

MISSION CONTROL

by

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NBC CASTING

1.15.14

COLD OPEN

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

CHYRON: “NASA MANNED SPACE CENTER, 1965”

Our MAIN CAST OF GUYS man MISSION CONTROL. Overseeing them, their confident leader, MARY (tough on the inside, pretty on the outside.) **Note: The ASTRONAUT (BUS) is only heard.*

BUS (O.S.)
I'm rolling over now, Houston.
Starting to see lunar terrain.

MARY
Eagle, set Primary Guidance to AUTO

BUS (O.S.)
Roger. Primary Guidance to AUTO.

MARY
Landing sequence initiated. Let’s bring him in smooth, fellas.

Suddenly we hear an ALARM.

MARY (CONT’D)
I hear beeping. Talk to me, RETRO.

ARTHUR
We have a discrepancy between the radar and onboard computers, ma’am.

GORDIE
6,000 feet.

BUS (O.S.)
Approaching decision point, Houston.

KREIGEL
If he doesn’t right himself, he could crash land and die, ma’am. What do we do?!

MARY
We stay calm and do our jobs. Switch to Abort Guidance System.

GORDIE
3,000 feet.

MOYNIHAN
AGS has failed, ma’am.

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BUS (O.S.)
Houston, I see a crater.

ARTHUR
He's too low!

MARY
Get him back up to orbit. Initiate Rendezvous Guidance System! Now!

SLAM! Mary reaches over and HITS a button herself. STATIC.

ARTHUR
We lost him. He crashed.

MARY
Damnit.

Moment of silence. GORDIE begins to CRY. Just then, LIGHTS UP, the FLIGHT SIMULATOR DOOR OPENS and out steps the ASTRONAUT, BUS (30s, jock, high status idiot.)

BUS
Well that was a turd!

Bus walks down the STEPS of the simulator as Mary addresses her men: GORDIE (20s, earnest, good-looking, in the closet), KRIEGEL (30s, weirdo genius), MOYNIHAN (30s, slight edge, over it), ARTHUR (20s, African American, dry as he is smart.)

MARY
Not the wording I would've chosen but yeah, it wasn't ideal. Gordie, c'mon, there's no crying at NASA.

She hands Gordie a HANDKERCHIEF.

GORDIE
Sorry, boss. I try to tell myself, 'it's just a simulation.'

ARTHUR
We're all simulations according to physics.

MOYNIHAN
Nothing was responding correctly, ma'am. It's a simulator problem.

BUS
The problem is you engineers are trying to computerize one of the most natural things in the world:
(MORE)

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BUS (CONT'D)
a man guiding a metal ship through the air with his hands! That's nature!
(then, to Kreigel)
Would you have a computer make love to your wife?

KREIGEL
(intimidated)
I live with my mother, sir. But if there was a computer that does what you're saying, she'd probably be very interested.

MARY
Bus, you're a hell of an astronaut and could end up being the first man on the moon. But right now, the only thing you're being is a jerk. My men did their jobs well. It's the computer that failed us. And if you don't like it, you speak to me.

BUS
I love it when you talk to me like you're my boss.

MARY
I am your boss.

BUS
You're also my girl.

He SCOOPS Mary up like a bride and KISSES her hard. Then:

BUS (CONT'D)
I LOVE THIS WOMAN! She's strong and smart and has one heck of a fanny!

MARY
Really wish you wouldn't do this at work.

BUS
When I was up there, and I knew I was gonna crash, having this necklace made me know everything was gonna be okay.

He pulls out a NECKLACE he's wearing under his space suit.

MARY
That's my necklace! I've been looking for that. I thought it was stolen.

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BUS
It was. By me. I just wanted a piece of you close to my heart.

MARY
(touched)
Aw, Bus. Even when you're thoughtless, you're thoughtful.

BUS
Supper. Tonight. You and me, doll.

Bus heads off.

ARTHUR
Really appreciate you sticking up for us, ma'am. Means a lot.

MARY
Arthur, if I wanted sentiment, I'd buy a Hallmark card. Now get me a telemetry and trajectory report. Kreigel, Moynihan get me a full software diagnostics. And Gordie, get me a new handkerchief-- I'm not touching that thing.

Mary HEADS OFF. Her crew watches her go.

GORDIE
That is one tough lady.

Everyone agrees.

MOYNIHAN
She really does have a nice fanny.

Everyone agrees again.

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: MISSION CONTROL

END COLD OPEN

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ACT ONE

INT. SIMULATOR ROOM - DAY

Mary addresses her crew in front of the CAPSULE SIMULATOR in the simulator room filled with 60's technology.

