

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

"Unemployed man breaks legs in abandoned pit." Which -- why do they have to say "unemployed" man? That is inappropriate editorializing that doesn't belong in a news piece, in my opinion.

LESLIE

(shaking her head)  
It's the gotcha media.

ANN

The point is, there's a giant hole in the ground and people are falling in. I've been trying for months to get someone to fix this problem -- I've written letters, and I've made like a thousand phone calls to the government, but so far...

She makes a zero with her fingers.

TOM

Who fell in again? Your boyfriend?

Yeah. ANN

TOM

Is he dead?

ANN

No. But he broke his legs.

TOM

Uh huh. How long you guys been together?  
Is it a strong relationship?

Ann looks at him a little warily.

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm not hitting on you. I'm married.  
am only asking for background purposes.

MARGARET, a local woman with 4 boys, yells out:

MARGARET

We've been to the Revenue Collection department, and the Transportation Department, and the City Manager, and we keep hitting dead ends.

LESLIE

I'm sorry to hear that, but this doesn't seem like a government problem--

(CONTINUED)

ANN

Actually it is, because the government owns the land now. So you're going to have to figure out a different way to blow me off.

LOUD ANGRY APPLAUSE from the crowd. Leslie gathers herself.

LESLIE

Well, guess what? I'm not going to blow you off.

ANN

(unconvinced)

Really.

LESLIE

Yes. I will help you.

ANN

Is that a promise?

LESLIE

More than a promise. A pinky promise. I pinky promise all of you, right now, that I will help. And not only will we fill in that pit, but we will put a beautiful new park on that land.

The crowd is happy. Tom leans over, covering the mic with his hand.

TOM

What the hell are you doing?

Leslie covers her mic.

LESLIE

I'm getting in the game.

ANN TALKING HEAD

B-ROLL: The meeting breaking up, Leslie talking to Ann and giving her a business card and them chatting.

ANN

She claims she's going to help us.  
Whatever. Frankly she seems like kind of a boob.

(beat)

She wears pantyhose, and for some reason I imagine them going all the way up to her chin.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

B roll: Leslie staring nobly out her office window at the brick wall that serves as her "view."

LESLIE

I've been in the parks department for six years, and until now I've only really been able to engage in park maintenance. For example, last year I led the city-wide drive to disinfect the sandbox sand after those problems with the cats. I heard some testimony from mothers of toddlers that would make you cry. But this pit! The chance to build a new park, from scratch...

(she thinks)

This is my Hoover Dam.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Tom is on the phone.

TOM

That sounds great. Problem is, anything over 25 dollars I have to report. So just call my wife and give her the suits and then if they don't fit her, maybe she'll give them to me.

Tom laughs a snarky little laugh. Leslie walks in

LESLIE

Hey Tom.

TOM

(covering)

Alright Mr. Mayor. Nice talking with ya.

(turns to Leslie)

Leslie! Hello.

LESLIE

That was the mayor?

TOM

Yeah. We were just rapping about some things.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Tom is so lucky. I need to make the acquaintance of the mayor.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

I swear to God she is the most gullible human being I've ever met in my life.

INT. LESLIE AND TOM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Leslie and Tom, brainstorming.

LESLIE

Brainstorm. How do I make this happen?

TOM

Go to the City Council directly, ask them to just front the money.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE

Nah, money's tight right now. Parks aren't a priority. I need more firepower. I need some bigger guns.

Tom looks at her chest and snickers.

TOM

Yeah. Your guns are pretty small.

LESLIE

Tell me about it.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Tom and I work great together. We're both outsiders -- me as a woman, him as... whatever he is. I wanna say... Libyan? Plus he's the size of a child. Size twenty-eight waist. Plus he worships the prophet Mahomet.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

Tom Haverford c'mon, I'm Episcopalian. Three years now.

INT. LESLIE AND TOM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LESLIE

Well, obviously, what I really need is to establish a committee.

(to camera)

Committees are power. They are the lifeblood of the democratic system.

(to Tom)

That was good. Did you get that? For the book?

Tom gets out a pen and paper.

TOM

Yup. Got it.

LESLIE

(to camera)

From time to time, I stumble upon a saying, or a phrase, that really sums up my feelings about things. Tom is helping me collect them, for my memoirs.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM  
No I'm not.

BACK TO SCENE

CLOSE ON what Tom is writing -- it's just scribbles.

LESLIE  
What if we got Mark on board?

TOM  
Mark who?

LESLIE  
"Mark who?!" Brendanawicz!

TOM  
Oh. Sure. Whatever. Call him.

Leslie starts to dial.

