

Annabelle nods and gives him a thumbs up.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Let's get into it.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Annabelle, Charlie, Tyler, Kate, Lucy, Gene, and Ben all hold up drink glasses in a toast.

ANNABELLE
Congratulations to Tyler on a
successful first show!

ALL
Cheers!

ANNABELLE
And Gene on his 40th anniversary!

DELIVERY PERSON arrives with a box. They hand Gene a pen.

GENE
Nope. You can't fool me.

LUCY
Gene, you're being ridiculous.

BEN
Yeah. Open the box. It's gotta be
something good after 40 years.

Annabelle nods. Gene hesitantly signs. He puts the pen down and excitedly opens the box to find a commemorative plaque.

GENE
(reading)
Congrats on four decades. The
office wouldn't be the same without
you. Aww. That's so nice.

ANNABELLE
Keep reading!

GENE
(reading)
And here's to another year?

He looks at the form he signed and finds a contract under it.

GENE (CONT'D)
Oh no! I did it again!

Annabelle approaches Tyler.

TYLER
Did we beat James?

ANNABELLE

No, but today was the highest ratings we've had since we lost him. You really impressed me today.

TYLER

You called me a disappointment.

ANNABELLE

It worked. I know I gave you a tough assignment, but it's a tough business. Now you'll get bigger assignments. Maybe even travel.

Tyler sees her flirting with Charlie from across the room.

CUT TO:

Ben, Lucy, and Kate at a nearby table. Tyler joins them.

BEN

Isn't that a Koch brother?

LUCY

Oh yeah it is...see ya!

Lucy gets up and saunters in the man's direction.

TYLER

I don't know how you do it, Kate. I barely survived and they haven't even asked me to do the types of stories they make you do.

KATE

Check your Instagram. How many new followers do you have?

Tyler opens his phone and looks back at her.

TYLER

45,000?!

KATE

It's better to be immoral than irrelevant. Now go be with your husband. I'll cover for you.

She gives him a reassuring smile. Tyler exits.

KATE (CONT'D)

Gay men are so weak.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dan, surrounded by FRIENDS, sits at a table in a private room. Tyler enters holding gifts and sets them on the table.

TYLER
Happy Birthday, darling!

Tyler gives a smiling Dan a kiss and sits down next to him.

FRIEND 1
Tyler! How's L.A.N. treating you?

TYLER
Oh, actually-

DAN
It's wonderful. They're talking
about getting him back on screen.

TYLER
(whispered to Dan)
My segment aired two hours ago.

DAN
(whispered to Tyler)
They don't watch conservative news.
They'll never know. I'm still in
denial about it myself.

FRIEND 1
That's wonderful! I really thought
they blew that whole Obama thing
out of proportion.

Tyler gets a message on his phone.

TYLER
Sorry. I'll be right back.

Tyler exits the room and looks at his phone. He watches intently as his Instagram profile hits 100,000 followers.

Dan and his friends continue mingling as Tyler returns singing "Happy Birthday" while holding a Starship Enterprise cake with a lit 45 candle and "Happy Birthday Dan" written on it. He sets the cake down as Dan looks at it in shock.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Charlie knows the owner of every
bakery in a 40 block radius.

DAN

By the way, your show scanned
copies of documents with my
personal watermark on them.

TYLER

I told them not to air those!

TYLER (CONT'D)

Well they did...and I have a
meeting with my disciplinary
committee next week.

Tyler looks visibly rattled. Dan calmly blows out his candles
as his friends finish singing.

END OF EPISODE