

Ambush

written by

David Graham-Caso

based on a true story

May 6, 2022  
First Draft

**INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - DAY**

We see a pair of SHINY SILVER ELEVATOR DOORS, flanked by POTTED PLANTS. From the floor, words GLIDE UP, as if carried by the elevator inside.

*TITLE: Names have been changed and details have been dramatized, but this all really happened.*

The elevator doors open and it is PACKED with PROFESSIONALS in expensive suits and ties.

From the back of the elevator, someone pushes through, trying to exit before the doors close.

QUINN

Excuse me, sorry, excuse me.

QUINN CASTLE exits the elevator, narrowly avoiding getting clipped by the closing doors.

Quinn is in his late 20s, sports the stubble of someone who rushed out of the house this morning and the jeans/sports coat/Chuck Taylors combination he is wearing makes him noticeably more casual than the professionals surrounding him, but not entirely out of place.

*TITLE: April 23, 2013*

Quinn has a BACKPACK slung over one shoulder and holds a phone to his ear with his shoulder as he walks.

QUINN

Ricardo, Quinn. I know it's early, but you need to give me a call as soon as you get this. There was a mail piece supposed to drop yesterday that didn't. Need to find out what the fuck is going on.

**INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS**

Quinn hangs up and nods a polite "hello" to the RECEPTIONIST at the FRONT DESK.

He continues to walk down a corridor that is lined on both sides with CUBICLES and glass-walled OFFICES. Outside each individual office door is a PLAQUE with the name of the occupant, all of them some form of solo practitioner attorneys.

Quinn passes a plaque as he enters one of the offices. The plaque, which reads "Rob Keyes, Attorney at Law" has a piece of paper taped above it.

We linger on the paper long enough to read: "*Rob Keyes for Los Angeles City Controller*"

Title: *Century City, 8:14 am*

**INT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

The "campaign office" is a small room that barely fits two desks, with one LARGE WOOD DESK and another a PLASTIC PICNIC TABLE, squeezed into the corner of the office and buried in paperwork.

INSERT: Framed newspaper clipping: "*SHOCKING WIN: Keyes Defeats Zene in Controller Primary - Runoff Election in May*"

At the smaller of the two desks sits FARRAH. Farrah is younger than Quinn and has long, strait black hair. She is reading something on a LAPTOP in front of her.

QUINN

Mornin'.

FARRAH

(without looking up)

The mail piece didn't drop yesterday.

QUINN

I know. I've already called the mail house...

Quinn sits at the larger desk and boots up the DESKTOP computer.

INSERT: On the desk, we see a NAME PLATE reading: "*Rob Keyes, Attorney at Law*". In the PENCIL HOLDER on the desk is a small RAINBOW PRIDE FLAG.

Quinn and Farrah both stare at their screens, reading emails as they chat.

FARRAH

...Rob says he has called three neighbors and no one got it...

QUINN

...but if you can call the printer to see if they know... wait, he's calling around to his neighbors?

FARRAH

At least three of them.

QUINN  
That's... okay. He say when he's  
getting in?

FARRAH  
He did not.

Quinn's phone rings. He answers.

QUINN  
Ricardo, thanks for the quick call  
back.

(pause)

Yeah, apparently it didn't drop  
yesterday. Can you check with...

(pause)

Well, at least three of Rob's  
neighbors still haven't seen...

(pause)

Listen, I'm not saying you  
fucked...

(pause)

Hey, hold on a fucking second,  
Ricardo. I'm just asking you to  
check what happened. I didn't  
blame...

(Beat)

Listen, man - we barely beat  
someone in the Primary we weren't  
even supposed to compete with and  
now we're in a runoff and getting  
outspent six to one. We can't  
afford any fuck ups. You and I go  
back. You know I left a good job  
to run a hopeless campaign. I  
don't care whose fault it is, I  
just need to get it fixed as...

(pause)

Thank you... thanks. Yes. That  
would be great. Thank you.

Quinn hangs up.

QUINN  
Un-fucking-believable. Six years  
I've worked with this guy. I give  
him work from three different jobs  
in six years and he's snapping at  
me at 8 in the fucking AM. What  
the fuck?

FARRAH  
Sorry, were you talking to me?

QUINN  
Honestly, that wasn't really to  
anyone.

They both stare at their computer screens for a moment in  
silence. Then, Farrah looks up at Quinn.

FARRAH  
Mind if I ask you something?

QUINN  
Is it about ironic questions?

FARRAH  
Why did you?

QUINN  
What?

FARRAH  
Leave City Hall?

QUINN  
Never ran a citywide campaign  
before.

FARRAH  
Yeah, but you just said it was  
hopeless. Why run a campaign you  
don't think... you know?

