

THE MAKING OF AN IDEALIST

"Pilot"

by
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TEASER

FROM THE BLACK WE HEAR-

PRESIDING OFFICER (V.O.)
The Senator from Florida is recognized.

FADE IN:

INT. SENATE FLOOR - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: U.S. Senate - Present Day

SENATOR ADAMS stands at a desk. Adams, early 40s, sports an unusual orange-and-blue tie.

The Senate floor, a semi-circular room resembling a lecture hall, is nearly empty.

SENATOR ADAMS
Thank you, Madame President.

Adams pulls from his suit pocket a leather-bound notebook with a folded sheet of blue paper clipped to the cover.

SENATOR ADAMS
I rise today to finally add my voice to the debate over the President's choice for the Supreme Court.

Adams clears his throat.

CUT TO:

INT. STAFF WORKSPACE - CONTINUOUS

ADRIAN, late 20s, her gleeful eyes fixated on the television, jumps out of her seat.

ADRIAN
He's on the floor!

A young professional, JEFF SIMON, comes running.

JEFF SIMON
Already?!?

ADRIAN
Yeah.

JEFF SIMON
Crap! The press is going to have a field day.

Jeff, loosening his tie, runs out of the office.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Adams laughs nervously.

SENATOR ADAMS (V.O.)

We have certainly learned a lot about the nominee throughout this debate. Senator Easley, a fellow Democrat, has an unparalleled passion for the law.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATE CLOAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Several Senators sit in plush leather sofas, watching C-SPAN. The MAJORITY LEADER, mid-60s and bespectacled, is watching smugly. His WHIP, late-50s with a round face and a comb-over, is agitated.

WHIP

Are you sure he's with us?

MAJORITY LEADER

Definitely. He's not Lieberman. He's a loyal Democrat.

WHIP

Only when he wants to be.

MAJORITY LEADER

Which is most of the time. Look, I spoke with him this morning. He has every reason to vote with us, including the promise of Science and Space after this is all over.

WHIP

You offered him a subcommittee?!?

MAJORITY LEADER

(smirks)

He was going to get it anyway.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Adams unclips and unfolds the blue paper.

SENATOR ADAMS

Yet, there is still so much we don't know. And the glare of the media spotlight is not always kind.

(beat)

We have a saying in my state. "Getting to the truth requires the sun to shine through."

A SCUFFLE. Adams, nervous, looks up at the press galleries.

SENATOR ADAMS

A former President once reminded us that 'the very word "secrecy" is repugnant in a free and open society'. Americans are inherently opposed to 'the excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts'.

The Whip and several other senators ENTER.

SENATOR ADAMS

President Kennedy was right in 1961, as much as he would be right today if he were to say those words now.

Adams glances down and grips the blue paper tightly.

SENATOR ADAMS

I'd like to know why Senator Easley chose to not disclose his long-time membership in the Phoenix Club, an elitist club in Chicago that until recently barred women and minorities from membership.

Cameras FLICKER, and the Whip grimaces.

SENATOR ADAMS

Until then, I cannot support this nominee.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Reporters gathering. Photographers jockey for position. Jeff hovering near the doors. Muffled conversations erupt from behind the closed doors.

After a beat, the ornate doors to the Senate OPEN. Voices

are momentarily louder. Senator Adams EXITS the Senate Floor.

The reporters nearest him shout questions simultaneously, making each question inaudible.

Jeff leaps forward to block the microphones from reaching Adams. The crowd begins to follow the pair out of the building.

JEFF SIMON
No questions today.

REPORTER #1
Is the Senator planning a filibuster on his own President's nominee?

JEFF SIMON
The Senator is not commenting.

REPORTER #2
Then why all the theatrics?

Adams quickens his pace. Jeff stops the reporters.

JEFF SIMON
The Senator is planning a press conference for 3 o'clock. I'd watch.

Adams EXITS, following the bright sunlight outside.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATE CLOAK ROOM - MID-DAY

Cable news reports covering the Adams speech are on the television, but muted.

The Majority Leader, mid-60s, and CALEB LOCKWOOD, mid-40s, are sitting. The Whip paces. SENATOR EASLEY, early-50s with graying brown hair and a tweed jacket, is staring at the television.

Senator Easley turns around, his face red.

SENATOR EASLEY
How the hell did Senator Adams happen?
I thought this vote was a lock!

MAJORITY LEADER
(resigned)
It was.

The cable news feed has added a timer for the Adams press conference: 3 hours, 23 minutes remain.

SENATOR EASLEY

How bad is it?

WHIP

Copeland is avoiding me. Weaver-

MAJORITY LEADER

--Our lone Republican vote on cloture.

WHIP

Not anymore. She's wanting to hear what Adams has to say this afternoon.

MAJORITY LEADER

Where does that put us?

WHIP

He's put us at least three votes short of ending the Republican filibuster.

Caleb Lockwood begins pouring himself a Scotch.

SENATOR EASLEY

Caleb, is there anything you can do?

The Senators watch Caleb as he returns to the sofas.

CALEB LOCKWOOD

My associates and I have known Senator Adams for nearly twenty five years. Everyone has secrets--

Caleb grabs the remote suddenly, and freezes the live news feed. The frozen image is that of Adams, on the Senate floor, pulling out a well-worn leather notebook.

CALEB LOCKWOOD (V.O.)

--Oh yes. Especially 18-year-olds.

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. RECEPTION AREA - MID-DAY

Stock footage of Senator Adams is giving his speech. Camera pulls back to reveal Adrian watching a television monitor.

There is an open, brightly lit space with plush chairs and a glass entrance to greet visitors. College-age interns are answering the phones.

A loud voice is heard from just outside. Adrian smooths out her dress, and fusses with her blonde hair

SENATOR ADAMS (O.S.)

I will not answer any of your questions. You will just have to wait like everyone else!

Senator Adams and Jeff Simon enter. Camera lights flicker as Adrian closes the door on several reporters.

ADRIAN

Senator!

Senator Adams does not stop walking.

ADRIAN

Senator, Helen Baker of the Washington Post called-

JEFF SIMON

No press this morning, Adrian.

CUT TO:

INT. STAFF WORKSPACE - CONTINUOUS

Senator Adams enters the work area of his staff, causing momentary commotion. Jeff Simon and Adrian follow.

SENATOR ADAMS

How are the speechwriters doing?

JEFF SIMON

The latest draft is almost done.

SENATOR ADAMS

Good.

Jeff Simon leaves to speak with the speechwriters.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Senator Adams enters his office. One wall prominently displays a framed Gator basketball jersey. Pictures and news clippings fill the room.

Senator Adams turns on the television built into the bookshelf. He keeps it mute.

ADRIAN

Senator, Congressman Roberts asked for five minutes.

SENATOR ADAMS

I'm not surprised. I'll meet with him as soon as he can get here.

