

~~the text of the essay, then jokingly weighs his phone in his hand.~~

~~Heavy.~~

~~No chuckle from Emily.~~

~~Ah. Okay. (Swiping rapidly through the essay.) Oh, I could do this on a bicycle.~~

~~EMILY. Don't.~~

~~JIM. No.~~

~~EMILY. Good. Keep everything on the shared drive so we can check your progress. Now. Over there, we have John's notes and backup.~~

~~She points over at an accordion file pocket, e.g. a Redweld, on a table.~~

~~JIM. This?~~

~~Jim reaches the Redweld.~~

~~EMILY. No, not that. Under.~~

~~Underneath it are two pages. He picks them up.~~

~~JIM. This?~~

~~EMILY. That's it.~~

~~JIM. (Concerned.) Ah.~~

~~EMILY. You can handle this, right?~~

~~JIM. Yeah, let's do this thing.~~

~~He turns and starts to leave.~~

~~EMILY. If you need help~~

~~Jim has nearly reached the door of her office.~~

~~JIM. I won't need help.~~

~~He exits. Blackout.~~

On screen:

THURSDAY

Lights up. Jim reenters, tie a mess, one shirt flap out of his black slacks.

JIM. I need help.

Seeing him, Emily pushes a button on her phone. Not yet known to us, she is on a conference call and has just muted

START

*it. Separately, her computer beeps. Her eyes glance at it, then return to Jim.*

EMILY. What is it?

JIM. I'm not interrupting?

EMILY. You are, but this takes priority.

JIM. I didn't want to bother you.

EMILY. You're starting to bother me.

JIM. Ah.

*Pause. She lets him suffer for a moment, then grins to signify she's joking.*

Oh. Right.

EMILY. You're doing a good job. I took a look at the log on the drive. I like the way you set up the spreadsheet—

*Emily pushes the button on her phone.*

Tell him to take a FLYING FUCK.

*Jim's eyes widen.*

I don't care if "Congressional Spouses" was ready—it'll be ready next year.

*She mutes her phone again.*

*(To Jim, without missing a beat.)*—easy to read, well organized. What's the trouble?

*Emily's computer makes another noise. Her eyes dart to it.*

JIM. Do you need to—?

EMILY. No, that's just a group—wait, do I? No. Go on.

JIM. Oh, right! So, the article.

EMILY. Yes. What about it?

*She holds up a finger, pushes the button on her phone.*

We hold production for this because it's better.

*Pushes button again, back to Jim.*

Go on.

JIM. The article is really good.

EMILY. Yes?

JIM. Best thing I've ever seen in the magazine.

*Her computer makes another noise. She glances at it, triaging.*

EMILY. Bold assessment; but I agree.

JIM. Daring way to push the envelope, making an indelible statement about life and death.

*A beat. Emily's computer makes another noise.*

If you need to get that—

EMILY. It can wait. What about the article?

JIM. Literate, eloquent. A beautiful piece of work—

EMILY. I got it.

JIM. Yeah. Okay. So, there's just a few things.

EMILY. *(Pushes the button on her phone.)* If they want overtime, fine. This is the article. Okay? This is the one.

*She disconnects the call. A beat.*

Good grief.

*She calms herself.*

**END** So what is it?

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~~JIM. Is this a bad time?~~

~~EMILY. There are no good times, and I have a call in seven minutes. Please proceed. As you just heard, I am holding Kankakee for you.~~

~~JIM. Oh, god, um, okay. *(Paging through his notebook.)* So barring what I can confirm through official documents—coroner reports, police reports, etc.—~~

~~EMILY. I did say Monday.~~

~~JIM. Right. Right. Okay, he says that on the day Levi died, "lap dancing was temporarily banned by the city," but that doesn't check out. The day before Levi died, the *Las Vegas Sun* wrote about a possible upcoming ban on touching strippers in fully nude establishments, but there's nothing about a possible ban on lap dancing altogether in topless or even so-called go-go bars, where nipple nudity is essentially banned, but of course establishments get around that using pasties—~~

~~*He riffles through his notes as he speaks. Emily's email noise happens again. And then twice more.*~~