

Burst

A full-length play

By Rachel Bublitz

Contact:

Rachel Bublitz
619-328-7239
Rnbublitz@gmail.com
www.RachelBublitz.com

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***Burst*, a full-length play by Rachel Bublitz**

burst* (bûrst): 1. To break open or apart suddenly and violently: explode as from internal force. 2. A sudden effort or spurt; rush: a *burst* of speed. 3. To give sudden expression to passion, grief, etc: to *burst* into tears; also, to be filled with violent emotion: to *burst* with rage.

*Definition found in The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary.

Characters:

Sarah Boyd, female, early to mid thirties, any race. CEO and Founder of Tactix. Conventionally attractive. Charismatic. Her clothes could have come out of an LL Bean catalogue. Wears a puffy vest and sensible dress shoes. Often wears red lipstick.

Jennifer Weaver, female, early to mid thirties, any race. Chief of Technology for Tactix. Brilliant. Does not put a considerable amount of time in her clothing choices and that shows. Probably wearing a comfy and unflattering sweater or sweatshirt. Her clothing shouldn't be so baggy that it would be hard to still function in a lab. Sneakers all the way.

Alexis Lyons, female, late twenties to thirties, any race. Journalist. Charming, able to make most people she comes in contact with trust her right away. Outfit is polished. Probably the only one on stage in heels.

Cast: 3 F

Setting: Sarah Boyd's office on the Tactix campus located in Mountain View, CA. The thermostat for the entire complex is set to a brisk 60 degrees.

Time: Very late.

Synopsis:

Sarah Boyd is an extraordinary human being. Not only did she build her company from scratch using nothing but willpower and fortitude, she also sits on the precipice of truly saving this planet. Because on top of being one of the fastest growing tech companies in history, Tactix, with Sarah at its helm, will usher this planet into the post-plastic era. A time where we need not worry or fret over the great destruction being done to our world from this non-biodegradable foe. With her eyes steady on her next round of funding, Sarah must persevere through a late night interview with a particularly tough reporter, a lawsuit aimed at a person from her past, and the waffling of her CTO. It's a heavy load, and Sarah knows that she is the only one great enough to bear it.

BURST: A PLAY IN ONE SCENE

SARAH's office.

A desk, two or more office chairs, a couch, two boring paintings, a closet, and a huge window with a view of the Tactix Campus.

It's late.

SARAH

Hi. I'm Sarah, Sarah Boyd. I'm here today to talk to you about a problem. A problem we all face right here, right now. That problem is plastic.

Let's start with your morning, with the food you first consume when you wake up. The plastic gallon of milk. The plastic sleeve in your cereal, keeping it fresh. The plastic bag your fruit came home from the store in. Let's move to the bathroom, to the toilet paper which came wrapped in plastic, to your toothbrush, made of plastic, your toothpaste, in plastic, like your shampoo, conditioner, soap dispenser- I could go on for days. And if we actually sat and contemplated all of the quickly used plastics we purchase and discard on a regular basis, if we think of all of the plastic we use and let that add up in our minds, and then we multiplied that for each person in our house, on our street, in our neighborhood, our city, our state, our country- We would be buried. We would be buried with fear and shame and the totality of what our inaction is costing this planet.

So we don't. We recycle, sometimes. Maybe we share a story of a straw caught in a sea turtle's nose. And we think, that's horrible, but now I've done my part and we feel a little better about ourselves. We feel like we've done something, when plastic is literally burying us alive. Because the hard truth friends, is that ignoring the pile won't make it go away. It's a problem. A huge, nasty, plastic problem. But I didn't come here today to scare you with this monster of a problem, well I did, but I'm also here to offer you a real solution. That's right. I want you to join me in solving this problem. Because together, you and me, we will solve the largest dilemma ever brought before mankind. My name is Sarah Boyd, I am the founder and CEO of Tactix, the only company with a real solution to this plastic disaster. Won't you join me?

There's a knock on the door.

SARAH (CONT'D)

GOD DAMNIT! I SAID NOT NOW!

WEAVER opens the door, but doesn't enter.

WEAVER

Sorry, I just-

SARAH

Weaver? What are you- I didn't mean to yell at you, come in.

WEAVER enters, she has a report.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I thought you were my assistant

(Yelling off)

WHO CAN'T EVER SEEM TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS!

WEAVER

Sorry-

SARAH

Stop apologizing, you know it makes my skin crawl when women apologize for no reason.

WEAVER

Right, sor- I mean, I have the report on the polyethylene disruption experiments I've been running. Are you busy?

SARAH

Yes, so incredibly busy my eyeballs might explode. I was at court all day and have to get a huge chunk of my presentation set before Greg gets here for an interview tonight, not to mention the stack of notes I need to go over before the fundraising strategy meeting tomorrow, but I have time for you. I always have time for my favorite CTO. Sit down.

WEAVER sits.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I just need to have a quick chat with Nina-

SARAH opens her door and looks out.

SARAH (CONT'D)

She's- She is not out there.

SARAH closes her door.

WEAVER

Yeah, that's why I just came in-

SARAH

I can't believe she would just- Her stuff is gone. She left for the day! Without a word to me, her boss, I cannot believe she would just take off like that.

WEAVER

It's pretty late.

SARAH

It's not that late.

WEAVER

I'm usually home by now.

SARAH

Okay, sure, and that's fine because you're not my assistant! I'm still here. If I'm still here, she- When did she leave for the day?

WEAVER

Oh, I- I have no idea.

SARAH

Right.. I know she was here at least until seven because she came in around then to tell me they'd set up the last of the ping pong tables- Oh! Did your team just love them?

WEAVER

Um, yeah. They're great.

SARAH

Thought it be a fun way to give everyone time to stretch and move, you know?

WEAVER

Makes sense.

SARAH

All the divisions got them. Two per division. I almost got pool tables, because of the plastic ping pong balls. If I'm being honest, it just doesn't look great for us to have that much plastic. But then pool is just so much less, I don't know, bouncy? I think the action of ping pong is much more conducive for what we're going for, you know?

WEAVER

It is a lot more active.

SARAH

Exactly. And then, I thought, "Oh my God, Sarah, you can just biodegrade the used ping pong balls! It's what you DO!" I laughed so hard, it was right in the middle of a totally different thing, think I gave my publicist a heart attack. But I'm glad I realized it, because I really don't think pool tables have the same effect as ping pong.

WEAVER

Yeah.

SARAH

Good. So glad to hear they're taking off! So what do you need?

WEAVER

The report, you wanted to go over the numbers-

SARAH

Hold that thought, I have to get to the bottom of all this with Nina..

SARAH goes to her phone and dials.

WEAVER

Okay. Take all the time-

SARAH holds up her hand to silence WEAVER.

SARAH

(Into phone)

Hey, Lee! Oh man, you pulled the night shift again? You lose a bet or something?... Hahaha, yeah I get that, I'm the same way... Anyway, so listen, I need you to go through the tapes from today and see if you can figure out when Nina left... You're a dream, thank you!

(Hangs up)

Ugh, I'm going to have to fire her and find someone new in the middle of all of this- Is there anything worse than having to hire a new assistant??

WEAVER

Maybe she had an emergency.

SARAH

That she couldn't come in here and tell me about?

WEAVER

I don't know, she seemed, she seemed good at her job whenever I was around. And she's put up with you for years now-

SARAH

I am a fantastic boss!

WEAVER

Oh yeah, you're a dream.

SARAH

I hear your sarcasm, but she knows. She knows that I need her here, with me, as long as I am in my office. I've told her that is my expectation! I don't know why it is SO impossible to just do what I've asked! Maybe what I want doesn't exist.

WEAVER

Not until we have AI assistant technology at least.

SARAH

That would- You think you could build me that in your spare time?

WEAVER

Oh sure, that's not a problem.

SARAH

Great. That'll help me out a ton.

WEAVER

I'll get right on that then.

SARAH

Perfect.

WEAVER hands the report to SARAH.

WEAVER

Regenerating the polymer out of supercritical fluid phase is our main obstacle.

SARAH flips through the report.

SARAH

Okay.

WEAVER

I'm setting up a new series of experiments that should be ready by next week. I want to try a few different temperature-pressure combinations to identify the optimum conditions for the re-polymerization reaction.

SARAH sets down the report.

SARAH

Great. Perfect. Thank you.

WEAVER

Just doing my job.

SARAH

And I appreciate it. Have to admit at this moment in time, I'd rather have you home, resting up, considering tomorrow you have to give a testimony in court.

WEAVER

I thought this was a top priority.

SARAH

It is, but-

WEAVER

I have dozens of reports in my backlog, all with that angry red exclamation mark blinking beside them, all of which have also been marked "top priority" by you, so I thought I'd power through-

SARAH

The trial is top top priority. Go get some sleep.

WEAVER

About that-

SARAH

No. We're not discussing it again.

WEAVER

The report, it wasn't the only reason I stayed late. The testimony-

SARAH

You know, I wasn't going to say anything, but after all these years I can read you like a book, and you, Jennie, you look terrible. Really. And I know right now- Look, I know we're going a hundred and twenty miles an hour down a road the width of my pinky nail and if any of us veer off the path even for a second the whole thing will just go off the rails and explode. I know that's a lot of pressure. I feel it, and I can see that you feel it too.

WEAVER

I do. Which is why-

SARAH

Which is why you are getting a massage tomorrow.

WEAVER

A what?