ADRIAN

Yes, sir.

SENATOR ADAMS

Thanks, Adrian. That'll be all.

Adrian leaves. Senator Adams drops his leather-bound notebook on the desk. A THUD.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: Gainesville, 25 Years Ago

A small, modestly decorated bedroom. An unfinished chess game is set on the desk. MIKE, 18, holds two letters of admission in his hand. His sister, ANNE, 21, sits on the corner of his bed.

MIKE

Do I really have to pick one?

ANNE (O.S.)

Yes!

MIKE

But what if I don't care which college I end up at?

Mike looks up at Anne.

ANNE

How could you not? Florida, Miami, and Georgia Tech - they all wanted you. You're lucky that you have a choice in which college to go to!

Anne looks down at the third admissions letter.

ANNE

Pick the right school, and you may finally end your dry spell. Get a shot at your first real co-ed experience.

MIKE

Is it really that important? You didn't live on campus or anything like that.

ANNE

I wasn't talking about the dorms.
(grins)
Are you kidding me?

MIKE

(groans)
That's not on my to-do list.

Mike looks down at the letters in front of him.

MIKE

Still, how bad can it be?

ANNE

Living in the dorms?

MIKE

Yeah.

ANNE

With the communal bathroom, a small bedroom that comes with a roommate and no real private space?

MIKE

And?

ANNE

For the same price you can have a decent apartment off campus!

MIKE

I've seen your off-campus roommates -

the dorms couldn't be that bad.

ANNE

Even so.

Anne shakes the letter in her hand.

ANNE (CONT'D)

You still have a choice to make. And tomorrow's the deadline.

Mike grabs the letter from Anne and shuffles all three in a pile, face down. He spreads them out on the desk.

MIKE

I guess I'd have to choose...

Mike points to the one on the left.

MIKE

That one.

Anne turns the letter over.

ANNE

University of Florida.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The sun shines brightly. Palm trees and green grass mix with parking lots; historic buildings mix with modern architecture. Hundreds of tanned students walk around t-shirts and shorts, nearly all wearing sunglasses.

The camera zeroes in on a particular trio of buildings - Easton Hall, Willard Hall, and Roberts Hall. It descends over the Willard parking lot as we--

CUT TO:

EXT. DORM PARKING LOT - DAY

Dozens of families are present amidst the chaos of Moving Day. Mike has pulled the last of his things out of the car - a duffel bag and a leather-bound notebook. His MOTHER is behind the wheel, and Anne is in the front seat.

MOTHER

Now, be good Michael. We'll miss you!

ANNE

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

MIKE

That's not saying much is it?
(looks over at his mother)
Love you. See you at Thanksgiving, if
not sooner.

His mother puts her foot on the accelerator, and the car
takes off with a sudden start.

MIKE

Gee, they left in a hurry.

Mike heads for the dorm entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM HALLWAY - DAY

Mike sees a door with his name on it. A voice ECHOES.

BRAD (V.O.)

No, Mom! I can handle this myself.

MOTHER #2 (V.O.)

But Brad, I'm only trying to help you!

BRAD, a freshman, and his mother step out of one of the
adjacent rooms, and continue arguing. Brad, a young and
confident surfer, seems a bit out of place in the dorms.

Another voice, from the right, draws attention.

FATHER (V.O.)

Son, you need to be doing some of the
unpacking here! Now shut off that
video game!

DORM RESIDENT (V.O.)

I'll do it later!

FATHER (V.O.)

No you won't, you'll do it right now!

Mike crosses the hallway, and reaches for his doorknob.

MIKE

(mutters)
Maybe it was good that my family left
in such a hurry.

CUT TO:

INT. GATOR CAFE - EVENING

Coffee-grinding. A puff of steam clears. Anne works against a growing line of customers.

The next customer in line, NICK ATLEE, puts down ten dollars.

NICK

Two cappuccinos. Skim milk.

While often abrasive and self-important, Nick (early 20s) still manages to look as comfortable in cargo shorts and sunglasses as in his more usual suit and tie.

Nick holds KAREN DOYLE's hand. A pen stuck behind her ear clashes with her clean-cut, stylish outfit.

NICK

(turns to Karen)

I'm telling you, Karen, this is going to be my year! I just know it.

KAREN

I hope so, too.

NICK

You'll have a hand in making it so--

Nick grabs her pencil.

NICK

--being on the newspaper staff and all.

Karen fiddles with a lavalier necklace showing Nick's fraternity letters.

KAREN

(blushes)

I'm just a copy editor right now.

NICK

But not for long. You've got more talent than most of the yokels you work for.

KAREN

You're probably right.

NICK

It'll be great! Just think of it.

This week, I'm Alpha Iota's Rush Chair.
This time next year, I could be Student
Body President.

KAREN
Everything is falling into place?

NICK
Karen, I can see it all happening. The
future belongs to those who prepare for
it, and boy have I've been preparing.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mike knocks. His Resident Assistant, TYLER, pulls back the door. Eager to please, Tyler wears a happy, childish grin.

TYLER
Hi! What can I do for you?

MIKE
Eh...

Mike lifts up a blue object.

MIKE
I found this in my room.

TYLER
I've been looking for this!

Tyler takes the object, and re-enters his dorm.

CUT TO:

INT. TYLER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tyler sets the object on his desk. Mike follows him inside.

MIKE
What's so special about it, exactly?

TYLER
You're not serious?

MIKE
It's just a model phone booth, right?

TYLER
(laughs)

No, it's a TARDIS.
(beat)
You know, from Doctor Who?

MIKE
Haven't watched it.

TYLER
That's your loss.

Tyler picks up a small stack of postcards.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Well, the name's Tyler. Welcome to
Willard Hall!

MIKE
Thanks, I guess.

TYLER
As the RA for this floor, I can help
with anything from coursework to coeds.
Just come by whenever.

MIKE
Sure. I'll do that.

TYLER
Good! You should also know about the
events going on in the dorms this week.

MIKE
Like?

Tyler hands him a postcard.

TYLER
Tonight, for example, we're holding a
Karaoke Night.

MIKE
(stifling a laugh)
Really?

TYLER
Yep. In our rec room - the basement.

CUT TO:

INT. GATOR CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Anne pushes the cappuccinos toward Nick, along with his
change. Nick and Karen head for a table.

ANNE (O.S.)

Next?

KAREN

Then it's true? You're getting tapped?

The two pass by other empty tables to sit down at one near the street window. Pedestrians slow down their walk to gawk at the attractive power couple.

NICK

It's as good as done. I've paid my dues. Besides, my House will owe me big after Rush Week.

KAREN

Why?

NICK

I've done my homework on this year's freshman class. I know exactly who we're looking for.

KAREN

You're taking this seriously, then?

NICK

Oh, yes. Alpha Iota is the top House on campus. We don't just take anybody. And I intend to keep it that way.