MARY
Gentlemen, we're mission controllers. When a flight simulation fails, we all fail. I'm a failure and you're a failure.

KREIGEL
It is eery how much you sound like my mother right now.

MARY
Who's got the diagnostics report?

GORDIE
Right here, ma'am.

Gordie hands her the FILE. She opens it and reads.

MARY
What is this, Gordie?

She holds up images of MUSCULAR MEN posing in bathing suits.

GORDIE
(covering)
Oh, sorry. That's my personal file.

He GRABS the file from Mary. And gives her the CORRECT FILE.

GORDIE (CONT'D)
I look at muscle pics to inspire me- - get in shape for my wedding-- Cause I love my fiancee. And I'm excited to make love to her!

MARY
Well you won't be making love to her tonight. Cause we're gonna stay here til we figure this out.

Everyone groans. Mary reacts.

MARY (CONT'D)
Hey! You wanna be a part of NASA, you gotta work hard. And that work starts right here, right now--

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JESSICA (O.S.)
Ms. Kendrick?

REVEAL Mary's secretary JESSICA (20s, bombshell, knows it.)

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Mr. Korman would like to see you in his office.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Mary walks down the hallway with Jessica.

JESSICA
Oh, I have a date tonight. Do you think I could leave a little early?

MARY
Uh, sure, Jessica. How early?

JESSICA
Two o'clock. Frank wants me to catch the flight to Vegas. I told him I have work but Frank likes to do everything his way.

Jessica peels off as Mary land at Korman's office.

INT. KORMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mary walks into the office. BOB KORMAN (40s, old school) sits behind his desk.

MARY
I think my secretary is going steady with Frank Sinatra.

KORMAN
Wow. Lucky guy.

CAROL ANN (O.S.)
Hello, Dr. Kendricks!

REVEAL Korman's secretary CAROL ANN (20s, earnest, upbeat) off to the side. She finishes putting up a MASSIVE STUFFED DEAD DEER HEAD on the wall.

MARY
... Is that a deer, Carol Ann?

CAROL ANN
Don't worry. He's dead. Thanks to Mr. Korman here.

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KORMAN
Damn right. And to think, I was dreading moving to this godforsaken hick swamp. Do you have any idea what it feels like to take the life of a powerful male buck?

CAROL ANN
Sad?

KORMAN
That'll be all, Carol Ann.

Carol Ann leaves.

MARY
Is this why you called me in, Bob? To stare into a dead animals eyes?

KORMAN
I called you in cause you're turning the moon into an astronaut morgue.

MARY
It's a technical glitch. We're trying to diagnose it right now.

KORMAN
You better figure it out fast. The boys from Washington are visiting in a few days. They're gonna wanna see a simulation of a man landing on the moon. Not crashing into it.

MARY
Right. Good talk.

She starts to head off.

KORMAN
Oh and get Tom up to speed.

MARY
(turns back)
Who?

KORMAN
Tom. The new guy. He'll be running the Apollo division with you.

MARY
What? You never told me about any new guy. What the hell, Bob?!

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KORMAN
Washington's nervous about hitting Kennedy's goal to get a man on the moon before the decade is up. I know you're probably thinking it's cause you're a woman. It is.

MARY
Bob, I've successfully run this division since the Manned Space Center opened. I'm the best aerospace engineer here and I'm getting discriminated against because I'm a <u>woman</u>?? That's- that's-- what do you call that?

KORMAN
I dunno. There's no word for it.
(then)
I gotta go. I'm late for a meeting.

Korman slings a set of GOLF CLUBS around his shoulder.

KORMAN (CONT'D)
I know you're probably thinking-- the meeting's really a golf game. It is.
(then)
Look, Tom's a great guy. Buddy of mine from Langley. Cool-headed, former test pilot. He's gonna be a great addition to your team. Promise.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

CLOSE ON TOM (30s, attractive, charming) Intense count down...

TOM
Nine-er. Zero. Six. Two... Engage!

Then we hear a TELEPHONE RING.

GORDIE
It's ringing!

REVEAL Tom is standing over a Mission Control panel near Arthur, Gordie, and Kreigel. Moynihan mans the dial pad. A RUSSIAN VOICE answers. The following Russian is SUBTITLED.

RUSSIAN VOICE (O.S.)
Da?

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TOM
(speaking in RUSSIAN)
Hello, is this the Kremlin?

RUSSIAN VOICE (O.S.)
(in RUSSIAN)
Yes. Who is this?

TOM
(in RUSSIAN)
I'm calling from the United States with an urgent diplomatic message:
(then, in ENGLISH)
Suck it!

