STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

a musical comedy

book, music & lyrics
by Bill Rowland
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THE CAST

JOEL STRANGE, male, age 49, baritone:A2-E4.
The Republican President of the United States, and a very eligible bachelor.

SUZANNE FELLOWS, female, age 48, soprano:A3-Ab5.
The Lieutenant Governor of Idaho, and Democratic candidate for Vice President. A very liberal feminist.

WARREN LEACH, male, age 60, tenor:Bb2-Ab4.
The Republican Vice President of the United States. Not “the sharpest knife in the drawer” (to put it mildly!). He has a beard, which is important in a few scenes.

MARGARET LEACH, female, age 50ish, alto: Ab3-C#5.
The Vice President’s wife, and the very driving force behind her husband.

STANLEY STOUT, male, age 30ish, baritone:G2-E4.
One of the president’s personal Secret Service agents, and his constant companion.

STEVEN STRONG, male, age 30ish, baritone:G2-E4.
One of the president’s personal Secret Service agents, and his constant companion.

A U.S. Senator, and the Democratic candidate for President.

JACK HUMPHREY, male, age ??, baritone:Ab2-E4.
Unscrupulous reporter for the W.A.S.H. TV news team.

CHRIS PHILLIPS, female or male, age 40ish?, singing optional.
Somewhat cynical anchorperson for W.A.S.H. news.

SANDY, female, age ??, mezzo:A3-F5.
Newspaper reporter.

MANDY, female, age ??, mezzo:A3-Eb5.
Remote TV news director.

ANDIE, female, age ??, alto:G3-Eb5.
Newspaper reporter.

NADIA, female, age ??, soprano:A3-Ab5.
Hotel housekeeper. Very enthusiastic, but a bit of a “hick”.

MELISSA, female, age 20ish, mezzo:A3-F5.
Suzanne’s aide.

ALLISON, female, age 40ish, alto:G3-D5.
Hotel manager. Just a bit “snooty”.

(NOTE: Chorus roles can be double-cast, as follows: Sandy/Nadia, Mandy/Melissa, Andie/Allison.)
ACT I, SCENE 1 - Approach to the White House

(Stage remains dark. The W.A.S.H. news theme music plays.)

“NEWS INTRO”

ANNOUNCER (offstage, over music): This is a W.A.S.H. News special report. W.A.S.H., the conscience of the capital, brings you the news of Washington where it happens, as it happens. (pause) And sometimes even before it happens!

(As music fades, spot comes up on CHRIS PHILLIPS seated at the W.A.S.H. news booth on the stage apron. Chris appears to be pretty much “burned out” with her/his job, and often reports with JUST A BIT of sarcasm and cynicism.)

CHRIS: Good morning, I’m Chris Phillips. As you probably know, this evening W.A.S.H. has exclusive coverage of the debate between the Republican and Democratic presidential and vice-presidential candidates. President Strange and Vice-President Leach are arriving at the White House now. We take you live to Jack Humphrey standing by at the White House steps. Hopefully Jack can get some kind of statements out of them regarding their thoughts about the debate. Lord knows we could use something to perk things up around here!

(Spot fades on CHRIS. Dim stage lights come up, and spot hits JACK HUMPHREY, center stage, in front of the White House steps. SANDY—newspaper reporter [chorus soprano], MANDY—remote TV director [chorus mezzo], and ANDIE—newspaper reporter [chorus alto] are also on stage. They are awaiting the arrival of the president and vice president.)

JACK: Thank you, Chris. This is Jack Humphrey at the White House. The president and vice-president have just left a fund-raiser breakfast, and are expected to arrive at any moment. We hope to get their comments on yesterday’s remarks by Democratic vice-presidential candidate Suzanne Fellows. Ms. Fellows statement was extremely critical of the budget bill that the president supports, which is currently before the Senate.

(JACK stops abruptly, holding his ear to hear information from the station.)

(As if to someone on his headset:)
Yes... yes... thank you.

(To front:)
We have just received word that the presidential party has been delayed. We will stand by and bring you our report when they arrive. But for now, we return to Chris Phillips in the W.A.S.H. newsroom.

(Stage lights come up full.)
JACK: Where are they now?! Did they have to make a bathroom stop during the two-mile drive! Not that it really matters. I'm sure all we'll get from them is another “no comment” from Strange; or some insightful “words of wisdom” from Leach.

Sometimes I wonder what’s happening to our country. We never seem to have any mud-slinging or name-calling in Washington anymore. Even the members of congress seem to be getting along. Just how is a reporter supposed to make a living?!

Ah, how I long for the good old days!

**“WE NEED A SCANDAL”** (Sandy, Mandy, Andie, Jack)

SANDY *(spoken in rhythm)*:
   POLITICIANS GOING TO JAIL.
MANDY *(spoken in rhythm)*:
   THE PRESIDENT HIRING BURGLARS.
ANDIE *(spoken in rhythm)*:
   EVEN SOME HANKY-PANKY
SANDY, MANDY, ANDIE *(spoken in rhythm)*:
   IN THE OVAL OFFICE!

JACK:
   I'M GETTING TIRED OF COVERING THE SAME OLD BORING NEWS.
ANDIE:
   WE'RE LIKE VULTURES ALWAYS HOVERING FOR BORING INTERVIEWS.
MANDY & SANDY:
   WE NEED TO FIND A STORY WE CAN SINK OUR TEETH INTO,
JACK & ANDIE:
   AND IN KEEPING WITH OUR PRINCIPLES, IT SHOULD BE PARTLY TRUE.
MANDY & SANDY:
   OH YES, IT MUST BE PARTLY TRUE.

JACK:
   OUR RATINGS AND OUR REVENUES ARE DROPPING EVERY DAY.
MANDY:
   THEY'VE GOT US WORKING OVERTIME,
SANDY:
   AND TAKING CUTS IN PAY.
ANDIE:
   OUR PATIENCE,
JACK:
   AND OUR POCKETBOOKS,
JACK & ANDIE:
   ARE GROWING VERY THIN.
ALL:
   WHAT WE NEED TO SAVE OUR SKIN,
   IS SOME GOOD OLD-FASHIONED SIN!

ALL:
WE NEED A SCANDAL, WE NEED SOME DIRT,
A LITTLE GRAFT OR TREASON WOULDN’T HURT.

MANDY:
IF I COULD FIND A SENATOR WHO CHEATS ON HIS MATE,

JACK & SANDY:
WE WOULD HAVE THE MAKINGS OF THE NEXT WATERGATE.

ALL:
WE NEED TO SLANDER SOMEBODY’S NAME.
WE NEED A PUBLIC FIGURE TO DEFAME.

ANDIE:
I’D GLADLY TRADE MY BYLINE FOR A GOOD EXPOSÉ.

ALL:
WE NEED A SCANDAL, WE NEED IT TODAY!

JACK (spoken in rhythm):
A LITTLE RUMOR, THAT’S ALL WE NEED.

MANDY (spoken in rhythm):
A BIT OF HERE-SAY, THAT COULD BE THE SEED.

ANDIE:
IF I COULD CATCH THE MAYOR IN A FEW LITTLE LIES,

JACK & SANDY:
WHO KNOWS, YOU MIGHT EVEN WIN A PULITZER PRIZE.

SANDY:
IF WE COULD DIG UP A LITTLE SLIME,

MANDY:
A CASE OF BLACKMAIL,

ANDIE (spoken in rhythm):
ARSON WOULD BE FINE.

ALL:
WE’RE NOT ASKING FOR A MURDER, JUST SOME WHITE-COLLAR CRIME,
WE NEED A SCANDAL, A GOOD ONE THIS TIME.

(All dance, with following “throw-away lines” spoken during music breaks)

SANDY (spoken in rhythm):
A SECRET LOVER.

MANDY (spoken in rhythm):
A FRAUD UNCOVERED.

ANDIE (spoken in rhythm):
A SPEECH THAT’S FICTION.

JACK (spoken in rhythm):
YOU KNOW, LIKE NIXON.

ALL:
WE NEED A SCANDAL, WE NEED TO SEARCH,
FOR SOMEONE’S HONOR THAT WE CAN BESMIRCH.

JACK:
IF I COULD FIND A JUDGE WHO’S NETTING MORE THAN HE GROSSED,

JACK & SANDY:
WE’D BE MILLIONAIRES LIKE THOSE TWO GUYS FROM THE POST.

MANDY & ANDIE:
IF WE COULD JUST FIND ONE RUSSIAN SPY,
WHO’S ON THE PAYROLL OF THE F.B.I.

JACK & SANDY:
WE’D HARASS HIM TO THE LIMITS THAT THE LAW WILL ALLOW.

JACK & SANDY:
WE NEED A SCANDAL.

MANDY (spoken in rhythm):
AN AGENCY THAT KEEPS TWO SETS OF BOOKS!

JACK & SANDY:
LET’S FIND A VANDAL.

ANDIE (spoken in rhythm):
A GENERAL WHO’S SELLING GUNS TO CROOKS!

ALL:
WE NEED A SCANDAL. . . . . RIGHT NOW.
WE NEED A SCOOP!

SANDY: Here they come.

JACK: This is Jack Humphrey at the White House. The president and vice-president are arriving now. We'll try to get a few words with them.

(JOEL STRANGE, WARREN LEACH, STANLEY STOUT and STEVEN STRONG enter briskly.)

JACK (to STRANGE): Mr. President. Jack Humphrey, W.A.S.H. news. Do you have any thoughts about tonight’s debate?

STRANGE: No comment right now, thank you.

ANDIE: Do you have any response to Ms. Fellows’ statement saying that the government funding bill you are supporting will, I quote, “.. eliminate many critical programs that provide support for the elderly, those physically and mentally challenged, and expectant mothers; sending more people to live on the streets, and forcing women to seek dangerous illegal abortions.” ??

(STRANGE tries to keep walking, but LEACH stops them.)

LEACH: I would like to respond to Ms. Fellows statement.

STRANGE: Warren, I really don’t think...

LEACH (interrupting): I’m reminded of a quotation from George Washington (who was our first president).
STRANGE (sarcastically): Yes, I believe everyone knows he was the first president.

LEACH: Or maybe it was Thomas Jefferson, our (counts on fingers)...

STRANGE: Third.

LEACH: Yes, our third president. (pauses, thinking.) Or maybe it was George Jefferson? You know, from that TV show. (sings): “We’re moving on up…”

STRANGE (interrupting): Warren!

LEACH: Well, whoever it was.. When faced with unfair criticism from his political opponents.. (pauses) .. or from his wife Weezie.. he responded with these immoral words:

STRANGE: I hope he means “immortal” words.

(LEACH strikes an oratorical pose.)
LEACH: “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but…”

STRANGE (interrupting): Come on, Warren!

(STRANGE quickly takes LEACH by the arm, and their group exits.)

JACK: Well, that about wraps it up from here. Back to you, Chris.

(Stage lights and spot fade. Spot hits CHRIS in news booth.)

CHRIS: Thank you for that ... “in-depth” report, Jack. We now return you to your regularly scheduled programming.

(Thinking the camera is off. Starts to light a cigarette.)
And that idiot is a heartbeat away from the presidency!? I just hope Strange is taking his heart pills! (startled) What? I’m still on?! Okay... Well, let’s see what else is happening.

(Shuffles through papers.)
Looks like Senator Meacham is starting a filibuster to try and delay that funding bill. “Filibuster”. That’s a funny word: Fil-a-bus-ter... Wonder where they came up with that? I’ll have to look it up. I’ll get back to you. And President Strange vetoed a bill to provide more funding to the Boy Scouts. Guess those kids are just going to have to get jobs to make some money. Girl Scouts have the cookie market all wrapped up. Maybe the boys could just get paper routes, like when I was a kid.

That new weather and traffic girl called in sick today. (Probably more like a hangover. I hear she really likes to party!) (makes drinking motion) So I guess I’m supposed to cover that.

(More paper shuffling.)
Let’s see... It’s eight o’clock on a Wednesday morning, so I’m sure there’s plenty of traffic jams out there. So good luck with that! And it’s October, so I suppose it will start getting colder. So maybe grab a sweater?

(Pushes papers aside.)
Well, that’s about all I’ve got. Be sure to tune in this evening for our coverage of the debate, and stayed tuned to W.A.S.H. for all of Washington’s news as it happens. And remember, it
may not come out on the networks; it may not come out in the Post; but it all comes out in the WASH.

“NEWS TAG” (Sandy, Mandy, Andie, Jack)

SANDY, MANDY, ANDIE, JACK (offstage):
W. A. S. H.

(Spot off.)

ACT I, SCENE 2 – The Oval Office

(The Oval Office. STRANGE enters, shadowed by STOUT and STRONG. Still on the president’s heels, they peer about the room as if searching for potential assassins. STRANGE stops abruptly, causing them to crash into him.)

STRANGE: Do you think perhaps you could wait in the hall this one time? (sarcastically) I haven’t encountered any enemy saboteurs in my office for several weeks now.

STOUT: Yes, of course sir!

STRONG: We’ll be right here outside the door if you should need anything.

STRANGE (more sarcasm): Oh, I’m sure you will!

(STOUT and STRONG exit. STRANGE peers impatiently out the doorway for a few seconds.)

STRANGE: Not you, Warren. Come on in. How can we have a meeting with you out there?

(LEACH enters.)

LEACH: Yes, Mr. President. I’m sorry.

STRANGE: And I wish you could stop being such a 'yes' man: (mocking) ‘Yes, Mr. President’, 'Whatever you say, Mr. President' After all, you are the Vice President of the United States. Wouldn’t it feel good just once to say, 'No, Mr. President, I don’t agree!'?

LEACH: Yes, Mr. Pr....

(Pauses confused, then continues confidently.)
No, Mr. President, I don’t....

(Pauses longer, even more confused, then continues timidly.)
I..I’ll have to give it some thought.
STRANGE: I'm sorry, Warren. I didn't mean to snap at you. It's been a long week and I'm just not myself today. Why don't we postpone our meeting until this afternoon. I want to see what kind of odds the papers are quoting for tonight's debate anyway.

LEACH: Whatever you....

(LEACH catches himself, thinks a second, then turns and exits silently.)

STRANGE: Now where did I leave those reading glasses?

(Taking items out of desk.)

What is all this stuff? When's the last time they cleaned out this desk?!

(Reading peanut bag label:)

"Jimmy Earl's Genuine Georgia Peanuts". Those have to be expired!

(Reading label from small plastic container:)

"Hands off! Ronnie's private stash!" Wow! I always thought he was a pretty straight-laced guy. Now Bubba... maybe.

(Opens container.)

Oh, it's just jellybeans. Those look pretty nasty!

(Holds up a pack of Marlboros.)