KAREN

Then who are you taking?

From his bag, Nick pulls out a folder. It has a stack of resumes with pictures clipped.

NICK

I know somebody in Admissions. They helped a great deal. Here are the three we want the most.

Karen is handed the folder.

KAREN

(reading)

Victor Jacobson, a high school track and field star. Eric Vontaine, the son of a real estate developer. And..

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mike unpacks boxes in a modest room. His half of the room looks identical to the other, except for a cluttered desk.

A KNOCK. JAKE, 18, enters carrying a duffle bag. Brimming with enthusiasm and confidence, Jake is naturally popular, although this has not rubbed off on his best friend, Mike.

MIKE

Jake!

JAKE

I'm here.

Jake sighs as he drops his things on his side of the room.

JAKE

Finally.

MIKE

When was your flight?

JAKE

Early this morning. Father had something come up at the last minute.

Jake looks around.

JAKE (CONT'D)

This is it, huh?

MIKE

Home sweet home.

JAKE

If you're not claustrophobic.

MIKE

Maybe the University just wants us to get out once and a while..

JAKE

Not everyone is hooked to the Internet, trying to find The Matrix or Ms. Right in there.

MIKE

Perhaps. But the University is still going all out. They've got a whole week of events planned out.

Mike finds the postcard and hands it to Jake.

JAKE

Tonight's a karaoke night, eh?
(beat)
We should totally go to this thing!

CUT TO:

INT. DORM BASEMENT - EVENING

A large, semi-circular basement, modestly and hastily decorated. Karaoke machine in one corner; refreshments in the other. Someone is already singing, albeit badly.

Jake and Mike put on name tags as LAUREN ENTERS. Lauren, 18, is quiet and unassuming with a sense of style to match.

JAKE

(shouts)
Lauren!

He rushes over. Mike follows.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I'm glad you made it!

Lauren looks around.

LAUREN

I can see why.

Jake sheepishly looks around.

JAKE

Yeah, it's not much.

MIKE

Jake hasn't told me yet. How was your summer away from Gainesville?

LAUREN

It was alright.

JAKE

Being a summer intern in DC was awesome.

LAUREN

If Jake was being honest, he wouldn't be saying that. Would you?

JAKE

Okay, okay. Fine. I'll admit it.

LAUREN

Finally?

JAKE

Yes.

LAUREN

So D.C. as a vacation spot blows?

MIKE

You're kidding, right?

JAKE

It was all the other tourists.

LAUREN

They were everywhere! They got in the way all the time, and never seemed to know where they wanted to be.

JAKE

Don't forget the weather.

LAUREN

Oh God, the weather! As hot as down here, but without any beaches nearby.

JAKE

So we didn't stay as long as my dad wanted, but it was still totally worth it. I know what I want to do now.

MIKE

Let me guess - political science, like your dad.

JAKE

(triumphantly)
Definitely! How about you?

MIKE

(sighs)
I have no idea.

LAUREN

(alarmed)
You do at least have a course schedule ready for next week?!?

MIKE

I'm seeing an Advisor tomorrow, but, no, nothing yet.

LAUREN

Why not? You're going to get stuck with all the terrible classes!

MIKE

You have yours picked out?

LAUREN

Yep. I'm trying out the pre-med route this semester.

MIKE

Well, I think I'll do alright. It's just one semester, anyway.

The room quiets down as a song ends. Lauren grabs a pen and makes herself a name tag.

JAKE

Hey, Mike, you should come out with us to the org fair tomorrow. The rec sports teams will be out there, as well as the brainier stuff.

A new singer begins, but is barely noticed.

MIKE

(beat)

Ah, no! You're going to make me sign up for intramural soccer, aren't you?

JAKE

It can't go as badly this time, right?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - AFTERNOON

Mike, a goalie, struggles as fast-moving balls fly past.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DORM BASEMENT - EVENING

Mike shudders. He sighs.

MIKE

I suppose it couldn't hurt to try.

JAKE

That's what I'm talking about!

Mike shakes his head. Brad ENTERS with a date, approaches

the group.

BRAD

Damn!

Brad's date pinches his arm. Mike turns in the direction of Brad's admiration.

MIKE

Woah.

We see at the karaoke machine, singing a beautiful ballad, KATHY. This college sophomore brimming with confidence and sensuality had drawn everyone's attention.

MIKE

Who is she?

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMS OFFICE - MORNING

Senator Adams peels off a Post-It that is attached to a page of his leather notebook. The note reads: "Kathy".

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ADAMS OFFICE - MORNING

Senator Adams lingers on the post-it note in his hand, his thoughts clearly elsewhere.

Jeff Simon KNOCKS, and tentatively enters the room.

JEFF SIMON

Senator?

Senator Adams returns the Post-It to his notebook.

SENATOR ADAMS

You've got the speech?

Jeff Simon nods.

SENATOR ADAMS

Let's see it.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM BASEMENT - EVENING

Mike looks at Kathy. As she continues singing, they make eye contact. Mike swallows hard.

MIKE

I think I'm going to be sick!

Mike turns away, and reaches for a glass of punch.

BRAD

Dude, what's wrong with you? She's hot!

Brad's date has had enough and walks off in protest. He shrugs, heads off in the opposite direction and immediately begins talking with another girl.

BRAD

Hey, why aren't you up there?

GIRL #1

Who me?

BRAD

Yeah, you're prettier than Britney Spears. And I'm sure you could sing

better than she can.

GIRL #1

(beat)
You think?

BRAD

Oh yeah.

Kathy finishes singing. Mike turns back around, swallowing again.

MIKE

Okay. I think I'm going to be fine.
Just jitters.

JAKE

That was more than just jitters!

MIKE

I don't know what you're talking about.

JAKE

You did the same thing in AP English
when you had to read Romeo's part in
front of the whole class!

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A room full of high school students. Mike and a female student are at the front, holding books open.

MIKE

(nervously)
What bright—I'm sorry.
(beat)
What light. Eh.

TEACHER

Come on!

A GIGGLE. Mike looks for the laugh, but instead sees Jake, wordlessly encouraging him. Mike clears throat.

MIKE

What light through yonder window
breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is
the sun.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM BASEMENT - EVENING

Kathy approaches the refreshment table. Mike looks away, blushing.

MIKE

Can we talk about something else,
please?

Jake eyes Kathy's name tag.

JAKE

Kathy, I have to say, you were pretty
good up there.

KATHY

Oh, thank you.

Mike looks at her, and begins blushing again. Kathy smiles, and notices his name tag.

KATHY

Your father isn't Robert Turner, the
congressman, is he?

JAKE

Yeah. He is.

Jake grabs Lauren's hand.

JAKE (CONT'D)

And this is my girlfriend, Lauren
Abernathy.

LAUREN

Are you a music major?