SARAH

A massage! I just hired a massage therapist on retainer.

(Takes out her phone)

Best part is that she comes in here, with her portable table, and can just work her magic on anyone I ask her to. There. You're booked.

WEAVER

Oh.

SARAH

She has magic hands. She'll come by when you're all through with- Well she'll be here at 11:30 and you should be back to the office by then.

WEAVER

Okay.

SARAH

I have never in my life met anyone with hands like hers. She could crush your skull with her fists. I'm serious.

WEAVER

That sounds really strong.

SARAH

Only the best for you.

WEAVER

Thanks.

SARAH

You are so welcome. Got to take care of yourself.

WEAVER

Right. Yeah. About that. Sarah-

SARAH

How's Michael doing?

WEAVER

Michael is great, I guess.

SARAH

And you two are doing well?

WEAVER

Yeah, I guess-

SARAH

Wow! You two are my heroes. And I bet he misses you. He's probably home all alone, wondering where on earth you could be.

WEAVER

He knows I had to stay late tonight.

SARAH

But you didn't. I asked you not to. Remember?

WEAVER

I know.

SARAH

Okay then. Go home! To Michael.

WEAVER

I have- I need to tell you-

SARAH

(Checking the time)

Well I am all ears! As long as it has nothing to do with the trial, feel free to share with me anything you need to get off your chest.

WEAVER

.. It's- Well- Actually Michael and I were talking- A lot-

SARAH

Oh God, he's not asking you to marry him or something, is he?

WEAVER

No, we're not- He just agrees with me that the trial is-

SARAH

What did I *just* say?

WEAVER

.. I mean, right. Yeah, that's- That is it. You hit it right on the head.

SARAH

Wait, really?

WEAVER

Yep. Michael is going to ask me to ma- marry him.

SARAH

Oh, that's- Are you going to say yes?

WEAVER

Well, um I guess so. If we do a whole big thing do you want to be in it? Like as a witness.

SARAH

Like your maid of honor?

WEAVER

Uh, yeah, maybe.

SARAH

Of course, that sounds, that's- That will be so, so, so great. Yeah. Wow, so have you talked about dates or anything like that? Because right now, well really for the next year, it would be an absolute nightmare for you to take off, and if I have to take off too- God, I don't know, I guess I might have to take off a day for this, right? And well that- We'll just have to be strategic-

WEAVER

Hold on, I tell you I'm getting married, and you come back to me with vacation days?

SARAH

It's late, okay? And I am very busy. I have to get my talk figured out before the reporter comes in tonight because I have to be at court ALL DAY tomorrow and every other day this week and you come in here freaked out and I naturally think it's about, you know, IMPORTANT THINGS like WORK and then it's just about a stupid wedding. AND he hasn't even asked you AND the last time I checked you had ZERO interest in marrying Michael or *anyone* for that matter and so shoot me if I'm not over the moon happy for your might not even be happening wedding-

WEAVER

I feel like we're drifting apart.

SARAH

Then why do you care if he asks to marry you?

WEAVER

No you, you and me. I thought we were friends.

SARAH

Oh my God, of course we're friends, I started this company WITH you, you can't get more friendly than that.

WEAVER

Then you'd think you'd be happy for me-

SARAH

I'm fucking thrilled. I'm foaming at the mouth. Michael is the greatest human who has ever lived. Mazel tov.

WEAVER

Thanks a lot.

SARAH

.. I am happy for you. Really. Congrats, that's huge, and Michael is so lucky, and I think you two will be so happy, but right this minute, I am behind on literally one million things, and so-

WEAVER

Working on the roll-out presentation?

SARAH

Trying to.

WEAVER

Let me hear it.

SARAH

No.

WEAVER

I could give you feedback-

SARAH

I do not want your feedback.

WEAVER

You have trouble with the technical elements-

SARAH

Gee thanks. Really know how to make a girl feel smart.

WEAVER
Sorry, I didn't mean-

SARAH
It's fine. And anyway, that's not what they want to hear.

WEAVER
It's a *science* talk.

SARAH
Nobody cares about science.

WEAVER
Okay, I'm sure you'll nail it. You always do.

SARAH
(*Expecting WEAVER to leave*)
... Weaver?

WEAVER
Yeah?

SARAH
I really need to get back to work.

WEAVER
Right. Yes. It's- Sarah, don't freak out, but it's the trial-

SARAH
I said no, I said we were not discussing-

WEAVER
I know and I'm sorry, but you have to! We are going to talk about this, and you are going to hear me! For my health, my mental and physical health I just think, I just can't- I can't do it. I have *never* wanted to do any sort of speaking in public, I do not do well with a lot of people and you know that, I can never get enough air and I have to fight the urge to vomit the whole time, and now I'm expected to speak in a court room on top of which, the testimony you expect me to deliver-

SARAH
Is Michael even proposing or were you just stalling-

WEAVER
Why can't you just listen?

SARAH
I've heard it. You've told me before.

WEAVER

But you never really listen to me. You don't understand-

SARAH

No, *you* don't understand. You wanted to be a part of something that would change the world, help the planet. You think that's just going to be an easy thing?

WEAVER

No, I didn't think easy-

SARAH

But you thought all your work would be done in the lab and you could just leave everything else on me, right?

WEAVER

When we started out, we said, we always said that *you* would handle the public, so that I could focus all my energy on the work in my lab-

SARAH

Okay, but when we started out we were twenty year olds sneaking beers, blabbing all night in our dorms. We're grown ups now, and sometimes grown ups have to do hard things.

WEAVER

Why did you even bring the suit in the first place?

SARAH

There was a person, a person making defaming statements about Tactix-

WEAVER

She's allowed to have her own opinions. She doesn't think we can do what you say we do-

SARAH

What our company does.

WEAVER

Can't we just prove her wrong, is my point, instead of all this legal mess-

SARAH

If anyone can just lie about us then everyone will see us as weak. We can't be seen as weak and so we attack.

WEAVER

It's business not combat!

SARAH

You know, I do need your help on the presentation. Let's sidebar the whole trial. Listen-
(*Back to presentation mode*)

We've all seen the facts, the figures, the images of our oceans overwhelmed, of our fellow creatures overpowered, our dumps saturated, litter lying in the streets, tumbling by on our freeways, clinging to our parks, and wrapped around our souls-

(*Snapping out of presentation mode*)

Is *souls* weird? Oceans, streets, freeways, parks, I know souls is a jump-

WEAVER

Souls aren't very scientific.

SARAH

That's true.

WEAVER

Maybe if you were addressing poets.

SARAH

Don't be ridiculous.

WEAVER

I think it's a weird stretch. It sounds like you're trying too hard.

SARAH

Well then what would you suggest?

WEAVER

I don't know, forests?

SARAH

I need something people see every day. Something they care about.

WEAVER

You can't see a soul-

SARAH

I'm not using soul, it was, it was just a placeholder, now are you going to help me or just be snide?

WEAVER

Schools, rivers I guess, malls-

SARAH

People don't care about malls.

WEAVER

People love malls.

SARAH

Not the people who care about science.

WEAVER

I think a lot of people really like malls-

SARAH

Okay never mind. You're not helping. Malls are like, they're a big part of the problem-

WEAVER

Dr. Henry has had us over. For Thanksgiving. And she'll be there, in court, staring at me while I read the statement you and the lawyers expect me to say. Maybe if I reworked-

SARAH

Council spent over a week on your testimony.

WEAVER

If I could just change it here and there-

SARAH

I approved what they sent you personally. It is all you need to say tomorrow, nothing more, nothing less.

WEAVER

It's just that, it'll go into the.. It'll become evidence-

SARAH

Yes. Exactly.

WEAVER

And I just think, not that any of it is an outright lie or anything like that-

SARAH

Because it isn't.

WEAVER

No, but some of it is, um, a bit of a stretch. You want me to say that we're projecting a *twenty* percent decrease in plastic waste, which is-

SARAH

It's only a projection!

WEAVER

Who came up with that number? The- We can't handle that much plastic! No where near, maybe, maybe, maybe we could say *two* percent-

SARAH

Read what we gave you.

WEAVER

And to claim Dr. Henry only has "cursory" knowledge of our technology-

SARAH

Oh, did I miss something? Did you hire Dr. Henry without telling me?

WEAVER

No, but-

SARAH

Then she doesn't know what we do here.

WEAVER

We talked- We both told her our ideas, and those same ideas are the foundation that all of my work here has been based on-

SARAH

A foundation that you have built on a great deal over the past decade.

WEAVER

It's- I'm not sleeping. And I've been getting acid reflux so bad I have to just carry around the Costco sized tub of Tums with me wherever I go. And I think if I could only alter, it's just the scientific claims made-

SARAH

The beach! People love the beach.

WEAVER

What?

SARAH

(Presentation mode)

We've all seen the facts, the figures, the images of our oceans overwhelmed, of our fellow creatures overpowered, our dumps saturated, litter lying in the streets, tumbling by on our freeways, clinging to our parks, and wrapped around our beaches-

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

(Snaps out of presentation mode)

Is that too close to oceans though?

WEAVER

It's better than souls.

SARAH

I'm just going to cut it. It's driving me nuts.

SARAH adjusts on her laptop.

WEAVER

She helped us, she was our first donor-

SARAH

I'll be there too. In court. She's not the only one who'll be watching you.