Tom HANGS UP. The guys LAUGH and CHEER. Mary walks up.

MARY
What is going on in here?

MOYNIHAN
He just prank called the Kremlin!

KREIGEL
In Russian!

TOM
It's all the Russian I know.
(then, to Mary)
Hi. Tom Stone.

MOYNIHAN
Tom's a legend! He piloted an X-15 experimental jet to the edge of space!

GORDIE
And he's got hair like John Lennon!

MARY
May I ask why you're using Mission Control to prank call the Kremlin?

TOM
Cause I hate Commies. Also, to bond with my men. Being a top-notch pilot has taught me that this is a brotherhood. And I wanna know everything I can about my brothers. Like, I learned Gordie here's engaged to a former Miss Texas but he won't touch her. They're saving themselves til they get married.

NBC CASTING

GORDIE
My choice. Not hers.

TOM
Don't know how you do it. I learned Moynihan's married with five kids.

MOYNIHAN
I sleep in my office most nights.

TOM
Kreigel is a genius who knows computers inside and out. But he's never known the inside of a woman.

KREIGEL
Just my mother.
(off their looks)
When I was born. What? That's a factual statement.

TOM
And I learned from Arthur that being black in America is no picnic. No matter how smart you are.

KREIGEL
Arthur's grandparents came here from Africa to become farmers!

ARTHUR
No, not farmers. Slaves.

KREIGEL
(confused)
You said they worked on a farm.

ARTHUR
I said they worked for a farm.

TOM
(to Mary)
And I'd love to learn more about you. All I know now is you're one heck of an attractive secretary.

Everyone gets awkward at this.

ARTHUR
Sir, this is Dr. Kendricks. She's manager of the Apollo division.

TOM
You're Doctor Kendricks?

NBC CASTING

MARY
That's what it says on my degrees.

TOM
Wow. First day and I've mistaken a female doctor for a secretary and a black scientist for a jazz musician.
(extending hand to Mary)
Glad to be working with ya, sweetheart.

MARY
I'd appreciate you not calling me sweetheart.

TOM
You got it, darling.

MARY
Or darling.

TOM
Sorry. Bad habit. Pilot mentality.

MARY
Let's get back to work, shall we? You might wanna read these files.

She hands Tom the FILES.

TOM
Will do. Gordie, read the files.

GORDIE
Yes, sir!

MARY
(forging on)
The problem resides during the automated landing sequence. It's either a software issue or a hardware issue.

TOM
The <u>issue</u> is trusting a computer to land over a man. Perhaps you'd trust men more, if you bonded with them.

MARY
Mr. Stone, I'm just trying to put a man on the moon.

MOYNIHAN
Are we <u>really</u> gonna put a man on the moon? I say we stage it.

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EVERYONE
Stop!/Not again!/That's crazy!

MOYNIHAN
Oh really?! That's a crazy idea! You know what's crazy? Rocketing a man to another planet, landing him, then launching him back off with no infrastructure whatsoever?!

TOM
We will put a man on the moon. It's our chance to make history! That's why we're all doing this, right?!

KREIGEL
I'm doing it to find proof of extra-terrestrial life because I feel like an alien on my own planet.

TOM
Wow. That was very raw. Thank you. Moynihan, this is a chance to make your kids proud. Do it for them!

MOYNIHAN
Yeah, I don't really like my kids.

TOM
Alright, then do it for yourself. You care about yourself don't you?

MOYNIHAN
Absolutely.

TOM
But ya know who we really owe it to?

MARY
The tax payers?

TOM
No! That kid out there who's staring at the starry sky wondering what it's like up there. I was that kid once. We all were. I won't let that kid down. Neither will you. God Bless him. God Bless America!

EVERYONE
God bless us!/America!/Freedom!

They all CLAP.

NBC CASTING

MARY
You're clapping for that?! You guys never clap for me!

GORDIE
You don't say inspiring things like him. Tom speaks and it's-- electric!

MARY
Sorry if I don't talk about kids staring at stars. I'm busy <u>getting things</u> <u>done</u>. I can be inspiring too.

TOM
(sincere)
Then do it. Be inspiring.

MARY
No, you can't just be inspiring on cue. That's like me telling you to "be funny" right now.

TOM
Virginity is like a soap bubble, one prick and it's gone.

Everyone LAUGHS. Mary's frustrated.

TOM (CONT'D)
That one always kills. Say why don't I have one of these guys get me up to speed on this simulator thingamajig. Any volunteers?

They ALL RAISE THEIR HANDS.