KATHY

Nah. Don't get me wrong, I like music.
But I'm more of a "signing in the
shower" kind of girl.

Kathy pulls a postcard out of her back pocket, hands it to Lauren.

KATHY (CONT'D)

I spend my free time as treasurer of
the Green Gators Club. We're tabling
all week at the org fair.

JAKE

You know, we just got done talking

about the org fair. Right, Mike?

MIKE

Ah... Err... Right.

JAKE

Yeah, we're going to try out for intramural soccer.

KATHY

Wow...good luck. Rec sports can be as brutal as the university teams.

MIKE

Told you it was a bad idea!

Kathy LAUGHS.

KATHY

Don't give up on my account, Mike. But if you need anything, feel free to stop by my door in Easton Hall, third floor. Or you can stop by the org fair.

Kathy leaves the refreshments, briefly chats with another group, and settles in by the door, as people come and go. Mike watches her every movement.

Jake pokes him.

JAKE

Man, Mike. You blew your chance.

MIKE

What?

JAKE

Just now. She's totally into you.

Mike's eyes widen at the prospect. Lauren pokes Jake.

LAUREN

Don't encourage his jitters.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY PLAZA - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A large open space with a long row of newspaper pins on one side and park benches on the other. Small groups of students walking casually, chit-chatting. Others are rushing across the plaza.

Mike enters a building labeled "Academic Advising".

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY PLAZA - PARK BENCHES - DAY

Clarion bells RING. Students enter onto the plaza and into the Org Fair. A young EVANGELICAL is shouting for attention as a second, older one hands out fliers.

EVANGELICAL

The college campus is full of sin and temptation. Giving in to temptation will send you to Hell for all eternity!

Anne enters. Spotting the evangelical, she approaches with a smirk.

ANNE

So - listen - I know the Bible pretty well, Sunday School and all of that.

EVANGELICAL

The leader of the Skeptics Society goes to church?

ANNE

One of the proverbs tells us "a wise man has great power, and a man of knowledge increases strength", does it not?

EVANGELICAL

Yes.

ANNE

Well, I know Leveticus, too. It says, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind, it is an abomination." Right?

EVANGELICAL

(nervous)
Ummm... I'm pretty sure you're right.
But I...
(voice cracks)
The pastor knows better than--

ANNE

--Right. Right. See, it also says, "if a man also lies with mankind, as he

lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them." I think that's it. Isn't it?

EVANGELICAL

Eh. Yeah. Something like that.

ANNE

"If a man lies with a man." What I'm saying is that, really, God is pretty cool with what we girls get up to, right? I mean, if my roommate and I want to share in a little girly action, that's ok?

EVANGELICAL

I'm really not an expert in this area. I'm more of a New Testament kind of Christian.

ANNE

Well... Are you're ok with it? If Alicia and I - I mean - it's not like we're married or have boyfriends or anything...

EVANGELICAL

Yeah... Uhhh... I mean... Ummm... Sure.

Anne leans in, whispers something into his ear, and runs her hand down his tie before bounding off.

The evangelical looks around, clears his throat. Another student approaches.

EVANGELICAL

Hey do you want to know about the good news?

CUT TO:

INT. ADVISOR OFFICE - DAY

Sitting with his foot dangling on his knee, Mike scratches a few notes into a leather-bound notebook while waiting for the ADVISOR to arrive.

MIKE

(muttering)

The young man's heart thumped repeatedly in his chest. What he did next to win the woman's heart could change his life forever, if only-

ADVISOR (O.S.)

Mike?

Startled, Mike shuts the notebook quickly. The Advisor stands behind Mike.

MIKE

Yes, sorry.

The Advisor walks around him, to sit behind the desk.

ADVISOR

So you're having trouble picking out a course schedule?

MIKE

A little bit, yes.

ADVISOR

What part of it can I help you with?

The Advisor checks Mike's computer file.

ADVISOR

Well, now. It says here you only picked out one class so far and haven't even picked a major.

MIKE

Ok, so, I'm having more than a little trouble.

ADVISOR

The University offers a wide range of possible majors. Finding classes that interest you should not be difficult. Let's see what we've got available.

The Advisor turns her computer screen so Mike can see as they get to work.

MIKE

There are just too many choices.

ADVISOR

If you're genuinely undecided, you can use your freshman year to pursue

general education credits and get a feel for which majors might work.

MIKE

Alright.

The Advisor types something into her computer.

ADVISOR

Then, let's set up your fall semester. I see you have already signed up for a creative writing course.

MIKE

It was the only easy choice.

ADVISOR

Good. That's a start. Anything else come to mind?

Mike drums on his notebook, thinking. He smirks.

MIKE

What kind of environmental courses are still available?

ADVISOR

There's the always popular course, "Plants, Plagues, and People".

MIKE

Fine, let's do that, too.

ADVISOR

Now we're getting somewhere.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY PLAZA - NEWSPAPER BINS - DAY

A rush of people passes through. A hand reaches for two copies of the student newspaper, the SWAMP GAZETTE.

Nick, seeing the front page, smiles.

NICK

This year's Rush is going to be historic!

Nick hands a copy of the paper to ERIC VONTAINE, a sharply-dressed college freshman.

ERIC VONTAINE

A record turnout is expected?

NICK

The Gazette is not always the best source of news on campus, but on this they are correct.

ERIC VONTAINE

That's a lot of competition.

Nick laughs.

NICK

The University's large community of Greek-letter organizations can accommodate a large Rush of wanna-be Greeks.

ERIC VONTAINE

Well, I'm glad you called. It's good to know what I'm getting myself into.

Nick pats Eric on the shoulder.

NICK

You should have nothing to worry about. Just relax, check out some of the houses, and don't forget to stop by the Alpha Iota house tomorrow night.

ERIC VONTAINE

Thanks. I guess I'll see you then?

NICK

Absolutely.

Eric nods and heads around the Org Fair. Nick watches him leave. Karen steps up from behind.

KAREN

Laying the groundwork?

Nick turns and smiles.

NICK

You bet. Your article about Rush was a great help.

KAREN

All thanks to you, of course. If we hadn't had space to fill, and you to

provide the details, it wouldn't have happened.

They begin walking around the crowd themselves.

NICK

Well, I think it worked on Eric.
That's one down, two to go.

They pass through, creating a momentary gap in the crowd.

Kathy had been watching them from behind that crowd. They pass her without noticing. She scribbles something down on her notebook.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPITOL SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Subway car doors open. CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS, early 40s with a thin runner's frame, steps in.

Roberts watches as a crowd of bureaucrats rush past outside. The car doors close before Roberts turns.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

I was wondering how long it would take for you to call in this favor.

Sitting inside the car is Caleb Lockwood.

CALEB LOCKWOOD

It's taken you this long to get into a position to pay me back.