Quinn thinks about it for a moment, then takes a sip from his  
COFFEE MUG.

QUINN  
Honestly, it's not more than that.  
I'd never run a citywide race  
before and thought it would be a  
good experience.

He finishes what is left in his mug.

QUINN (CON'T)  
Plus, Rob's a good guy who would  
be great at this job and Zene is a  
train wreck who I'd hate to see  
win.

FARRAH  
Huh. Thought you would be a "make  
history" type.

QUINN  
What's that supposed to mean?

FARRAH  
Campaign manager to elect LA's  
first gay elected official.

QUINN  
First citywide gay elected  
official. Well, openly gay...

FARRAH  
...who...?

QUINN  
...there are rumors - actually,  
don't worry about it.  
Yeah, that's important, sure. But  
honestly, it hasn't been a big  
deal in the campaign so far. We  
haven't made it one and neither  
have they.

FARRAH  
Why not?

QUINN  
Rob's qualified for the job. Him  
being qualified means he will be  
good at it, and that actually  
affects people's lives.

FARRAH  
Him being gay...

QUINN  
...doesn't. I mean what are they  
going to say? "Rob is in a loving  
marriage to a great guy" isn't  
exactly the salacious hit piece it  
used to be.

FARRAH  
I guess that's progress.

QUINN  
I'll take it.

FARRAH  
(under her breath)  
Said the straight white guy.

QUINN  
I heard that. And touché.  
How did the event go last night?

FARRAH

Not bad. Decent turnout. Raised 10.

QUINN

Shit. We were hoping for at least 15. Was Rob pissed?

FARRAH

(shrug)

Eh. He's still expecting the article that ran yesterday to turn into more fundraising.

QUINN

It will, but we don't want to be the ones pushing it.

FARRAH

The hell we don't! We need to make something of it if we want it to be something.

QUINN

You're still annoyed about yesterday?

FARRAH

Yeah.  
Why wouldn't we want to speak with a reporter doing a story about Zene having a long history of really gross sexual harassment?

QUINN

We already got the story placed in the Times without our fingerprints on it. We need to let it have a life of its own for a bit.

FARRAH

Pretty sure stories don't live on their own anymore. They either get help or they die.

QUINN

Not always. And you're not wrong about it being a good story for us.

FARRAH

This fucking guy is running for a citywide position that is in charge of making our government more efficient and cost-effective... all while he's also responsible for big lawsuit payouts because he's a gross and immature douchebag who bullied a female co-worker who wouldn't sleep with him.

QUINN

That was a lot of words to agree with something. I just said it was a good story for us.

FARRAH

I was on a roll. Just saying - this can define the campaign.

QUINN

You're not wrong. But it changes how voters interpret information when it is being pushed by an opponent.

Farrah can't hide a small eye-roll at the mansplaining, but Quinn doesn't look up from his screen to notice.

FARRAH

You're the campaign manager. It's your call. But my job is making sure we have enough money to win this campaign, and the more this story is out there, the easier my job gets.

QUINN

I get that. And for what it's worth, it is always and only ever Rob's call on stuff like this. We advise, but it is his campaign. And he didn't want to do it.

Farrah stands up from her desk and picks up an EMPTY COFFEE MUG.

FARRAH

I need a refill. You want?

Quinn hands her an EMPTY MUG from the DESK.

QUINN

Thanks, yeah.



We hear Quinn's phone ring in his pocket (a ringtone version of the Avengers theme). He fishes it out of his jeans as he finishes his thought to Farrah.

QUINN (CONT'D)  
Going to be a late night with the  
SOHA forum.

Farrah nods and exits as Quinn looks at the caller ID. We see "Dick Diamond, Daily News." He exhales deeply and then taps the screen to answer the call.

QUINN  
Mornin' Dick.

On the other end of the phone we hear the gravelly voice of DICK DIAMOND a grizzled veteran of the City Hall newsroom.

DICK (O.S.)  
Hey, Quinn. Good morning.

QUINN  
What can I do for you?

DICK (O.S.)  
You're still running Rob Keyes'  
campaign for Controller?

QUINN  
Sure am. What's up?

DICK (O.S.)  
I got an email from a neighbor in  
the Melrose area that apparently  
centers around some complaints  
about a business there and  
operating hours, or something like  
that.

QUINN  
O...kay. What can I do for you?

DICK (O.S.)  
Uhhhh. I'm going to forward you  
the email. We are looking for  
whatever comment you have about  
it.

QUINN  
Um... okay. Again, I'm not sure  
what a business near Melrose has  
to do with us, but I'll be happy  
to take a look.