TOM (CONT'D)
Great. Let's go.

The guys start to LEAVE. Tom turns to Mary.

TOM (CONT'D)
Really looking forward to working together, sugar.
(then)
Uhp, sorry, looking forward to working together, <u>woman</u>.

He walks out, leaving Mary alone, frustrated.

<u>END OF ACT ONE</u>

NBC CASTING

ACT TWO

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Mary walks into the women's bathroom, frustrated. Jessica and Carol Ann are at the sink.

MARY
Finally. A place with no men.

JESSICA
Everything okay, Dr. Kendricks? You seem upset.

CAROL ANN
If it's about the dead deer, Mr. Korman assured me he's up in heaven.

MARY
No. Its nothing. It's just... Tom. Men think they can do whatever they please. We get treated differently cause we're women.

JESSICA
I know. It's great.

MARY
No, Jessica. It's insulting. They don't respect us.

CAROL ANN
I respect you, Dr. Kendricks. I wish I was as strong as you. To be able to focus on my career and let my most fertile childbearing years slip away. That's admirable.

MARY
... Thanks, Carol Ann.

JESSICA
You know what you should try? Flirting. Always works for me. You might wanna put on a different dress though.

MARY
Well, this has been swell. Thanks for the advice, girls. Back to work.

JESSICA
Actually I need to leave now for my date.

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MARY
It's 11:45 in the morning.

JESSICA
Frank wants me to catch the earlier flight. I told him you might be mad, he just said "That's life!"

They start to head out. Carol Ann TURNS BACK to Mary.

CAROL ANN
Don't let 'em push you around, Dr. K. You owe it to yourself.

Mary TAKES THIS IN. Carol Ann has a point.

MARY
You're right. I do.

CAROL ANN
And to those unborn children you'll never have.

Carol Ann exits, leaving the door OPEN. Mary hears LAUGHTER.

INT. MISSION CONTROL BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

Mary walks out to find Tom LAUGHING and DRINKING with Arthur, Kreigel, Gordie and Moynihan.

MARY
What the hell are you guys doing?

TOM
We're having a brainstorm on your simulator issue. Some of the greatest ideas in history have come from men sitting around a table and brainstorming. Like WWII for example. We've already come up with some good stuff.

ARTHUR
We formed a softball league!

TOM
We did that too. These guys should run around more. See this all part of my process.

MARY
Really? Is it your 'process' to use important reports as drink coasters?

NBC CASTING

ANGLE ON the files underneath their DRINKS.

TOM
I'm not a report guy. I like to go on my gut. To push my men to think outside the box for solutions.

GORDIE
To thinking outside the box!

They all CHEERS and click their drinks.

MARY
Are you all drinking alcohol?

TOM
Of course. You can't truly brainstorm without a stiff scotch. Provided courtesy of Moynihan here.

MOYNIHAN
I like to have a few drinks at work. Keeps the mind sharp.

MARY
No, it keeps the mind drunk.

TOM
Mary, a man should be able to have a few drinks on the job. Just because you're a woman and can't hold your scotch doesn't mean we should all be punished.

MARY
I can't hold my scotch?! Gimme that.

Mary SWIPES Moynihan's glass from him and DOWNS it. She instantly SPITS it out, COUGHING.

TOM
See? What did I tell ya?

MARY
That is not scotch! What the hell are you drinking, Moynihan?!

MOYNIHAN
Little moonshine. I like to call it 'rocket fuel.' I siphon it from the red canisters in the firing bay.

NBC CASTING

GORDIE
Those are the fuel canisters. So you call it rocket fuel because it <u>is</u> rocket fuel?

MOYNIHAN
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ARTHUR
How are you able to digest that?

MOYNIHAN
Guess I got a good tolerance. Little blood in the toilet bowl, but we all get that, right?

EVERYONE
No./Absolutely not.

Mary, frustrated, turns to the other guys.

MARY
You boys want a <u>real</u> drink? How ‘bout the drink of <u>hard work</u>? Sure, it doesn’t always go down smooth but the harder the drink, the stronger the reward!

ARTHUR
You... want us to drink <u>more</u>?

MARY
No-- I’m using drinking as a metaphor. I want you to drink work!

TOM
What are you doing?

MARY
I’m trying to inspire them, okay!

KREIGEL
I’m inspired: to drink more.

MOYNIHAN
To drinking more and drinking harder!

They all CHEERS and DRINK.

MARY
No. Uch. Ya know what, I inspired <u>myself</u>! So if you’ll excuse me, I have a simulator to fix.

NBC CASTING

Mary STORMS out. Tom watches her go, concerned.