Marlboros? I thought she made him quit?! Well, I guess it’s hard.

(Holds up Trump “Make America Great Again” cap.)

How did that work out for you?

(Holds up cassette tape.)

What's this? A cassette tape? Says “Date: June 1972. Length: 18 ½ minutes”. Eh, probably nothing important.

(Threws tape back into the desk.)

(Holds up a string of condoms.)

And I don’t even want to know why these are here!!

(Takes reading glasses from drawer, opens newspaper and begins to read.)

Well, let’s see what I was blamed for today.

(Reads headline:)

‘PRESIDENT VETOES BOY SCOUT FUNDING BILL’. Well, there goes the 12-year-old vote. They don't bother to mention that that bill included amendments to proclaim George Jessel's birthday a federal holiday... and to declare war on Iceland. But now, every time a little old lady gets run over crossing the street they'll point the finger at me!

They call me “The Leader of the Free World”. I certainly don't feel like I’m free. Sometimes it seems more like I’m in solitary confinement in this office. With my two ever-watchful prison guards just outside, of course. If I even just had a cellmate to break the solitude.

I guess most single men would give anything to be in my position. I could have my pick of any number of beautiful, intelligent women to propose to. But how could I be sure if she was marrying me to be Mrs. Joel Strange, or just to be the First Lady of the United States.

Suzy McGrewhue. Little skinny Suzy. I wonder why I ever let her go? Where would I be right now if I had stayed in Cooper Valley with Suzy instead of going off to college?
“COOPER VALLEY, IDAHO” (Strange)

STRANGE (spoken over song intro): Cooper Valley, Idaho – That’s the real America! Not Washington, D.C. I’d trade all the cocktail parties and state dinners in this city to be back at Dan’s Dairy Delite in Cooper Valley holding Suzy’s hand.

STRANGE:
THERE’S A PLACE WHERE I CAN GO TO LOSE MY WORRIES,
TO LEAVE MY TROUBLED THOUGHTS ALL FAR BEHIND.
A QUIET PLACE WHERE NO ONE EVER HURRIES,
A PLACE THAT’S NOT SO VERY HARD TO FIND.

I GO THERE EVERY TIME I FEEL DISCOURAGED,
I CLOSE MY EYES AND LET MY MEMORY FLOW,
AND SUDDENLY IT SEEMS, IF ONLY IN MY DREAMS,
I’M IN COOPER VALLEY, IDAHO.

THE VISIONS OF MY PAST ARE THERE TO GUIDE ME,
DOWN STREETS THAT HAVEN’T CHANGED THROUGH ALL THE YEARS.
I TURN AND SEE HER STANDING THERE BESIDE ME,
BUT WHEN I TAKE HER HAND SHE DISAPPEARS.

AND EVEN THOUGH THE DREAM HAS GONE SHE LINGERS,
I SEE HER FACE AS IF SHE STILL WERE THERE;
I FEEL THE GENTLE SOFTNESS OF HER FINGERS,
I STILL CAN SMELL THE FRAGRANCE OF HER HAIR.

OF ALL THE DISTANT LANDS AND MIGHTY NATIONS,
THE NOBLE KINGS AND QUEENS I’VE COME TO KNOW;
I’D TRADE THEM ALL AWAY, FOR JUST A SINGLE DAY,
BACK IN COOPER VALLEY, IDAHO.

(Instrumental bridge. STRANGE moves to apron.)

IF I HAD A MAGIC SPELL THAT COULD RETURN ME,
TO ANY SPECIAL MOMENT LONG AGO,
I’D FLY THROUGH TIME AND SPACE, AND TOUCH THAT FRECKLED FACE,
BACK IN COOPER VALLEY, IDAHO.
FOR THERE’S NO PLACE THAT I’D RATHER GO,
THAN TO COOPER VALLEY, IDAHO.

ACT I, SCENE 3 – Washington D.C. hotel room

(Setting is Suzanne’s hotel room, the evening of the debate. Required prop is a dressing table with mirror. The housekeeper NADIA finishes up some dusting, and stands ‘at attention’. The hotel manager ALLISON enters, followed by SUZANNE FELLOWS and her aide MELISSA.)
ALLISON: Once again Ms. Fellows, I would like to thank you on behalf of our entire management and staff for choosing the Van Buren again for your stay in D.C. We are always thrilled to have you with us. I hope everything seems suitable?

SUZANNE: Oh yes, the room looks lovely, as always.

ALLISON: Wonderful! Your things should be up right away, and your lunch has been ordered. Please let us know if you require anything else. If not, we’ll leave you to get settled.

(NADIA and ALLISON start to leave, but SUZANNE stops them.)

SUZANNE: I do have a couple of questions, if you don’t mind.

ALLISON: Of course. Anything. All of our amenities are listed here (pointing to folder), but I would be glad to give you more details...

SUZANNE (interrupting): No, no. Nothing like that. You are probably aware that one of the main focuses of my campaign platform is women’s equality? I'm anxious to understand any issues being faced by working women today. Would you mind if I asked the two of you a few questions? Nothing too personal, of course.

(SUZANNE reads the housekeeper’s nametag:)

SUZANNE (to NADIA): “Nadia”, is it? I'm wondering how you find conditions here, compared to... where you grew up?

NADIA: Well ma'am, it’s not really that different here in D.C. than it was in Pittsburgh. Maybe a little more humid?

SUZANNE: Oh, I'm so sorry! I just assumed from your name... How rude of me!

NADIA: Oh no, don’t worry about it. That happens a lot. My parents (whose great-grandparents came over from England, by the way) were big fans of that famous Romanian gymnast back in the seventies, and they named me after her.

“EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK” (Suzanne, Nadia, Melissa, Allison)

(During the song choruses, they march around holding up items as if they were protest signs. duster? hairbrush? clipboard? room folder?)

SUZANNE (to NADIA): I imagine you have had some negative experiences as a hard-working woman, in a world controlled by men. Is there anything you would like to share?

NADIA: Well... as a matter of fact..

NADIA:
MY FATHER WAS A LAZY GOOD-FOR-NOTH-ING BUM.
HE LEFT US ALL ALONE WHEN I WAS ON-LY FOUR.
POOR MAMA WORKED AND SLAVED UNTIL HER HANDS WERE NUMB,
TO KEEP THE WOLVES AND BILL COLLECTORS FROM OUR DOOR.
ONE DAY AS SHE WAS LEAVING FROM THE FAC-TO-RY,
HER BOSS SAID “WAIT! YOU’RE WORKING LATE. YOU’LL STAY TILL
NINE!”
SHE SAID, “WELL, HONEY, I JUST WON THE LOT-TER-Y,
AND YOU CAN PUT YOUR JOB RIGHT WHERE THE SUN DON’T SHINE.”

ALL:
EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK, EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.
WE JUST ASK THAT ALL OUR TASKS ARE WELL REWARDED.
TELL THOSE CHAUVINISTIC JERKS THAT WE WANT BENEFITS AND
PERKS.
UNDERSTAND THAT OUR DEMAND IS EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

SUZANNE (to ALLISON): How about you, Allison? What are things like for you working in the
hotel business?

ALLISON: I suppose I don’t have room to complain too much. But I have had some issues
with men in my life. Things are starting look up for me, though.

ALLISON:
MY DADDY MADE HIS MILLIONS TRADING REAL E-STATE.
BUT I WAS LEFT EXCLUDED FROM MY FATH-ER’S WILL.
HE SAID, “A LOWLY FEMALE SIMPLY DOES-N’T RATE,
MY PROPERTIES WILL ALL GO TO YOUR BRO-THER BILL.”

BUT THEN THEY HAD SOME TROUBLE WITH THE I. R. S.
MY DAD AND WILLIAM DIDN’T PAY THEIR TAX ON TIME.
I’LL FINALLY GET MY CHANCE TO SHARE IN THEIR SUC-CESS.
(makes a gesture as if she is handcuffed)
THEY’RE IN A CELL, AND THIS HOTEL WILL SOON BE MINE!

ALL:
EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK, EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.
AND A SHARE OF PROFIT WHERE IT SEEMS WE’VE EARNED IT.
WE’VE THE RIGHT TO MAKE A CHOICE, NOW HEAR OUR STRONG
UNITED VOICE.
WHAT WE’RE PRAYING FOR TODAY IS EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

SUZANNE: Thank you very much ladies. I appreciate you taking the time...

MELISSA (interrupting): Wouldn’t you like to hear my story?

SUZANNE (puzzled): Oh, I just assumed that everything was all right with..?

MELISSA: Of course! I love working for you. But before this job...

MELISSA:
THE CONGRESSMAN I WORKED FOR, HE WAS QUITE A SLOB,
THAT DIRTY CREEP JUST COULDN’T KEEP HIS HANDS OFF ME.
HE SAID, “HEY SUGAR, IF YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR JOB,
YOU’LL MEET ME IN MY SECRET ROOM AT HALF PAST THREE.”

BUT I MADE SURE THE PUBLIC SOON FOUND OUT ABOUT HIS CRUDE DEMANDS AND ROVING HANDS AND WANDERING EYES. THE VOTERS IN THE NEXT ELECTION KICKED HIM OUT, NOW HE’S WORKING AT THE GOLDEN ARCHES SLING-ING FRIES.

ALL:
EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK, EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.
WE EXPECT ALL THE RESPECT THAT WE’RE DESERVING.
OUR BELIEFS WE WON’T FORSAKE, AND OUR RESOLVE WILL NEVER BREAK.
HEAR US ROAR! WE WANT NO MORE, THAN EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

SUZANNE: You ladies have certainly had some interesting experiences in the workplace, and I appreciate you sharing with me. If you don’t mind, I might mention some of your stories in my campaign speeches.

(NADIA seems overly energized by the feminist activities. She offers SUZANNE an unexpected “high five”. SUZANNE responds awkwardly.)

NADIA:
Right on, Sister! Whatever can help get Strange and his flunky Leach sent back to where they came from!

(Knock on the door.)

ALLISON:
That must be your lunch.

(NADIA goes to the door and brings in the food tray.)

ALLISON:
Please let us know if you need anything else. And best of luck with the campaign and election. You’ve got my vote!

NADIA (with a fist-pump):
Girl power!

(SUZANNE responds half-heartedly. ALLISON and NADIA exit.)

MELISSA:
Will there be anything else Ms. Fellows?

SUZANNE:
No, nothing else now, Melissa. I’m just going to eat and then go over my notes for the debate again.

(MELISSA exits.)
“IF I WERE IN LOVE” (Suzanne)

SUZANNE:
FOR ALL OF MY LIFE, I’VE DREAMED OF THE TIME,
WHEN I WOULD BE WHERE I AM NOW.
I’M HERE WITH THE WORLD IN THE PALM OF MY HAND,
BUT SOMETHING IS MISSING SOMEHOW.

I SHOULD BE SOARING LIKE A NIGHTINGALE, MY HEAD SHOULD BE IN
THE CLOUDS.
I SHOULD RUN DOWN THE BOULEVARD SINGING AND LAUGHING OUT
LOUD.
I FEEL I COULD SPREAD MY WINGS AND JUST FLY AWAY,
TO THE MOON AND THE STARS HIGH ABOVE.
WHY IT’S ALMOST AS PERFECT AS, AS BEING IN LOVE.

I HAVE ALL I COMMAND, WITH A WAVE OF MY HAND.
EVERYTHING SHOULD FEEL PERFECTLY RIGHT.
BUT I DON’T FEEL A MEASURE OF PLEASURE,
ONLY LONELY AND COLD THROUGH THE NIGHT.

I’VE PICTURED THIS DAY AS A SCENE IN A PLAY,
I’M THE QUEEN WHO’S ASCENDING HER THRONE.
I DON’T UNDERSTAND, IT’S JUST NOT LIKE I’D PLANNED IT,
I’M PLAYING THE SCENE ALL ALONE.

I CAN’T BELIEVE, THAT SOON I WILL HAVE THE CHANCE, TO BE ALL I’VE
WANTED TO BE.
AND I KNOW THAT MOST WOMEN WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO BE ME.
PARTS OF MY LIFE, JUMBLED AND STALE BEFORE,
SEEM TO FIT LIKE A HAND IN A GLOVE.
WHY I’M ALMOST AS HAPPY AS, IF I WERE IN LOVE.

WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR, I WISH THINGS SEEMED CLEARER,
I CAN’T SEE A SPARK OR A FLAME.
MY REFLECTION SEEMS LIKE IMPERFECTION,
WITHOUT SOMEONE WITH ME IN THE FRAME.

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD DANCE THROUGH THE STREETS IN A TRANCE,
LIKE A PERSON WHO HASN’T A CARE.
BUT I DON’T FEEL ENTRANCING, I DON’T FEEL LIKE DANCING,
I’M GINGER WITHOUT HER ASTAIRE.

ALL THAT I WANT IS RIGHT HERE WITHIN MY REACH, MY FUTURE
BRIGHT AS THE SUN.
BUT I’M HERE IN MY HOTEL ROOM ORDERING DINNER FOR ONE.
ALL OF MY HOPES AND WISHES ARE COMING TRUE, EVERYTHING THAT
I’VE BEEN DREAMING OF.
WHY IT’S ALMOST AS PERFECT AS, AS BEING IN LOVE.
I CAN’T THINK OF A THING I COULD WISH FOR . . . BUT BEING IN LOVE.

(Stage goes dark.)

ACT I, SCENE 4 – U.S. Senate podium

(Stage remains dark. News music plays. Spot comes up on CHRIS in the news booth.)

“FILIBUSTER #1 (Meacham)

CHRIS: We take you live to the Senate floor, where Senator Harold Meacham is in the fourth hour of a filibuster to delay voting on a funding bill. He seems to be running out of things to say, as I believe he is now reading from a book of baseball statistics.

(Spot fades on news booth, and comes up on HAROLD J MEACHAM on the opposite stage apron, speaking behind a lectern.)

MEACHAM:


IN EIGHTY-TWO YOUNG RICKEY STOLE ONE HUNDRED THIRTY BASES. IF HE GOT ONTO FIRST, HE SOON WOULD BE OFF TO THE RACES. THE YEAR OF NINETEEN SIXTY-TWO, WHEN BATTING FOR THE TWINS, HAMM’RIN’ HARMON KILLEBREW LED THEM TO OVER 90 WINS.

I DON’T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN DO THIS. I’D LIKE TO JUST GO HOME AND HIT THE HAY. I NEED TO FIND THE STRENGTH TO GET ME THROUGH THIS. SOMETIMES I DON’T FEEL LIKE I CAN FIND ANOTHER WORD TO ..