DICK (O.S.)  
Thanks. Sending it now.

QUINN  
Cool.

Quinn shifts the phone so he is holding it with his shoulder. He clicks the mouse at his computer.

QUINN  
Got it. Let's see here...  
(he begins reading the email,  
muttering to himself as he  
does)  
Jesus, he really copied every  
reporter in LA, didn't he?

DICK (O.S.)  
And even some I don't even know.  
Have you seen the attachment yet?

QUINN  
Opening it now.

On Quinn's screen, we see him double-click an icon and a FLYER opens.

At the top of the flyer, in big bold letters, "*RETURN QUIET TO OUR STREETS: LIMIT MELROSE GAY SPA HOURS.*"

INSERT: The caption of the photo reads "*Melrose Gay Spa Bathhouse Customer Leaving at 4:01am.*"

Beneath the header is a photo, and beneath the photo is more text, including a large bold section reading: "*Demand Councilman Carcetti limit Melrose Gay Spa Hours on Weeknights!*"

QUINN  
Okay. Flyer is open. Still not seeing the connection here, Dick.

DICK (O.S.)  
Uhhh.  
(beat)  
Is that Rob Keyes in the photo?

Quinn looks closer at the screen, nearly pressing his NOSE to the MONITOR and SQUINTING. Then he sees it.

His EYES grow WIDE.

QUINN  
I'll call you back.

Quinn lets the phone drop from his shoulder. It lands on the desk with a THUD.

Farrah enters the room with two cups of coffee and puts one on the desk by Quinn. She notices Quinn's expression.

FARRAH  
What's... up?

Quinn doesn't answer, lost in the screen in front of him.

FARRAH (CONT'D)  
Quinn?

Quinn snaps out of it.

QUINN  
Sorry. Sorry. Ummmm... we need to get everyone on the phone. Right now.

FARRAH  
What's going...?

QUINN  
Not sure yet. Now... please.

Farrah starts tapping the screen. She turns on speaker phone and we hear it RINGING as she sets it on the TABLE.

ROB (O.S.)  
Hello.

Rob's voice is unique, distinct. He sounds like Nathan Lane doing an over-the-top Nathan Lane impression.

QUINN  
Hey Rob. Good morning.

ROB (O.S.)  
Good morning.

QUINN  
I have Farrah here with me in the office. I'm going to conference in LANE.

ROB (O.S.)  
Is everything okay?

QUINN  
Hold on a second.

He taps the phone a few more times and we hear it RINGING again. A YOUNG WOMAN answers.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)  
Lane Bones Political Consulting.  
How may I direct your call?

QUINN  
Hey Jenn, it's Quinn. Is Lane  
available? It's important.

JENN (O.S.)  
Hey. Yeah, he just got in. One  
sec.

After a moment, LANE joins the call.

LANE (O.S.)  
What's up?

QUINN  
Good morning. I've got Rob on the  
other line. Hold on, I'll patch  
you in.

Quinn taps Farrah's phone again.

QUINN  
Rob?

ROB (O.S.)  
Hello again.

QUINN  
Lane?

LANE (O.S.)  
Present.

QUINN  
Hi everyone. Quinn and Farrah here  
in the office. We've got a bit of  
a situation.

ROB (O.S.)  
What happened?

QUINN  
Just got a call from Dick Diamond  
at the Daily News. He is asking  
for a comment about a flyer he was  
forwarded complaining about the  
hours of a spa or bathhouse on  
Melrose.

LANE (O.S.)  
What does that have to do with us?

QUINN  
There is a photo on the flyer that  
looks a lot like Rob.

ROB (O.S.)  
What?!?

We hear TIRES SCREECHING in the background of Rob's call.

QUINN  
Forwarding to you all now.

Quinn sends the email. There is stunned silence as everyone  
opens and reads.

LANE (O.S.)  
Yup. That sure looks like him.

ROB (O.S.)  
No. Never. It's not me.

QUINN  
You're sure?

ROB (O.S.)  
Sure. Positive.

QUINN  
Photoshop?

FARRAH  
Hold on, let me see...

She double-clicks the file on her computer.

FARRAH (CONT'D)  
Okay... here we go. If we open  
"File Info" we can see when the  
file was created, and... uh...

QUINN  
What?

FARRAH  
What was the name of that reporter  
who reached out yesterday?

QUINN  
The freelancer? Uh... Bill? Bill  
Buck or something alliterative  
like that I think?

FARRAH  
Bob Bur?

QUINN  
That was it. Why?

FARRAH  
He created this file.

ROB (O.S.)  
What?

Farrah points to her screen.

FARRAH  
Says right here in File Info -  
Created by Bob Bur.