GORDIE
(to Tom)
In the spirit of learning about one another: are you circumcised?

INT. MISSION CONTROL SIM ROOM - DAY

Mary stands by the SIMULATOR. A PAIR OF LEGS sticks out from below them, a la a mechanic.

MARY
Well? Find anything yet, Bobby?

BOBBY (30s, blue collar, chip on shoulder, sensitive) SLIDES OUT from underneath.

BOBBY
Bit of a head scratcher, Doc. Then again, I ain't thinking straight. On account of a recent family death.

MARY
Oh. Well, I'm sorry. I didn't know.

BOBBY
Why would you? You guys upstairs don't got time for the problems of a grease monkey that works below.

MARY
We work on the same floor. But I am very sorry for your loss.

BOBBY
Thanks. It was the old guy's time. Lived longer than the doctors thought. By the end, he could barely see or walk. He didn't even have a tail anymore. But that's on him, he chewed it off himself.

MARY
You're talking about your dog.

BOBBY
Yeah. I know-- you guys upstairs probably have a big laugh about me and my dog. The animal and his animal, right?

NBC CASTING

MARY
No that's not-- ya know what, I'll just look at the simulator myself.

She starts get down on the ground.

BOBBY
Whoa, this is complicated machine for a woman. Plus, you could get oil on your skirt.

MARY
I have a degree in mechanical engineering, Bobby. And to hell with my skirt.

She crawls UNDER the simulator, like working on a Chevy.

UNDER THE SIMULATOR

On her back, Mary looks up at the underside of the simulator.

MARY
Wow. I really underestimated the amount of wires on this thing.

TOM (O.S.)
Maybe I can help.

REVEAL Tom sliding up right next to her.

MARY
Ah! What are you doing here?

TOM
I wanna talk. And what better place to really hash out our issues than under a capsule simulator, right?

MARY
I don't wanna talk.

TOM
Really? You sure you're a woman?
(then)
Look, I get how you feel. I feel the same way. We're two new co-workers who are both attracted to one another. It's a classic will they or won't they.

MARY
You think you're so cute, don't you?

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TOM
Cute? I dunno. Darling? Maybe.
(then)
Ya know, I've always wanted to be an astronaut. Got sidelined with a rare inner ear disorder that causes Vertigo. They call it "Hitchcock Ear." Well, I just call it that but I'm trying to make it a thing. I'll never stop wanting to go up there. This is the closest I can get. I'm here to help, Mary. If you let me.

She takes that in. Maybe she's been a little hard on him.

MARY
Fine. If you're here to help, then figure out this simulator problem.

TOM
I know exactly what you need to fix it. All you need... is a screw.

MARY
Aaaand I'm out.

Mary SLIDES OUT from under, as does Tom.

TOM
Sorry but you set me up on that one. Had to take it.

BUS walks up.

BUS
There's my girl! You ready?

MARY
(to Tom)
This is my boyfriend. Bus. He's an astronaut. And Bus, this is--

BUS
Tom Stone! Gimme a hug, you S.O.B.!

They HUG.

MARY
You know each other?

BUS
Unfortunately. Tom broke my altitude record in the X-15. We
(MORE)

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BUS (CONT'D)
all knew he was a lock to be an astronaut. Finally made it, huh?

TOM
Actually I'm in more of an administrative position here. It's pretty cool.

BUS
Know what's cool? Strapping yourself to a rocket and blasting into space. It is super! You gotta try it.

TOM
(covering)
Some day. So, you two are dating, huh? That's quite a pairing.

BUS
Yep. When Mary was new to the city and all alone, I offered to help her move in. Then I asked her out. I said 'how'd you like to go on a date with the first man to walk on the moon someday?'

MARY
And I said 'no.'

BUS
Then I asked her sixty more times and eventually won her heart. Besides, it's all nerds around here. Who else is she gonna date?

TOM
Beats me.

BUS
C'mon, baby. We're gonna be late.

MARY
Bus is taking me out for supper. So you'll just have to go back under the simulator and... screw yourself.

She smiles and they head out. Tom watches them go. PAN OVER TO REVEAL Bobby standing next to Tom.

BOBBY
So you're the new boss, huh? I'm Bobby. Say, what's the likelihood of sending a dog's ashes into space?

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INT. CAR - NIGHT

Mary drives. Bus is in the passenger seat. He's DRUNK.

BUS
I think I burned my mouth on dessert.

MARY
You burned your mouth trying to drink the candle on the table, Bus. You drank too much vodka at dinner.

BUS
Vodka is delicious! I love it. Who even knows what it's made out of.

MARY
It's made out of potatoes.

BUS
Potatoes? Seriously? Man, you are smart. Who knows that?!

MARY
Most people. It's pretty common.

BUS
Not to me it isn't. I'd be lost without you, baby. I really would.

Bus STROKES her hair. Mary's touched.

MARY
Thanks, Bus. That means a--

BUS
WATCH OUT! You're swerving my car!

MARY
The car isn't swerving! You are.

BUS
This is why women shouldn't drive! Their bodies aren't built to operate motor vehicles.

MARY
What?! That's ridiculous.

BUS
It's a fact! I read it in Reader's Digest! Women's breasts get in the way of steering. I'm overtaking the wheel!

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Bus tries to OVERTAKE the steering wheel. Mary FIGHTS him.

MARY
Stop pulling at the wheel, Bus!

The car swerves off the road and CRASHES into a ditch. They both HIT the dashboard as they have no seat belts. Then:

BUS
Are you okay? How are your breasts?

MARY
I told you not to pull at the wheel!

BUS
I didn't trust you so I took control of the situation. That's what pilots do.

MARY
Well pilots are stubborn and hard-headed! Just because you don't trust something doesn't mean you overtake them and--
(then, realizing)
HOT DAMN! I just figured it out!

BUS
Figured out what?

MARY
The simulator problem! I'm gonna solve it and prove that a woman can do a job just as good as any man!
(KISSING Bus)
Thanks for crashing the car, Bus!

BUS
You're welcome.
(holding head)
Ow. I really should've gotten the seat belt option.

END OF ACT TWO

NBC CASTING

ACT THREE

INT. MISSION CONTROL BULLPEN- DAY

Everyone works at their various desks. Moynihan walks in.

MOYNIHAN
Lemme ask you fellas something: what's the average amount of blood you get in your stool?

ARTHUR
None. The average is none.

GORDIE
You should really stop drinking rocket fuel.

Mary CHARGES in.

MARY
I solved it! I know what's going wrong with the simulator.

ARTHUR
Really? That's great! Is it a software issue or a hardware issue?

MARY
Neither. It's a man issue. Bus has been overtaking the controls during the automated landing procedure.

GORDIE
Bus is the glitch?

MARY
He's a pilot. And pilots are stubborn, pompous and need to feel in control. Tom, you taught me that.

TOM
Well thank you I appreciate-- that's not a compliment, is it?

MARY
No. We can't have Bus taking over again. A pilot needs to put his ego aside and trust us like we trust him. Bus needs to know that.
(to Tom)
And you're gonna tell him.

NBC CASTING

TOM
Me? You're his girlfriend.

MARY
He won't listen to a woman. But he'll listen to you.

TOM
You want me to tell a man to let a computer fly for him? No way. What kind of pilot would that make me?

MARY
(she's had enough)
You're not a pilot anymore, Tom! You're a guy with vertigo who works at mission control! Deal with it!

This STINGS Tom.

MARY (CONT'D)
I've seen your type come and go. My father was a decorated general, and my three brothers are in the military. Guys like you get where they are on the backs of their drinking buddies. Well, some of us weren't invited to drink at bars or tee off at golf courses. Some of us had to work our asses off to get here. Now, we gotta get this simulator up and running. And if you can't get it up, don't look to me to get it up for you!

TOM
... We're still talking about the simulator, right?

MARY
Oh grow up! Are you gonna help me or not?

TOM
Fine. Jeez, alright. You are tough.

MARY
Then do it. And read the reports instead of using them as coasters!

Mary takes the FILE from under Tom's drink and SLAPS it against his chest. She heads off.

NBC CASTING

TOM
Oh congratulations! You've left a watermark!

Tom OPENS the file and looks at it.

TOM (CONT'D)
Hello, words. We meet again.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Tom and Bus sit at a bar. Bus sips a DRINK.

BUS
Mmm. That is good stuff. Nothing like a nice cold glass of vodka!

TOM
That's water, Bus. We haven't ordered yet.
(to Bartender)
Two vodkas please.

BUS
Really? Well, it's delicious water.

TOM
Bus, I wanted to talk. As pilots. We're both pilots, right?

BUS
Damn straight. We fly like we make love: hard, fast and with an angry face.

Bus laughs and slaps Tom's back. Tom's uneasy.

TOM
Listen, I was reading this report--

BUS
You read reports now?! Man, the nerds really got to you.

TOM
I know, right? But the thing about nerds is... they're pretty smart. And I'll be damned if this report they wrote didn't make me realize I was looking at things wrong.