The subway car begins to move.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. CAPITOL SUBWAY CAR - DAY

The subway car is moving.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

So what is so important that you're
calling in this favor?

Caleb pulls out a thin orange folder.

CALEB LOCKWOOD

We need you to talk to Senator Adams.
You have his ear, unlike anyone else.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

He and I have a long history.

CALEB LOCKWOOD

We all do. But he still values your
opinion. We want you to give him this.

Caleb hands Roberts the folder.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

You're not coming with me?

Caleb shakes his head.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS (CONT'D)

So, what is this?

CALEB LOCKWOOD

Just take a look. It's a reminder of
our shared past, and why Senator Adams
is not the political saint he claims.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMS OFFICE - DAY

Senator Adams reads aloud the current draft. Jeff Simon
hangs on his every word and gesture.

SENATOR ADAMS

"Knowing what to do is not always easy.
Yet, some in Washington knew their
position without knowing all the fact.
This is business-as-usual. I am not

content with that."

Senator Adams takes off his glasses. Jeff Simon shuffles his feet nervously.

SENATOR ADAMS

I like it. Much better.

Jeff Simon sighs with relief. He takes the annotated draft and leaves.

Senator Adams stands up, and glances at his bookshelf and the television situated there. He reaches for the remote and un-mutes it.

PUNDIT #1

--have a right to be worried. Senator Adams is a complete unknown. Having the luck of a sympathetic state giving him a complete pass, not--

NEWS ANCHOR

--You aren't suggesting?

PUNDIT #1

I am! His election was a complete sham. He was losing until--

PUNDIT #2

--His girlfriend, a reporter for the Washington Post, was kidnapped!

PUNDIT #1

Exactly! The spineless Republicans gave up asking the tough questions.

NEWS ANCHOR

Like what?

PUNDIT #1

What's real about Senator Adams? What skeletons are in his closet that we don't yet know about?

Senator Adams growls, and shuts off the television.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY PLAZA - PARK BENCHES - DAY

Mike exits the Academic Advising Building.

Students are walking in all sorts of directions. Booths,

tables, brightly colored posters, and dozens of orange-and-blue balloons fill the Plaza.

Jake comes up from behind to pat him on the back.

JAKE

Hey!

MIKE

Hi.

JAKE

How did it go?

MIKE

I've got a fall schedule. We'll see.

Mike shrugged, looked around, and followed Jake as they approached the Org Fair.

MIKE

So what do we have here?

As the two move through the crowd, the camera passes tables with signs indicating the group.

JAKE

There's the College Democrats...

MIKE

But it's not an election year.

JAKE

How about the Residence Hall Association?

MIKE

If last night is the best they can do...

JAKE

Yeah, you're probably right.

MIKE

You always have the Jewish Student Council...

JAKE

True. But that doesn't help you, eh?

Mike spots Anne behind a table.

MIKE

Speaking of which, come with me.

JAKE

Where are we going?

They approach Anne's table.

MIKE

The Skeptics Society, sis?

ANNE

Yep!

MIKE

It's not just about a place for
atheists to hang out on Sunday
mornings?

ANNE

Hell no! We've organized debates and
brought atheist speakers out to debate
the campus preachers.

JAKE

But how can you be so sure you're
right?

ANNE

The important thing is to know that
they are wrong.

JAKE

And how do you know that?

ANNE

What do you think? Just go over to the
Campus Christians group and ask some
hard questions. They get all
befuddled. In four years of doing
this, they've failed our test every
time. But it never gets old seeing
them try.

Jake pokes Mike.

JAKE

Look...

Mike spins around and sees KATHY sitting behind one of the
tables, chatting with other club members.

JAKE (CONT'D)

And that's not the Greenies she's with.

Mike squints.

MIKE

What's that say?

(beat)

Gamma Delta Iota? Is that some kind of sorority?

JAKE

I haven't heard of it. You want to find out?

Jake leads Mike over to Kathy's table.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM COMMON ROOM - DAY

A simple space twice as wide as a dorm room. The modest furniture could have come from IKEA.

Nick and Tyler sit across from each other at the table in the center of the room. A chess set is between them.

Nick thumbs a Blackberry.

NICK

Gahh!

TYLER

You know, we're supposed to relax some in college. And it sure looks like you can use a vacation already.

(beat)

Bishop to C4, by the way.

Tyler moves his bishop accordingly.

NICK

This is too important to let her get involved.

TYLER

What happened?

NICK

A brother just texted. She was watching me in the Plaza this morning.

TYLER

Who was it that said there's no fury like a woman scorned?

Nick glares at Tyler as he moves his piece.

NICK

That was the past. I hope she can put it to rest.

TYLER

As easily as you have?

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY PLAZA - DAY

Kathy smiles as Mike and Jake approach.

KATHY

Hello again, Jake Turner. And you're Mike, right?

Mike nods, and swallows hard.

JAKE

Don't mind him. He's got the jitters.

KATHY

The jitters?

JAKE

Yeah.

Kathy's friends disperse to hand out fliers.

JAKE (CONT'D)

So what is Gamma Delta Iota?

KATHY

GDI. It's supposed to draw attention from that crowd.

Kathy points to a livelier table where a gaggle of bubbly sorority girls are cheerfully announcing Rush Week.

Mike clears his throat.

MIKE

So this is some kind of sorority?

Kathy laughs.

KATHY

Not at all. The exact opposite in fact. The University has enough fraternities and sororities. What we

try to do is organize those who are independent of the Greek system.

JAKE

Organizing independents? Seems like a contradiction in terms to me.

KATHY

But necessary. Our Student Government has millions of our tuition money. Why should the Greeks continue a century-long control of that pot of money?

MIKE

There's nothing inherently wrong with that, is there? There are elections, right? If the campus wanted change, they'd get it.

KATHY

You'd be surprised at the lengths some will go to keep hold of whatever power they have.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM COMMON ROOM - DAY

Tyler moves his Queen.

TYLER

So when are you going to meet him?

NICK

Later today, before the party.

TYLER

You're cutting it close, then.

NICK

Indeed. I'm going to need your help. Can I count on it?

TYLER

What else are old dorm mates good for?

Nick grins. He knocks over Tyler's Queen with a Knight.

NICK

Good, glad to hear it. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to get the House ready for Rush.

Nick rises out of his seat, and reaches for his sunglasses.

NICK (CONT'D)
Oh, and Tyler...

Tyler glances at the board, and gasps.

NICK (CONT'D)
Checkmate.

Nick EXITS.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY PLAZA - DAY

Kathy rises with a fist full of leaflets.

KATHY
So, freshmen, what do you think?

MIKE
I dunno. Greek. Independent. It just seems to be high school all over again.

KATHY
It's not like that.

JAKE
He didn't make the soccer team and hasn't been the same since.

MIKE
Hey! That's not true!

Kathy laughs.