WEAVER

I'm not going to make you or the company look bad, I'll be very careful-

SARAH

Do I have to call Lee up here and have you escorted out of the building?

WEAVER

Sarah- I- I can't believe- How could you-

SARAH

(Laughing it off)

Oh you're too easy, of course I'd never actually call security on you.

WEAVER

I'm only trying to do what's right.

SARAH

And I am trying to launch us into the big leagues.

WEAVER

We're not in the big leagues yet? Tactix is one of the fastest growing companies-

SARAH

One of, I mean to make us *the* fastest growing company ever.

WEAVER

I know. And you know that I think we could stop trying to raise money and concentrate on the technology, the science behind-

SARAH

But that's just not how business works! If we're not growing we die.

WEAVER

If we don't have tech that works-

SARAH

It works.

WEAVER

In the lab we're, I'm hitting walls. The same walls, again and again-

SARAH

Look, you're only tackling little pieces. You don't know the big picture. I do. We're great. Ken Johnson? The new hot-shot I brought in over on the west campus? He's killing it.

WEAVER

If you say so.

SARAH

Ken is great, trust me.

WEAVER

I'll have to take your word, the security won't even let me in over at the west campus. But that's probably just an oversight, right?

SARAH

Yeah, I mean what else could it be?

WEAVER

Can you straighten that out for me?

SARAH

Sure, when I have a second to think for myself, I'll spend that time worrying about where you can and can't go in your own company.

WEAVER

I didn't mean it like that.

SARAH

Anything else you need? Want me to come to the cafeteria and cut off your crusts at lunch?

WEAVER

It's just, it's weird that, I don't know, the departments are all so far apart. So separated.

SARAH

It's not weird. I designed it like that on purpose.

WEAVER

I just, I guess I don't know why-

SARAH

So that you- We're doing the impossible here, you know that! And we can't- I don't want anyone limiting anyone else because of their own lack of imagination. Trust me, all the great scientific achievements since the beginning of time have been made by individuals working almost entirely alone, not being held back by the notions of the masses.

WEAVER

I do trust you.

SARAH

Good. You should! Apple has the exact same model in place and look at them.

WEAVER

I... I just don't want to go in front of a judge and lie.

SARAH

I am not asking you to do that. Just read the statement I prepared for you.

WEAVER

I just worry that it's not entirely the whole truth.

SARAH

The court doesn't care about the whole truth.

WEAVER

I think you're wrong about that.

SARAH's phone rings, she answers it.

SARAH

(On phone)

Hello?... So what'd you find?.... Two hours? Really? Two entire hours? Wow.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Can you believe that?.... No, not a goodbye or a check in, nothing, she just poof vanished into thin air...

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

So, Lee, I'm, I am so crammed and behind as it is up here, could you call her and let her know to expect her personal belongings in the mail?... I know, it's awkward and if I had time, I would do it, of course, but I am beyond backed up tonight.... Thank you. Thank you so much. You are worth your weight in gold! Seriously.... Yes, Greg should be here soon, just verify his ID and send him up, thanks.

(Hangs up phone, to WEAVER)

She left more than two hours ago.

WEAVER

Alert the press.

SARAH

She knew what she was getting into, the hours, the demand, and I pay her- You know what? I don't need to rationalize my decisions to you.

WEAVER

Trust me, I know that.

SARAH

And what is that supposed to mean?

WEAVER

Nothing. It's just- The suit against Dr. Henry, bringing in Ken freakin' Johnson to run a whole division that I don't even have clearance to step foot in-

SARAH

Which was probably just an oversight-

WEAVER

I don't even know why we need to bring in a reporter tonight. Didn't we just have a piece in the Post?

SARAH

This is just a small thing. An offense thing to get ahead of the trial story and all that.

WEAVER

Seems like a lot of attention near the trial wouldn't be great-

SARAH

Let me do my job, you figure out yours.

WEAVER

...I, I just wish PR wasn't the thing we were the most good at here.

SARAH
Fuck you. It's not.

WEAVER
Okay.

SARAH
Hey, it's not, and if you want to hand back your 200+k paycheck which I got for you BECAUSE of all the good PR and investments-

WEAVER
Okay, okay.

SARAH
I really do have a tremendous amount of things to get done before Greg gets here.

WEAVER
I know.

SARAH waits for WEAVER to leave, she doesn't.

SARAH
So we're all set then, right? You'll stick to the testimony, I'll see you bright and early for court, then you'll race back here to have your aches and pains magically cured by Corrine? Right?

WEAVER
I might stay and work on it, the testimony.

SARAH
Please. Please, please. Just go home, go to bed, wake up, and read what I gave you.

WEAVER
And if I don't?

SARAH
I am not your mother. I am not going to threaten you into behaving, Jennifer.

WEAVER
Sarah, I- If that, if you're telling me that I have to do this..

SARAH
I am.

WEAVER

.. Okay.

WEAVER exits.

SARAH lets out an exasperated breath. She picks up the phone and dials.

SARAH

Yeah, hi Lee, I know you're in the middle of the Nina thing, but how hard would it be to look through an employee's contacts?... I'd need out going and in coming calls, emails, meetings... Okay. Good to know... Oh, the name? It's... You know what? Never mind... No really, it's fine, I was just curious... Yeah, thanks.

SARAH hangs up. She checks the time.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Shit shit shit.

She stretches, shakes out, does a vocal warmup.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Hi, I'm Sarah. Blah blah problem, plastics are bad.. Right. Okay..

(Back in presentation mode)

Five massive plastic patches are wrecking havoc in our oceans, the largest of these floats between Los Angeles and Hawaii, in our own Pacific Ocean, and is roughly twice the size of Texas. I went out to see this atrocity for myself and it.. It broke my heart. You have to be up in the air to get a full picture, at one point plastic waste was all I could see for miles. We won't come back from this. And we cannot hope to survive- The delicate scales at which the system of this planet supports life are tipping. Plastic is going to poison us all. I knew that, looking at that stain on our world, nothing was more clear. That's when I decided what had to be next for Tactix and the fate of this planet.

And that's why I'm here with you today. I'm here to tell you that we are taking our mission to rid the world of plastic to the next level, and we have a HUGE partner to help get us there. Colgate-Palmolive, once on the list of the biggest offenders of creating quick plastic has decided to join our team here at Tactix. My scientists have designed a brand new plastic, a biodegradable plastic- And no, this isn't the flimsy, quick to fall apart plastic made from corn or potato starch, no. This plastic feels and works just like the plastic we are familiar with today. BUT, unlike the plastic of today, IT BIODEGRADES!

We have done the impossible, made *new* plastic, plastic that once returned to us can biodegrade just as if it was a fallen tree in the forest. And just how will we get our plastic back? We've got BINS baby! Bright and beautiful *yellow* bins that are hitting the streets here in Mountain View this Fall.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Those bins will be delivered back here to our campus where we will conduct the process of biodegrading. And we're not keeping this local for long. We have a nation-wide plan-

WEAVER enters with a sheet of paper.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Why can't you knock? I am *trying* to work-

Not looking up from the ground WEAVER hands the paper to SARAH.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(Not looking at the paper)

How explicit do I need to be when I tell you I don't want you to rewrite your testimony?

WEAVER

It's- It's not- I- I- I'm-

SARAH

Talk! Just say the words!

WEAVER

I am resigning.

SARAH looks at the paper for a few seconds, then back at WEAVER.

SARAH

No.

WEAVER

You don't- You can't just- I can't work here anymore-

SARAH shreds WEAVER's letter of resignation.

SARAH

I don't give a shit! I do not give a fuck what you can or can't-

(Takes a deep breath)

.... Jennie. Do you not realize- I can't do this without you.

WEAVER

We both know that's bullshit. Just have Ken Johnson-

SARAH

Oh my God, are you really so threatened by Ken Johnson-

WEAVER

This has nothing to do with him! I just- The direction you're taking the company-

SARAH

Our company.

WEAVER

Why wasn't I made aware of the last board meeting?

SARAH

What?

WEAVER

Last month. I was not invited to the board meeting. This is my company too-

SARAH

I have no idea- You know, I bet, I bet it was Nina. She, she's been dropping the ball left and right, she must have not put you on the email.

WEAVER

I should have been at that meeting.

SARAH

I agree. I 100% agree with that. And I'm already firing her, so it's fixed, but let's just also remember that you haven't come to board meetings for a number of years now-

WEAVER

Because you told me I didn't have to come-

SARAH

Because you told me you didn't want to be there. Don't rewrite history. You hate those meetings. You hate the small talk, the business jargon, the politics-

WEAVER

I don't like that all the choices are made without me. I don't like-

SARAH

Then show up! How about that? And don't be pissed at me about meetings you ducked out of long ago-

WEAVER

I wasn't showing up because, I wasn't needed! And they were long and boring and, and, and I didn't think- You knew without me being there, you knew that I wouldn't have wanted- I never would have wanted a suit to be brought against Dr. Henry- And I didn't have to be there for you to know that. It's wrong. All of it. It is just- It is so wrong.

SARAH

.. I know. It's, it's been a hard couple of months. I've felt it too. She inspired me more, maybe more than anyone on this earth save for my Father, and it was not an easy decision for me to come to, taking her to court, believe me. I fought it, with council. Fought it tooth and nail-

WEAVER

You did?

SARAH

Of course I did!