BUS
Hey! Don't let some nerd tell how to look at things!

NBC CASTING

TOM
Yeah, but sometimes we have to put our egos aside, for the good of the team. Like Mickey Mantle. Even though he's a great slugger, he sometimes has to bunt for the sake of the team.

BUS
(suddenly passionate)
I hate when he bunts! I like when he hits home runs!

TOM
But sometimes swinging for a homer is too risky. Sometimes the manager asks him to just get a man on base.

BUS
Well he should disobey that manager.

TOM
Not necessarily.

BUS
Yes he should! He can do whatever he wants! He's Mickey freakin' Mantle!

TOM
I'm not talking about Mickey Mantle, Bus! I'm talking about you.

Bus is thrown by this.

BUS
What the hell you getting at, Stone?

TOM
Look Bus, no one wants to tell you how to fly. Literally. That's why they chose me. They don't want you flying manual on the landing. Let the system guidance land for you.

BUS
I'm not letting them tell me how to fly. I'm the pilot.

TOM
Let's be honest, we pilots can be a little egotistical.

BUS
Cause we're the greatest!

NBC CASTING

TOM
But sometimes being great is knowing when others are right. Especially when a buttload of data backs them up.
(then)
Look, Bus, if I were you I'd probably sock me in the face. But sometimes you gotta do what's best for the team. Our team needs a man on base. So? Whattya say?

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Mission Control. Our cast preps for flight. Tom walks in with a BLACK EYE.

MOYNIHAN
Woah, that's some shiner. You get into a fight last night, sir?

TOM
No. I got drunk with an astronaut.

MARY
What happened?

TOM
We talked a lot about Mickey Mantle. A lot. Then we got drunk on vodka. A lot. Then he wanted to <u>make</u> vodka with potatoes but he didn't know how, so we just ended up eating potato chips and throwing around the baseball. Thus the eye.

MARY
What about the landing part?

TOM
Oh. Yeah, he's fine with it. We hashed it out. Man to man.

Korman walks up with the two men from Washington, DR. GLENNAN and DR. STILLWELL.

KORMAN
Mary, I want you to meet Dr. Stillwell and Dr. Glennan, two chief administrators from D.C.

DR. STILLWELL
Ms. Kendricks.

NBC CASTING

MARY
Welcome, gentlemen.

KORMAN
And, fellas, this is Tom Stone.

DR. GLENNAN
Hear you're quite a pilot, Mr. Stone.

TOM
You should see my short game.

They LAUGH.

DR. STILLWELL
Nice shiner. She put up some fight huh?

TOM
You tell me, Doc, she's your wife.

Glennan and Stillwell LAUGH. They love Tom.

DR. GLENNAN
Ha ha! He's saying he forced himself on your wife!

DR. STILLWELL
She does get around... the whore!

They all LAUGH. Mary sees how easy Tom is with them.

DR. STILLWELL (CONT'D)
I like your style, Stone. Puts me at ease.
(then, to Mary, COLDLY)
Ma'am.

DR. GLENNAN
(COLDLY)
Ma'am.

Carol Ann walks up with a tray of GLASSES OF SCOTCH.

CAROL ANN
Sirs, your scotch.

KORMAN
C'mon, fellas, let's have a seat.

They head off. Carol Ann turns to Tom.

CAROL ANN
Scotch, Mr. Stone?

NBC CASTING

TOM
(reaching for glass)
Don't mind if I--
(off Mary's glare)
Ya know what, I'm good.

MARY
(to the crew)
We are go for launch everybody!

TOM
Good luck, Bus!

REVEAL Bus, suited up, loading into the simulator. He also has a BLACK EYE. He gives Tom a THUMBS UP.

CUT TO:

INT. MISSION CONTROL - LATER

MID-SIMULATION. Same as the opening of the show. Bus approaches landing point.

BUS (O.S.)
Houston, we're at the PDI. Let's initiate the braking phase.

MARY
Eagle, set Primary Guidance to AUTO.

BUS (O.S.)
Roger. Primary Guidance to AUTO.

ARTHUR
Landing approach initiated.

MARY
Here we go.

TOM
Relax. We're gonna be just fine.

Suddenly we hear an ALARM.

MARY
Damnit. RETRO?

ARTHUR
Delta H is rising, ma'am.
Discrepancy between the radar and onboard computers.

NBC CASTING

GORDIE
His state vector is all off.

MARY
(to Tom)
I thought you talked to him??

TOM
I did!
(into mic)
Eagle this is Houston. Did you switch to manual?

BUS (O.S.)
Affirmative, CAPCOM. I am in control!