KATHY
Well, think about it, Mike. How real is the real world compared to high school and college? Everywhere you go, there's going to be popularity, cliques, and connections - all of which is more important than what's actually accomplished. Wouldn't it be great to be on the side that wants to change all that?

MIKE
Couldn't we just sign a petition or something?

Jake pokes Mike in the ribs.

JAKE

Thanks, Kathy. Don't let Mike here waste any more of your time today.

Jake drags Mike away. Sorority girls watch Jake as they pass. At the edge of the Plaza, Jake turns to face Mike.

JAKE

Have you lost your nerve? What on earth were you doing back there?

MIKE

I was being honest.

JAKE

Well, stop it! You just blew your second chance with Kathy!

MIKE

I did?

JAKE

You don't win a girl over by dismissing her choice in clubs.

MIKE

But she's way out of my league.

JAKE

First thing you need to learn is, no girl is out of your league. You just need to learn how to approach them.

Jake turns to see a sorority girl looking at them.

JAKE

Here, I'll show you.

Jake drags Mike back to the sorority table.

JAKE

Just don't tell Lauren about this.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMS OFFICE - DAY

Adrian KNOCKS.

ADRIAN

Senator?

Senator Adams looks up from a briefing book.

SENATOR ADAMS
He's here?

ADRIAN
Yes, sir.

SENATOR ADAMS
Send him in.

Adrian leaves. Senator Adams rises, and drops his reading glasses onto the desk.

A moment later, Congressman Roberts steps into the office.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS
Senator.

SENATOR ADAMS
Welcome, Congressman. I've been expecting you.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. ADAMS OFFICE - DAY

Congressman Roberts sits down.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

You know why I'm here?

Senator Adams smiles.

SENATOR ADAMS

Yes. You're wondering if you can convince me to stop the media firestorm I started this morning.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

The thought had crossed my mind.

Silence. Senator Adams notices Congressman Roberts is holding a folder.

SENATOR ADAMS

You know why I'm doing this.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

But I thought being friends...

SENATOR ADAMS

That won't deter me from my course.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

Then you will need to see this.

Congressman Roberts hands over the folder. Senator Adams glances at the contents, and smiles.

SENATOR ADAMS

This is Caleb's handy work, then?

Congressman Roberts nods. Senator Adams laughs.

SENATOR ADAMS

This won't work, either.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

But he's going to release this to sabotage your press conference.

SENATOR ADAMS

Of course he is! That's how this town works. The media are accomplices in a great character assassination.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

And you're not worried?

SENATOR ADAMS

No. I am not ashamed about anything that happened twenty five years ago.

Senator Adams begins pacing in silence. He stops at a chess set surrounded by photographs from college.

SENATOR ADAMS (CONT'D)

The real question here is why Caleb would be so intent on getting a member of the Phoenix Club to break the tie on the Supreme Court? Maybe he wants the favors he can collect. Maybe he needs the influence for his associates.

CONGRESSMAN ROBERTS

His associates are my associates.

SENATOR ADAMS

Either way—

Senator Adams picks up a chess piece.

SENATOR ADAMS (CONT'D)

He doesn't know what he's getting into.

Congressman Roberts glances back at the open folder, seeing a mug shot of a much younger Senator Adams.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM COMMON ROOM - AFTERNOON

Tyler puts away the chess set.

Mike and Jake enter. Mike, exhausted, slumps into the nearest chair.

TYLER

What's got you beat?

Mike looks up, and sighs.

JAKE

I introduced him to a few of the girls

at Delta Delta Gamma.

TYLER
The Drop Dead Gorgeous sorority?

JAKE
Yeah. Tried to be his wingman.

TYLER
Did it work?

Mike smiles weakly, pulls out one crumpled flier.

JAKE
One of their pledges.

TYLER
Not bad, though!

JAKE
He needs more practice.

TYLER
Perhaps at tonight's Rush parties?

Jake looks at Mike.

JAKE
Are you up for another go?

Mike rose from his seat, stretching.

MIKE
I dunno, maybe. Isn't Lauren going to one of those?

JAKE
Yeah. She mentioned something about Epsilon Xi Alpha having a mixer. I suppose it wouldn't hurt to go to a frat or two if she's hitting--

A thud. Tyler is startled. SPLASH!

Tyler rushes to the door.

TYLER
--That bastard.

MIKE
Who?

A balloon narrowly flies past Tyler. A second SPLASH.

TYLER

He's gonna get it now!

Tyler runs over to the kitchenette's small sink, and grabs a wad of balloons.

MIKE

Who?

Tyler begins filling the balloons with water.

TYLER

The RA on Easton 5. He already nailed Jamieson and Wilkinson.

JAKE

Who are they?

TYLER

Other RAs. And he'll be back soon with reinforcements.

TYLER

So are you going to help?

MIKE

I dunno...

TYLER

Look, you'll have plenty of time to change before Rush.

JAKE

Really?

Tyler looks at Jake with interest.

TYLER

Yeah. In fact, I'm going with Brad and a few others to show them around. I mean, it couldn't hurt. The worst that can happen is you'll never see those guys ever again.

JAKE

True. I guess I'm going then.

MIKE

Count me in, then.

TYLER

Good. Now, do you mind?

Mike and Jake help Tyler fill the balloons and carry them out of the common room.

CUT TO:

EXT. DORM AREA QUAD - CONTINUOUS

They make it out to the dorm area's quad.

A balloon lands near their feet.

MIKE

Yikes!

TYLER

Take cover. I know where he's hiding!

Tyler holds up a balloon and prepares to return fire...

CUT TO:

INT. GATOR CAFÉ - EVENING

Anne grips a damp rag, frustrated by her customer's mess.

One table remains occupied. Nick sits with VICTOR JACOBSON, 18, a tall and slender athlete.

VICTOR JACOBSON

Ain't it getting kinda late?

NICK

Alpha Iota starts its parties later than the other Houses. I've got time.

VICTOR JACOBSON

Am I missing anything?

NICK

Any House worth something would have sought you out already. Have they?

VICTOR JACOBSON

(bored)
Sigma Eta Tau.

NICK

The Sigmas think sports are everything. They like knowing every team is represented in their House.

VICTOR JACOBSON

Is that a bad thing?

NICK

No, but I happen to know you don't think sports is everything, either.

VICTOR JACOBSON

Oh?

NICK

Class valedictorian. Led a charity drive to save your town's library. And still managed to letter in track and field. That's no small accomplishment.

VICTOR JACOBSON

It was a challenge.

NICK

Let me be as plain as I can be. The Alpha Iota House has the best parties, best girls, and the best pledge class on campus. And you would be the best of the best.

VICTOR JACOBSON

I don't know what to say.

NICK

You don't have to say anything. Just show up tonight.

After checking his watch, Nick stands up to leave.