“SAY HEY” WILLIE MAYES IN APRIL NINETEEN SIXTY-ONE, HIT FOUR HOMERS IN ONE GAME, A FEAT THAT’S Seldom DONE.

(Spot switches back to news booth, and music segues into news music.)

CHRIS (sarcastically): Well, that was certainly fascinating! I’m afraid the senator won’t be able to keep this going too much longer. He is of course the Democratic candidate for president, and considering his age, he should probably be getting a little rest before tonight’s debate. Remember this is exclusive coverage by W.A.S.H. News. You won’t see this kind of thing on any other stations. (Gee, I wonder why!)
ACT I, SCENE 5 – *The Leachs’ bedroom*

*(Essential props are a chair and a hat rack, with several hats. *LEACH* is speaking into a pocket recorder.)*

*LEACH:* Testing, one, two, three, testing.
*(Clears throat, as if preparing to make a speech.)*

The memoirs of Warren Leach, vice-president of the United States. Chapter One...

"**NUMBER TWO**" (Leach)

*LEACH:*

**IT ALL STARTED SIXTY YEARS AGO ON A FARM NEAR AUGHNACLOY.**
MY DEAR OLD IRISH MOM HAD JUST DELIVERED HER FIRST BOY.
WHILE ALL THE FRIENDS AND KINFOLK WERE ADMIRING MY TWIN BROTHER,
THE DOCTOR SAID, "BUT WAIT! BY ALL THE SAINTS, HERE COMES ANOTHER!"

I'M NEVER NUMBER ONE, I'M ALWAYS SECOND IN THE RACE.
IF I EVER WERE A JOCKEY, YOU COULD BET MY HORSE TO PLACE.
I JUST CAN'T REACH THE PINNACLE, NO MATTER WHAT I DO.
I NEVER COME OUT FIRST, BECAUSE I'M ALWAYS NUMBER TWO.

I WAS LEADING IN THE QUARTER-MILE, THE FINISH WAS IN SIGHT,
THE GUY BEHIND ME YELLED MY NAME, IT GAVE ME QUITE A FRIGHT.
HE SAID, "HEY, LOOK! THAT LADY'S UP THERE TAKING OFF HER CLOTHES!"
WHEN I LOOKED UP, HE PASSED ME BY AND BEAT ME BY A NOSE.

I'M NEVER NUMBER ONE, I'M ALWAYS JUST A STEP BEHIND.
I'LL NEVER BE THE LEADER, TO MY FATE I AM RESIGNED.
ON THE RIBBONS IN MY TROPHY CASE, THERE'S NOT A TRACE OF BLUE.
I'VE NEVER BEEN THE WINNER, CAUSE I'M ALWAYS NUMBER TWO.

THE GIRL SAID, "HERE'S YOUR NUMBER, SIR. YOUR FOOD WILL SOON BE DONE."
I READ THE NUMBER ON THE SLIP, IT SAID: YOU'RE NUMBER ONE!
I SOON DISCOVERED, "JUST MY LUCK! IT'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE."
THE SIGN ABOVE THE COUNTER SAID, "NOW SERVING NUMBER TWO!"

I'M NEVER NUMBER ONE, I NEVER MAKE IT TO THE SUMMIT.
SOMEONE COMES 'ROUND TO KNOCK ME DOWN, AND TO THE GROUND I PLUMMET.
I JUST CAN'T EVER SEEM TO FIND A WAY OF BREAKING THROUGH.
I'M NEVER AT THE TOP, I ALWAYS STOP AT NUMBER TWO.

I BOUGHT A TICKET FOR A DRAWING WITH A MILLION DOLLAR PRIZE,
AND WHEN I GOT THE PHONE CALL, JUST IMAGINE MY SURPRISE.
THE LADY SAID, "YOU’VE WON!“, I THOUGHT IT MUST HAVE BEEN A DREAM!
(Tugs on his beard.)
"YOU’VE TAKEN SECOND PRIZE: A YEAR’S SUPPLY OF SHAVING CREAM!“

I’M NEVER NUMBER ONE, I’M ALWAYS PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE.
(Holds up three fingers. Then possibly “flips the bird”??)

WHENEVER THEY NEED THREE TO SPEAK, THEY PUT ME IN THE MIDDLE.
I DON’T KNOW WHY I CAN’T PREVAIL, I HAVEN’T GOT A CLUE.
I’LL NEVER TAKE THE CHECKERED FLAG, I’M ALWAYS NUMBER TWO.
I’LL NEVER BE THE PRESIDENT, I’M STUCK AT NUMBER TWO.

(MARGARET LEACH enters briskly, carrying a newspaper.)

MARGARET: Warren, aren’t you ready yet? We’re going to be late for the luncheon! And that will make us late for the debate. You won’t make much of an impression on the voters if they have to start the debate without you.

(LEACH quickly puts the recorder in his coat pocket as she enters.)

LEACH: Almost ready, dear.

(He begins tying his necktie. Throughout the following dialogue he continues to fuss with the tie, with little success.)

MARGARET: Look at this!

(MARGARET reads from newspaper.)
‘PRESIDENT VETOES BOY SCOUT FUNDING BILL’. What does he think he’s doing? Doesn’t he know that every one of those little twerps has two potential voters wrapped around his grimy little finger? Not to mention all the scoutmasters and den mothers. I’m surprised that that man has gotten as far as he has without a woman to tell him how to do things right. Are you listening to me, Warren??

LEACH: Yes, dear. You were talking about, uh, Boy Scouts’ rights.

(LEACH opens coat and speaks toward recorder in pocket, in an oratorical manner:
Yes, I have always been a firm supporter of the rights of the fine young men...)

MARGARET (interrupting): Well, that’s close. Anyway, as I was saying: Someday, somehow, Warren, I’m going to get you into that Oval Office, and when I do..

LEACH (interrupting): Oh, I can go in the Oval Office any time I want! In fact, I was just there this morning. It’s really nice. There’s a big picture of Abraham Lincoln. (stroking beard dramatically) I’ve often been told that I bear a striking resemblance to the “Great Emasculator”.
MARGARET: I think that’s “Emancipator”. And I’m not talking about going there to look at the pictures. I’m talking about you sitting behind the desk in that big chair.

LEACH: He even let me sit in his chair once, just for a minute. It’s nice and big, but it’s kind of lumpy. Actually, I think I like my chair better.

MARGARET (glaring him to silence): Someday, Warren, we’re going to be President of the United States!

LEACH: You mean I’m going to be President.

MARGARET: That’s what I said. And then we’ll show them how a real woman can run this country!

LEACH: You mean a real man.

MARGARET: Whatever.

(MARGARET goes to help him with his tie.)
Here, let me do that before you hang yourself!

“YOU’LL ALWAYS FIND A WOMAN” (Margaret)

MARGARET:
YOU’LL ALWAYS FIND A LADY BEHIND EVERY FAMOUS MAN,
A SALLY OR A SADIE FOR EVERY DICK OR DAN.
SHE’S ALWAYS AT THE READY TO CORRECT HIS SILLY PLANS,
YOU’LL ALWAYS FIND A LADY BEHIND EVERY FAMOUS MAN.

YOU’VE HEARD ABOUT HOW GEORGIE ROWED ACROSS THE DELAWARE,
(He jumps onto chair, puts on a tricorn hat from the rack, and strikes 'Washington Crossing The Delaware’ pose.)
BUT HE’D HAVE NEVER MADE IT, WITHOUT A WOMAN THERE:
(Chair begins to wobble.)
IF MARTHA HADN’T SHOUTED OUT, 'HEY, IDIOT, SIT DOWN!',
(He sits down abruptly, losing the hat.)
THE 'FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY' WOULD HAVE TIPPED THE BOAT AND DROWNED.

YOU’LL ALWAYS FIND MELANIA HELPING OUT HER FAMOUS DON,
WITH ALL THE PREPARATIONS FOR HIS JOURNEYS FAR AND YON.
SHE’S CONSTANTLY REMINDING HIM TO KEEP HIS BRITCHES ON.
(She shakes her finger at him, pointing to his crotch. He grabs to make sure his pants are on.)
YOU’LL ALWAYS FIND MELANIA HELPING OUT HER FAMOUS DON.

WELL, LITTLE ISAAC NEWTON DIDN’T WANT TO CLEAN HIS ROOM,
(He leans back in the chair and crosses his arms smugly.)
HE WAS HIDING IN THE GARDEN WHEN AN APPLE WENT 'KER—BOOM'.
(She drops a hat [perhaps one with an Apple company logo?] from the rack onto him.)
THAT LAZY JERK WOULD NEVER HAVE DISCOVERED GRAVITY, IF IT WASN’T FOR HIS MOTHER BACK THERE SHAKING ON THAT TREE. (She shakes the rack, causing more hats to fall on him, as he falls out of the chair.)

YOU’LL ALWAYS FIND A JILL SUPPORTING EVERY FAMOUS JACK, (She helps him to his feet.) TO KEEP HIM MOVING FORWARD, AND NEVER SLIPPING BACK. (She pushes him across the room.) AND IF HE STARTS TO FALTER, SHE’LL JUST GIVE HIM A GOOD WHACK! (He flinches as she fakes a swing at him.)

YOU’LL ALWAYS FIND A JILL SUPPORTING EVERY FAMOUS JACK.

HAVE YOU WONDERED WHY BEN FRANKLIN WAS OUT PLAYING WITH A KITE, (He turns his back to audience, and pantomimes working a kite string.) IN THE MIDDLE OF A RAINSTORM ON A DARK AND DREARY NIGHT? (Thunder and lightning from offstage.) IT SEEMS HIS WIFE HAD KICKED HIM OUT FOR COMING HOME QUITE CROCKED, SHE SAID, 'YOU KNEW YOU HAD IT COMING, BEN, YOU SHOULDN’T LOOK SO SHOCKED!'. (He turns to face her, with hair mussed up and a 'shocked' look on his face.)

YOU’LL ALWAYS FIND A WOMAN BEHIND EVERY FAMOUS MAN, SHE’S THERE A STEP BEHIND HIM TO LEND A HELPING HAND. SHE’LL SOMETIMES USE A ROLLING PIN, OR ELSE A FRYING PAN, YOU’LL ALWAYS FIND A WOMAN BEHIND EVERY FAMOUS MAN. OH YEAH!

MARGARET: The only problem is, you stand about as much chance of being elected president as you do being appointed Pope. If Strange hadn’t thought your tearjerker “raised in an orphanage” story would help him get votes, we would never have gotten this far. No, our only chance is for you to succeed to the presidency. And unfortunately, Strange is as healthy as a horse. What we have to do is hope that you and Strange are re-elected, and then somehow dig up (or make up) enough dirt on him to get him impeached. We just have to make sure they never find out where you were actually born. The President of the United States born in Ireland. How would that go over?!

(LEACH suddenly remembers his recording mentioning “Aughnacloy”, and fumbles in his pocket for the recorder.)

LEACH: Oh yes, that would be bad! But I’m sure there’s no way they could ever find out. You did such a wonderful job with my fake birth certificate!

MARGARET (proudly): Yes I did, didn’t I!
(Pauses as if to congratulate herself.)
Would you quit messing with that recorder! We really will be late now!

LEACH: But dear, there's something very important I need to do!

(He realizes the recorder was still on, and turns it off. But doesn't have time to erase it. Then, almost standing up to her:)
And you're the one who took up time going on about a woman behind every man.

MARGARET: Well, I was just trying to make my point. And I'm sure whatever you need to do with that silly recorder can wait until after the debate!

(She takes the recorder from him and puts it on the chair. They exit, and the stage goes dark.)

ACT I, SCENE 6 – Hotel conference room

(Strange and Leach alone, front of stage.)

LEACH: I'm sorry I missed our meeting this afternoon, Mr. President. Margaret drug me off to a luncheon with the Daughters of Something-or-other.

STRANGE: That's okay, Warren. I understand. (concerned) Uh, they didn't ask you to make a speech, did they?

LEACH: Well, they did ask if would like to say a few words. But Margaret suggested that I should save my comments for the debate.

STRANGE (relieved): Good, good. Yes, I think that was probably best.

LEACH: You know sir, sometimes I really envy you. Free to do what you please, without someone there to always “help you along” with things.

STRANGE: Well, I guess there are pros and cons to all situations. Anyway, we still have some time before the debate, and I just wanted to go over a few things, and make sure we're on the same page. (Strange flips through papers he is holding.)

LEACH: Sure. Shouldn't I have a copy of that, so I'll know what page you're on?

STRANGE: No, I don't think that's necessary. I thought maybe we could do a little role-playing.

LEACH (a little confused and worried): Well.. okay.. Should we have a “safe word”?

STRANGE: (a little disgusted): No! That's not what I mean.

STRANGE: I'll pretend to be the debate moderator, asking you a few questions.

LEACH: Okay. And who should I be?
STRANGE: You’ll just be yourself, Warren. (And that’s what has me worried.)

“LEAVE IT UP TO ME” (Strange and Leach)

STRANGE:
CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE THREAT OF GLOBAL WARMING?
YOU MUST AGREE THE SITUATION IS ALARMING.

LEACH:
INSTEAD OF CUTTING BACK EMISSIONS, AND CONTINUING TO WHINE,
JUST TURN UP THE AIR CONDITIONING. I THINK YOU’LL BE JUST FINE.

STRANGE:
AND WHAT ABOUT THOSE MEETINGS WITH THE RUSSIANS?

LEACH:
I NEVER WAS INVOLVED IN THOSE DISCUSSIONS.

STRANGE:
AND ALL THOSE EMAILS THAT ARE MISSING.. DO YOU KNOW WHERE
THEY WENT?

LEACH:
YOU CAN PROBABLY FIND OUT IF YOU JUST ASK THE PRESIDENT.

(Next lines together.)

LEACH:
LEAVE IT UP TO ME. PLEASE LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

STRANGE:
NO! LEAVE IT UP TO ME. JUST LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

STRANGE:
BUT WHAT IF THEY SHOULD ASK ABOUT YOUR IDEOLOGY?

LEACH:
AS LONG AS I DON’T HAVE TO SPELL IT, THERE’S NO PROBLEM I CAN
SEE.

(Next lines together.)

LEACH:
I CAN DO JUST FINE, IF YOU WILL LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

STRANGE:
I THINK THINGS WILL WORK OUT BETTER IF YOU LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

STRANGE:
IS IT TRUE THAT YOU WERE THE PROПONENTS,
OF A BILL THAT IT IS SAID BY YOUR OPPONENTS,
WAS MEANT TO FUNNEL LARGE AMOUNTS INTO YOUR PERSONAL
ACCOUNTS?

LEACH:
I DIDN’T REALLY UNDERSTAND IT, BUT IT TURNED OUT LIKE WE
PLANNED IT.