Quinn stands up and walks over to look over Farrah's shoulder.

QUINN  
Fuck me.

LANE (O.S.)  
What?

QUINN  
A reporter reached out yesterday  
wanting an on-camera interview  
with Rob about the Zene story.  
And now it looks like that same  
reporter is the one who created  
this flyer. And he forgot to  
delete his information from the  
metadata.

Quinn sits across from Farrah at the small desk and puts the  
phone between them.

QUINN (CONT'D)  
Farrah, what else can you tell?

FARRAH  
Ummm, let's see... the photo was  
taken at 9:06 PM on April 1, 2013  
using a Canon EOS iD Mark IV, and  
was modified using Photoshop CS6  
for Macintosh on April 19, 2013 at  
9:22 PM.

QUINN  
(shaking his head)  
Fuck me.

LANE (O.S.)  
It's a trap. Just ignore it.

QUINN  
Not sure ignoring is the best move  
here, Ackbar.

He waits a beat for anyone to get the reference. No one does.

QUINN (CON'T)  
If this guy is already sending  
this to press, we need to make  
clear it is bullshit to anyone who  
asks, right?

LANE (O.S.)  
Nah. Don't give it life at all.

ROB (O.S.)  
(angry)  
Don't give it life? This is a  
smear! This is bullshit! This is  
not fair!

QUINN  
How about I just call Dick back  
and let him know it is a fake  
before he starts writing something  
about it.

ROB (O.S.)  
Yes. Call him right now.

QUINN  
As soon as we hang up here.  
While I'm doing that - Lane, do  
you know of anyone who could  
examine the photo to prove it is a  
fake?

LANE (O.S.)  
No, but I'll find someone.

QUINN  
Thanks.  
Rob, are you on your way into the  
office yet?

ROB (O.S.)  
I was. But I'm pulled over now.  
I'm going to go to Melrose to see  
if I can get a look at the club.

QUINN  
Bad idea.

LANE (O.S.)  
Don't.

ROB (O.S.)  
 Okay, okay. Jeez. I just wanted to see if the place even looks like the photo. Maybe it is a photo of me leaving somewhere else?

LANE (O.S.)  
 Let us look into it.

FARRAH  
 Plus, Rob, we have a lot of fundraising calls to make today. You promised me at least two hours of call time.

ROB (O.S.)  
 Okay, okay. I'll be in soon.

QUINN  
 Okay. Thanks everyone. Lane, let me know when you find an expert to take a look at the photo. I'm going to see what I can find out about this Bur guy.

LANE (O.S.)  
 Will do.

QUINN  
 Thanks, all. Let's plan on touching base in a few hours.

Quinn hangs up the call. After a moment of silence, he turns to Farrah.

QUINN  
 Well, fuck.

She nods in agreement.

**INT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE - DAY**

Quinn now works on a LAPTOP across the desk from Farrah. The CHAIR at the LARGE DESK that dominates the rooms is empty.

TITLE: *Century City, 4:14 pm*

We hear a familiar ringtone and Quinn answers.

QUINN  
 Hey Lane. Hold on, I'm with Farrah. I'll put you on speaker.



He taps the screen and sets the phone on the table between him and Farrah.

QUINN

Hey. What've you got?

LANE (O.S.)

Rob there?

FARRAH

Still not. I'm assuming he went to the spa at this point and that he will head straight to SOHA this evening.

LANE (O.S.)

We told him not to go to the spa.

QUINN

Us telling him not to do things has not stopped him from doing things before.

LANE (O.S.)

Dumb.

QUINN

Did you find a photo forensic guy?

LANE (O.S.)

Yeah. He was able to take a look. It's a fake.

FARRAH

You're sure?

QUINN

Conclusively?

LANE (O.S.)

Yeah. Reading here... "According to this online test...it appears to be altered as can be seen in the difference in the number of times each pixel was saved separately as a JPEG before being added together..."  
Yada yada yada... "His face looks altered..."  
More jargon I don't really understand...  
Okay, here we go: "again, in my opinion it appears to have been placed into this photo. This is a well done fake."

QUINN

Wow.

LANE (O.S.)

Find anything out about this Bur guy?

QUINN

Some. He's close to Zene. Donated to one of his past campaigns for council.

LANE (O.S.)

Is he really a reporter?

QUINN

More of an ambulance chaser in a helicopter.

LANE (O.S.)

That's a thing?

QUINN

Apparently. According to his website,

(reading)

"Bur thrives on risk. He's been a medic, a licensed private investigator, a rescue pilot, and Carrie Fisher's boyfriend. At forty-seven, he's had five angioplasties and he still does triathlons. He also is a helicopter cameraman who apparently recorded the Reginald Denny beating in 1992."