NICK (CONT'D)

But just remember, with the Alpha Iotas, you can write your own ticket. Be anything you want to be on campus. That's just not true anywhere else.

Nick leaves. Anne stops by Victor's table.

ANNE

Want another cup?

VICTOR JACOBSON

Yeah. Looks like I'm going to need it.

CUT TO:

EXT. GATOR CAFÉ ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Nick exits, and dials his phone. He begins walking back toward main campus. The call connects.

NICK

Two down, one to go.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRATERNITY DRIVE - CONTINUOUS

Jake, Tyler, and Brad are ready to party. Mike wiggles uncomfortably in his sports jacket.

They are at a parking lot at the bottom of a hill. Music can be heard.

TYLER

We won't have a lot of time. Perhaps twenty minutes at each House.

BRAD

Which one are we starting with?

Tyler points to the one behind them.

TYLER

This house is Phi Upsilon Nu. A newer house. They replaced one with a history of hazing violations.

Tyler starts up the hill. The others follow.

Mike nudges Jake.

MIKE

Can you believe that music?

JAKE

Sounds like a lot of fun.

THUMP, THUMP, THUMP.

Brad grins.

BRAD

Sounds like my kind of house.

CUT TO:

INT. PHI UPSILON NU - CONTINUOUS

They are inside to a room packed with people dancing.

BRAD (CONT'D)

These are my kind of people!

Brad heads for the first nearest co-ed.

MIKE
It's that easy?

JAKE
(unable to hear)
What?

MIKE
(louder)
It's that easy?

JAKE
If you want it to be.

The two of them follow Tyler into a room off the dance floor. The music is muffled.

Mike rubs his ears in relief.

MIKE
So much better. Could hardly think in there.

Silence. Mike looks around. Jake is chatting with one of the Phi Nu brothers.

Mike sighs and heads to the refreshment table.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRATERNITY DRIVE - EVENING

They are now at the top of the hill, in front of the last house, Alpha Iota Chi.

Jake stuffs another business card in his pocket. Mike shuffles his feet aimlessly.

JAKE
Are you doing alright?

MIKE
What? Who doesn't like loud parties and jocks talking about sports?

TYLER
Well, maybe this, our last house of the night, will be different...

Jake slaps Mike on the shoulder as they enter.

CUT TO:

INT. ALPHA IOTA CHI COMMON ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Alpha Iota Chi house is different. Smartly decorated with a classic preppy look. Pictures filled the walls, with pledge classes and alumni alike.

A particular picture grabs Jake's attention.

JAKE

Is that--

TYLER

Yes, it is.

MIKE

Who?

JAKE

My father is standing with the U.S.
Attorney General.

Jake and Mike continue admiring the pictures.

Tyler leaves them, and soon passes by Nick.

TYLER

That photo is working like a charm.
Well, they're all yours.

NICK

Thanks, man.

Nick approaches Jake and Mike. Jake does not notice.

NICK

The name is Nick Atlee. President of
Alpha Iota Chi.

Mike turns around.

MIKE

Mike Adams. He's Jake.

Nick points at the picture.

NICK

You know, Mr. Collins is an Alpha Iota
alum at Georgia Tech.

Jake turns around, surprised.

JAKE

Really?

Nick smiles.

NICK

Alpha Iota is one of the best represented fraternities in Washington, D.C., I assure you.

The three of them make their way through the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALPHA IOTA CHI COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

They reach an open-air courtyard in the center of the house. A live band is on stage, but on a break.

JAKE

How well do we do on campus?

NICK

An Alpha Iota serves on the IFC board. We are also heavily involved in Student Government and The Circle.

JAKE

The Circle?

NICK

UF's leadership honorary. Its members are the kind of leaders who get elected Student Body President.

JAKE

That's impressive.

NICK

Thank you.

Nick smirks.

NICK (CONT'D)

Now, we aren't all about service. We have a very active social calendar. We literally have our pick of sororities for mixers.

MIKE

But what about academics?

NICK

Our pledge classes always represent a good mix of majors. Our GPA is above the fraternity average.

Jake, bored, drifts over to the refreshments.

NICK

Jake doesn't seem impressed.

MIKE

If you knew him, you'd know what it takes to impress him.

NICK

And you know him pretty well?

Nick already knew the answer.

MIKE

We've been friends since high school.

NICK

And you guys are both rushing?

MIKE

We had not planned on it. It just kind of happened.

NICK

Have you all been impressed so far?

Mike shrugs.

MIKE

Most of the frats seemed alike to me. Similar slogans, similar houses. It all blends together after a while.

NICK

I hope Alpha Iota has stood out. And I know that, if Jake and you join, we will continue to stand out.

Kathy enters the courtyard while talking on a phone. Mike notices her arrival.

MIKE

Well, it'll certainly be hard to forget this party. Excuse me.

Mike pulls away from Nick, headed in Kathy's direction.

The live band starts up again. The crowd erupts in dance.

YOUNG CALEB, 22, steps up next to Nick. His expensive clothes are preppy in the extreme - including his loafers without socks.

YOUNG CALEB

Who was that?

NICK

Mike Adams. Friend of the
congressman's son.

YOUNG CALEB

Does he know Kathy?

NICK

He's nothing to worry about. He's just
a shy little freshman.

YOUNG CALEB

So she's not going to be a problem?

NICK

No, I don't think so.

YOUNG CALEB

Good. We need Jake Turner on board.

Mike struggles to get to the other side of the courtyard.

Jake stops him, and hands him a cup.

JAKE

This'll help!

MIKE

What?

JAKE

Kathy's here. Drink up! The beer will
loosen your nerves.

MIKE

I don't know. Remember the last time?

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - NIGHT - SIX MONTHS AGO

Crowd of teenagers, Jake, and Mike, sit around a pool.

JAKE

It's Prom. Last party of high school.
Drink up!

MIKE

Maybe I shouldn't.

TEENAGER #1
Oh, come on, Mike!

TEENAGER #2
Don't be a goody goody!

JAKE
Drink!

Mike stares at the cup, uncomfortable with the idea.

JAKE
(chanting)
Drink! Drink! Drink!

MIKE
(gulps)
Here it goes.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALPHA IOTA CHI COURTYARD - NIGHT

Mike looks down at the cup. The liquid is pulsating with the beat of the band.

Mike looks back up at Jake, and hands the cup back.

MIKE
No thanks. Not tonight. I think I can handle this one myself.

JAKE
About time!

Mike heads off in Kathy's direction.

JAKE
(drains one of the cups)
Thatta boy!

Nick steps up next to Jake to talk some more.

Kathy puts away her phone as Mike approaches.

MIKE
Kathy! I didn't expect you to be here.

KATHY
Rush is open to the public, Mike. That includes the non-Greeks. Besides, the Alpha Iotas know me.

MIKE

How come?