WEAVER

Then I don't understand, you're so eager-

SARAH

Because that's my job here. I was not blessed with your mind, a mind on the brink of greatness, I was, God, I was blessed with the ability to be a freakin' mascot. That's all I'm good at-

WEAVER

Sarah, that's not-

SARAH

It is true. You said it yourself. "I wish PR wasn't the thing we were most good at."

WEAVER

I didn't mean, I'm sorry if it came off-

SARAH

It's fine. Really. I'm good at it. No, I'm great at it. And that enthusiasm, I have to throw myself behind everything- If I falter, just for a moment, this whole- The company rests on my shoulders alone. One slip up and it all falls down. And no one else is trying to fix this plastic mess, Jenny, no one. I may be just a cheerleader, but at least I have a good cause.

WEAVER

I know you do, we do, I mean.

SARAH

I've been thinking, a lot lately, about Dr. Henry pairing us together freshman year. You did not want to work with me.

WEAVER

No, that's not true, I-

SARAH

It's okay, you thought I wasn't strong enough to pull my weight scientifically. And maybe I wasn't, but we aced that first project on light-triggered catalysts.

WEAVER

We did. It was your presentation-

SARAH

No, it was your research-

WEAVER

You got *gasps* in class. You fired people up like nothing I've ever seen. You still do.

SARAH

It was us, working together.

WEAVER

It wasn't the science that made me reluctant to partner with you, I was.. I was intimidated by you. You had it all figured out, and I thought if we spent any time together you'd know right away that I was just, clueless. Just making it all up as I went.

SARAH

We were eighteen, we were all just making it up as we went.

WEAVER

I don't believe that for a second.

SARAH

I remember when she gave us that first donation. Five thousand dollars. I'd never been in charge of anywhere near that much money in my life. She had so much faith, so much belief in what we wanted to do, I cried that night.

WEAVER

(Laughing a little)

Yeah, I was there. We got pretty drunk on PBR-

SARAH

The champagne of champions.

WEAVER

Absolutely. We almost misspelled Tactix on the Delaware Corp site-

SARAH

Oh, because *someone* insisted that we file for our license *that* night instead of waiting until the morning!

WEAVER

That was you!

SARAH

No, it was you, you said, you said something about momentum and the power in that specific moment-

WEAVER

That was absolutely you! Have you ever ever heard me talk like that?

SARAH

Okay, I guess there's a chance that it could have been my idea to file while drunk.

WEAVER

There should be a drunk lock on computers to keep people from making terrible mistakes while inebriated.

SARAH

That's what we'll do next! After we solve plastic for the world, the only logical next step would be to take on the other looming problem Earth faces: Drunk computering.

WEAVER laughs.

WEAVER

We'll have to get a list going now, you want an AI assistant, drunk computer blocker, anything else while we're at it?

SARAH

I'm sure I'll think of more things to keep you busy.

WEAVER

Oh, I'm sure you will.

SARAH

I didn't want to. It wasn't my idea to take the person who started our friends and family round to court.

WEAVER

Then I don't understand-

SARAH

It was the lawyers. We don't get to just be regular people anymore, Jennie, we have to operate at a much different level. If we want great things, impossible things- Dr. Henry wouldn't stop making those very public claims, she was attacking us, if we just let the people who are supposed to be our friends attack us how quickly do you think our enemies will jump on the band wagon?

WEAVER

Our enemies?

SARAH

Our competitors. You know why security throughout the company is so high? Because they're itching to get in here and steal everything we're trying to do. I know I'm asking a lot of you. I know I ask a lot of everyone. Greatness has a cost.

WEAVER

If I could only make- It could just be minor adjustments.

SARAH

I would be much more comfortable if you read what our lawyers approved, it's why we pay them so much money.

WEAVER

Tweaks, really. And I can run the whole thing by you when I'm done.

SARAH checks the time.

SARAH

If I have concerns?

WEAVER

We'll go through it together. Like old times.

SARAH

I was hoping for at least three hours of sleep tonight.

WEAVER

It won't take long, I promise.

SARAH

Fine. But please hurry up, the interview won't take that long.

WEAVER

Thank you, for hearing me.

WEAVER goes to hug SARAH as SARAH's phone rings. SARAH avoids the hug and heads to her desk.

SARAH

That'll be Greg.

(Answers her phone)

Hello?.. Hey Lee, great, send Greg.... What?... WHAT?... No, I heard you- Those mother- Those *assholes*.. NO! No.... Just- Take her through the full security check, including a search for video and audio recording devices, ID verification, I want all of it. If she checks out, then send her up.

SARAH hangs up the phone.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Those bastards. So we're a fluff piece now, huh? They think- Some cute little look at what the women-folk can do, isn't it adorable- I WAS ON THE COVER OF FORBES FOR FUCKS SAKE!

WEAVER

Whoa, what is-

SARAH

They sent a fucking woman. A woman! And you know why they send a woman. Because we're not a company, no we're a *woman's* company. So they send some reporter who's never covered tech, who's always on fashion or celebrity gossip or whatever, but it's so they can be like oh look how we're supporting the women and it's bull shit!

WEAVER

I'm sure she's-

SARAH

This whole thing is the very definition of unprofessional. Especially since *Greg Spencer* the senior tech reporter was supposed to be here- God, she's probably barely a step above intern. If a woman can't do the job, don't give it to her just because she's female, that's my one wish for the whole fucking world. UGH!

I hate women!.. I don't, but you know what I mean. Oh and you better get outta here quick because women like this, they can smell useless information a mile away and she'll just know instinctively that you're engaged, or thinking of getting engaged, or whatever, and she'll just jump all over it, and then we'll have to talk about weddings and babies- Oh my god you pregnant is my fucking nightmare!

SARAH picks up her phone and dials.

WEAVER

Okay, I'll just get back to my lab then-

SARAH

(Waiting for an answer)

Pick up, pick up, pick up!

WEAVER

Sarah, I'll come back-

SARAH

(To WEAVER)

OKAY! Go! Like you need my permission.

WEAVER exits.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(Still waiting)

Answer, you fucking-

(It goes to voicemail)

Of course, damnit.

(On voicemail)

Hey Greg, it's Sarah. Disappointed I won't be seeing you tonight, I always love our chats. You know, next time you're not feeling up to an interview you can always reschedule with my assistant, sending some intern to fill in wasn't necessary at all. In fact if you pull bullshit like this again I'll be sure to reach out to Jimmy over at Wired before I put together anything with your publication again. Hope you feel real better soon!

Hangs up the phone.

Collects the shredded letter of resignation and stuffs it somewhere out of sight.

She takes out makeup and a mirror from a drawer and applies the makeup.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Miss Boyd, you look amazing, what's your exercising secret?

Where did you buy that sweater?

Is that lip shade Russian Red or Cherry Bomb?

What shoes do you find the most fierce to tackle the board room in?

How do you manage to follow all the sports metaphors during meetings?

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Aren't you worried the effect your job will have on your future children?

Don't the long hours hurt your ovaries?

Is your boyfriend/husband/sex slave comfortable with you making so much more money than they do?

Ugh. Fucking women...

She tosses the makeup and mirror back in the drawer and closes it.

There's a knock on her door.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Yes?

ALEXIS enter. ALEXIS is dressed for the warmer weather that's happening outside this building. She's visibly cold right away.

ALEXIS

I hope it's okay that I just came right in, the security guard told me-

SARAH

It's fine, my assistant had a family emergency. Come on in!

ALEXIS

I hope everything is okay.

SARAH

Oh, I'm sure it's fine. I'm Sarah, Sarah Boyd.

ALEXIS shakes SARAH's hand.

ALEXIS

Great to finally be meeting you Sarah, I've been following you and your company for a while now.

SARAH

You look familiar. Have we met before?

ALEXIS

No, I would have remembered that. I just have one of those faces.

SARAH

And your name is?

ALEXIS

Sorry! Of course! My name is Alexis Lyons.

SARAH

Can't say I've heard much about you before. I was expecting Greg-

ALEXIS

Isn't Greg the best?

SARAH

Yeah, he's pretty great.

ALEXIS

I went to him right when I heard he had an interview and begged him to give it to me. I've been working on a piece about Tactix and you for a few months now-

SARAH

Months? Greg didn't mention anything coming down the pipeline.

ALEXIS

Oh, this was off the radar, I hadn't even pitched it yet.

SARAH

Right.

ALEXIS

But, obviously I pitched it once I heard from Greg about the interview and he loved it-

SARAH

So here you are.

ALEXIS

Here I am.

SARAH

Great.

ALEXIS

Do you often meet with reporters this late at night? I don't think I've ever had a interview scheduled to start this late before.

SARAH

It's not so out of the ordinary, especially as I'm ramping up for a funding round. I go pretty much around the clock.. Say, you look cold, would you like a vest? I keep extras on hand for just such occasions.

ALEXIS

That would be great, I didn't expect the temperature difference, it's so warm out tonight.

SARAH opens a closet revealing dozens of identical puffy vests, just like the one she wears.

SARAH

I like it brisk, keeps everyone moving, you know?

SARAH hands a vest to ALEXIS.

ALEXIS

Thank you.

(Putting it on)

This really helps.

SARAH

And it looks so great on you! Really completes the ensemble.

It doesn't at all, it looks really odd with her outfit.

SARAH (CONT'D)

.. So, how did you and Greg come to the decision that you would change everything on me but not give me a heads up? Usually we run new reporters through my press representatives before they get in to see me, but since this was supposed to be with Greg I told them I could handle it on my own. Sure hope this isn't some sort of ambush. Haha.