FARRAH

Kind of a fucked up Carrie Fisher joke wedged in there.

QUINN

I thought so too.

LANE (O.S.)

So he's a PI?

QUINN

Yep. Licensed and everything. But it looks like most of his income comes from work as a helicopter pilot who films car chases and sells them to news stations.

(MORE)

QUINN (CONT'D)

And he also rents out camera gear to people.

LANE (O.S.)

What kind of camera gear?

FARRAH

I have it here... uh...

(reading)

"After 30 years in the news business, Bur runs a small specialized production company that produces impossible to get shots using the Sony HDCAM system. Recently Bur and his team have begun using Canon DSLR cameras, including the EOS iD Mark IV, and 5D Mark II. Backed by a lens selection from the Ultrawide 14mm 2.8 to the Super Telephoto 400mm 2.8 EF IS USM, there's no shot that can't be had."

QUINN

Wait... say the camera again...

FARRAH

There were a lot of cameras.

QUINN

The metadata listed the kind of camera that took the photo.

He clicks his laptop a few times.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Yeah, here it is... Canon EOS iD Mark IV.

Farah cross-references it, pointing at her screen.

FARRAH

Yep. He rents it.

LANE (O.S.)

So if I'm getting this straight, a private eye, who previously donated to Zene, pretended to be a journalist and requested an interview the day before someone sent a fake flyer with Rob's photo on it to reporters... and we can prove that the flyer was created by the same private eye?

QUINN

You're burying the lede, Lane.  
This is straight up homophobia.

There is a pause while the all let that sink in.

LANE (O.S.)

Did you talk to Dick?

QUINN

Yeah. He asked me to send him an email confirming that the Rob has never been to that spa and that the photo is a fake. Was just about to hit send.

FARRAH

Well I'm pretty sure Rob is making a liar out of you about that first part right now.

QUINN

Fuck, you're right.

LANE (O.S.)

Just answer the second part and get him the email as soon as possible. We want to squash this before it becomes a thing we have to correct.

QUINN

Okay. I'll send it now.

FARRAH

Lane, one more thing before you go?

LANE (O.S.)

Sure.

FARRAH

Did you have a chance to review the draft fundraising email we are hoping to get out tonight after the Sherman Oaks forum?

LANE (O.S.)

Not yet.

FARRAH

It is just that we need to hit send as soon as the forum is done. Lots of donors in that neighborhood.

LANE (O.S.)

(annoyed)

Yeah. I understand. I'll take a look when I get a chance.

The line goes dead.

FARRAH

He's not going to take a look, is he?

QUINN

No, probably not. Send it over and I'll review before getting on the road to Sherman Oaks.

FARRAH

Thanks.  
When do you have to leave?

Quinn looks at his watch.

QUINN

Soon. It's going to take forever to get there and I need to show up early to make sure we have lit to hand out. Last cycle this meeting drew a big crowd.

FARRAH

What lit do you want to distribute? I was heading down to storage and I can grab it for you.

QUINN

Thanks.

(MORE)

QUINN (CONT'D)

Get me the brochure with "Uniquely Qualified" on the front - the Sherman Oaks HOA is mostly old and white and Rob's work on the quality and productivity commission works well with them.

FARRAH

Got it.

QUINN

Thanks.

Quinn looks over at the EMPTY CHAIR behind the large desk.

**INT. QUINN'S CAR - EVENING**

Quinn sits in HEAVY TRAFFIC on a FREEWAY. He listens to NPR as his small car inches forward.

TITLE: *The 405, 5:36 pm*

NPR HOST

...the Congressman is survived by his wife and daughter. No word on when a special election will be called to fill the now vacant seat.

In other political news, the Mayor's race in Los Angeles continues to heat up as City Council President Merrick Carcetti and City Controller Susan Buell campaigned today in what local pundits say is the first competitive race for LA Mayor in more than a decade. Though Buell, who has served as the City's Controller for the past four years, has been endorsed by a series of former mayors, Council President Carcetti finished a surprisingly strong second place in the recent primary and is now seen as the favorite heading into next month's general election.

Quinn picks up his phone and taps the screen. We hear the phone ring and a woman picks up. She sounds about Quinn's age. This is ANNE.

QUINN

Hey, it's me.

ANNE (O.S.)  
Hey, babe.

QUINN  
Just heard a quick blurb about the  
Mayor's race on NPR.

ANNE (O.S.)  
Yeah, I caught it.

QUINN  
Pretty shitty framing.

ANNE (O.S.)  
I know. Not much we can do about  
it. Reporters love them some  
Merrick Carcetti.