Kathy looks around, nervous.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALPHA IOTA CHI COURTYARD - NINE MONTHS AGO

Kathy and Nick, sitting closely together on a bench, gaze up at the night sky. Nick points at a constellation.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALPHA IOTA CHI COURTYARD - PRESENT DAY

Kathy looks back at Mike.

KATHY

That's a story for another time.

Kathy heads for the exit. Mike follows.

MIKE

Wait up!

KATHY

I wouldn't stick around here much longer, if I were you.

MIKE

Why?

Kathy does not hear him. A cluster of partygoers had separated them, and Mike has trouble getting through.

Shoulders sagging, Mike turns back to the courtyard. Jake sees him, breaks from Nick and comes running.

JAKE

What happened?

MIKE

She wasn't interested in the party.

JAKE

But she could not have been here long.

MIKE

I don't know what to say.

JAKE

Maybe she was hoping for a karaoke machine?

Mike chuckles.

MIKE

Maybe.

JAKE

But who leaves a party so quickly?

Behind them, blue and white lights begin flashing.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRATERNITY DRIVE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Campus police arrives. A patrolman steps out of his car, and heads up to the House. Some partygoers flee the scene. Jake drags Mike along with them.

JAKE

I think it's best we get out of here.

MIKE

You think?

JAKE

The University prohibits alcohol during Rush Week! And we're underage.

MIKE

Yikes!

JAKE

Like I said, we're better off getting back to the dorms.

Mike sees her. Kathy was watching from the other side of the parking lot.

More partygoers empty out of the Alpha Iota House.

JAKE

Let's go!

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. UNIVERSITY PLAZA - NEWSPAPER BINS - DAY

Karen pulls a newspaper off a stack in the Plaza.

The headline screams "UPD BREAKS UP RUSH PARTY AT ALPHA IOTA". An irate Nick is pictured arguing with a patrolman.

Karen sighs as she heads off to class.

CUT TO:

INT. ALPHA IOTA COMMON ROOM - MORNING

Nick and Young Caleb enter.

YOUNG CALEB

This is a disaster. Definitely not the publicity we need right now.

NICK

How bad do you think it will be?

YOUNG CALEB

The House could be reprimanded, fined. But that's not the real problem.

NICK

We could lose pledges?

YOUNG CALEB

If you really want to move up, you better hope your star recruits accept their bids.

NICK

No one has turned me down.

YOUNG CALEB

Yet.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATE CLOAK ROOM - MID-DAY

Caleb enters cautiously. Senator Easley is pacing.

SENATOR EASLEY

I thought you handled this!

CALEB LOCKWOOD

Senator Adams was a bit more
intransigent than I expected.

SENATOR EASLEY

Didn't you have something on him?

CALEB LOCKWOOD

I did. Everyone has secrets, even him.
His freshmen year in college in
particular. He didn't care!

SENATOR EASLEY

If you really want to move up in this
town, you better hope you can deliver.

CALEB LOCKWOOD

I haven't let you down.

SENATOR EASLEY

Yet.

CUT TO:

INT. GATOR CAFE - MID-DAY

A puff of steam clears. Anne is tending to customers.

Mike is sitting at a long table, scratching into a leather-
bound notebook. Lauren taps Mike on his shoulder.

LAUREN

Is this seat taken?

MIKE

No, go ahead.

LAUREN

Jake asked me to meet him here.

MIKE

Same here.

LAUREN

Hey, he tells me you're in Creative
Writing this semester.

Mike looks up from his notes.

MIKE

Yeah.

LAUREN
So am I! It's my one elective.

MIKE
That's awesome! A friendly face among
the critics.

Lauren laughs.

MIKE (CONT'D)
So what news do you think Jake has?

LAUREN
I dunno. Did you all get your bids?

MIKE
Yeah, you?

LAUREN
I signed up with Epsilon Xi.

MIKE
Congrats.

LAUREN
And what about you?

MIKE
What? Oh, gosh, I had forgotten...

Mike pulls out the envelopes, and tears one open.

LAUREN
Well? Which ones?

MIKE
(disappointed)
Delta Theta Pi.

LAUREN
The Revenge of the Nerds route. Okay.
Who's the other?

Mike opens the other. A small note falls out, along with
the invite.

MIKE
Huh.

LAUREN
That bad?

MIKE

No. It's from Alpha Iota Chi.

Mike hands her the note.

LAUREN

"A deal for the locals. Two heads are better than none."

(beat)

What's that supposed to mean?

MIKE

I'm not sure.

JAKE (O.S.)

It means—

Jake arrives, dumping his backpack as he sits.

JAKE (CONT'D)

That the most powerful fraternity on campus wants us in their pledge class.

LAUREN

Congratulations!

MIKE

And you're accepting their bid?

JAKE

Hell yeah!

MIKE

Just like that?

JAKE

Just like that.

MIKE

What sealed the deal?

JAKE

Being a legacy didn't hurt. But did you know that they are so plugged in to the University that they know exactly how I can get to be Student Body President before I graduate?

LAUREN

Is that right?

JAKE

Yeah! It starts with being captain of the House's intramural soccer team and an assistant at the Speaker's Bureau - and then...

Jake's rant is drowned out by the grinding of coffee beans, and a familiar voice.

KATHY (O.S.)

Give me an iced coffee to go, please.

Mike looks open to see Kathy, just as his hand gets caught on something in his backpack - the flyer for her anti-establishment group, the Gamma Delta Iotas.

JAKE

Oh, not this again!

Mike jumps.

MIKE

What?

JAKE

You're still stuck on her, aren't you?

Jake grabs the flyer and the two bids, and shuffles the three behind his back.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATE HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Senator Adams and Jeff Simon walk toward the Press Room.

JEFF SIMON

Are you sure about this, sir?

SENATOR ADAMS

Yes.

JEFF SIMON

And how you're going to handle the Lockwood matter?

SENATOR ADAMS

Yes. Skeletons are skeletons. Joining an anti-minority, anti-women club of the elite is on a whole other level.

JEFF SIMON

But he's going to argue-

Jeff stops right in front of the door.

SENATOR ADAMS

He can argue about my college days all he wants. It was in college when I learned independence by facing real choices.

CUT TO:

INT. GATOR CAFE - MID-DAY

Jake finishes shuffling.

JAKE

If a shuffle of the deck was good enough for picking a college, it's good enough for picking this!

SENATOR ADAMS (V.O.)

For too long, I let the world decide for me. I let things go unchallenged. Some think this is the best course of action. But-

Mike waves Jake to stop.

MIKE

Not this time, Jake. I know what I want. And for all their prestige, the Alpha Iotas cannot deliver this.

Kathy turns to look at them.

Mike closes his notebook and stands up.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATE HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Jeff opens the door. Camera lights flicker to life. Reporters quiet down.

SENATOR ADAMS

But a choice is just the beginning.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW