



ACT ONE

VT: SERIES OF SWEEPING SHOTS OF FAMOUS LANDMARKS

We see shots of famous political images -- the Capitol Building, floor of the Senate, a recent Presidential inauguration, the White House, Mount Rushmore, etc.

LESLIE (V.O.)

I love politics. I've always loved politics. "The game."

B -Roll: SLOW PAN OVER some BOOKSHELVES. Nothing but Political biographies.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Some people say that politics is show business for ugly people. I disagree. It's show business for real people -- people whose talents aren't dancing and singing, but rather talking and talking.

INT. LESLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

ANGLE ON: a framed copy of the Constitution...a portrait of Thomas Jefferson...

LESLIE (V.O.)

I just...I love the majesty of the political system. I live for it. I would say that my greatest dream is to be elected President of the United States of America.

REVEAL: LESLIE (AMY POEHLER)

In her office, she is framed by an American flag, and a flag of the state of Indiana. A nameplate on the desk reads "Leslie Knope." She's wearing a beige pantsuit.

LESLIE

My name is Leslie Knope. And I am the Deputy Chairwoman of the Department of Parks and Recreation in the city of Pawnee, Indiana.

Camera widens to see that her office is small and cramped, and not all that impressive.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Can you get wide enough to see the flag?

We widen further to see that there is another desk in her room, with a piece of another guy (TOM) typing at something.

INT. PARKS DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM

RON SWANSON, 40s, midwestern, leads a meeting of the Parks Department. LESLIE, TOM (Aziz Ansari), and various OTHERS.

RON

Internal Auditing wants to remind all government employees that any gift given by a member of the public valued at over \$25 has to be reported immediately.

One employee looks a little worried.

EMPLOYEE

Ron, what about, like, a gift certificate? Would that count?

RON

How much?

EMPLOYEE

Two hundred dollars.

RON

(yes, dummy)

...Yes. That would count. You can't win, just report it and add to the endless red tape.

LESLIE

Of course report it!

(off their looks)

It's the smart play. The last thing we need is the press breathing down our neck. Am I right, Ron? I am agreeing with you.

People stare at her. Ron sighs.

RON

Lastly, tonight is the Community Outreach Public Forum. Leslie's gonna run it.

She grins.

RON (CONT'D)

We need one more. Who wants in?

No one volunteers.

RON (CONT'D)

Tom.

Untitled Daniels/Schur Project  
First Network Draft  
CONTINUED:

3.  
10/24/08

TOM  
Ugh. Fine.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE  
Every month the city government holds a  
public forum and every month, out of over  
600 city workers, I'm the one they send.  
(shrugging)  
It's pretty cool. Whatever. No big  
deal. Just an honor.

RON TALKING HEAD

RON  
No one else wants to do it. It's a  
terrible job, going to some dingy rec  
center and getting yelled at by the  
public. I hate the public. The public  
is stupid.

EXT. EST. EMERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Some people drift towards the door.

CLOSE ON: Sandwich board reading:

Pawnee City PUBLIC FORUM.

7:30 PM, Auditorium

Free and Open to the Public

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Leslie and Torn are in a SCHOOL HALLWAY outside an AUDITORIUM.

LESLIE  
(to camera)  
This'll be really good for you guys to  
see. This is where the rubber of  
government meets the road of actual human  
beings. When I go through those doors, I  
have to be on, like the White House Press  
Secretary. So. Deep breath.  
(she takes one)  
Let's rock and roll.

Leslie tries the DOOR. It's LOCKED. She jiggles it many  
times. Locked. Beat. Tom snickers and points at her.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Colorful children's ART hangs on the walls. Leslie and Tom each have an (unnecessary, now that they're in a small room) MICROPHONE, like in a Senate hearing.

About 40 of those little chair-desk combo seats are filled with people, and more stand along the walls -- mostly elderly, all races. Among them is ANN (late 20's, pretty without trying).

Leslie finishes writing her NAME and TITLE on the blackboard.

LESLIE

Thank you all for coming. My name is  
Parks Department Deputy Chairwoman Leslie  
Knope.

She casually sits on the edge of one of the tiny desks and TIPS OVER. She recovers, and sits on the teacher's desk.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

With me today is department member Tom  
Haverford.

Tom notices with irritation people's confused faces.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

Yes, when **I** was 18 I changed my name from  
Aziz Abdul Al'Rahman to Tom Haverford.  
The cold hard fact is that dark-skinned  
people with funny-sounding Muslim names  
just don't make it very far in politics.

(jump cut)

Yes, okay, fine, Barack Obama. Why does  
everyone always bring up Barack Obama?  
That's one counter-example!

BACK TO SCENE

Leslie holds court.

LESLIE (V.O.)

And yes, I do call myself a "Deputy  
Chairwoman." Politics is changing in  
this country -- it's not just a boys club  
anymore. There are 18 million cracks in  
the glass ceiling, thanks to people like  
me, and Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin,  
and, um... Margaret Thatcher. And Nancy  
Pelosi. The Parks Department is the site  
of another one of those cracks.

(MORE)

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LESLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And over the course of my political career, I intend to go around making thousands of more cracks in things, if not outright shattering and destroying them.

She smiles broadly.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Big turnout tonight! Very exciting.

We see the front row is mostly old people and weirdos.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

So fire away! Yes?

Ann raises her hand. A MAN stands aggressively and starts talking.

MAN

I am here because of a crime that is happening right now all over this city, that you people know about and do nothing to stop.

LESLIE

That's horrible.

MAN

Will you commit right now to helping me stop this crime?

LESLIE

Absolutely. We want to serve you in any way we can.

Tom shakes his head in disgust at her naivete.

MAN

Do you want me to tell you what the crime is?

LESLIE

Yes. Please, tell me, so I can help you stop it. I don't understand why you're being so mysterious about this.

MAN

It's abortion.

Leslie winces, glances to camera, embarrassed.

TOM

Abortion's legal, dude.

CONTINUED 1

MAN

You promised to stop it.  
(holds up mini recorder) I  
have it on tape!

LESLIE

Sir, first of all, that was a really mean  
trap. But more importantly, the city  
government doesn't have the ability to  
overturn a Supreme Court decision--

MAN

I think you could, if you weren't so  
lazy. Mayor Havlicek could.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Mayor Havlicek was mayor when I was a  
kid. He was quite an old-school  
character.

B roll: photo of brutal-looking man in a suit.

LESLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He might have been able to overturn a  
Supreme Court ruling. He died in a small  
plane accident when he was thrown out in  
handcuffs at 20,000 feet.

Widen to reveal the picture is on the front page of the  
Pawnee Journal, with headline: Mayor Meets Grisly End.

BACK TO SCENE

He sits. Leslie gathers herself. Ann still has her hand up.

ANN

Um...I have --

Another MAN stands.

OTHER MAN

When they gonna open up Ramsett Park  
again? It's been closed for a year.

LESLIE

Yes, we are trying hard to get that park  
reopened. There was a new problem  
recently...what was it, Tom?

TOM

Angry dogs.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE

Dogs. That's right. There was a pack of scary dogs who were attacking the park workers, and we said, unh unh. Read our lips. "Dogs can't bite people!"

Leslie glances around to see how her tough-talking is received. The old people stare impassively like cows.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

So we are looking into the problem.  
(she makes a note)  
Who's next?

Ann waves her hand frantically.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Yes, Barry, go ahead.

A 50-ish WEIRDO, BARRY, stands up, very animated and inexplicably super sarcastic.

BARRY

Well, well, well -- today is a great day! Because last month they put me in jail. That's right! And my mother had a restaurant in this town. A creamery. The head of the police is a ninth degree mason.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

There are a few regulars who always show up to our meetings and ramble on about stuff. Leslie **says** we should listen to them like we'd listen to anyone else. I prefer: mocking them.

BACK TO SCENE

Close on Tom, snickering as he listens to Barry's ramblings.

BARRY

One day there was a fire. And that's **what killed my snake. Now I have a few** things to say about Laura Linney.

LESLIE

Okay, Barry, thank you.

TOM

No, no, I want to hear what he has to say about Laura Linney.

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BARRY

Laura Linney is a fifteenth degree mason.  
In the fifteenth degree they teach you  
how to talk with your mouth closed.

LESLIE

Okay, thank you, Barry. Thank you for  
your comments.

Tom starts CLAPPING sarcastically. He whistles.

TOM

I agree with a lot of what he said.

Barry wanders out the door. Leslie spins for camera.

LESLIE

This is valuable. Citizen comments.  
Who's next?

Ann has her hand up. Another guy starts to get up and talk  
and Ann just shouts it out.

ANN

Hi. So, I'm Ann Logan, and a few of us  
are here to talk about the abandoned lot  
on Sullivan Street.

LESLIE

Alright. Go on.

ANN

I'm a nurse, and frankly I'm not at all  
interested in politics.

This gets some claps; Leslie looks insulted.

ANN (CONT'D)

But this thing almost killed my  
boyfriend, so...

EXT. STREET - PAWNEE, INDIANA - MORNING - B -ROLL

This footage is shot on a different day-- the documentary  
crew has followed Ann, after hearing her issue at the  
meeting, and is splicing in this footage to illustrate what  
she talked about.

We're on an unimpressive street full of shops with apartments  
and small homes behind them.

(CONTINUED)

ANN (V.0.)

Anyway, on this lot near my house, a developer dug out a basement for an office building, and then they went bankrupt. And now, there's just...this giant pit.

We look over at a GIANT PIT, maybe 15 feet deep, dug out of the ground. It is surrounded by a construction fence that is rotting and busted down in places -- this has clearly been here for a while. Ann looks to camera and silently points out sections of the pit as we hear the conversation at the meeting continue.

ANN (V.0.) (CONT'D)

It's been there almost a year.

LESLIE (V.0.)

Twelve months, yes, go on.

ANN (V.0.)

It goes right up to the backyard of the house I rent.

BACK TO MEETING SCENE

ANN

And my boyfriend -- who's a musician actually, who I support, but who was really starting to make some contacts and apply himself in the music business -- anyway, he was cutting through the lot at night, and it was raining, and he just -- whoomp! -- fell right in. Broke both his legs.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Andy is on his couch, both his legs in a cast.

ANDY

It was slippery. Did she tell you it was slippery? Because it was super slippery.

BACK TO SCENE

ANN

There was a little item in the paper.

Ann holds up a clipping from a scrapbook.