STRANGE:
SOME PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THEY’RE FULL OF KNOWLEDGE,
WANT TO ELIMINATE THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE.
LEACH: THAT IS A NARROW-MINDED PLAN THAT I WOULD CERTAINLY CONDEMN!
WE SHOULD BE BUILDING MORE NEW SCHOOLS; NOT ELIMINATING THEM!

(Next lines together.)

LEACH: LEAVE IT UP TO ME. PLEASE LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

STRANGE: PLEASE! LEAVE IT UP TO ME. JUST LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

STRANGE: IF A QUESTION SHOULD ARISE ABOUT THE WORLD’S ECONOMY.

LEACH: I’M SURE I COULD HANDLE IT.

STRANGE: WE’LL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.

(Next lines together.)

LEACH: I CAN DO JUST FINE, IF YOU WILL LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

STRANGE: I THINK THINGS WILL WORK OUT BETTER IF YOU LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

(Together.)

LEACH: LEAVE IT UP TO ME. JUST LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

STRANGE: LEAVE IT UP TO ME. PLEASE LEAVE IT UP TO ME.

STRANGE: YOU WILL NEED TO BE PREPARED FOR EACH EVENUALITY.
AND HONESTY IS SOMETIMES NOT THE PERFECT POLICY.

(Together.)

LEACH: I CAN DO JUST FINE, IF YOU WILL LEAVE.. IT.. UP.. TO.. ME.

STRANGE: I THINK THINGS WILL WORK OUT BETTER IF YOU LEAVE.. IT.. UP.. TO.. ME.

ACT I, SCENE 7 – U.S. Senate podium

(Stage remains dark. News music plays. Spot comes up on CHRIS in the news booth.)

“FILIBUSTER #2” (Meacham)
CHRIS (speaking): We are checking in again on Senator Meacham. I am told that he is now reading from a copy of the 1985 Kansas City telephone directory. I believe he is up to the letter “P”.

(Spot fades on news booth, and comes up on MEACHAM on stage apron, speaking behind a lectern.)

MEACHAM:

DOCTOR PATRICK W PACE, 605 PACIFIC PLACE
555-1036, WHY DID I ENTER POLITICS?

PARSON PERCIVAL J PAYNE, 93 PERSIMMON LANE
555-6287, I THINK I KNOW HIS BROTHER KEVIN.

MRS. PENNY PELAFORT, 1800 PATTON COURT
555-4380 (“ZERO”), I’LL NEVER MAKE IT TO “SHAPIRO”!

PAUL AND PATTY PETTIGREW, 83 PARK AVENUE
555-1623, I REALLY NEED A BREAK TO PEE!

HOW LONG MUST I CONTINUE TO EXTEND THIS,
JUST TO KEEP THE FLOOR FROM VOTING ON A BILL?
I REALLY WISH THAT I COULD SIMPLY END THIS.
MY FEET ARE SORE; MY VOICE IS GONE, I THINK THAT I HAVE HAD MY..

PHILIP PIPER’S PICKLE STORE, 404 EAST PELINORE
555-0261, THIS REALLY ISN’T ANY FUN.

(Spot switches back to news booth, and music segues into news music.)

CHRIS:
I have to say, the senator isn’t looking too well. And the debate starts in just about two hours. He’s going to have to choose soon between continuing this filibuster and making it to the debate. Be sure to tune in to exclusive W.A.S.H. coverage tonight, with “yours truly” as the debate moderator.

(Spot fades on news booth.)

ACT I, SCENE 8 – Hotel ballroom

(Preparations are being made for the debate. The entire cast is on stage, except for Chris and Meacham, milling around and talking. STOUT and STRONG can be more anonymous, without Secret Service gear. MANDY is on stage as the TV news director. NADIA is carrying an hor’dourve tray.)

ALLISON (to NADIA): Thank you so much, Nadia, for helping out with serving tonight. Apparently there is some kind of flu epidemic amongst the kitchen staff. But, I hear it’s getting much better!

NADIA: Of course, ma’am! Always willing to help with anything for the future owner of the Van Buren hotel chain!
ALLISON: Well, we'll see.

NADIA: Oh look, there's Ms. Fellows!

(NADIA approaches SUZANNE.)

Hello, Ms. Fellows! Would you care for an “orr derve”? (pronounced very hesitantly). I hear these “peh-teet fours” (butchering pronunciation) are very good. I don’t know why they call them that? They’re petite, all right; but we sure have more than four of them. Maybe means you have to eat at least four to get full?

SUZANNE: They do look delicious; but nothing for me right now, thank you.

NADIA: Could I get you a glass of champagne?

SUZANNE: Thank you, but I think I need to keep all my wits about me for the debate.

ALLISON: Frankly, I don’t think you would need all of your wits, since your opponent is barely a half-wit!

ALLISON (to NADIA): Now dear, make sure you are offering hor’dourves to everyone. We need to at least pretend that we are impartial.

(LEACH approaches and tries to take something from the tray. NADIA pulls it away, and he has to lurch to grab for it.)

NADIA: Oh, don’t worry. I have some cheese that was left out in the sun for a few days to offer President Strange!

(SUZANNE’s cell phone rings, and she answers.)

SUZANNE: Excuse me.

(CRIS enters.)

CRIS: Has anyone heard from Senator Meacham? We’re supposed to be on the air in fifteen minutes! Is he still going on with that stupid filibuster?!

SUZANNE: His driver just called. He should be here any minute.

(MEACHAM enters, looking very tired and “bedraggled”)

SUZANNE (to MEACHAM): Senator, we were afraid you weren’t going to make it! So you gave up on the filibuster?

MEACHAM: Oh no. I just suspended it.

SUZANNE: But I thought you had to keep talking to keep the floor?
MEACHAM: Well, there were only a few folks left in the chamber. And you know that most of those guys are in their eighties. Once it got past their naptime, they all dozed off pretty quickly. I put on a recording of some of President Strange’s speeches. That should keep them snoozing until after the debate, and I'll pick things back up again.

SUZANNE: But are you sure you will be okay for the debate? You look exhausted!

MEACHAM: Don’t worry about me. I'll be fine. I’m just a little concerned about you, Suzanne.

SUZANNE: Me? Oh, I’m okay. What are you concerned about?

MEACHAM: I just hope you're prepared for the dog-eat-dog world of D.C. It's a lot different from Idaho, you know. Just look at me. Do you want to end up like this?

I remember when I was a brash young freshman congressman, ready to take on the world, and battle my opponents into the wee hours when needed. Now I’m just another one of the “old codgers” who can barely stay awake in the chambers.

SUZANNE: Well, you haven’t slept for about 36 hours! I’m surprised you’re even still standing!

MEACHAM: All those battles have really been taking their toll on me. And then things went even more downhill when I lost my wife a few years ago.

SUZANNE: Oh, sir! I never knew that! I wasn’t really aware of anything about your personal life. If you want to keep that private...

MEACHAM: No, no, it will probably help me to talk about it. I haven’t really shared much about it with anyone else.

She seemed to be doing fine, until I became Chair of the Foreign Relations committee, and had to start doing a lot of travelling around the world. My wife really struggled with me being gone so much, and not having much time for her. So I decided to start taking her on some trips with me, and she seemed to be taking to it very well.

SUZANNE: Well, it sounds like that helped the two of you grow closer.

MEACHAM: Yes, for a while. Then we were staying at a very nice hotel in Milan, when I lost her.

SUZANNE: I’m so sorry! How did she go? Was it an illness? Or an accident?

MEACHAM: Oh no. She’s still very much alive and well, as far as I know. I lost her… to a hotel bartender named Enrico, who she was sleeping with while I was away in meetings. Got back to the room one night and found a note on the bed. The last I heard, they were living together in a villa in Sanremo.

SUZANNE: (hesitantly) Oh... well... I'm... still sorry.
MEACHAM: Well, thanks for listening. (wearily) I just wish I could catch a quick nap.

(MEACHAM wanders away from her in a bit of a daze.)

SUZANNE (to front of stage): I still can’t believe this is really happening to me. I’m running for Vice President of the United States! It seems like only yesterday I was a skinny little kid working at Dan’s Dairy Delite back in Cooper Valley, Idaho.

(STRANGE overhears her and looks up, startled. He approaches her, and they move to the front on one side of the stage, as if out of earshot of the others.)

STRANGE: Suzy? Suzy McGrewhue? Is that really you?

SUZANNE: I prefer Suzanne, if you don’t mind. And where did you ever dig up McGrewhue? Nobody’s called me by that name for twenty years! Your staff much be doing some pretty extensive “mud-slinging” research. Well, you’ll have to dig pretty deep in my closet to find any skeletons.

STRANGE: You don’t recognize me, do you?

SUZANNE: Well, I’ll have to admit I’m not one of your biggest fans, but I do know the President of the United States when I see him!

STRANGE: No, no! Cooper Valley, Idaho. It was thirty years ago. I had a summer job at the lumber mill and you were a carhop at Dan’s Dairy Delite.

SUZANNE (loudly): Larry Martin?!

(Lowers her voice as people look at them. Continues very confused.) Larry Martin? But..but., your name isn’t Larry Martin, it’s Joel Strange!

STRANGE (also puzzled): And you’re not Suzy McGrewhue, you’re Suzanne Fellows. I didn’t think you had ever married?

SUZANNE (remembering her feminism): A woman can do a simple thing like changing her name without the benefit of wedding vows, you know; not to mention the annoying side-effect of having a husband following her around! I decided to change to my mother’s maiden name when I started law school. I just couldn’t bear the thought of going through my life hearing giggles from the jury box every time a judge said, “And representing the defendant, Sue McGrewhue”.

STRANGE: Well, I suppose you have a point. Personally, though, I think most of our courts could stand a few giggles now and then.

(MARGARET, on the other side of the stage, notices the two talking, and moves a little closer to try to eavesdrop. LEACH is close by her, nibbling from an hors d’oeuvre plate.)
SUZANNE: But what about Larry Martin? Although I think I would have stayed with that. “President Martin” would certainly sound more dignified than “President Strange”!

STRANGE: I’m afraid there never was really a Larry Martin. That was all my dad’s idea. He thought that if I got a summer job off in another state under a false name, I could see what the real world was like, without all the special treatment I usually got as a senator’s son.

SUZANNE: That’s right. Of course politics is a family business with you, unlike some of us who’ve had to work our way up with the common people. I see you lost the long hair and beard. And I recall we used to do a little..

(Makes a “pot-smoking” motion with her hand.)

.. occasionally. Are you sneaking one in the Oval Office every now and then?

(STRANGE quickly pushes her hand down, and looks around to make sure no one else saw.)

STRANGE: Of course not! That was a long time ago. We were just kids, trying different things.

SUZANNE (with an evil grin): Yes, as I recall we did try several things!

STRANGE: Looks like your pigtails are gone. And you’ve filled out very nicely. I believe you’ve put on a few pounds. Don’t get me wrong; all in the right places!

SUZANNE (indignantly): Flattery will certainly get you nowhere! Except maybe into court with a sexual harassment suit!

STRANGE: Ah, but you forget! “A sitting president cannot be prosecuted for a crime.” And from what I hear, your “tastes”, shall we say, have changed, and I’m no longer your “type” anyway.

SUZANNE: I don’t know where those rumors got started! You’re definitely not my type of person.

(looking him up and down)

But I believe you would still meet the physical requirements.

MARGARET (stage whisper to LEACH): Warren.

(LEACH ignores her, busy eating.)

MARGARET (more insistent): Warren! There is something fishy here!

LEACH: Oh, that’s just the salmon. It’s very good! Would you like to try some?

(He offers her a bite, and she pushes it away.)

MARGARET: Something is going on between Strange and Suzanne Fellows. They are over there talking like they’re old friends. Something about Idaho, and someone named Larry. And she was making a very suspicious motion with her hand.

(She mimics the “pot-smoking” motion, carefully out of sight of others.)
LEACH: She was probably just getting something out of her teeth. Maybe some of the spinach from this dip.

(He takes a toothpick from his plate and demonstrates the same motion cleaning his teeth.)

LEACH: Do I have anything in my teeth? I would hate for that to embarrass me during the debate.

(LEACH flashes his teeth.)

MARGARET: No, your teeth are fine. And believe me, that’s the least of your worries for embarrassing yourself in the debate! I’m telling you there’s something funny here. We need to keep our eyes and ears open.

MANDY: Okay, everyone, two minutes. I’d like to have the candidates in their places so we can go over a couple of things.

STRANGE (to SUZANNE): Listen, I think it’s probably best that we keep “Larry and Suzy” safely buried in the past. The press would have a field day with that kind of story, especially those vultures from W.A.S.H!

SUZANNE: For once I agree with you completely!

(Candidates make their way to their places.)

MANDY: Now remember, since we’re using an open format, it’s very important that everyone stay on their marks. We’ll be using several different camera angles and we want to be sure that no one is blocked. Okay, fifteen seconds. Quiet, please!

(MANDY cues CHRIS, on stage.)

CHRIS: Good evening, I’m Chris Phillips. Welcome to exclusive W.A.S.H. coverage of tonight’s historic event. This will be the first time that all four of the candidates from the major parties for president and vice-president will be in the same debate.

(CHRIS turns to the candidates.)

Welcome, gentlemen and Ms. Fellows. Shall we begin? I’d like to remind you to please keep your statements brief and to the point.

“WHERE DO YOU STAND?” (All)

(All of the cast except the four candidates are part of the AUDIENCE for the song.)

CHRIS (speaking): Your first topic is education. Would each of you comment briefly on what you would do to improve the quality of education in the United States in the next four years. President Strange, you may answer first.

STRANGE:

I HAVE A STRONG BELIEF IN THE NEED, FOR EVERY VOTER TO KNOW HOW TO READ,
SO I AM DRAFTING A LAW TO ABOLISH ILLITERACY.
MEACHAM:
IF ALL OF THE TEACHERS WILL GIVE ME THEIR VOTE, I PROMISE THAT I WILL PROMOTE, ANY AMENDMENT TO INCREASE THEIR SALARY.

SUZANNE:
WHENEVER A STUDENT WISHES TO PRAY, I CERTAINLY THINK THAT IT IS OKAY, BUT SHE SHOULD REFRAIN FROM MENTIONING ANY PARTICULAR GOD.

LEACH:
AND THERE IS ONE THING WE SHOULD NOT OVERLOOK. THAT I THINK I ONCE READ IN A BOOK? PARENTS SHOULD ALWAYS SPARE THE CHILD AND SPOIL THE ROD.

AUDIENCE:
BUT WHERE DO YOU STAND? WHAT IS YOUR PLAN?