QUINN  
Always have, always will, I guess.  
Hey, I'm on my way to SOHA - are  
you guys sending anyone?

ANNE (O.S.)  
No, it is just a controller's  
forum. No mayoral candidates.

QUINN  
Yeah, but it isn't like you  
couldn't canvass a big community  
event in a key area of the city...  
and hang out with me in the back  
of the room for what should be a  
really, really boring evening.

ANNE (O.S.)  
Oooo, hard metal folding chairs  
and octogenarians drinking punch  
and hoping to hear coded racism?  
I'll pass.

QUINN  
Probably a good call.

ANNE (O.S.)  
I'm going to stop at the store on  
my way home, though. Do you need  
anything?

QUINN  
I think we are out of bread and  
cat food.

ANNE (O.S.)  
Did you make Bruce a sandwich?

QUINN

That would actually be a big step  
in our relationship if your cat  
would eat a sandwich I made him.

ANNE (O.S.)

I gotta go - Sue has an interview  
in a few minutes that I'm  
staffing. Text me if you think of  
anything else we need.

QUINN

Okay. Love you.

ANNE (O.S.)

Love you too.

Quinn hangs up and changes the radio station to rock music.

**EXT. SHERMAN OAKS HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT**

The music continues playing as Quinn approaches the large  
concrete building. He carries a BOX of FLYERS.

TITLE: *Sherman Oaks High School, 6:17 pm*

**INT. SHERMAN OAKS HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT**

Quinn fans out flyers on a PLASTIC FOLDING TABLE and sits  
behind it.

Around the gymnasium are ROWS OF FOLDING CHAIRS, all facing a  
SMALL DAIS, on which sits a table with two NAME CARDS:

INSERT: Name Card: *Rob Keys, Lawyer*

INSERT: Name Card: *Councilmember Carl Zene, Councilmember, Los  
Angeles City Council*

**INT. SHERMAN OAKS HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT**

The room is beginning to fill up, with most of the chairs now  
occupied by OLD WHITE PEOPLE.

Quinn speaks with an ELDERLY ATTENDEE, handing him a FLYER. As  
the ATTENDEE smiles and walks away, Quinn sees Rob enter the  
gym.

Quinn makes a b-line for Rob.

QUINN

Hey.



ROB  
Hi.

QUINN  
Everything okay?

Rob turns his nose down at Quinn and raises an eyebrow, delivering a devastating stare that asks "are you fucking serious with that question today?"

QUINN (CONT'D)  
Sorry.  
Did you do a message box for this?

ROB  
We don't need to do that every  
time.

QUINN  
We do need to do that every time.  
That is the entire point. Okay,  
quickly, who is the audience?

ROB  
(annoyed)  
Sherman Oaks Homeowners  
Association.

QUINN  
And what do old white people  
value?

ROB  
Fiscal conservatism.

QUINN  
Let's call it efficiency.  
Why wouldn't they vote for you?

ROB  
They've supported Zene for Council  
for the past 12 years.

QUINN  
So our barrier message is "this  
isn't a council office. This is a  
specific job that I'm more  
qualified for."

ROB  
I've got it, Quinn.

QUINN  
Remember to ask for their support  
- you can't get what you don't ask  
for.

Rob is looking around the room, barely paying attention at this point.

Quinn SNAPS HIS FINGERS to reclaim Rob's attention.

Rob responds with a glare that informs Quinn of the line he just crossed and Quinn realizes he went too far.

QUINN  
Sorry.

Quinn takes a deep breath.

QUINN (CONT'D)  
Make sure talk about the future.  
Connect to their values in both  
your opening and close. Explain  
why having a specifically  
qualified controller helps spend  
their tax dollars wisely.

ROB  
Quinn. I've got it. Really.  
Now what did you find out about  
the flyer?

QUINN  
A lot. But now's not the time and  
this is not the place. Let's focus  
on the forum.

Rob gives a big, dramatic sigh and rolls his eyes.

**INT. SHERMAN OAKS HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT**

The forum is in progress.

Quinn sits behind the TABLE where Rob's literature is still set up. He stares down at the phone in his lap.

TITLE: *Sherman Oaks High School, 8:52 pm*

On the dais, Rob and CARL ZENE sit behind the TABLE on the stage. Zene is bulky, bald, wears a suit that is a size too small and still speaks with the arrogance and authority of a motorcycle cop who has pulled someone over.

ZENE

... and I've been there. More than  
a decade I've been there. I know  
where the bodies are buried.

Without looking up from his phone, Quinn mutters to himself.

QUINN

Helps when you're the one who  
buried them.

MODERATOR

Mr. Keyes, same question to you -  
why should you be our next  
Controller?