TOM
Bus! What happened to Mickey Mantle bunting?!

BUS (O.S.)
I hate it when he bunts!! I'm going for the home run!

ANGLE ON a concerned-looking Dr. Stillwell and Dr. Gordon. Korman steps up, checking in.

KORMAN
Tell me you have this under control.

KREIGEL
He's gonna crash!

GORDIE
(grabbing tissues)
And here come the tears.

MARY
Man up! He is not gonna crash!

BUS (O.S.)
Mary, if I crash, know that the last breath I gasp will be your name. Not "Mary." The name I call you in bed.

TOM
He knows people can hear him, right?

MOYNIHAN
Ma'am, don't worry. I mocked up this diorama to help plan staging the landing.

NBC CASTING

Moynihan holds up a DIORAMA of a moon with a miniature Apollo. She KNOCKS it away. It FLIES across the room.

ARTHUR
Ma'am! State vector is stabilizing!

TOM
(surprised)
It is?

The ship has started to right itself. It's getting better.

KREIGEL
Pitch and roll are nominal!
Primary guidance is holding.

MOYNIHAN
He's righting the ship!

GORDIE
Fifty feet!

MARY
Come on...

BUS (O.S.)
Coming in for approach...

A tense moment. Then:

BUS (CONT'D) (O.S.)
Houston... the eagle has landed!

Victory! They all CHEER/CLAP. Gordie WEEPS.

GORDIE
(weeping)
He's alive! He didn't die!

Dr. Glennon and Dr. Stillwell approach with Korman.

DR. GLENNAN
Helluva job, Stone!

DR. STILLWELL
You can force yourself on my wife anytime!
(they laugh)
I mean that. I just wanna watch.

They then turn to Mary, very reserved again.

DR. GLENNAN
Ma'am.

NBC CASTING

DR. STILLWELL
Ma'am.

KORMAN
(to guys)
Fellas, how 'bout some golf, steaks and strippers? Not necessarily in that order.

Korman, Stillwell and Glennan head off. The SIMULATOR DOOR opens and Bus steps out, arms outreached.

BUS
How 'bout that, nerds?!

Bus heads down to Mary and the crew.

BUS (CONT'D)
See what happens when you let a man drive?

Bus heads off.

TOM
So... I <u>was</u> right. Let the pilots do their job. Sometimes <u>you</u> need to trust <u>me</u>, Mary. I know pilots.

MARY
Well I had a feeling Bus wouldn't listen. That's why I disabled his controls.

ARTHUR
The computer landed after all?

MARY
Tom may know pilots. But I know men.

Mary's crew begins to CLAP. She smiles and WALKS OFF. Tom's impressed. ANGLE ON Bobby, who watches off to the side.

BOBBY
No one ever claps for me. Why would they? I'm just the one who makes the damn thing fly.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Early evening. Tom walks out to find Mary sitting on the HOOD OF A CAR. She's looking up at the sky.

NBC CASTING

TOM
Big moon tonight, huh?

MARY
Waxing gibbous to be exact.

TOM
Ah. I'm more of a waning gibbous man, myself.

He SITS on the hood beside her. They look up at the sky.

TOM (CONT'D)
You were good back there, Mary. You're really good at what you do. And I don't just mean 'for a broad' good. I mean 'for a man' good too.

MARY
... Thanks.

TOM
Maybe I could learn a thing or two from you.

MARY
Maybe. You weren't so bad yourself. You got a way with people. Definitely not my way but... maybe I could learn from you too.

They both stare up at the stars for a beat.

TOM
You ever wonder what it's really like up there?

MARY
All the time. Not all the kids that stare up at the stars are boys. I know I'll never get a chance to go up. But hell if I won't do everything in my power to help those that can.

TOM
Well, damn. Guess what you just did? You inspired me.

MARY
(touched)
I did?
(then)
Yeah, I do that a lot.

NBC CASTING

SCREECH! A 1965 Corvette SCREECHES up. Bus is driving.

BUS
Hey, doll! Let's go. Don't wanna be late for bowling. I wanna get the good ball.

TOM
You bowl too huh?

MARY
No. I hate bowling. But I like Bus and Bus likes to bowl.

She hops off the car.

MARY (CONT'D)
See you tomorrow.

She gets in Bus' car.

TOM
You kids have fun.

He HOPS off the car and FALLS instantly to the ground, like before.

MARY
You okay?!

Tom POPS back up.

TOM
Yep. Hitchcock Ear! I'm good!

Mary and Bus SPEED OFF. Tom then limps off.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW

NBC CASTING