ALEXIS

That's on me, actually, I passed it off to the assistant, we share one in features, and it just slipped through the cracks. I promise it won't happen again, I will keep you in the loop personally from here on out.

SARAH

So this is a feature? Not just in the tech section?

ALEXIS

That's right.

SARAH

Oh, I was, Greg and I had talked about a smaller piece-

ALEXIS

You're not shy, are you? Wasn't that you I saw on the cover of Forbes last year?

SARAH

It was, I just like to plan these things out.

ALEXIS

Well now you know.

SARAH

Yes. Great!

ALEXIS

So great.

SARAH

Yeah, great, great... I guess tomorrow will be a rough day for that assistant of yours.

ALEXIS

I'm sorry?

SARAH

The one who let the update fall through the cracks. The one I imagine will spend tomorrow crying after you fire them.

ALEXIS

Oh, well, you know. We all get one mistake now and then. And plus she, she has aspirations of becoming a journalist-

SARAH

Oh, I see.

ALEXIS

Got to help out other women when you get the chance, right?

SARAH

Some people do see it that way.

ALEXIS

I'm sure you do it all the time.

SARAH

I don't, actually.

ALEXIS

Oh?

SARAH

I hate the- The whole women must stick together bull shit we get spoon fed.

ALEXIS

Really? That's-

SARAH

Shocking?

ALEXIS

Unexpected, what with you running a company full of women-

SARAH

I started Tactix with Jennifer Weaver because she has a profound and keen understanding of both organic and inorganic chemistry, I did not pick her because we both have vaginas.

ALEXIS

Obviously, but nearly half of your board is made up of women, which is more than any other company in the tech industry-

SARAH

All capable and intelligent people that help guide this massive ship. The amount of women who work for Tactix is only a coincidence, I assure you.

ALEXIS

I guess I'm just- Just surprised that it wasn't intentional.

SARAH

Tactix is a company not a *woman's* company.

ALEXIS

But you have to see the bias against women in your industry, in the vast majorities of all industries-

SARAH

Oh yes, the terrible bias that has stopped so many women, the very same bias that you and I seem to have magically escaped to rise above? Don't make me laugh. I prefer to ignore conspiracy theories and believe in what I can see. If there aren't many female CEO's maybe it's because most women don't want it.

ALEXIS

They don't want it?

SARAH

Or they don't want it badly enough. It's not for me to judge. I am not them.

ALEXIS

Right, but then, in your seed round of funding you signed your inquiries with S. Boyd instead of *Sarah* Boyd, you don't think that was for a reason?

SARAH

Of course it was for a reason, everything is for a reason.

ALEXIS

And that reason wasn't to try and hide your gender?

SARAH

No. My- My Father's name was Samuel. Going by S. Boyd was an honoring of him.

ALEXIS

But after that first round you went back to using Sarah Boyd-

SARAH

Where did you find this information?

ALEXIS

I've done some background, like I told you I'd already been working on something.

SARAH

The mystery of my first initial? Quite the page turner.

ALEXIS

Something like that.

(Takes out a notebook and pen)

So, shall we?

SARAH

We hadn't already begun?

ALEXIS

Just a little getting-to-know-you before the hard stuff.

ALEXIS laughs a little. SARAH does not.

SARAH

I see.

ALEXIS

That was just a joke-

SARAH

Okay.

I'm not-

ALEXIS

SARAH

Just ask your questions.

ALEXIS

Right. Okay, so Sarah, I'd love to hear how-

SARAH

Oh one more thing, you're sending me an advance copy of this, right? Before anything goes to print?

ALEXIS

What?

SARAH

Of the piece. This article you're writing.

ALEXIS

I don't normally-

SARAH

For approval, of course.

ALEXIS

Hold on, sorry, approval?

SARAH

Of the story.

ALEXIS

Well it's *my* story.

SARAH

About me.

ALEXIS

And Tactix.

SARAH

My company.

ALEXIS

Does Greg give you approval?

SARAH

No, but we got way back, you understand.

ALEXIS

Oh, for sure. How about I send it over to Greg then? If you trust him-

SARAH

I'd really prefer if everything came through me on this.

ALEXIS

Oh.

SARAH

You understand.

ALEXIS

I don't normally send anyone but my editors advanced copies, and I certainly would never let a subject have approval-

SARAH

Well this'll be a short interview then, won't it.

ALEXIS

I... I suppose I could send you an advance copy.

SARAH

Great.

ALEXIS

And allow for potential input, but I won't give you final approval.

SARAH stands.

SARAH

Totally understand, good for you, sticking to your guns. I'll just call Greg tomorrow-

ALEXIS

If Greg writes this piece it'll just be in the tech section, eighth of a page, maybe a picture-

SARAH

Maybe if I was more familiar with your writing, I'd be more comfortable.

ALEXIS

Greg had hinted that him and Chris saw it as a potential cover story.

SARAH

Oh?

ALEXIS

I mean, I don't know if that'd make a difference, I know it's nothing new for you to be on the cover of a magazine. Though it's been over a year since the Forbes cover, and with your next round of funding coming up-

SARAH

You have done your homework.

ALEXIS

Like I said, I've been following you for a while now. I'm a big fan.

SARAH

And you'll listen to any corrections I might have?

ALEXIS

With both of my ears wide open. I swear. And you know Greg is on your side.

SARAH

What exactly have you been researching about me for months?

ALEXIS

Just, you, your company, everything seemed to come out of nowhere, and now you're huge, you're- You're a Cinderella story. From rags to riches-

SARAH

And saving the world.

ALEXIS

Exactly! A Cinderella story with a twist. A Cinderella story that wants to do more than just go to a ball.

SARAH

.. Okay. Fine. But let's get on with it.

They return to their seats.

ALEXIS

Absolutely, I'll just jump right in-

(Opens her notebook)

Okay, yes, so Sarah, Tactix. You and Jennifer Weaver's baby basically, how'd it get started?

SARAH

I thought you said you'd done the background work-

ALEXIS

I have, I just- Excuse me for being a bit of a fan girl, but I'd like to hear it straight from you. The beginning. The birth. Tactix's origin story.

SARAH

Okay, I, I mean how far should I even go back?

ALEXIS

As far back as you want. I'm all ears.

SARAH

Right... So, my father was really into recycling- Obsessed you might say-

SARAH has told this story hundreds of times

SARAH (CONT'D)

He had all these side projects and experiments in our backyard; he thought he was on to a better way to recycle plastic. And that rubbed off on me, I idolized my father. Anyway, it must have been second grade when I petitioned to have my school include a blue bin for recycling and a brown bin for compost, this was Berkeley after all, it's not as if I was fighting in the middle of Kansas. But regardless of how easy the fight was, when I was successful they honored me at a special city council meeting. On our walk home- My father didn't drive- My father told me his heart was erupting with pride. Those words exactly: Erupting with pride. He told me we were all responsible for this world, this planet we share, and that all it takes is the dream of one person to change things for the better. I was his little dreamer. He put me in science school after that, it was clear to him that I had an interest, and he wanted to foster that curiosity of course, and though it was expensive he transferred me anyway. And I just loved my new school, my teachers, the challenges that we were given, and- Well it wasn't long after then that my father passed...

I went to live with my Mother after that, and she allowed me to stay at the science academy, though she thought girls should spend their time playing with dolls- She bought me dozens of Barbies. I don't know exactly what she was thinking since I'd never shown an interest, perhaps she thought there was strength in numbers. I don't know, but I got around to, well not playing with the Barbies as my mother had intended, but playing with them in seeing how the material that they consisted of could be manipulated.

ALEXIS

And would this be about the time you met Dr. Henry?

SARAH

.. Yes. It was.

ALEXIS

Dr. Henry was a friend of the family?

SARAH

Her husband worked with my mother.

ALEXIS

And they were all close friends, correct?

SARAH

They were friendly, yes.

ALEXIS

How does it feel to take someone that you've known since childhood to court in this civil suit you've raised-

SARAH

It feels justified. Obviously I wish I didn't have to go down the road we're on, but here we are.

ALEXIS

I have a quote from you here-

(Goes through notes)

Saying, here it is-

(Reads quote)

"Michelle Henry was a life raft to me. I was lost after the death of my father and her presence in my life was a beacon of hope."

SARAH

I was- I said that a long, long time ago, you know how it is when you idolize a person when you're young only to grow up and discover they don't live up to your childish ideals.

ALEXIS

Would you say it's fair to make the statement that much of your success was possible because of your relationship with Dr. Henry?

SARAH

No. No I don't think that's fair to say at all.

ALEXIS

But wasn't it with Dr. Henry's help that you made it into UC Berkeley?

SARAH

My SAT scores were outstanding, I had countless science awards, I can't say that her "help" did anything that I wasn't doing on my own.

ALEXIS

You don't think it helped to have the Chair of the Chemical Engineering department at UC Berkeley writing you a letter of recommendation?

SARAH

She didn't become Chair until after I'd left school.

ALEXIS

Right, you dropped out after only three semesters, correct?

SARAH

I left to start Tactix. I don't see it as dropping out.

ALEXIS

Technically though-

SARAH

If you want to talk semantics, sure, yes, I dropped out. I'm also the CEO of one of the fastest growing companies the world has ever seen, but fine. I'm a college dropout.

ALEXIS

I went to UC Berkeley too, you know.

