

TERMS

Season One Episode 1

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TERMS SEASON 1 EPISODE 1 - 11/20/2016

1.1.1 COLD OPEN - TV BROADCAST OF INT CONFERENCE CENTER, ELECTION NIGHT, 70 DAYS UNTIL INAUGURATION

(Crowd chanting)

CHARLES DUNWALKE

They tried to marginalize us! To tell us OUR America was a thing of the past! But, tonight, I will become the next President of the United States! Tonight, we take this country back!

(The crowd goes wild. Now we hear the in-studio host, Davis Frye, give us some context and introduce his co-host)

DAVIS FRYE

There you've heard candidate Charles Dunwalke breaking with tradition and addressing his campaign supporters with polls still open in a large majority of the country.

REBECCA MONTGOMERY

Wow.

DAVIS FRYE

It is almost 7:30 here on the East Coast with a lot of voting yet to be done, but Charles Dunwalke is taking the unusual step of addressing his supporters as though he has this VERY close race already wrapped up. I want to bring in Rebecca Montgomery, host of Inside Track. Are you surprised at all by any of this?

REBECCA MONTGOMERY

Davis, What hasn't been surprising about this Dunwalke run for the White House? Six months ago no one believed Charles Dunwalke had any hope of securing the Republican nomination, because, you know, he was so unconventional.

DAVIS FRYE

Right.

REBECCA MONTGOMERY

But then when he won the nomination, no one thought he would make a close race of it. They - I mean we, I have to include myself on this - counted him out even before the Democrats had chosen their nominee.

DAVIS FRYE

Yeah, well, we all are probably guilty of that to some extent. But it was an uphill battle for the Republicans this year.

REBECCA MONTGOMERY

Right.

DAVIS FRYE

Even though Oliver Pierce remains an incredibly popular President, it is extremely rare for a party to maintain control of the White House after holding it for two terms.

REBECCA MONTGOMERY

Exactly. It's only once in the last century.

DAVIS FRYE

And that was with the sitting Vice President as the candidate.

REBECCA MONTGOMERY

Sure. Well. That's definitely not the case here, Dunwalke beat Vice President Garza early in the primaries and has been campaigning against the status quo, against the Republicans, even though he himself is a Republican. Dunwalke has definitely NOT been trying to ride on Pierce's coattails.

DAVIS FRYE

In fact, this is the first time that a sitting president has failed to endorse the nominee from his party. President Pierce is staying completely silent on this election...

REBECCA MONTGOMERY
Completely silent.

DAVIS FRYE
...it's, it's almost as if he wants
no part of it.

REBECCA MONTGOMERY
Well, regardless of how reluctantly
he does it, the only thing Oliver
Pierce really has left to do is to
congratulate the winner and then,
well, I guess, off into the sunset,
so to speak. But, the big question
still actually remains: WHO will he
be congratulating?

DAVIS FRYE
We will begin to have numbers for
you very soon, but as we wait for
states to close their polls, I want
to bring in
Democratic pollster Sidney Howard.
Sidney, you have been tracking the
exit polls for Ohio and
Pennsylv-

(KNOCK AT THE DOOR. The TV is turned off.)

PIERCE
Come in.

ZACH
Mr. President, Ron Clarkson is on
line three.

PIERCE
Thank you, Zach.

(Door closes. TV goes off)

PIERCE (CONT'D)
Ron.

RON
(over phone)
You hear that? You get to ride into
the sunset.

PIERCE
How did you know what channel I was
watching?

RON
(over phone)
'Cause you think Rebecca's cute
even though she's mean to you.

PIERCE
What do you know that's useful?

RON
(over phone)
So far, turn-out has been high in
the only two states that matter.
RNC is pretty sure the total may
fall short, but Dunwalke has the
Electoral Votes.

PIERCE
So it's over.

RON
(over phone)
You sound like your turtle just
died. Look, you finished strong and
helped the party hold on to the
White House. Take the compliment
and start working on your short
game.

(there is a long silent beat.)

RON (CONT'D)
Oliver?

PIERCE
Ron, I need you here tomorrow. I'll
fill you in later. Right now, I
have to go to dinner at the Vice
President's.

RON
But tomorrow you need to meet with
me?

PIERCE
Yes.

RON
So, that part about your work being
done...

PIERCE
It's just beginning.

MUSIC: Intro Sting

VOICE: Terms

MUSIC: Intro

1.1.2 INT. STUDY IN THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY

1.1.2

VICTOR GARZA

Are you out of your GODDAMN mind?!?
You can't be serious!

PIERCE

Keep your voice down, Victor.
They'll hear you.

VICTOR GARZA

It's my DAMN house for the next
eight weeks and I will NOT keep my
voice down! Do you realize what
you're are asking me to do?

PIERCE

Of course I do. I know better than
anyone. And you know I would never
do anything to hurt you if there
was another way. I'm asking...

VICTOR GARZA

HURT me?!? You want to annihilate
me! This finishes me. Even if it
goes nowhere my...

PIERCE

You're already finished Victor. I'm
sorry but it's true. This was your
shot. It didn't work out. But there
is still important things we..

VICTOR GARZA

Oh because you say so?? You call
the shots? You always call the
shots. I did everything you asked.
Every photo op. Every campaign
speech. Eight years I stood next to
you to show everyone
how big your tent was! I...

PIERCE

(interrupting)
I.... That's not why..

VICTOR GARZA

Oh really? You didn't use me to
fight your demographic problem???

PIERCE
Victor I didn't...