As Rob answers with his standard debate closing, we see Quinn look up from his phone and notice a MAN WITH A RECEDING HAIRLINE walking into the room with a LARGE CAMERA and a large piece of ROLLED UP PAPER.

Quinn looks nervous and STARES at the man as he enters.

INSERT: The camera has a SONY HD logo on the side.

QUINN

(to himself)  
You're fucking kidding me.

Quinn taps at his phone.

INSERT: Quinn's PHONE SCREEN. He opens google and searches "Bob Bur" and then clicks "Images". A PHOTO appears of a MAN WITH A RECEDING HAIRLINE.

Quinn looks back and forth between the photo on his phone and the man who just walked in. He's sure, It's him.

Quinn begins typing out a text message to Lane, which we see in a CHYRON on the screen.

Quinn: *"Bob Bur at SOHA forum with a camera. Looks like an ambush. You okay with me interceding?"*

Lane: "..."

The dots cycle for a few seconds before stopping altogether. Quinn lets out a deep SIGH.

Across the room, BUR has taken a seat in the back of the room near a SNACK TABLE.

Quinn stands up, stretches casually, and walks over toward the SNACK TABLE.

He serves himself some PUNCH with a LADLE, standing close enough to hear as an OLD WOMAN approaches BUR.

OLD WOMAN  
(in a loud whisper)  
Excuse me, sir. Are you with the press?

BUR  
Uhhh... no. I'm not.

OLD WOMAN  
Reporters are supposed to sign in at the front.

BUR  
I'm shooting a commercial.

She's confused, but his terse replies get her to back off.

OLD WOMAN  
Oh. Okay then. Welcome.

Quinn stands near Bur, sipping on his punch. He peers down at the ROLLED UP PAPER. We see a FRAGMENT of the PHOTO FROM THE FLYER.

Quinn's jaw clenches.

Quinn walks back to the table and begins stacking the flyers into piles, keeping his eyes locked on Bur.

He goes back to his phone and opens the text conversation with Lane.

Quinn: *"Bur has a poster-sized version of the doctored photo. Unless you object, I'm going to speak with him so Rob can get out of here without an incident."*

Lane: "..."

QUINN  
Fuck.

MODERATOR  
I'd like to thank you both for your time tonight. That was certainly educational. Of course if we didn't get to anyone's questions, I'm sure the candidates would be happy to stay for a bit to chat.

People begin to stand up from their seats. As they do, Quinn WEAVES in and out of old people, quickly making his way to Rob.

We see Bur pick up his camera, put it on his shoulder and begin walking toward Rob. He has a hard time making his way through the crowd of old people.

Quinn reaches Rob. He gets in close so he can WHISPER.

QUINN

The guy with the camera behind me is the one who is trying to set you up with the flyer about the spa.

Rob's eyes get wide.

QUINN

Don't freak out. Finish the next conversation and politely and calmly get to your car. I'm going to talk to him.

Quinn turns and approaches Bur.

Bur looks past him, trying to find Rob in the crowd.

QUINN

(his voice showing a small quiver at first)

Excuse me.

BUR

Yes?

QUINN

Is your name Bob?

BUR

(surprised)

Yeah...

Quinn take a deep breath.

QUINN

Look Bob, I know what you are planning to do here tonight. It's a bad idea.

Bur raises an eyebrow at Quinn.

QUINN

I know that you Photoshopped the photo of Rob coming out of the spa,

(MORE)

QUINN (CONT'D)

I know that you used a Canon Mark IV to take the original photo on April 1 and I know that you used Photoshop CS6 on your Mac to edit it.

I know what you are planning on doing tonight and I am telling you that it is a very bad idea.

Bur eyes get wide and his jaw clenches. He looks angry.

Quinn stares back stoically, resolute.

BUR

(slowly)

I have no idea what you're talking about.

Who are you?

QUINN

My name is Quinn Castle and I am Rob Keyes' campaign manager. I know what you are going to do and I'm telling you, it is a bad idea.

BUR

I have no idea what you are talking about.

Still doing his best to look like a tough guy, Quinn nods slowly.

QUINN

Okay, then.

Quinn turns and walks away, letting out a deep exhale after he does.

He looks for Rob, but can't find him in the gym.

**EXT. SHERMAN OAKS HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT**

Quinn taps his PHONE and puts it to his ear.

ROB (O.S.)

Hi. I got out of there.

QUINN

Good. I spoke to him. I think you should be okay for tonight. It was definitely an ambush.

ROB (O.S.)  
I just can't believe they would do that.

QUINN  
I'm sure it will only get worse from here.

**EXT. MID-CITY COFFEE SHOP - DAY**

Rob sits at an outdoor table in front of a CHAIN COFFEE SHOP. He sees Quinn walking toward him, across the street and Rob WAVES EXCITEDLY.