SARAH

It's a fine institution.

ALEXIS

I was over in journalism, of course.

SARAH

Yes, of course.

ALEXIS

But Berkeley, that's where you and Jennifer Weaver first met?

SARAH

Correct.

ALEXIS

And both of you had Dr. Henry as an advisor?

SARAH

Yes and to save yourself your very obvious next question, yes, it was Dr. Henry that recommended we work together. Are we to spend the whole interview talking about my college advisor?

ALEXIS

Your college advisor that you're taking to court for libel and defamation-

SARAH

It's an unfortunate situation, as I've mentioned before.

ALEXIS

Dr. Henry doesn't think your technology is ready-

SARAH

I can't speak to what Dr. Henry does or does not think-

ALEXIS

But that's the statement that you took offense to-

SARAH

It was more than just a statement she was giving interviews, going on talk-shows-

ALEXIS

Talk shows, really? Which talk shows?

SARAH

Local, just small, there was at least one talk show. I'll have to send you the link.

ALEXIS

That would be great, I hadn't heard-

SARAH

It happened.

ALEXIS

If you say so.

SARAH

I do.

ALEXIS

Okay then. Let's move on.

SARAH

Yes, please.

ALEXIS

Could you walk me through what you do?

SARAH

Absolutely. As the CEO of Tactix my day-to-day is pretty full as you can imagine. I have regular strategy meetings, check-ins with my lead engineers-

ALEXIS

No, excuse me, I meant the technology. The tech that Tactix uses to change plastic into something that can biodegrade.

SARAH

Well you can read all about that process on our website.

ALEXIS

I'd love to hear you describe it.

*SARAH gets a pamphlet and hands it to
ALEXIS.*

SARAH

Here, I wrote this.

ALEXIS

Oh, this is great! I'll use this for sure.

(Tucks the pamphlet into her notebook)

But still, I'd love to hear it from the horses mouth, as they say.

SARAH

I have never understood that phrase-

ALEXIS

I think it just means from the source-

SARAH

No, no, I understand what it means to people, but horses can't talk. It's a lie.

ALEXIS

I guess in a way it is. But getting back to the procedure-

SARAH

It's a unique combination of chemical and physical procedures. We take the used plastics and do a large scale washing of all other matter off of it. Paper, adhesives, residual liquid and solid bits, everything is washed away using a series of well-known industrial processes. After the plastic has been cleaned, we sort out the different types. There are roughly seven different types of plastic, all consisting of varying polymers.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

This sorting step is integral as each polymer has a different chemical structure, so they must be handled specifically. We sort with density testing, which eliminates human error, before we move on to the next step in the process. Once the plastics have been sorted into different types we get to where the magic really happens. My team and I have invented a method to modify not just the backbones of the polymers, but the way the molecules are intertwined, which ultimately allows us to alter the plastic at a molecular level into matter that can decompose and return to the earth.

ALEXIS

Can you talk me through the steps of modifying the chemical structure?

SARAH

To a degree, yes, I can't tell you all my secrets of course. Our method physically alters polymers with just a small chemical change. Then we use our unprecedented technique to alter the phase of polymers at extremely high temperatures and pressures.

SARAH (CONT'D)

This converts the polymers into a supercritical fluid, and under precise conditions, we reform the polymers into a new solid phase that has biodegradable properties.

ALEXIS

So you're melting plastic?

SARAH

No, no, not at all. It's beyond the regular liquid phase- supercritical fluids are a totally unique entity with their own properties.

ALEXIS

Can you go into more detail about how you make the conversion from the supercritical fluid state to the new biodegradable structure?

SARAH

Of course I could, but then I'd have to kill you!

SARAH laughs.

ALEXIS

There are a lot of people intrigued by what you claim your company can achieve, naturally there'd be a lot of curiosity around it.

SARAH

And if I tell you my company's secrets every Tom, Dick, and Harry will be after our technology and then what would become of Tactix?

ALEXIS

Could I perhaps take a tour of one of your facilities, get on the floor, watch the process-

SARAH

I underestimated you. No really, I thought, before I met you and I heard you were a woman, I thought, oh no, here it comes, they sent some fashion writer merely because we both have breasts.

ALEXIS

Ah.

SARAH

Don't take offense, it's happened to me many times before.

ALEXIS

I'm sure it has.

SARAH

I had one female reporter ask me how much I thought my physical appearance helps me get money from all the male VC's.

ALEXIS

Wow.

SARAH

I know, as if they were just piling money on my lap because I happen to also be an incredibly attractive woman. Sometimes we can't help but tear at one another, I'm afraid.

ALEXIS

Which might be because of the corner society has backed us into-

SARAH

But you've turned me around. You've obviously done your homework, you came in prepared, asking good questions, tough questions.

ALEXIS

Well thank you, but I did have more questions-

SARAH

Of course! Of course you do. We will need to wrap up sooner rather than later though-
(Checks her phone for the time)

Oh wow. Yeah, just a few more.

ALEXIS

Right. I'll be quick.

SARAH

This was supposed to be just a short thing with Greg.

ALEXIS

Yes, and again, I apologize-

SARAH

Don't apologize, it drives me up the wall when- Never mind, what's next?

ALEXIS

Okay...

(Looks over notes)

Yes. What can you tell me about the Colgate deal?..... The toothpaste company?

SARAH

They- Well they're called Colgate-Palmolive, and they do a lot more than just make toothpaste- Where did you- How did you find out about-

ALEXIS

Lots of background. It's a big piece.

SARAH

But we haven't- No one has announced. I'm- I am right now working on the announcement.

ALEXIS

Scheduled for this week, right?

SARAH

.... That's right.

ALEXIS

So, the partnership, can you share the details? It seems odd for you to turn around and *make* plastic, what with your mission being to rid the world of plastic-

SARAH

We're making biodegradable plastics for Colgate-Palmolive.

ALEXIS

Oh, like out of potatoes?

SARAH

No. No, they- They feel and act just like the plastics we're used to, but they're different. They've been manipulated at the molecular level.

ALEXIS

To biodegrade?

SARAH

Yes. Once returned to us, yes.

ALEXIS

Is it the same process you use with the plastic you're getting now?

SARAH

No, this is night and day different. Was it someone at Colgate-Palmolive? Because I was assured that only top level people were aware-

ALEXIS

I can't reveal my sources, you understand.

SARAH

Right.

ALEXIS

So, about the process...?

SARAH

Yes. Right. Um. Well.. It's going to change everything. This new- Our plastic. We're planning to roll out new bins, a plastics only bin, which will deliver directly to our facilities. That'll cut out the middle man and streamline the process. The bins will be hitting the streets in the next six months, they're this beautiful shade of bright yellow-

ALEXIS

Can your facilities handle that much input?

SARAH

They will. Yes. We're expanding. That's- That's the next round of funding. A lot more infrastructure will be necessary, we'll need to build out from here, one plant can handle the plastic use of about five million people, so we'll be adding in quite a few more plants close to home before we start to branch out beyond the Bay Area-

ALEXIS

And the building of this "new" plastic, is that done in the same plant as the destruction of the discarded plastic?

SARAH

We don't *discard*, we change the molecular compounds allowing the plastics to biodegrade-

ALEXIS

Right, and that's done in the same facilities?

SARAH

For now, yes, obviously that may change, the plastic demands of a company like Colgate-Palmolive are massive, as you can imagine-

ALEXIS

Did Dr. Henry advise you on these new technologies at all?

SARAH

No. She... Are we really back to her? This is ground breaking change we're discussing. Change that can turn this planet around and you keep bringing up a college professor?

ALEXIS

But she advised you often before your falling out, isn't that right?

SARAH

She- Once or twice, I may have gone to her to seek out an opinion.

ALEXIS

I have it here that you two had regular weekly lunches-

SARAH

Maybe ten years ago.

ALEXIS

A source told me that your last lunch with Dr. Henry was only a little over eighteen months ago, that's considerably less than ten years-

SARAH

According to whom? Who told you when my last lunch-

ALEXIS

Do you remember what was discussed? Was she aware of the Colgate deal?

SARAH

The Colgate deal has been completely top secret- At least I thought it was top secret.

ALEXIS

Did you ever bring her the idea of this "new" plastic?

SARAH

I do not recall the last project or idea that I told her about.

ALEXIS

She doesn't think it's possible though, this molecular changing of plastics-

SARAH

Like I told you before, I can't speak to her *thoughts*, only the statements she released-

ALEXIS

But isn't that why she came forward? Because you're not changing plastic you're melting it down to reuse it in other ways-

SARAH

No, that's- No, we're not at all. There are regulations about what you can and can't do with used plastic and how they must be treated in order for them to be reused-

ALEXIS

Yes there are- Many regulations because plastics absorb matter and it wouldn't be sanitary-

SARAH

But that's not what we're doing-

ALEXIS

Not to mention the waste those plants create. AND that that's not new technology at all because we've been reusing plastics for decades-

SARAH

BUT WE'RE NOT DOING THAT! We. We change the molecular structure of plastics at the most basic level.

