

# The Outsider - A.C. Side 2

The Outsider

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A. C. *(The question means she's debating which way to go, which he takes as a good sign.)* Seven minutes.

RACHEL. *(A little beat. To DAVE:)* I've gotta go do some thinking.

DAVE. Right.

*(RACHEL moves to exit out the Reception door, but comes back.)*

RACHEL. Why did you ask me if I play poker?

DAVE. I honestly don't know.

RACHEL. *(Accepting that response:)* Alright. *(Beat.)* How many reporters did you leak those papers to?

DAVE. Just you. You were the only one.

RACHEL. Okay, first of all, thank you. And second: *(With actual anger and frustration:)* You're supposed to say "what papers?"!

DAVE. Right. Sorry. "I, I don't know what you're talking about."

RACHEL. Oh my God, you're the worst liar ever.

DAVE. *(As she exits:)* And you like that about me?

RACHEL. *(A little angry:)* Yes.

*(RACHEL exits out the Reception door. NED enters from the Hallway door.)*

NED. *(The idea of being on camera, moments from how, is making him mumbly again.)* Oh, Dave, I've gotta get my *(microphone on.)*

DAVE. What's that—your mic?

NED. Yeah, Paige told me to come in and *(have A. C. put my mic on.)*

DAVE. *(Reassuring him:)* That's fine; you get set-up, and I'll tell Arthur we're almost ready, okay?

*(A.C interrupts to talk to NED about the placement of his mic and mic pack.)*

A. C. *(Making a few grunts, accompanied by gestures, meaning, perhaps:)* *(I'm gonna clip the mic to the lapel of your jacket.)*

NED. *(In response, mumbling, perhaps:)* *(Okay, last time I wasn't wearing a jacket.)*

A. C. *(In response, grunting, perhaps:)* *(Yeah, that's fine. And the mic pack will go in the inside pocket of your jacket.)*

NED. *(In response, mumbling, perhaps:)* *(Last time, it was in my pants pocket.)*

Start

A. C. (*In response, grunting, perhaps:*) (Right, but this time you're wearing a jacket.)

DAVE. Okay—clearly you two are gonna be just fine.

(*DAVE exits through the Hallway door. There is a brief silence, as A. C. works—attaching NED's mic, testing the mic, etc.—while NED observes him. The silence soon makes NED comfortable enough to speak.*)

NED. I'm not sure I'm even gonna *need* this mic. (*Beat.* A. C. says *nothing.*) I mean, even when there's *not* a camera, I'm not great at talking. (*Beat.*) Which is... maybe something you and I have in common.

A. C. (*Beat.*) Uh-huh.

NED. (*Encouraged by getting a response:*) But *you* see people talk on camera every day. You probably think it's ridiculous for me to be nervous about being on TV.

A. C. (*With a shrug—meaning "I wouldn't exactly say that":*) Well...

NED. What. What does *that* mean?

A. C. (*The shrug.*) I'm just saying...

NED. What? That I *should* be nervous?

A. C. (*The shrug.*) Well...

NED. What does that *mean*?

A. C. (*The shrug.*) I'm just saying...

NED. No you're not, you're not saying anything.

A. C. The last time you went on TV... (*The shrug.*)

NED. I looked like an ass.

A. C. Yeah. But look, the truth is... *most* people who go on TV make asses of themselves.

NED. Do they?

A. C. Oh yeah. *God* yeah—

NED. Okay. I'm not sure this is helping—?

A. C. Especially politicians—

NED. Yeah, definitely not helping—

A. C. But, you know, most politicians are asses to begin with. (*Realizing who he's saying this to:*) Ha! See? This is why I don't talk to people.

NED. No, I wouldn't disagree with that. There's an awful lot of idiots in politics. Though I don't know why that is.

A. C. Because no sane, intelligent person would want to work in government? (*Realizing:*) Okay, I'm gonna— (*Gesture meaning "zip it."*)

NED. Why would you say that?

A. C. Nah, forget it.

NED. No, tell me. Why would no intelligent person want to work in government?

A. C. Because... what is government? What does it do? Right? What good, honest purpose does it serve? I suppose it... *has* to exist, and always *will* exist, but... Government, politics, what does that have to do with... I'm sorry, but... *real life*? It has nothing to do with *my* life. I pay my taxes. I bitch about it, but I pay, and then all that money gets spent on... whatever—whatever politicians *spend* money on, when they're not busy trashing other politicians, or looking into my TV camera and lying every time they open their mouths. Right? (*Beat.*) Why should I pay attention to that? Why should I care? Life is crowded enough as it is. I've got a brother who's out of work, needs help paying his rent. I've got a friend who's been in and out of the hospital. And my wife and I... just want to make it to the weekend so we can spend time with our two boys, who are... awesome, and... important. That's real life. Government is... over there. Making a lot of noise. If you listen to it. But... why listen to it?

NED. (*Beat.*) I'm sorry about your friend in the hospital.

A. C. (*Feeling a little awkward:*) Thanks. I don't know why I brought her up.

NED. Well—real life, like you said.

A. C. Yeah.

NED. What kind of work is your brother in?

A. C. He was teaching high school, in Fairview. Got laid off.

NED. Was that... a public school?

A. C. (*With earned cynicism, as he's talking to a politician:*) You gonna get him a job, Governor?

NED. I'm honestly just wondering.

A. C. I don't know why I told you all that.

NED. I asked you a question. And you answered it. That's what Dave keeps telling me about this interview with Rachel: it's just a conversation.

A. C. Yeah. Though you know he's just lying to you to make you feel better, right? *(Beat. Seeing that was the worst thing to say:)* Okay, I am never speaking again.

*(RACHEL enters.)*

RACHEL. How close are we, A. C.?

A. C. A-minute-and-forty-seconds out.

*(The Hallway door opens, LOUISE, ARTHUR, PAIGE, and DAVE enter. During the following: LOUISE will sit on the sofa; A. C. will attach her mic, etc.)*

ARTHUR. Okay, here we go, let's do this! Lulu, I'll be right over here, okay? *(Indicates a spot behind the camera.)*

LOUISE. Okay! Looks good!

DAVE. *(To NED, as privately as possible:)* Ned, are you all set?

NED. I don't know.

DAVE. You're gonna do great.

NED. Gonna do great.

DAVE. Just be yourself.

NED. Just be myself.

A. C. We're live in one minute, folks.

DAVE. *(Sensing he can do no more good for NED:)* Okay, uh... *(To RACHEL, as privately as possible:)* Rachel?

RACHEL. You want to know what decision I've made.

DAVE. I do, but—

RACHEL. You don't get to ask me that—

DAVE. *(Finishing his sentence:)* I was assuming I shouldn't ask you that.

RACHEL. It could be I haven't made a decision.

DAVE. Right.

RACHEL. But you shouldn't know that, either.

DAVE. If it helps... I really feel like I don't know anything.

A. C. Thirty seconds.

ARTHUR. Dave?

DAVE. *(Joining ARTHUR and PAIGE on the far side of the room:)* Right. Stay out of the shot, stay out of the shot.

**END**