RACHEL. A. C.'s gonna set everything up. You have an idea where you'd like us to sit?

DAVE. We were thinking—the two of you here, on the sofa?

RACHEL. Does that work for you, A. C.?

(*A. C. grunts.*)

A. C. doesn't talk much. So, Dave Riley— (*As she talks to DAVE, she can't help but look around the Governor's office—her first time in it.*) The new Governor's Chief of Staff. A man I somehow have never met before. What's your deal, what's your story?

DAVE. (*The slightest hesitation, just at the directness of the question:*) Oh—well—

Start

RACHEL. (*Misinterpreting DAVE's hesitation:*) And I'm just asking that—that's just personal curiosity; I'm not asking that as a reporter, okay? I'm not trying to break any rules. I'm completely clear about the whole "not asking any questions" thing. I got the memo.

DAVE. What memo?

RACHEL. The figurative memo. The message. I got the message. About not asking any probing questions. You look like you have no idea what I'm talking about.

DAVE. I think I have no idea what you're talking about.

RACHEL. The rules—clearly laid out to me about this interview. That it's—actually—not an interview, that I'm not here as a reporter; I'm just here because my boss, the head of our news division, is pals with Arthur Vance. They go golfing together—is that what it is, golfing?

(*Realizing:*)

RACHEL. Sorry, that was— (*She laughs or smiles.*) That was totally a question. That's just... me; even when I'm not being a reporter, I sound like a reporter. The way you probably sound like a politician even when you're not being a politician.

DAVE. Oh! Um...

RACHEL. Actually you don't sound much like a politician.

DAVE. Are you saying someone told you you couldn't ask any questions?

RACHEL. (*Thinking it silly that he'd go that route:*) Oh, look, you don't have to pretend that... I'm sorry I mentioned it—was I not supposed to mention it?

DAVE. No!

RACHEL. *(Surprised he'd take offense at that:)* Okay, I don't exactly know the etiquette of—

DAVE. No, I meant, no, you weren't *not* supposed to—

RACHEL. *(Not having heard that:)* I'm just telling you—I don't know why I'm telling *you*—I'm just… I'm not a big fan of people in the *news* business being pals with the people we're supposed to *cover*, okay? And these arrangements, where you do *us* a favor, like offering an exclusive interview with the Governor, and we do *you* a favor, like promising the reporter won't ask any tough questions. Just "how does it *feel?*" kinda stuff. Since, apparently, our new Governor is not very bright. Is that *true*, by the way—is Ned Newley not very bright? *(Realizing:)* Shit, I did it again. Honestly, it's involuntary—it just comes out—but I really don't want to get *fired* today, so… No more questions. Eight years I've been covering politics in this state, this is my first time setting foot in the Governor's office, but I will just sit here and… smile pretty for the camera. Right, A. C.?

(A. C., sharing her cynicism about the situation, grunts.)

A. C. doesn't talk much. Unlike *me*, who… *(Aware she's been venting, she stops herself from saying anything more than a simple:)* Sorry.

DAVE. No, *I'm*… I'm sorry to hear all that.

RACHEL. *(Not having patience for the bullshit:)* Look, you pretending to be innocent and sympathetic isn't really… *(Seeing something in his face:)* Wait, you are *pretending*, aren't you?

DAVE. *(Beat.)* I don't think I'm pretending.

RACHEL. Are you saying you weren't told about this arrangement? You didn't know this wasn't a real interview? Arthur Vance didn't share that fact with the Governor's Chief of Staff?

DAVE. He did not.

RACHEL. Well that's an awesome little scoop for me to put in the story that I'm *not allowed* to *write*. *(She's genuinely angry now.)* I'll just file that under "Leads I Can't Pursue," along with "Why would Arthur Vance fly here from Boston to work for a new Governor nobody's ever heard of?", *and* "Why is he claiming Ned Newley's not smart, when he's been our State Treasurer for—?" Wait, why are you… ? Why are you looking at me like that?

DAVE. Like what?

END