STOUT:
WILL YOU HELP THE RICH GET RICHER, OR SUPPORT THE WORKING CLASS?

AUDIENCE:
WHAT WOULD YOU DO, IF WE VOTED FOR YOU?

JACK:
WOULD YOU STAND UP FOR YOUR COUNTRY, OR JUST SIT THERE ON YOUR AS.

AUDIENCE (interrupting):
ASININE AND VAGUE CONViction. WHY DOES THIS ALL SOUND LIKE FICTION?

CHRIS: Well, that was certainly brief, anyway! We'll move on to the next subject. Members of the opposition party have accused the administration of showing favoritism to certain special interest groups. How does each of you feel about these claims? Vice President Leach?

LEACH:
I AM OPPOSED TO ANYTHING THAT, FAVORS THE THIN FOLKS OVER THE FAT, OR THAT PROHIBITS A LADY FROM DRIVING AN AUTOMOBILE.

STRANGE:
I CERTAINLY THINK THAT OUR CURRENT RÉGIME, SUPPORTS THE AMERICAN DREAM, AND FOR THE MOMENT THAT'S EXACTLY HOW I FEEL!

SUZANNE:
I HAVE A PAPER HERE THAT EXPLAINS, HOW ALL THE PRESIDENT’S FAMILY GAINS, FROM GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS WITH HIS COUSINS, UNCLEs AND AUNTS.

MEACHAM:
AND IT’S AN EASILY PROVABLE FACT, THAT THEIR ELECTION FUNDING IS BACKED, BY SEVERAL SECRET RUSSIAN ROCKET BUILDING PLANTS.

AUDIENCE:
BUT WHERE DO YOU STAND? WHAT IS YOUR PLAN?

MANDY:
COULD YOU OVERSEE THE COUNTRY IF WE DROPPED IT YOUR LAP?

AUDIENCE:
GIVE US A CLUE, TO YOUR POINT OF VIEW!

NADIA:
ARE YOU TELLING US THE TRUTH, OR JUST ANOTHER LOAD OF CR..

AUDIENCE (interrupting):
CRASS AND MINDLESS ORATORY. CAN’T WE GET YOUR HONEST STORY?

CHRIS: Thank you! I... think...? Our next topic of discussion is the area of foreign aid. Would each of you briefly describe your views on this subject. Ms. Fellows, would you begin?

SUZANNE:
I HAVE BEEN MAKING A PERSONAL LIST, OF EVERY NATION THAT WE SHOULD ASSIST, DURING MY ANNUAL CRUISE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

MEACHAM:
I HAVE A COUSIN WHO LIVES IN QUEBEC, AN UNCLE WHO MARRIED A CZECH, AND I COULD GIVE THEM JOBS IF YOU WOULD VOTE FOR ME.

STRANGE:
IN AN ATTEMPT TO BALANCE OUR DEBT, I STRONGLY BELIEVE WE SHOULD CAREFULLY VET, ALL OF THE COUNTRIES THAT WE SHOULD DECIDE TO GIVE ANYTHING TO.

LEACH:
I HAVE DEVISED AN INFALLIBLE PLAN, FOR GIVING THE BOMB TO IRAN, SO THEY CAN BLOW US UP BEFORE THE RUSSIANS DO.

AUDIENCE:
BUT WHERE DO YOU STAND? WHAT IS YOUR PLAN?

ALLISON:
YOUR PLATFORM SEEMS SO VAGUE, WHY CAN’T YOU MAKE IT MORE CLEAR-CUT?

AUDIENCE:
IF YOU SHOULD WIN, WHERE WOULD YOU BEGIN?

JACK:
WILL YOU TRY TO MAKE THINGS BETTER, AND GET OFF YOUR LAZY BU..

AUDIENCE (interrupting):
BUNCH OF MEANINGLESS HAND-WRINGING. WHAT’S THE PROMISE YOU ARE BRINGING?

CHRIS: Our final subject is the state of the nation’s economy. What do you feel should be done to help lift the country out of the current recession? Senator Meacham, would you go first?

(MEACHAM doesn’t respond, and appears to be dozing.)

CHRIS: Senator Meacham? (pause) Senator Meacham!
(MEACHAM is jolted awake, and for a moment thinks he is still doing the filibuster.)

MEACHAM (sings, but NOT along with the music):
LARKIN BATTED 302 IN NINETEEN NINETY-ONE.
CANSECO LED THE MAJOR LEAGUES WITH 44 HOME RUNS.

CHRI$ (interrupting): Senator.. The filibuster is over. The question is about improving the nation's economy. (pause) Please.

MEACHAM:
ALL OF THE STUDIES THAT I HAVE REVIEWED, SAY PEOPLE ARE WASTING THEIR MONEY ON FOOD, AND ALSO ON SHELTER AND CLOTHING AND OTHER EXTRANEOUS FRILLS.

SUZANNE:
AND I AM CERTAIN THAT WE COULD OFFSET, ALL OF OUR NATIONAL DEBT, IF WE JUST PRINT A DOZEN TRILLION DOLLAR BILLS.

STRANGE:
I AM IN FAVOR OF ANY NEW PLAN, THAT IN THE VIEW OF SOCIETY CAN, POSSIBLY PUT OUR DECLINING ECONOMY BACK IN THE PINK.

LEACH:
I AM OPPOSED TO ATTACKING PERU, MY FAVORITE COLOR IS BLUE, AND I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I THINK!

AUDIENCE:
BUT WHERE DO YOU STAND? WHAT IS YOUR PLAN?

STRONG:
ARE YOU TRUE AS HONEST ABE OR JUST ANOTHER HYPOCRITE?

AUDIENCE:
IS IT NAIVE FOR US TO BELIEVE,

NADIA:
ALL THE PROMISES YOU’RE MAKING, ARE THEY JUST A PILE OF SH..

AUDIENCE (interrupting):
SHIFTLESS, EMPTY FABRICATIONS. SHOULD WE LET YOU LEAD OUR NATION?

(All dance.)

SUZANNE, LEACH, MEACHAM, STRANGE:
WE GAVE YOU OUR PLAN, BUT YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND.

AUDIENCE:
BUT WE NEVER HEARD A WORD ABOUT THE ANSWERS WE DEMAND.

SUZANNE, LEACH, MEACHAM, STRANGE:
WHAT DIDN’T YOU HEAR? WE MADE IT CLEAR:
WE’LL MAKE OUR STAND —— RIGHT —— HERE.

AUDIENCE (echoing & overlapping):
BUT WHERE DO YOU STAND? PLEASE GIVE US YOUR PLAN RIGHT HERE!
(Leach is out of place.)

MARGARET (spoken): Warren! You’re supposed to stand right here!
(She moves LEACH to the right spot.)

(As music ends, STRANGE and SUZANNE end up in center with their hands upraised together. They suddenly realize what they are doing and move apart quickly. Lights out, curtain closes, end of Act I.)
ACT II, SCENE 1 – The Oval Office / Houston hotel room

(Curtain up. Split stage: STRANGE in the Oval Office. SUZANNE in a hotel room. Strange’s office is lit. STRANGE puts handkerchief over telephone mouthpiece and dials.)

STRANGE (disguising voice): Yes, operator. Could you give me a number for the Arcadia Hotel in Houston? (pause) (louder) The Arcadia Hotel. (pause) No, I can’t speak any more clearly, you’ll just have to listen more clearly! (pause) Thank you.

(Hangs up phone. Removes handkerchief, and throws it down as if thinking ‘This won’t work!’, and dials again. This time speaks with broad Texas accent.)

Hello there, young lady. Could you please ring the suite of Suzanne Fellows. (pause) (forgetting accent) Well, I believe she’ll speak to the president of ... (catching himself) er..uh.. the president of Arcadia Hotels! (pause) Mr. Namagichi? Young lady, just who is the president of Arcadia Hotels? (pause) Of course! Sekio Namagichi! If I am the president of Arcadia, then it follows, does it not, that I must be Sekio Namagichi.

(He pauses, then continues with a bad Japanese accent.)

Yes, of course I was disguising my voice! It’s a technique I use when calling our hotels to spot check for courtesy to callers and possible incompetency of personnel. By the way, may I have your name please? (pause) Oh, never mind. We’ll let it go this time. Just ring me through to Ms. Fellows, please. I just hope she has no complaints about her treatment at the Arcadia!

(Other half of stage is lit, showing Suzanne’s hotel room, which should look different from the one in the earlier scene. Suzanne is at the desk. The phone rings and her aide MELISSA answers.)

MELISSA: Hello?

STRANGE: Yes, is Ms. Fellows in?

MELISSA: May I ask who is calling?

STRANGE: Just tell her that it’s Larry Martin.

MELISSA (to SUZANNE): Ms. Fellows, it’s a Larry Martin.

SUZANNE (puzzled): Larry Martin? (realizing) Larry Martin! (trying to cover) Er.. Larry Martin? No, I don’t believe I know a Larry Martin.

MELISSA (into phone): I’m sorry. Ms. Fellows isn’t taking any..
SUZANNE (interrupting): Wait. (smugly) I'll talk to Mr. Martin. We wouldn't want to ignore a potential voter. Would you mind getting me a latte, Melissa? I was told that little place around the corner is excellent. I believe you know how I like it?

(MELISSA exits. SUZANNE puts phone receiver down, and switches to speaker phone.)

“WHAT A RIDICULOUS IDEA” (Strange and Suzanne)

SUZANNE:
I CAN’T BELIEVE YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO CALL ME ON THE PHONE.
I WISH THAT YOU WOULD GO AWAY AND JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!

STRANGE:
“ALONE” IS SUCH A LONELY WORD.

SUZANNE (spoken):
WELL YES, THAT’S WHAT IT MEANS!

STRANGE:
DON’T YOU MISS OUR TIMES TOGETHER?

SUZANNE:
WE WERE ONLY IN OUR TEENS!

THAT WE COULD RECONNECT, THAT OUR LIVES WOULD INTERSECT, IT’S
A RIDICULOUS IDEA!

STRANGE:
YOU CAN'T DENY THAT YOU AND I STILL FEEL A STRONG CONNECTION.

SUZANNE:
YOU’RE WASTING ALL YOUR TIME TRYING TO TOY WITH MY
AFFECTION.

STRANGE:
IF WE CAN WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN FIND A COMPROMISE.
AND START TO RID OUR COUNTRY OF THE BIGOTRY AND LIES.

SUZANNE
THAT TWO OF SUCH POLITICAL EXTREMES SHOULD FORM A
PARTNERSHIP JUST SEEMS, LIKE A RIDICULOUS I-DEA!

STRANGE:
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PLANS THAT WE WERE MAKING, BACK IN
COOPER VALLEY, IDAHO?

SUZANNE:
BUT ALL OF OUR IDEAS YOU’VE BEEN FORSAKING.
THAT WAS A MILLION MILES AWAY, AND OH SO VERY LONG AGO.

SUZANNE:
YOU’RE THE ONE WHO VETOED UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE!
AND YOU DON’T GIVE A DAMN THAT WE’RE POLLUTING OUR AIR.
YOU HAVEN’T SHOWN CONCERN ABOUT THE POOR AND THE NEEDY.
YOU ONLY GIVE SUPPORT TO ALL THE RICH AND THE GREEDY.
SUGGESTING I CONSORT, WITH A PERSON OF YOUR SORT,
WHAT A RIDICULOUS I-DEA!

STRANGE:
I REALIZE MY VIEWS HAVE BEEN AFFECTED,
BY FACTORS SOMETIMES OUT OF MY CONTROL.
I THINK MY POINT OF VIEW COULD BE CORRECTED.

SUZANNE:
BUT I DON’T SEE HOW WE COULD EVER FIND A COMMON GOAL.

STRANGE:
PERHAPS IF WE COULD ONLY GET TOGETHER FOR A CHAT?

SUZANNE:
IMagine what the media would make out of that!

STRANGE:
WE COULD SNEAK OUT LATE AT NIGHT; WE COULD DRESS IN DISGUISE.
MEET SECRETLY, JUST YOU AND ME, WITH NO PRYING EYES.

PLEASE GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT, AND I BELIEVE YOU’LL FIND IT’S NOT SUCH A RIDICULOUS IDEA.

SUZANNE:
YES, IT’S RIDICULOUS...

(Song stops, as there is a knock on Suzanne’s door.)

MELISSA (from offstage): I have your latte, Ms. Fellows.

SUZANNE (covering phone): Yes, come in.

(MELISSA enters. SUZANNE picks up phone, and switches off from speaker phone.)

SUZANNE (into phone, briskly): Mr. Martin, as I’ve told you, I have no interest in your proposal!

STRANGE: I don’t remember proposing to you! At least, not yet. You sure do seem to be rushing things!

SUZANNE: How could I make it any more clear?! I don’t agree with your proposition.

STRANGE: Ah! So you’d like to be propositioned first?! Okay. Then we could see what else develops.

SUZANNE: Now you’re just twisting my words! Please don’t call me again!

STRANGE: I have a feeling you’re going to change your mind, Suzy. Be watching for a personal ad in the New York Times.

SUZANNE: As I’ve told you before, I think the whole thing is a ridiculous idea!

(SUZANNE hangs the phone up angrily. Strange’s side of stage goes dark.)
MELISSA: Is everything all right, ma’am??

SUZANNE: Yes, Melissa. It’s just someone I used to (pauses, looking for the right word) work with, back in Idaho. For some reason he seems to think that he can still have some influence over my decisions. Some people just never know when it’s time to put the past behind them!

Men!! Can’t live with them, ...(pause)
Where’s that latte?!

(Stage goes dark.)

ACT II, SCENE 2 – U.S. Senate podium

(News music plays. As music fades, spot comes up on CHRIS in the news booth.)

“FILIBUSTER #3” (Meacham)

CHRIS (speaking): Well folks, he’s at it again! After barely staying awake through the debate, and having no sleep for several days, Senator Meacham is attempting to restart his filibuster. I believe he has now started reading from the dictionary.

(Spot fades on news booth, and comes up on MEACHAM on stage apron, speaking behind a lectern or music stand.)

MEACHAM:
I WONDER, IF I STOPPED RIGHT NOW, IF ANYONE WOULD NOTICE?
A-BOU-LI-A: A STATE OF MIND WITH LOSS OF ONE’S VOLITION.
THE PERFECT DEFINITION OF MY MENTAL DISPOSITION.

A-BLA-TION: MEANS TO VAPORIZE, ERODE AWAY, OR MELT.
IT SEEMS LIKE I’VE BEEN TALKING SINCE THE TERM OF ROOSEVELT.
A-BAN-DON: MEANS TO LEAVE ALONE AND UTTERLY FORSAKE.
THAT’S WHAT I SOON WILL HAVE TO DO, IF I DON’T GET A BATHROOM BREAK!