ALEXIS

But Dr. Henry says that's impossible-

SARAH

I don't care what Dr. Henry says. Or anyone. This- Ha. You know what Steve Jobs said when people told him the personal computer would never take off? Never have a market? When people came after him and called him a lunatic? He said first they call you crazy, then they try and fight you with everything they've got, and then, finally you've changed the whole world. That's what we're doing here. THAT is what is at stake. Change. Real, ground breaking, earth shattering change. Before penicillin was invented everyone thought it wasn't possible. Before light bulbs, steam engines, the printing press, WHEELS, *FIRE!*

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Before that- Before the inventions that pull humanity into the next phase of evolution, there are seas of people *doubting* the inventors. Tactix is changing the world, *I* am changing the world!

ALEXIS

.. Wow. You're- To be honest you are, well, astonishing.

SARAH

Exactly. *Exactly*. And the sad truth is that the big things bring out the big uglies in people. There- There are so many doubters, so many nay-sayers, it's why I have to stay so vigilant.

ALEXIS

Right, I can see that. If I may, Sarah, I wonder, if Tactix is on the precipice of changing humanity as much as the wheel or fire, why, why all the secrecy? The verification process just to get in the building was pretty staggering, I can't imagine the checks required if you get to set foot in one of the labs. And really, if you wanted to prove people wrong why isn't sharing your discoveries the first order of business?

SARAH

Like I said before, if *anyone* else was able to get their hands on my technology it would be stolen, making Tactix obsolete-

ALEXIS

You've not allowed peer reviews for your science either- Isn't that out of the ordinary? Aren't most scientific endeavors done with more checks-

SARAH

We are a company, not the US Government-

ALEXIS

But there are- Journals, papers, expos- Your own scientists are the only ones with access- And even then I've heard you keep all of your departments separate-

SARAH

Where did you hear that?

A knock, WEAVER enters.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(To WEAVER)

Bad timing Weaver, I'm not quite ready to go over-

ALEXIS

(*Crossing to WEAVER*)

Jennifer Weaver? It's so great to meet you, my name is Alexis Lyons.

ALEXIS shakes WEAVERS' hand.

WEAVER

I'm so sorry, I thought it was just a quick thing-

ALEXIS

Are you kidding me? Don't be sorry! I was hoping I would get the chance to meet you!
I'd love to chat with you one-on-one-

SARAH

She's about to go home for the night, she's got an early morning-

ALEXIS

That's right, you're due in court tomorrow. I'll see you there.

SARAH

That's why I recognized you.

WEAVER

You're covering the trial?

ALEXIS

Of course. It's an all-angles type of story-

SARAH

That's she's running through me before anything goes to print of course- Haha!

WEAVER

I didn't think- Will other reporters be there too?

ALEXIS

Yes, there are a half a dozen or so other-

WEAVER

Half a dozen?

SARAH

But it's not-

WEAVER (CONT'D)

You never mentioned-

SARAH

Oh my God! Use your head! Of *course* reporters are going to be there!

ALEXIS

Dr. Henry mentioned to me that you were shy, that was in fact, why she put the two of you together, she thought you'd compliment one another's strengths.

WEAVER

You- You've talked with Michelle?

ALEXIS

A number of times, yes. She was removed as Chair, with the University, and has been receiving pressure to take a leave of absence-

SARAH

Yeah, it turns out trying to torpedo your ex-students, your very successful and generous ex-students, is frowned upon-

WEAVER

You didn't- You never told me-

SARAH

Am I your only source of news? I wasn't aware it was my responsibility to keep you informed about all the life changes of our college advisor.

WEAVER

Are you trying to have her fired?

SARAH

That- That is completely *absurd!* You should hear yourself.

ALEXIS

She told me that she's optimistic about getting her position back after the trial is settled.

SARAH

Oh, is she? Optimistic, was that the word she used?

ALEXIS

(To WEAVER)

She said she knows you'll set the record straight.

WEAVER

That I would?

ALEXIS

That you would never put anything before your integrity.

WEAVER

No, I wouldn't-

ALEXIS

So you'll be backing up her claims tomorrow? Coming clean about what Tactix can and can't do?

SARAH

No, she absolutely will not- Not that there's nothing to come clean about-

ALEXIS

Then you stand by Sarah in her assertion that Dr. Henry's statement was both malicious and damaging, and motivated by jealousy instead of fact?

SARAH

Yes, she does.

ALEXIS

(To WEAVER)

And you don't think suing a teacher over her opinion for millions of dollars is exorbitant?

SARAH

First of all, she was giving away trade secrets *in addition* to throwing around her very wrong and uninformed opinion, and second of all, two million dollars is a drop in the bucket! That was me going easy on her, my lawyers begged me to ask for more.

ALEXIS

(To WEAVER)

And how do you respond to the statement: "I don't know what she," She being Sarah, "Is doing with the plastic, none of us do, but we're not changing anything. The technology is no where near there." Is that true?

SARAH

More dirt throwing from that sad and washed up shell of a human?

ALEXIS

No, actually, that's a different source.

SARAH

.. You're bluffing.

ALEXIS

It wouldn't be ethical for me just make up statements-

SARAH

Who told you that, then?

ALEXIS

I told you already, I won't be divulging the names of my sources-

SARAH

Maria Cox?

ALEXIS

If we could get back to my original question-

SARAH

James Mendez?

ALEXIS

(To *WEAVER*)

What is Tactix doing with all of the plastic it's been biodegrading, could you walk me through the-

SARAH

All of my employees have signed extensive nondisclosure agreements. I can and will take them to court.

ALEXIS

They understand that, but they had a crisis of conscience.

SARAH

Well they're liars and I will see they are punished for it. And I will do the same to you if you run any of that garbage.

ALEXIS

(To *WEAVER*)

Is my source incorrect? Do you have an accurate account for all the plastic you've taken in-

SARAH

I've already answered that-

ALEXIS

I was hoping to hear from your colleague-

SARAH

We are square on the same page-

ALEXIS

Then why don't you let her speak for herself?

SARAH

Fine. Go on. Answer the damn question so we can be done with all this!.. Jennifer, now!

WEAVER

*(Reciting a memorized statement provided
by SARAH)*

My position at Tactix is Chief of Technology, as such it is my task to oversee the tech that alters plastic at a molecular level. We do this using great temperatures and additional techniques handled by the engineers in various teams. We separate out the steps in our process to maintain security. There has been a lot of success using our technology and we've estimated a 20% decrease in plastic waste over the next five years which has a massive environmental impact on the world. Tactix is changing our planet for the better and I am proud to be a part of that. The truly damaging impact of Dr. Henry's statements is that not only are they false and unfounded, but that they undermine the potential greatness Tactix can offer our planet. Additionally because of Dr. Henry's cursory knowledge of our unique technology from conversations founder Sarah Boyd and I had with her over a decade ago, she could not possibly have the information required to make an informed opinion. What's most dangerous to Tactix, as well as Sarah Boyd and myself, is the fact that Dr. Henry may have stolen industry secrets from us, and that's threatening our ability to responsibly test our technology before it goes out to the public.

SARAH

Exactly. I couldn't have said it better myself. I think that's all you need, Ms. Lyons.

ALEXIS

I had a few more questions-

SARAH

I'll bet you do. Why don't you email them to me.

ALEXIS

I'd prefer to get them in the moment, can we schedule a follow up interview or-

SARAH

Send me whatever questions you have left and I will reply with my answers. And give me back my vest.

ALEXIS

Oh, right.

ALEXIS takes the vest off, SARAH snatches it from her.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
(Shaking WEAVER's hand)

It was great to meet you, Jennifer.

WEAVER

Yeah, you too.

ALEXIS

And it was incredible to meet you, Sarah Boyd. You do not disappoint.

SARAH

I'm nothing if not vastly impressive.

ALEXIS and SARAH shake hands.

ALEXIS

Best of luck with your big new toothpaste deal.

SARAH

They do more than toothpaste, a lot more.

WEAVER

Toothpaste? What is she-

SARAH

We'll get into it later-

ALEXIS

Colgate-Palmolive.

WEAVER

Colgate-Palmolive?

ALEXIS

Your new client.

SARAH

I was planning on announcing tomorrow.

ALEXIS

Oh, excuse me, I assumed you knew, being a partner and everything-

SARAH

Surprise- Ha! I'll tell you all the details tomorrow afternoon.

WEAVER

Tell me now.

SARAH

.. I'd rather wait-

WEAVER

Tell me right now!

SARAH

It's just, it's nothing, a- A- A new partnership type thing.

WEAVER

With a toothpaste company?

SARAH

They do a lot more- It's Colgate-Palmolive-

WEAVER

And what would we be partnering with them for?

SARAH

I'm making a company wide announcement-

WEAVER

Sarah!

SARAH

We will be supplying them with new plastic, better plastic, plastic that'll be easier for us to change after-

WEAVER

New plastic?

SARAH

Yes! We've been working it out in Ken Johnson's new department-

WEAVER

But this is huge, the amount of plastic they must need-

SARAH

And it's only the beginning, we have a nationwide goal, over the next ten years-

WEAVER

With our special plastic?

SARAH

We're getting bins, they're going to be yellow, bright yellow- You'll just love the color, I know you will-

WEAVER

Is that why I can't get in over at the west campus?

SARAH

I told you- That's an oversight-

WEAVER

Because it's insane that there would be any part of this company I wouldn't have access to.

SARAH

You don't have access to the majority of what this company does-

WEAVER

No one does. No one but you.

SARAH

Because I oversee, have you ever tried working with scientists? Managing scientists? Head in the clouds, not aware of basic human functions, I put this, I built Tactix from nothing-

WEAVER

I've been telling you for *years*, we need to slow down and get a hold of our technology-

SARAH

It's new, we have a *new* plastic, you're not on- You don't know, you don't work in that division! Ken Johnson-

WEAVER

Ken Johnson has a degree in international business, what does he know-

SARAH

He knows! Okay! I say he knows, so he knows!