TITLE: *June 12, 2013*

Rob gives Quinn a half-hearted HUG as Quinn approaches the table.

ROB  
Hey there!

QUINN  
Hi Rob. Mind if I grab something?

ROB  
Go right ahead!

**EXT. MID-CITY COFFEE SHOP - DAY**

Rob and Quinn sit across from each other on the coffee shop patio. Rob is in the shade while Quinn sits in the sun.

TITLE: *Beverly Glen, 10:28 am*

Rob isn't drinking his TEA, and Quinn is halfway done with his ICED COFFEE.

QUINN  
...and I mean, the Times endorsement and the party support made the difference.

ROB  
I still can't believe it.

QUINN  
I can. You were always the right candidate for this job.

ROB  
Yeah, but against a sitting  
Councilmember!

QUINN  
You know that before I took this  
job I heard about an early poll a  
Dem club did in citywide races.  
You know what your race was at?

ROB  
What? What did it say? And how did  
you never tell me this?

QUINN  
Same answer to both, actually.  
49-2. You were losing to Zene  
49-2.

ROB  
(amazed)  
And we won by 14.

QUINN  
And we won by 14.

ROB  
I'm glad you didn't tell me that.  
Would have really thrown me for a  
loop.

Quinn allows himself a small smile at Rob accidentally agreeing  
with his decision to withhold information from him.

Rob takes a sip from the small STRAW poking out of the lid of  
his cup.

There are a few moments of awkward silence.

QUINN  
I almost forgot - did you hear  
about the reporter who tried to  
ambush you at the Sherman Oaks  
forum?

ROB  
That sounds like a joke but it  
isn't funny.

Quinn taps the screen of his PHONE a few times and SLIDES it  
across the table. Rob picks it up and looks at the screen.

He reads the screen, SHAKES HIS HEAD IN DISBELIEF and then  
reads it again.



ROB  
Un-fucking-believable.

QUINN  
That was my reaction. I set up a Google alert after the ambush attempt and it went off this morning. Kind of odd to put out a press release about it, but there it is.

ROB  
I can't even. Why would he...?

QUINN  
She.

ROB  
Oh. Right. Why would she...?

QUINN  
Who knows? I guess even pre-op transgendered people can be assholes who need money, too.

ROB  
I guess.

Rob hands Quinn back his phone and they sit in silence for another few moments.

Quinn notices that Rob's leg is twitching.

QUINN  
So anyway, I'm thinking that we are going to want to look at outgoing council offices for staff. Especially with how much we talked about coordination with the council on efficiency improvements...

ROB  
Quinn.

QUINN  
Yeah?

ROB  
You know I really appreciate everything you've done for me, right?

Quinn lets out a deep sigh. He can tell something bad is coming next.

QUINN

Yeah...

ROB

Well I got you something to say  
thank you.

From behind his chair, Rob pulls out an ELABORATELY WRAPPED  
GIFT and hands it to Quinn.

Quinn is surprised. Confused.

QUINN

Uhhh... thanks.  
Thank you.  
You shouldn't have.

ROB

You're welcome!

QUINN

And there's no "but" coming?

ROB

Ummm... well... I really  
appreciate everything you did for  
me during the campaign.

QUINN

You mentioned that.

ROB

(spits it out quickly)  
But we didn't seem to get along  
near the end there and I don't  
think we should work together in  
the Controller's office.

QUINN

I'm sorry?

ROB

Yeah, I'm going to keep most of  
Sue's staff on at first.

QUINN

But... we talked about... what do  
you mean we didn't get along?

ROB

Well you just got really pushy at  
times there.

QUINN

Look, I apologize if I overstepped any lines, but it was a stressful campaign...

ROB

...I know. But you don't seem happy working with me.

Quinn sits in stunned silence. He opens his mouth to disagree but can't.

ROB (CONT'D)

I just think it would be better for both of us to just move on.

Quinn stares at Rob. He doesn't say a word.

Rob stands up.

ROB

Well, I've really got to get going. Orientation downtown later today.

Quinn doesn't stand. Doesn't even look up at Rob.

Rob walks away.

Quinn tears open the GIFT, balling up and TOSSING the wrapping paper on the table in front of him.

Quinn holds a FRAMED SERIES OF PINS FROM HISTORIC PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS. The pins are placed in STAIN behind GLASS and framed in MAHOGANY. This looks expensive.

Quinn chuckles to himself and shakes his head.

QUINN

(to himself)

Un-fucking-believable.

He puts the frame on the table, gets up and walks away, leaving it behind.

FADE OUT.