WHATEVER MADE ME THINK I COULD ACHIEVE THIS?
MY THROAT IS SORE, AND NOW I HAVE A COUGH. (cough.. cough..)
I THINK IT’S TIME TO GIVE IT UP AND LEAVE THIS.
I REALLY SMELL; NOT FEELING WELL, I WISH THAT I COULD JUST TAKE...

(MEACHAM collapses. Spot switches to news booth.)

CHRIS: It appears that Senator Meacham has just collapsed.
(Holds hand to ear as if listening.)
Yes, yes. I am told that the senator is conscious. He apparently is just suffering from exhaustion, and will be taken to the hospital for evaluation. Well... he IS 76
years old, and hasn’t slept for three days. Not too surprising. W.A.S.H. will keep you posted on his condition. And we will have to see how this might affect the election. Stay tuned.

ACT II, SCENE 3 – The Leachs’ bedroom

(Split stage. Lights come up on LEACH and MARGARET in their bedroom on one side of stage.)

MARGARET: So you’re sure that’s what he said?

LEACH: Yes, I’m sure. Like you said, I was listening for anything suspicious, so I waited around outside the Oval Office before our meeting. I noticed he was talking on a cell phone, which seemed odd, since he normally uses his desk phone.

MARGARET: Hmmm, probably one of those “burner” phones that all the crooks use on the crime shows. Probably a conversation he wanted to keep “off the record”. What did you hear?

LEACH: Well, I heard something about “New York Times, personal ad”. Then he said, “From Larry to Suzy”.

MARGARET: Yes, yes! When I heard them talking before the debate, I heard her mention Larry. And Suzanne could be Suzy. Probably the secret code names they’re using. He must have put an ad in the Times to send her a message. I suspect this has something to do with the Russians; or maybe the Chinese. Then what?

LEACH: About then someone came along, and I didn’t hear any more.

MARGARET: What!? That’s all you got? Well, we’re just going to have to start looking through the paper until we find that ad. Go see if you can find us a copy of the Times.

LEACH: Yes, dear. I’ll get right on it.

(LEACH exits.)

(During Margaret’s next lines, the spot fades on her, and comes up on SUZANNE on the opposite stage apron, holding a copy of the New York Times. The line “What a ridiculous idea!” is spoken by both of them together.)

MARGARET: Getting a secret message to her with a newspaper ad? What a ridiculous idea!

SUZANNE: What a ridiculous idea! I can’t believe I’m actually looking for this ad! I just want to see if he’s really going through with his silly plan. Though, I have to admit, I do get just a touch of those old feelings at times. I really did think that the two of us were going to make some changes in this world. I just can’t understand how he could have strayed so far from our dreams!
I remember what wonderful ideas he had; and how smart he was. Of course, someone would have to be very intelligent to become President of the United States.

(Looks toward the audience.)
Right??
(Pauses, as if expecting a response.)

"WHAT A RIDICULOUS IDEA – REPRISE1" (Suzanne)

SUZANNE:
WHY AM I EVEN DOING THIS? I JUST DON’T KNOW PRECISELY.
(Looking at photo of Strange on front page of newspaper.)
BUT I’LL SAY THIS: THE FELLA SURE DOES CLEAN UP VERY NICELY.
(She opens the paper and looks for the ad.)
PERHAPS WITH ME TO GUIDE HIM, I COULD HELP TO CHANGE HIS MIND,
AND HE COULD BE COMPASSIONATE, CONSIDERATE, AND KIND.
BUT THINKING HE COULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH ME,
IT’S A RIDICULOUS IDEA! WHAT A RIDICULOUS...

(SUZANNE and the music stop in the middle of the song as she spots the ad. During her next lines, spot fades back from her to LEACH and MARGARET, who is also reading from the paper. Underlined lines again are spoken together.)

SUZANNE (excited): This is it!
(reading from paper)
“From Larry to Suzy: Man, that dude on the C-note sure was L-7!”

MARGARET (reading from paper): “Man, that dude on the C-note sure was L-7! See you 118 days after my birthday, 2100, bench in NE corner.” It’s a riddle. We just have to figure it out.

LEACH: Ooo, I LOVE riddles! (dramatically) To quote the esteemed Sir Winston Churchill, “It’s a riddle, wrapped in a puzzle, inside an enema.”

MARGARET: I think I’m just going to let that one go.

MARGARET: “That dude on the C-note”. What could that mean?

LEACH: C note. Must be something about music. Maybe “the dude” is an opera singer. When I was singing in the choir back in Boston, I used to be able to hit a high C note. La la la la.

(LEACH makes terrible high-pitched singing sounds.)

MARGARET: Warren, can you try to stay focused?! How could you squawking like a strangled chicken possibly help us solve the riddle? No, I think “c-note” is a term used by gangsters to refer to a $100 bill. They must be mixed up with the mob! This is really getting good! So, the “dude on the C-note” would be Benjamin Franklin.

LEACH: Ah, yes; Ben Franklin. One of our greatest presidents! I remember walking down to one of his stores to buy penny candy when I was a kid. I always wondered why he went
from being president to opening a chain of five-and-dime stores. Just needed some retirement income, I guess.

MARGARET (patiently?): First of all, Franklin was never president. Secondly, he didn’t own the stores; they just used his. (giving up) Oh, I don’t know why I bother!

“Sure is L-7” L-7. L-7. That seems familiar

LEACH (confidently): I’ve got this one! (pretending to be on “Jeopardy”)
Alex, I’ll take “Science Fiction Movies” for $100.
L-7... Who is: one of the robots in Star Wars? Hey, maybe they’re both aliens, and the newspaper ad is a message to the mother ship to attack earth!

MARGARET: Please, Warren! Please! Although that alien thing might be worth looking into.

I remember! “L-7” was a term used by the hippies and beatniks back in the 50s and 60s to refer to someone who was “square”. You know when you make an “L” with one hand, and a “7” with the other, and put them together it looks like a square.

(LEACH tries unsuccessfully to figure this out. Holds up 7 fingers, then tries to make an “L.”)

MARGARET: Using hippie slang? Maybe they’re into drug smuggling?
(puzzled) “Benjamin Franklin”.. “sure was square”.. Franklin.. square (realizing) Franklin Square! That’s a park just a couple of blocks from the White House. They must be setting up a secret meeting in the park to discuss their gangster friends selling drugs to the Chinese!

LEACH: Their alien gangster friends!

MARGARET (ignoring him): “118 days after my birthday..” When is Strange’s birthday?

LEACH: I really do know this one. His birthday is the Fourth of July.

MARGARET: Right! I remember what a fuss they made about him being born on the same day as our country. (sarcastically) How terribly patriotic of him! Now we just need to do the math and count up the days.

LEACH: “Thirty days hath September, April showers bring May flowers..”

MARGARET (interrupting): Never mind that. Just get me the calendar and pencil from that drawer.

(LEACH digs in a drawer and gets a calendar and pencil. MARGARET scribbles on the calendar, while he tries to count on his fingers.)
MARGARET: Let’s see: 31 days in July, minus four gives 27. 31 days in August, and 30 more in September. That makes 88 days. Subtracting 88 from 118 gives 30. Warren, that’s today! October 30! And “2100” must be 2100 hours military time, or 9 PM. They are meeting tonight at 9:00 PM at a bench in the northeast corner of Franklin Square. And it’s 6:00 PM now. I have to get busy! I’ll need some kind of disguise. And where is that recorder you were fooling with?

LEACH: I think it’s right here. (getting recorder from drawer) But, I don’t think I ever remembered to..

MARGARET (interrupting): No time for that now. Just give it to me. I think we’ve got them, Warren! I’m not sure exactly what they’re up to, but I have a good feeling about this. I think we’re going to be the next President of the United States!

LEACH: You mean... (trails off)

(Lights out.)

ACT II, SCENE 4 – The Oval Office

(Only props required are the desk and a hat/coat rack. STRANGE is alone. He is preparing three drinks.)

STRANGE: I know this could get me into a lot of trouble. But those two don’t give me much choice. There are only so many errands I can ask them to run. And they’re so efficient, they always get back before I have time to turn around. I thought that crossword puzzle I gave them to do once would take an hour, but they were done in ten minutes! They must have cheated!

STRANGE (reading from piece of paper): Mix one-fourth teaspoon of powder into an 8-ounce drink to incapacitate person for up to four hours. Amazing what you can find on the internet these days!

(STRANGE drops powder into two of the glasses and stirs.) That should be enough to keep them napping for a while.

STRANGE (to offstage): Fellas, can you come in for a moment?

(STOUT and STRONG enter.)

STOUT: I know sometimes you want a late night snack. Could we get you a sandwich ..

STRANGE (to STOUT, interrupting): No, no. No problem; and I don’t need anything, Steven.

STOUT (pointing at STRONG): Sir, he’s Steven. I’m Stanley.

(All seem confused.)
STRANGE: Are you sure?? Doesn't matter.. Anyway.. I was just thinking that I never really show my gratitude for everything you do for me. I thought maybe we could share a drink together.

STRONG: Oh sir, thank you, but we couldn’t drink on duty!

STRANGE: Oh, of course! It's just ginger ale. I'd like to make a toast to Steven Stout…

(STRANGE points tentatively to STRONG and is corrected.)

…and Stanley Strong, my faithful protectors and constant companions. I don’t know what I would do without you. (under his breath:) But it’s going to be nice to find out.

(All drink.)

“SERVE AND PROTECT” (Stout and Strong)

STOUT and STRONG:

WE LIVE TO SERVE AND PROTECT, WE HONOR AND RESPECT, YOUR SLIGHTEST WISH, IT IS OUR NEXT COMMAND.

IF YOU NEED ANYTHING AT ALL, WE’RE THERE AT YOUR BECK AND CALL,

YOU KNOW YOU’RE ALWAYS SAFE IN OUR PROTECTIVE HANDS.

WE NEVER SWERVE FROM OUR TASK WHATEVER YOU SHOULD ASK,

WE’D DO ANYTHING TO KEEP YOU SAFE FROM HARM.

NO MATTER HOW HARD THE TEST, IF EVEN YOU SHOULD REQUEST,

FOR US TO WAIT AND KEEP THE LIMO NICE AND WARM.

STOUT:

IF YOUR ENEMIES HAVE A PLAN WE’LL ALWAYS FOIL IT,

YOUR SECURITY IS OUR NEVER-ENDING GOAL.

STRONG:

AND EVERY TIME YOU GO INTO THE TOILET,

BOTH:

WE’RE JUST OUTSIDE THE DOOR IN CASE YOU NEED AN EXTRA ROLL.

YES, WE’RE EAGER TO HEED YOUR EACH AND EVERY NEED,

WE’LL NEVER FORSAKE OUR UNINTERRUPTED GUARD.

STRONG:

WE’LL NEVER DESERT YOU, SIR,

STOUT:

EXCEPT WHEN YOU PREFER,

BOTH:

FOR US TO TAKE A BREAK TO MOW AND RAKE YOUR YARD.

STRANGE (speaking) : Another toast. Here's to success in the election, and another long four years together! (Oh, so very long!)

(All drink again.)
BOTH:  
WE’RE YOUR SHIELD AND DEFENSE, IT’S NO COINCIDENCE,  
WHEREVER YOU GO WE’LL NEVER BE FAR AWAY.  

STRONG:  
WHENEVER YOU MAKE A SPEECH, WE LISTEN TO WHAT YOU TEACH,  

STOUT:  
THOUGH WE DON’T UNDERSTAND A SINGLE WORD YOU SAY.  

BOTH:  
WE’LL NEVER YIELD TO THE FOE, WHEREVER YOU MAY GO,  

STOUT:  
FROM ISTANBUL,  

STRONG:  
TO ICELAND,  

STOUT:  
TO IRAQ.  

BOTH:  
WE’RE THERE RIGHT AT YOUR SIDE, EXCEPT WHEN YOU DECIDE,  
THAT WE SHOULD GO AND WALK YOUR DOG AROUND THE BLOCK.  

STOUT:  
WHENEVER YOU NEED OUR HELP WE’RE READY AND WILLING,  
TO DO ANYTHING AT ALL ON YOUR BEHALF.  

STRONG:  
REMEMBER THE TIME YOU THOUGHT YOU’D LOST A FILLING?  

BOTH:  
WE WERE SEARCHING THROUGH YOUR GARBAGE FOR AN HOUR AND A  
HALF.  

(STRANGE puts his arms around their shoulders.)  

STRANGE (speaking): One more toast, to my two best buddies!  

STOUT: Are you sure this is just ginger ale?  

STRONG: Yeah, I’m feeling a little funny.  

STRANGE: Oh yes, only the finest ginger ale for my two best friends. I think you’re just getting very tired. It’s been a long day.  

(They drink again, finishing their glasses.)  

BOTH:  
(They are pretty well ‘plastered’ by now, slurring words, and singing out of tune..)  
WE’RE STOUT AND WE’RE STRONG, WE ALWAYS TAG ALONG,  
OUR ONLY JOB’S TO KEEP YOU SAFE AND SOUND.  

STRONG:  
YOU’RE NEVER LEFT ALONE, WITHOUT A CHAPERONE,  

STOUT:  
AND YOU CAN BET YOUR BOOTS WE’LL ALWAYS HANG AROUND.
STRONG:
    WE LIVE TO SWERVE AND CORRECT,

STOUT:
    OR CURVE AND DISINFECT,

STRONG:
    OR SOME SUCH KIND OF PATRIOTIC CRAP!

BOTH:
    AND NOW WHAT WE’RE GONNA DO, IF IT’S ALRIGHT WITH YOU,
    WE’RE GONNA CLOSE OUR EYES AND TAKE A LITTLE NAP.

    (They pass out, holding onto each other, and leaning against the hat rack.)

STRANGE (saluting them): Remember fellas: They also serve who only stand and wait!

    (STRANGE moves to the nearby stage apron, where a trenchcoat and hat
    are hanging on the wall. Stage lights fade out, and spot comes up on the
    apron.)

“What a ridiculous idea – reprise2” (Strange)

    (Throughout the song, STRANGE starts to put on the coat and hat, then
    takes them off.)

STRANGE:
    WHAT MAKES ME THINK THAT THIS COULD WORK? IT’S REALLY QUITE
    INSANE!
    I NEVER WOULD HAVE TRIED IT, IF I JUST HAD HALF A BRAIN.
    I BELIEVE THAT I SHOULD GO TO BED AND JUST FORGET IT.
    BUT IF I LET THIS CHANCE GO BY, I KNOW THAT I’LL REGRET IT.
    BUT WHY SHOULD I GO THROUGH, WITH SOME SECRET RENDEZVOUS?
    SUCH A RIDICULOUS IDEA! IT’S SO RIDICULOUS..