WEAVER sits and tries to steady her breathing.

SARAH notices that ALEXIS has been taking notes this whole time.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(To ALEXIS)

We are off the record.

WEAVER

Oh my God.

ALEXIS

If- If you have anything you need to get off your chest, Jennifer, I would be happy to walk you through the evidence I've already collected-

WEAVER

Shit!

SARAH

Stop it, for fucks sake, Weaver! Stop having your little panic attack or whatever is going on and tell the woman that we have not done anything dishonest, certainly not anything illegal-

WEAVER

I'm- I- Oh shit! Shit! Shit! Shit!

SARAH
(To ALEXIS)

She's just an anxious person, she has episodes like this all the time, which is why I was waiting to tell her about the deal. Obviously she misspoke before, and she'd be happy to verify that with you at a later time-

ALEXIS

Thank you, but she seemed pretty clear headed to me-

SARAH

But you don't know her like I do, she will go on record and deny everything she said-

ALEXIS

After you've coerced her?

SARAH takes the notebook from ALEXIS.

SARAH

You need to leave, now.

ALEXIS

Give me back my notes.

ALEXIS tries to get the notebook from SARAH, she avoids her.

SARAH

Your lies, you mean?

SARAH flips through the notebook.

ALEXIS tries to get the notebook back again, SARAH avoids her.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh yes, let's see. Bullshit from Dr. Henry. More bullshit from Dr. Henry. Bullshit from Dr. Henry's husband. Bullshit from- Is that Becky Reed, my roommate from college? Jesus, bet you found some real ground breaking information from her! Ha! Bullshit from- Wait. You talked to my assistant?

(She flips through the notebook)

You talked to Nina. You talked to her at least... She's always had an axe to grind against me. I will go on record right here and now and let you know that everything out of that worthless woman's mouth is just complete fabrication-

ALEXIS

I believe her. And so does Greg.

SARAH picks up her phone and dials.

SARAH

(On phone)

Lee, get up here now. I need you to escort Alexis Lyons off the premises.

SARAH hangs up the phone.

ALEXIS

I will not leave without my property.

ALEXIS reaches for her notebook a third time. SARAH pushes ALEXIS out of her way.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Do NOT put your hands on me!

SARAH

I am merely defending myself, you entered my personal space in a threatening manner-

ALEXIS

Because you grabbed my notebook!

SARAH

Lower your voice, this is an office, there's no need to get hysterical-

ALEXIS

Give it to me NOW-

SARAH

If you want it, come and get it-

ALEXIS lunges at SARAH, she reaches again for the notebook, can't quite get it, and moves to hit SARAH instead. As ALEXIS is about to make contact, she stops.

ALEXIS

You want me to- Jesus. You're trying to get me to hit you, aren't you?

SARAH

Hahahaha. It's going to give me great pleasure to have you fired.

ALEXIS

We'll see who walks out of all of this with a job.

SARAH

You don't scare me. You will be a side note to my new story, to the next level of Tactix. Even without a black eye, you'll just be the lying reporter who made things up and tried to trick my partner just to get ahead. It's the kind of adversity that the rest of Silicon Valley will just eat up hook line and sinker.

ALEXIS

Glad I could be of assistance.

SARAH

Just promise me you'll think back as fondly as I will when you remember how you didn't believe in me. How you doubted. I am a dreamer. With dreams that I am making come true. No one thought you could change plastic into something that could biodegrade and every day I inch closer and closer into making that a reality-

ALEXIS

Right! Because you're not there, are you?

SARAH

No, that's not what I meant-

ALEXIS

“Every day I inch closer and closer into making that a reality,” Sarah Boyd admitting that her technology falls short of its promises-

SARAH

That was, I wasn't articulating clearly-

ALEXIS

It's over Sarah, you're done.

SARAH

You still don't get it, do you? It doesn't- IT DOES NOT MATTER THAT I CAN'T CHANGE PLASTIC! It doesn't fucking matter. What matters is that people can feel better about themselves. That's all anyone wants these days. Our world is literally falling to pieces but everyone is too isolated and fucking lazy to do a damn thing about it so I sell them the appearance of change. It's all anyone really wants. That's it. So they can use their fifty million straws from their drive-thru and not feel the guilt that they are a part of the problem.

No one actually cares if it works or not. NOT ONE PERSON CARES! I tell a good story, I sell a good package, and that's all that matters. This isn't the age of innovation, it's the age of marketing, and I'm the marketing mother fucking master. So here.

(Throws the notebook at ALEXIS)

Take your little notes and get the fuck out of my face. You can't end me. No one wants to hear that the miraculous cure that's going to save us all from the apocalypse doesn't quite work yet. They'll just blame you for bursting their bubble, for taking away their quick and easy fix. And when I do change plastic, because you better fucking believe I will- I will do this thing whether anyone actually cares or not- And when I do, and I'm the hero that saved the planet, you'll just be the pathetic and desperate *female* reporter who couldn't handle seeing another woman succeed. They'll call you jealous and petty. They will call you weak. I'm not the one they'll burn at the stake, you are, because if there's one thing people hate these days more than anything, it's the truth.

There's a knock.

SARAH (CONT'D)

That's Lee. Go before I have to call the police.

ALEXIS exits.

At least fifteen seconds of silence and stillness.

WEAVER

I think- God... I think if we- We drop the suit, back out of the Colgate deal. We can walk all this back. We'll restructure and slow down, get a hold of the tech. I'm close, we are very very close.

SARAH

There's no walking anything back.

WEAVER

I know it seems impossible, and I know it will be hard and awful, but we can figure it out! She, she's going to print that story, the world is going to find out what's going on.. We- Here's what we do, in the morning, we'll call a board meeting. And then you'll- I mean we, we will come clean. I will help you make a plan.

SARAH

You are going to help me?

WEAVER

Yes I am. We can break the story before Alexis goes to print, break it on our terms.

SARAH

And pull the rug out from under her in the process.

WEAVER

In a manner of speaking, yes.

SARAH

I like that... We'll still be fucked. This company. Our lives.

WEAVER

We'd come back.

SARAH

Not from this.

WEAVER

It happens every day. Fast food companies come back from food poisoning, factories come back after workers get hurt, or even die, we, we will figure this out. I think after we meet with the board and the lawyers, that we announce and take the blow. Then we restructure, we reorganize, and then we finally get a hold of our tech so that when we do come back, and we do get to the top again, we can hold our heads high because what we have has been tested and tried and we know that it really works! Steve Jobs got kicked out of Apple. He came back!

SARAH

He did.

WEAVER

We would come back. Even, even if this sends us back to being a two person team, even if it's just me and you again, I, I believe in us and in this. We can still do great things.

SARAH

Change the world?

WEAVER

Yes! We can.

SARAH

And you'd stick with a sinking ship?

WEAVER

I will stand with you and take it all. I will.

SARAH

I applaud that kind of loyalty. That's all I ever wanted, needed, from another person. Someone to stand with me, back straight, chin up, taking whatever comes at us. Because when you have that, when you have someone with you, it eases the blows.

WEAVER

We built this together. Let's save it together.

SARAH

... I could have used more of that loyalty a few moments ago, of course.

WEAVER

Sarah..

SARAH

I was going to tell you about Colgate. Why couldn't you let me tell you about Colgate?

WEAVER

People will get sick, don't you understand- Our process is physical, and not approved by the FDA-

SARAH

And why couldn't we have had that conversation for *after* she had left?

WEAVER

I was- I was surprised, thrown off-guard-

SARAH

How easily your loyalty slips.

WEAVER

It wasn't, I wasn't being disloyal-

SARAH

Your testimony will not be needed in court tomorrow.

WEAVER

I don't think you realize how serious this is- The repercussions against Tactix, against you, or any of us-

SARAH

You are terminated from your position effective immediately-

WEAVER

You can't-

SARAH

I own a controlling share I can do whatever I want.

WEAVER

But- We- We started this together, Tactix, it's both of ours-

SARAH

And I have been waiting for you to deliver on your end for far too long. I raised millions and millions of dollars for you! I gave you a lab, I took care of everything else so that you could- All of it was because you told me you could do the impossible. You promised me! But I can see now you can't do it. You do not possess imagination and you never will. You have wasted my time- Over a decade of my life! Why don't you- You should just go ahead and marry Michael. Have a bunch of kids. You'll make one hell of a stay at home mom.

WEAVER

I am your partner-

SARAH

Remember the nondisclosure agreement you signed. I can and will take everything from you if you breach that contract.

WEAVER

... Sarah, I, I-

SARAH

Unless you want to leave in handcuffs, get the hell out of my office and exit the building immediately. I'll have your personal items mailed to you.

SARAH picks up her phone.

They stare at one another.

WEAVER exhales, then exits.

SARAH rushes to the door and locks it.

She is breathing hard.

She walks back to her desk. She opens her laptop. She closes it.

*She picks up the phone then slams it down.
Again, again, again, again.*

She stops... Maybe a sigh. A groan. A sob.

.... She checks the time. Exhales.

She clears her throat, gets in presentation mode.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Hello. Hi. I'm... I am Sarah Boyd. Let me tell you how I intend to save the world.

End of play.