**ACT ONE**

**Untitled Daniels/Schur Project First Network Draft**

**1.**

**10/24/08**

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

**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.0.)**

**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.0.)**

**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?**

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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

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(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 3.**

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**CONTINUED:**

**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

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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 A1'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.0.)  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) |  |
| CONTTNIIED |
|  |  |

**LESLIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)**

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**CONTINUED:**

**5.**

**10/24/08**

**CONTINUED 1**

**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.**

**MAN**

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**Untitled Daniels/Schur Project 6.**

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**CONTINUED: (2)**

**WONTINUEDI**

**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.0.) (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.**

•

LESLIE

**Untitled Daniels/Schur Project** First Network Draft

CONTINUED:

7.

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**CONTINUED1**

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 -Because last month That's right! And restaurant in this head of the police mason. | - today is a great day! they put me in [jail.](http://jail.my) my mother had a  town. A creamery. The is a ninth degree |

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.

**BARRY**

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**CONTINUED:**

**8.**

**10/24/08**

**(CONTTNUED)**

**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 crew has followed Ann, after hearing her meeting, and is splicing in this footage she talked about.** | **-- the documentary issue at the**  **to illustrate what** |

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

**Untitled Daniels/Schur Project 9.**

**ICONTTNUEn1**

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**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.**