    (STRANGE pauses, then puts on the coat and hat, and exits. Curtain
    closes.)

ACT II, SCENE 5 – Franklin Square park, Washington, D.C.

    (This scene is staged in front of the curtain. Props are a park bench center
    stage, and a bush to one side.)

    (MARGARET enters in disguise, wearing a Yankees baseball cap, and
    wearing a scarf to cover her face.)

MARGARET (into recorder): Testing, 1, 2, 3.

    (She hides the recorder behind the park bench, and she hides behind the
    bush. STRANGE enters and sits on the bench.)
STRANGE: She was right. This certainly was a ridiculous idea! Hard to imagine that she would actually look for the ad, find it, figure it out, and show up. I guess I should give it a few minutes, just in case there is a chance...

(SUZANNE enters.)

STRANGE: You came! Does this mean that you’ve thought about the things I...

SUZANNE (interrupting; stubbornly): All it means is that I wanted to see if you would actually go through with your crazy idea. Nothing more.

STRANGE: I remember some other crazy ideas that we had once. And some great discussions about what we might do to help change the world. Great discussions mixed in with some other... fun activities!

SUZANNE: Yes, we did have lots of... fun. And we had some very ambitious ideas and plans. Then you went off to college, then to Washington, to follow in your father’s footsteps. And I frankly haven’t seen you doing much to make any meaningful changes. What happened to the dreams that we had of helping to make the world a better place?

STRANGE: I think we are both still trying to make the world a better place. It felt like going to college and taking advantage of my father’s name would give me the chance to get in a position where I could make a difference. And “changing the world” hasn’t turned out to be quite as easy as we thought back then. You have to agree that I’m able to have more influence now than I could have by just staging protest rallies in the streets? We’ve just had different dreams, and chosen different paths toward the same goal.

SUZANNE: It sounds like you’re giving up on those dreams. Maybe you are realizing that dreams don’t always come true. In fact, most of them don’t.

STRANGE: No, I’m not giving up at all! I’m just learning that it takes a lot of hard work, and a lot of cooperation by people with many different viewpoints, to make any progress. And none of that is easy in Washington.

SUZANNE: We do have very different viewpoints! I’ll give you that.

STRANGE: I remember a speech about a dream, over fifty years ago, by a man who I think you consider one of your idols.

SUZANNE: Well, that certainly hasn’t worked out the way Dr. King had hoped. You can’t claim that we have achieved equality for people of color.. different genders.. different religions..

“I BELIEVE” (Strange and Suzanne)

STRANGE (speaking over song intro): But we’ve made a start. He wouldn’t have given up on his dream. And neither should we.

STRANGE: I BELIEVE IN DREAMS, I BELIEVE THAT WISHES CAN COME TRUE, I WISH THAT YOU COULD BELIEVE IT TOO.
SUZANNE:
I BELIEVE THAT TIME HAS WASHED AWAY THE SANDS THAT WE HAD DRAWN,
OUR DREAMS UPON, I BELIEVE THEY’RE GONE.

STRANGE:
ONCE UPON A TIME, WHEN OUR LOVE WAS NEW,
LIFE WAS LIKE A FAIRY TALE, A DREAM FOR ME AND YOU.

SUZANNE:
THAT WAS LONG AGO. SOMEBODY YESTERDAY,
OUR HAPPILY-EVER-AFTERS WENT THEIR SEPARATE WAYS.

STRANGE:
MAYBE IF WE WISHED ON THE BRIGHTEST STAR UP IN THE SKY,
AND CLOSED OUR EYES,

SUZANNE:
MAYBE .. WE COULD TRY.

WISHES ON A STAR CAN’T SCALE THE WALL THAT KEEPS OUR WORLDS APART,

STRANGE:
BUT WE CAN START, JUST LISTEN WITH YOUR HEART.

SOMEBODY THERE’S A PLACE WHERE OUR LOVE CAN BE,
MORE THAN JUST A FAIRY TALE, A DREAM THAT USED TO BE.

SUZANNE:
THAT PLACE IS FAR AWAY, A MILLION MILES FROM HERE,
OUR NEVER-NEVER-LAND CAN NEVER REAPPEAR.

(Instrumental interlude.)

STRANGE:
Someone’s coming!

(Two lady JOGGERS, played by two of the chorus ladies, enter. STRANGE
grabs SUZANNE and kisses her, to hide their identities. She seems to
struggle at first.)

JOGGER #1 (alarmed, watching SUZANNE struggle): Is this man attacking you? Do you need help?!

JOGGER #2: Are you okay?!

(SUZANNE stops struggling, gives an “okay” sign with her hand, and
wraps both arms around STRANGE.)

JOGGER #2: Geez, you two should get a room!!

(Joggers exit.)
STRANGE: I BELIEVE IT’S TRUE.

SUZANNE: I BELIEVE IT TOO.

STRANGE & SUZANNE: I BELIEVE IN YOU.

(STRANGE and SUZANNE exit, with her obviously being won over by him.)

(After they have left, MARGARET comes from hiding and retrieves the tape recorder.)

MARGARET: Oh, this is even better than alien drug-dealing gangsters! Those two were lovers! And now they are planning to get back together. How romantic! And just what I need to bring them both down.

(Using “air quotes” for emphasis.)

She probably had his “love child”. Or maybe she had it “taken care of”, since she is such a believer in a woman’s “right to choose”.

(Playing with “air quotes”.)

Hmm, I wonder who came up with these things? “Very handy!”

Now I just need to get this information out, but make sure the timing is right. And I have a perfect plan.

(She puts the recorder in her purse, takes out her cell phone and dials.)

MARGARET (into phone): Hello, is this Jack Humphrey, the W.A.S.H. reporter? (pause) Never mind who I am. I have a recording that I think you will find very interesting. (pause) Well I think you will listen, because I know some very interesting information about you. That story that you reported last month about Congressman Reynolds taking bribes? I happen to know that you have been sleeping with the congressional aide who gave you that information, and she was the only person who testified. I don’t think that makes her a very reliable source. Not to mention of course what your wife and family would think about you having a little “something on the side”.

(pause) Oh, believe me, my sources are very reliable, and well-documented. So, if you don’t want this to all come out “in the WASH”, as you folks like to say; or in the Post, and on all of the news networks, you will meet me in the northeast corner of Franklin Square in ten minutes.

(pause) What do I want for the information? Oh, no payment needed. I’m just doing my duty as a concerned citizen.

(pause) Well, do you remember “Deep Throat” from Watergate? I guess you can just call me “Big Mouth”. I’ll see you soon. I’ll be wearing a Yankees baseball cap.

(Hangs up phone.)

Now for the final details.

(She takes an envelope and pen out of her purse, and reads as she writes on the envelope.)

“Do not open until after the election, under penalty of.. You know what!”

(She starts to put the recorder in the envelope, but hesitates.)
I guess I should make sure I got everything recorded.

(She rewinds and plays the recording, hearing:)

**MARGARET's voice on recording:** “No, our only chance is for you to succeed to the presidency. And unfortunately, Strange is as healthy as a horse. What we have to do is hope that you and Strange are re-elected, and then somehow dig up (or make up) enough dirt on him to get him impeached. We just have to make sure they never find out where you were actually born. The President of the United States born in Ireland. How would **that** go over?!”

**MARGARET (mortified!):** Oh my God! He had the recorder running?! Why didn’t he erase it? Oh, I guess that’s what he kept trying to tell me he needed to do. Well, I’ll just get rid of all of that before..

**(JACK enters. MARGARET covers her face and tries to get away.)**

**JACK:** Big Mouth?

**MARGARET (turning away from him):** How dare you, sir!? If you don’t leave me alone, I’ll call the police!

**JACK:** Oh, so now you’re getting shy? What about that information you promised me?

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**“FOR JUST A LITTLE SMILE” (Margaret and Jack)**

**MARGARET:**

I DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. YOU’RE MAKING QUITE A SCENE.
I THINK YOU’VE HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK. I CAN’T IMAGINE WHAT YOU THINK I KNOW?

**JACK:**

I KNOW YOU FROM SOME PLACE. WHY DO YOU HIDE YOUR FACE?
JUST CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE, MY DEAR. I’LL GIVE YOU MY UNDYING GRATITUDE,
FOR JUST A LITTLE SMILE.

**JACK:**

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO TELL ME?

**MARGARET:**

YOU’RE RUDE, AND YOU REPEL ME!

**JACK:**

I THINK I’VE HEARD YOUR VOICE BEFORE. DID I KNOW YOU IN BALTIMORE?

**MARGARET:**

YOU’RE MAKING A MISTAKE, I GREW UP IN SALT LAKE.
(She folds her hands and looks toward the heavens.)

**SANDY, LEACH, STOUT, STRONG (offstage):**
HAL-LE-LU-JAH!

**MARGARET:**

I’M GETTING QUITE DISTRAUGHT WITH YOU, THERE’S NOTHING I HAVE BROUGHT THAT YOU CAN HAVE.
JACK:  
YOU HAVE SUCH LOVELY EYES! WHY HIDE IN A DISGUISE?

MARGARET:  
I HAVE TO KEEP MY BIG MOUTH SHUT!

JACK:  
YOU THINK THAT I HAVE PATIENCE, BUT I DON’T.

MARGARET:  
I DON’T HAVE MUCH TO SHARE, I’M REALLY NOT PREPARED.  
IT’S GETTING VERY LATE AT NIGHT AND I BELIEVE IT’S BETTER IF WE  
WAIT,  
FOR JUST A LITTLE WHILE.

MARGARET:  
I’M SORRY THAT I’VE STALLED YOU. I NEVER SHOULD HAVE CALLED  
YOU.

JACK:  
SO YOU ADMIT THAT YOU’RE THE ONE!

MARGARET:  
I GUESS MY SCHEME HAS COME UNDONE.

JACK:  
YOU’RE WASTING ALL MY TIME. YOU SHOULD HAVE SAVED YOUR DIME.  
I’D RATHER BE ASLEEP IN BED, AND COUNTING SHEEP, INSTEAD OF  
HERE WITH YOU.

(Following sections overlap.)

MARGARET:  
YOU WON’T BELIEVE THE THINGS I HAVE TO TELL,  
ABOUT A SITUATION THAT COULD RUIN OUR NATION.  
THEY SAY THAT PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE.  
I’M SORRY, I DON’T HAVE MY FACTS ALL READY TO COMPILE.

JACK:  
THE TIME IS LATE. I’M BORED WITH THIS DEBATE.  
TELL ME OR I’M LEAVING, I’M GETTING TIRED OF THIS DECEIVING.  
WHY ALL THIS MYSTIQUE? JUST LET ME HAVE A PEEK.  
YOU’D BETTER GIVE ME SOMETHING MORE THAN TRICKERY AND GUILE.

(Last two lines together.)

MARGARET:  
YOU’LL HAVE TO WAIT A WHILE.

JACK:  
PLEASE GIVE ME JUST ONE SMILE.

(A MUGGER, played by the third chorus lady disguised as a man, enters,  
knocks MARGARET down, and grabs her purse, containing the recorder.  
The MUGGER grabs the wallet from her purse, throws the purse down,  
spilling its contents, then runs away. MARGARET is on the ground leaning  
against the park bench, dazed but not seriously hurt. Her face is exposed.)

MARGARET (dazed): What.. what happened?
JACK: Mrs. Vice-President! Now this makes sense! I assume you have a juicy bit of info. Undoubtedly something that you think could help further your witless husband’s career!

MARGARET: Please! Help me up.

(JACK notices the recorder.)

JACK: What's this?

MARGARET: No! You can't take that! And remember, I know all about your little affair.

JACK: Yes. But unfortunately for you, my wife has also known about it for some time, and our divorce is in process. So your little blackmail scheme won't work!

Hmm.. I guess some people would call this a “moral dilemma”. But, since neither of us seems to have much in the way of morals, I'm just going to think of it as an “opportunity”!

MARGARET: You can't just leave me like this!

JACK: Well, I don't see any blood? No bones protruding? I think you'll be okay.

“For Just a Little Smile – Reprise” (Jack)

JACK:
I GUESS IT ISN'T RIGHT TO LEAVE YOU IN THIS PLIGHT,
BUT MOVING ANY INJURED PERSON, MIGHT MAKE THEIR CONDITION WORSE.
IT SEEMS YOU'RE ONLY STUNNED, I'LL JUST CALL 9-1-1.
YOU'LL SAY THAT THIS IS WRONG, BUT I'M AFRAID THAT I'LL BE TAKING THIS ALONG,
(holds up recorder.)
FOR JUST A LITTLE WHILE.

(JACK dials cell phone.)

JACK (into phone): Hello? Yes, there is a lady injured in the northeast corner of Franklin Square.

MARGARET: You can't do this! You'll be sorry!!

JACK (into phone): Yes, yes, that's her yelling. I'm afraid she's in shock, and doesn't know what she’s saying. The poor thing! Please send some help right away!

(JACK hangs up the phone.)

MARGARET: I'm going to get you for this!!

JACK: You'll have to catch me first!

(JACK exits. Lights out.)
ACT II, SCENE 6 – Hotel ballroom

(Room is decorated in a Halloween theme. Stage remains dark during instrumental intro. Couples STRANGE/SUZANNE and STOUT/SANDY are on stage at the start. Throughout the song LEACH/MARGARET enter. One or two other couples enter, chosen from STRONG, MEACHAM, MANDY, ANDIE.)

“MASKS” (Ensemble)

(The dance is choreographed so that dancers are frequently changing partners during the chorus vocal section. STRANGE and SUZANNE start together, end up together again at the beginning of each of their verses, and stay together through the verse. Then the switching starts again.)

MEN:
TAKING A NEW PARTNER AND TWIRL HER AROUND,
NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR ROMANCE.
FACES ALL COVERED, AND NAMES NEVER FOUND,
HERE IN THIS MASQUERADE DANCE.

WOMEN:
WHY ARE YOU HIDING? OH WHO CAN YOU BE?
LET ME HAVE ONE LITTLE GLANCE.
WHAT DO YOU LOOK LIKE? OH PLEASE LET ME SEE,
DURING THIS MASQUERADE DANCE.

STRANGE:
WE MEET IN DISGUISE, KEEPING OUR LIES.
OTHERS MUST WONDER AND NEVER CAN UNDERSTAND WHY.

SUZANNE:
WHY MUST WE HIDE, FEELINGS INSIDE?
NEVER DECLARING LOVE,

STRANGE & SUZANNE:
WEARING OUR LOVE BEHIND MASKS.