VICTOR GARZA
Cause it sure feels like I've been
playing your one brown friend for a
long time...

PIERCE
All you did was bore people in two
languages!

Victor, I brought you with me, all the way, not because of
your last name, but because I trust you. Because I know you
are a good man. But you are NOT without blame, Victor. There
is a reason things were covered up. I'm not here to scold
you. I'm not trying to punish you. I'm here to tell you that
you can make a difference. You can help me DO something about
all of this...

VICTOR GARZA
It's too LATE, Oliver! He won.
Taking me down isn't going to
change that!

(Footsteps of the women coming to see what the commotion is.
A door opens.)

GWEN
Oliver?

CHRISTINA GARZA
What's going on in here?

PIERCE
Sorry, Christina, It's my fault. I
should't have spoiled the evening
talking shop.

CHRISTINA GARZA
Oh I think we all know what you
were talking about. But if you can
say it to my husband you can say it
to me.

GWEN
Can we just...

VICTOR GARZA
Honey, that's not ...

CHRISTINA GARZA

No if he's in here BLAMING my
husband for what is happening
tonight then it's about me, too!

GWEN

Christina, no one is suggesting...

CHRISTINA GARZA

This is not my husband's fault,
Oliver. He was with you when you
needed him and now, after you all
stood by and watched this happen,
you want to say it's HIS fault?!?

VICTOR GARZA

Christina..

CHRISTINA GARZA

All of you kept your mouths shut
during the primary until it was too
late. You got exactly what you
deserved with Dunwalke!

PIERCE

You're right, Christina. We created
this mess. It's all of our
responsibility.

(beat)

(To Gwen)

We should go.

GWEN

I'm sorry tensions got high,
but....

PIERCE

Goodnight Christina. Victor, I'm
sorry. I know you've always given
everything you can for this
administration, and
for this country. I know you will
continue to do that.

MUSIC: TRANSITION MUSIC

1.1.3 INT. PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE

1.1.3

(Door closing.)

GWEN

You going to tell me what that was
about?

PIERCE

I had some things to talk to Victor about that he didn't like.

GWEN

And I am asking you what those things were and what made him start yelling.

PIERCE

And I am telling you... I'm not telling you.

GWEN

What?

PIERCE

I am telling you that we talked, that he got angry and that we're going to work through it, but I am not going to talk about it.

GWEN

What? Just ... no? And I'm just supposed to walk away? That's suddenly who you think I am?

PIERCE

I know that's not who you are. And I also know that you are not a woman I am going to lie to. So I'm telling you truthfully that I am not going to tell you.

GWEN

You don't just..

PIERCE

I don't. But I am.

GWEN

That... is UNACCEPTABLE.

PIERCE

(long inhale. He sounds truly tired for the first time.)

I know.

But... I have a congratulatory statement to write.

(PHONE rings)

PIERCE (CONT'D)
And this to answer.

GWEN
We are not done discussing...

(PHONE rings)

GWEN (CONT'D)
Fine.

(DOOR CLOSES... perhaps slams. THERE IS SILENCE. A WEIGHT hangs in the room.)

(Phone continues ringing. PIERCE answers.)

PIERCE
General.

GENERAL
(over the phone,
inaudible)

PIERCE
Yes, I am.

(PIERCE hangs up.)

MUSIC: TRANSITION MUSIC

1.1.4 INT. STAFF ROOM OUTSIDE OVAL OFFICE

1.1.4

(Sounds of office work still happening. A busy place. Chatter. Typing, etc.)

EVELYN TAYLOR
Good evening, Mr. President.

PIERCE
Evelyn.

EVELYN TAYLOR
FOX news and the PACE website have already called it for Dunwalke. They're expecting a concession call within the hour and then they will be asking for a statement from you. I asked Gary to have a few of the speechwriters stay late in case you want to let them...

PIERCE

Here's what I want it to say.
Verbatim.

EVELYN TAYLOR

QUIET PLEASE!

(The room hushes.)

EVELYN TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Whenever you're ready sir.

PIERCE

Tonight, the American people completed a ritual that is the corner stone of our democracy. It is neither a perfect nor an easy process, yet it is perhaps the most important tool we have, as a people, to build the nation we want to inhabit. That is the point of our elections, and perhaps for everything we do as public servants: to build a more perfect union.

Today you have selected the leaders that will steer our nation, from the White House to the state house to the court house. And to all those who tonight have been chosen by the people to lead them, to guide them, I wish you wisdom. Wisdom and resilience in the face of conflict. Wisdom and humility in the face of those people you have been selected to serve.

I congratulate Charles Dunwalke on the great honor that has been bestowed upon him by the people of our country. In the coming months I will do whatever I am able to assist in a successful transition, while still keeping to the important duties of keeping our country safe. And when I leave this office, I will do so with the firm faith that I leave it in the capable hands of a servant of the people.

God bless our union. God bless the United States of America.

EVELYN TAYLOR

Yes sir. We'll have it out within the hour.

PIERCE

Thank you, Evelyn.

(The busy noise resumes, and fades as he walks back into his office and closes the door. We hear a phone speed dialing.)

RON
(over phone)
Mr. President.

PIERCE
Ron. Tomorrow, one o'clock, Zach
will pick you up in back of
Filomena's, where you will be
having lunch. Come in the delivery
entrance and don't bring your
phone.

RON
(over phone)
Are you serious?

PIERCE
I'm very serious.

RON
(over phone)
What are we meeting about?

PIERCE
I cannot let that man become
President.