LESLIE  
(to camera)  
You want something done in this town, you need Mark Brendanawicz. He's a city planner and he's "da bomb." Smart, capable, knows where all the bodies are buried. Just a great, solid, smart, big, strapping, solid guy.

Tom looks at her.

TOM  
(to camera)  
She wants to bone him so bad.

LESLIE  
What?  
(into phone)  
Hey! Mark!

EXT. COURTYARD - LATER

This is an interior courtyard of the building. Crummy, run-down -- just a few benches and a piddling fountain. Leslie approaches Mark, who's eating a sandwich.

MARK  
Hey Leslie.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE

What's up, Brendanawicz, you crazy ol'  
Polack?

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Politics is rough-and-tumble. Yes, I'm a  
woman, but to fit in I sometimes have to  
talk like a man, act like a man. You  
have to dish it out and you have to take  
it.

(she pinches her arm)  
Thick skin.

BACK TO SCENE

MARK

"Crazy (31' Polack?" What the hell,  
Leslie? That's really hurtful.

LESLIE

(crumbling)  
Oh my God. Mark, I'm so sorry. I'm just  
trying to kid around. Oh God. Oh God,  
I've already screwed it all up.

MARK

Leslie. I'm kidding.

Leslie looks confused, and then laughs really loudly and  
weirdly to try to recover.

LESLIE

What? Ha ha ha ha! I know. He he he  
he! Oh man. Good times. Politics.

Mark smiles at her, bemused.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

So. Down to brass tacks. Do you know  
this pit I'm talking about?

MARK

Yeah. Lot 48. I checked it out like a  
month ago. It's pretty gross.

LESLIE

As in a gross injustice!

MARK

Okay, but what I meant was, it's  
disgusting.

(MORE)

CONTINUED 1

CONTINUED:

MARK (CONT'D)

People have been tossing their garbage into it. And I'm pretty sure there was a dead wolf in one corner.

LESLIE

Let me ask you this -- do you think I could turn it into a park?

MARK

A park. Huh.

(beat)

Well, when I think about the logistics, and the various hoops you'd have to jump through, I'd say: is it likely? No. But is it possible? No. It's not possible. You should give up.

LESLIE

What? Why?

MARK

(annoyed, deep breath)

There's a million reasons why. I used to try to get stuff like this off the ground when I started, but between the developers and the citizen groups, the bureaucrats and the anti-government nuts...it's impossible.

LESLIE

So there's a chance.

MARK

...No. There isn't. Aim smaller, is my advice. Have the wolf removed. You might be able to pull that off before Christmas.

LESLIE

Mark, I need your help on this. I need you to support it.

She stares deeply into his eyes.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Can you do me a favor? For old time's sake?

He looks a tiny bit confused.



LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Mark and I...it's complicated. You work closely with someone, two strong personalities, passionate about the same things, sharing a worldview...things can happen. We slept together.

She makes a motion like: there it is.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

A while ago. We didn't really talk about it much afterwards -- we're both professionals, and it doesn't affect our work. I don't know. Some day down the line, maybe we'll give it a chance to become something more. Who knows.

MARK TALKING HEAD

In his office.

MARK

Leslie? No.

(he thinks)

Oh my God -- wait -- yes, we did! Wow, I totally forgot about that. Yes. She's right. Like five years ago. After some kind of...party or something? I was pretty drunk. Anyway. Yeah. How about that.

BACK TO SCENE

She's still staring into his eyes.

MARK

Why do you care about this pit? What's your angle here?

LESLIE

No "angle." I've been here six years, I know more about our city and the government than anyone else, and I've never had my own project. It's not fair! It's like, we're back in school and I've studied really hard and they're not letting me take the tests. Imagine how frustrating that would be.

Mark looks to camera.

MARK

God if those tests had been called off, I would have been pissed. And those lousy snow days too. I hated those.

LESLIE

I know! Mark, I believe that government can do good things, but you need power, and getting this park made would give me power. The more power I can get, the more good I can do. If I had absolute power, I could do absolute good!

Mark smiles glumly at her sincerity.

MARK

Your enthusiasm is...intense, and off-putting--

LESLIE

Thank you.

MARK

But take it from me -- it's just not going to happen.

LESLIE

But I promised those people I would make this happen. I promised them in the meeting.

MARK

Well, you'll just have to accept that you will be the first bureaucrat in history to make a promise and fail to deliver on it.

He walks off. Leslie looks frustrated and determined until Mark is out of sight.

LESLIE

(suddenly)

Not me!

(to camera)

Why do I always think of the perfect response like one second too late?

INT. ANN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Andy watches TV with his broken legs up. He is swaddled in an old blanket and covered in snack wrappers. Ann is hustling around cleaning up the apartment.