SUZANNE:
WE MEET IN THE SHADE, ALWAYS AFRAID,
OF WHAT THEY’RE THINKING OF, CAN’T THINK OF LINKING OUR HANDS.

STRANGE:
HANDCUFFED BY FEAR, SOMEONE WILL HEAR.
IT KEEPS DIVIDING US,

STRANGE & SUZANNE:
HIDING US, BEHIND THESE MASKS.

WOMEN:
WALTZING AND GLIDING, WE SOAR ‘CROSS THE FLOOR,
SPINNING AROUND IN A TRANCE.
THE MORE YOU DENY ME, THE MORE I IMPLORE,
HERE IN THIS MASQUERADE DANCE.

MEN:
WHY ARE YOU HIDING AND ACTING SO SHY?
WON’T YOU JUST GIVE ME A CHANCE?
QUESTIONS UNANSWERED, AND PLEAS ALL DENIED,
DURING THIS MASQUERADE DANCE.

(Part overlap.)

STRANGE:
WE MEET IN DISGUISE, KEEPING OUR LIES.
OTHERS MUST WONDER AND NEVER CAN UNDERSTAND WHY.
WHY MUST WE HIDE FEELINGS INSIDE,
WEARING OUR LOVE BEHIND...

SUZANNE:
WE MEET IN DISGUISE, KEEPING OUR LIES.
OTHERS CAN’T UNDERSTAND
WHY WE MUST HIDE FEELINGS INSIDE.
NEVER DECLARING LOVE, WEARING OUR LOVE BEHIND...

(Action on stage freezes, as spot comes up on CHRIS in the news booth.)

CHRIS: This is a breaking news report. W.A.S.H. News has come into possession of a recording with several pieces of incriminating evidence against members of President Strange’s administration. Reporter Jack Humphrey is at the Capitol Ballroom, where members of both parties are currently attending a masquerade ball. Over to you, Jack.

(JACK enters, and others “come to life”.)

JACK: Thank you, Chris. The recording we have acquired documents an attempt by Margaret Leach, the vice-president’s wife, to get evidence of an affair between President Strange and Suzanne Fellows. But, the recording also captured a discussion between Vice-President and Mrs. Leach, with their plans for overthrowing President Strange, so Leach could become president. And, if that’s not enough “scandal” for you, there is also some information about Leach’s actual birthplace. Now, if we can identify some of those involved behind their masks, we will try to get their responses.

LEACH (to MARGARET) : Let’s just keep our masks on, and try to blend in with the crowd. Maybe he won’t spot us.

MARGARET: Look around, you idiot! How many people do you see here with beards?

(LEDACH tries to cover his beard with his hands. JACK approaches them.)

JACK: Vice-President and Mrs. Leach, I presume. Mrs. Leach, how do you respond to the evidence that was found on the recording in your possession?

MARGARET (indignantly) : “Found in my possession”, you say?! Found after you knocked me out in the park and stole my recorder, leaving me for dead. And then you obviously doctored the recording with your phony evidence!
JACK: Actually, the D.C. Police apprehended the mugger who took your wallet after knocking you down in the park. He had used one of your credit cards, had your wallet in his possession, and confessed to the crime. And I understand the only injury you had was a slight bruise. It was just a stroke of good fortune that I happened to find your recorder under a park bench while going for a run the next morning.

LEACH: That’s not true! I happen to know that Margaret called you to meet her in the park, so she could give you...

MARGARET (interrupting): You’re not helping, Warren!!

JACK: And how do you explain this?

(JACK plays the recording.)

MARGARET’s voice on recording: “We just have to make sure they never find out where you were actually born. The President of the United States born in Ireland. How would that go over?!”

LEACH: I’m sure she said “Maryland”, not “Ireland”! She just didn’t think people would want to vote for someone from such a small state.

JACK: Well, I never actually mentioned “Ireland”. But thanks for pointing that out. And then there’s this:

(JACK plays the recording again.)

LEACH singing on recording: “IT ALL STARTED SIXTY YEARS AGO ON A FARM NEAR AUGHNACLOY, MY DEAR OLD IRISH MOM HAD JUST DELIVERED HER FIRST BOY.”

JACK: Aughnacloy, Maryland?? I don’t think so!

LEACH: Fake news! More fake news from the literal media!!

MARGARET (wearily): That’s “liberal media”. Well, we had a good run, Warren, but I’m afraid the jig is up. Instead of another four years, with a chance to live in the White House, we’ll probably have more like five-to-ten in the “big house”.

LEACH: Maybe at least they’ll let us have some of those constable visits?

MARGARET: I think the word you’re looking for is “conjugal”. And I think I’ll pass on that. But I do see some sort of constables coming to visit with us right now.

(STOUT and STRONG escort LEACH and MARGARET offstage.)

JACK: Now let’s see if we can get some response from the president and Ms. Fellows, if they are willing to come out from behind their masks.

(STRANGE and SUZANNE remove their masks, and JACK approaches them.)
STRANGE: We have nothing to hide. We’ll be glad to answer your questions.

JACK: Mrs. Leach’s recording also has evidence of a sordid affair between the two of you. Do you have any comments about that?

SUZANNE: There is certainly nothing “sordid” going on between us! We were in love many years ago, and we have recently discovered that our love never really died.

JACK: A source also tells us that the two of you may have had a love child, possibly when Suzanne was only seventeen years old.

STRANGE: A source?! Would that possibly be the woman who just left; probably on her way to jail? Not the most reliable of sources! In fact, when we first met back in Idaho, Suzanne was eighteen, and I was nineteen. So we were a couple of years older than those two kids in “The Sound of Music”! And no one ever seemed to question what they might have been up to!

SUZANNE: And there was certainly no child. In fact we never...

(STRANGE interrupts and whispers something in her ear.)

SUZANNE: Well... at least we always...

(STRANGE whispers again.)

SUZANNE: Well, as I said, there was no child, and we were both adults. So it’s really none of your business! And if you don’t mind... We’re having a party. And I don’t believe you were invited!

STRANGE (to STOUT and STRONG): Stanley. Steven. Could you please escort this gentleman out of the building!

(JACK is “hustled” off the stage. All masks are taken off. Dance continues with couples staying together.)

“MASKS – REPRISE” (Ensemble)
(All sections are overlapping.)

SUZANNE: UN-DIS-GUISED, ENDING OUR CLUM-SY LIES.

STRANGE: FINALLY FREED. WE HAVE NO NEED TO BURY OUR HEADS IN THE SAND.

WOMEN: WALTZING AND GLIDING, WE SOAR ‘CROSS THE FLOOR, SPINNING AROUND IN A TRANCE.

SUZANNE: ABLE TO SHOW THAT WE ARE NO LONGER DIVIDED, AND NO NEED FOR HIDING OUR...
STRANGE:
SHOUT-ING OUR NEWS PROUDLY ACROSS THE LAND.

MEN:
FACES UNCOVERED, KEPT SECRET NO MORE, HERE IN THIS MASQUERADE DANCE.

SUZANNE:
...DREAMS A-WAY. TOTALLY FREE TO SAY,

STRANGE:
SECRETS ALL PAST. LOSING OUR MASKS. OPENLY SHARING OUR LOVE.

WOMEN:
NO MORE OF HIDING AND SLIDING AWAY, THIS IS THE TIME FOR ROMANCE.

SUZANNE:
WHAT WE BELIEVE WE CAN ACHIEVE. READY TO SEE, WHAT WE CAN BE, AFTER THIS MASQUERADE DANCE.

STRANGE:
ALL RE-VEALED, HERE AT THE END-ING OF THIS MASQUERADE DANCE.

MEN & WOMEN:
FINDING A PARTNER WHO'S WILLING TO STAY, SOMEONE WHO GIVES ME A CHANCE, HERE IN THIS MASQUERADE DANCE.

ACT II, SCENE 7 – Hotel ballroom

(CHRIS is in the newsbooth, and JACK is upstage. As part of the action onstage, the stagehands are decorating the room with flags and other patriotic decorations. A TV is brought onstage to show election results.)

CHRIS (in the news booth): Welcome to W.A.S.H. coverage of election night. Jack Humphrey will be working the map for us as winners are declared state by state. We will also have supporters from each party with us, and Jack will try to get their comments as the results come in.

JACK: Hello, Chris. Well, we’re not sure what to expect tonight. All four of the major party candidates are still on the ballot. But... since Warren Leach is found to have been born in Ireland, he wouldn’t be able to continue serving as vice president. (And of course, he may also end up in jail!)

CHRIS: Yes. And Senator Meacham is still in the hospital, as doctors found a serious heart condition when checking him after his filibuster incident, and they may not clear him to perform the rigorous duties of president. (Lots of golf, you know!)

JACK: And then there is the romance between President Strange and Suzanne Fellows; which some are calling a “scandalous affair”, and others a beautiful love story. But who are we to say? We’re just trying to sort this crap out like the rest of you!

“STRANGE BEDFELLOWS” (Ensemble)
(STOUT and SANDY enter from opposite sides. SANDY is reading a newspaper. STOUT is carrying a red vest and a blue vest.)

CHRI
(speaking): It looks like some of the political supporters are starting to arrive. But they can't even seem to make up their minds who they are supporting!

STOUT:
IT'S THE DAY OF THE ELECTION, I MUST CHOOSE THE RIGHT DIRECTION,
HELP ME MAKE A QUICK SELECTION, AM I WEARING RED OR BLUE?

SANDY:
ALL THESE HEADLINES THAT I'M READING, ARE THEY TRUTHFUL OR MISLEADING?
WHICH WAY SHOULD I BE PROCEEDING? I'M CONFUSED AND I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!

(MANDY and STRONG enter from opposite sides. STRONG is reading a newspaper. MANDY is carrying a red vest and a blue vest.)

MANDY:
DID HIS PLEADING FINALLY REACH HER? WILL THEY GO TO SEE A PREACHER?
SHOULD I VOTE FOR STRANGE AND LEACH, OR PICK THE SENATOR INSTEAD?

STRONG:
AS THIS ARTICLE DISCOVERED, MANY LIES HAVE BEEN UNCOVERED.
DOES HE REALLY, TRULY LOVE HER? I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD GO WITH BLUE OR RED.

(STRONG holds up newspaper showing large headline “DID STRANGE BED FELLOWS??”)

ALL:
DID STRANGE BED FELLOWS?
MANDY & SANDY:
ARE THE RUMORS REALLY TRUE THEY HAD A SCANDALOUS AFFAIR?

(SANDY holds up newspaper showing large headline “WILL STRANGE WED FELLOWS??”)

ALL:
AND WILL STRANGE WED FELLOWS?
STOUT & STRONG:
WELL AS LONG AS THEY'RE IN LOVE, IS THERE A REASON WE SHOULD CARE?

(MARGARET and ANDIE enter, with more vests. All dance. During the dance they keep swapping the vests, but never settle on who will wear which color.)
ALL (with overlapping echoes):
DID STRANGE BED FELLOWS?
IT’S THE TIME FOR MY DECISION, BUT I HAVEN’T GOT A CLUE.
AND WILL STRANGE WED FELLOWS?

(Following sections overlap.)

WOMEN:
DID THEY GO TO BED TOGETHER? CAN’T DECIDE JUST WHETHER,
TO DRESS IN RED OR RATHER GO IN BLUE.

MEN:
IF THE MESS THE PRESS HAS SAID IS TRUE,
THEN I DON’T KNOW IF I SHOULD GO WITH RED OR BLUE?

(They finally choose and put on vests. Vests are assigned as follows:
Red: SANDY, MARGARET, STRONG
Blue: MANDY, ANDIE, STOUT)

(All move upstage, with Reds on one side, and Blues on the other.)

“LANDSLIDE” (All)

(Music goes right into “Landslide”. During the song, election results change
on the map on the TV as results come in.)

JACK (speaking): It looks like we have some results coming in from the eastern part of the
country; and the incumbents seem to have a substantial lead.

(Holds mic up toward Red supporters.)
Any comments?

STRONG:
WE’RE WINNING PENNSYLVANIA AND CONNECTICUT AND MAINE,
YOU KNOW THE EVIDENCE IS PLAIN THAT WE ARE TAKING THE LEAD.

MARGARET:
THE MAJORITY OF IOWANS AND MOST OF THE OHIOANS,
ARE TELLING US THAT WE’RE THE ONES THEY NEED.

SANDY:
THINGS ARE REALLY LOOKING DUCKY IN RHODE ISLAND AND
KENTUCKY,
AND WE THINK THAT IF WE’RE LUCKY TENNESSEE’S GUARANTEED.

STRONG:
THEY LIKE US IN NEW JERSEY AND THE PRESIDENT CONCURS, HE SAYS

STRONG & SANDY:
THE DATA ALL INFERS THAT IT’S A LANDSLIDE.

ANDIE:
DON’T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS TOO SOON!

MARGARET:
WE’VE GOT A LANDSLIDE.

STOUT:
YOU’LL SOON BE CHANGING YOUR TUNE.

MARGARET, SANDY, STRONG:
OUR SOURCES AT THE POLLS ARE SAYING WE’RE IN THE LEAD.

MANDY, ANDIE, STOUT:
OUR SURVEYS TELL US WE’VE GOT ALL THE VOTES THAT WE NEED.

ALL (overlapping lyrics):
WE’RE DEFINITELY POSITIVE, WE’RE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT IT’S A LANDSLIDE.
WE’RE POSITIVELY CERTAIN THAT IT’S GONNA BE A LANDSLIDE.

CHRIS (speaking): The polls are closing for states in the middle of the nation, and the Senator seems to have taken the lead. But stayed tuned. I have a feeling we’re in for a roller coaster ride!

(JACK holds mic up toward Blue supporters.)

ANDIE:
WE’VE WON LOUISIANA, ILLINOIS AND INDIANA, AND IN TEXAS AND MONTANA WE ARE MAKING OUR PLAY.

STOUT:
IN NORTH AND SOUTH DAKOTA WE HAVE FINALLY REACHED OUR QUOTA, AND VERMONT AND MINNESOTA LOOK OKAY.

MANDY:
OUR SUPPORTERS DOWN IN BIRMINGHAM HAVE PUT A POST ON INSTAGRAM, CONFIRMING THAT ALL ALABAMA’S GOING OUR WAY.

STOUT:
WE’VE GOT THE LEAD IN DELAWARE AS EVERYONE IS WELL AWARE,

STOUT & MANDY:
I THINK THEY MIGHT AS WELL DECLARE A LANDSLIDE.

MARGARET:
THE VOTES ARE SWINGIN’ OUR WAY.

ANDIE:
WE’VE GOT A LANDSLIDE.

STRONG:
YOU’LL SOON BE RUEING THE DAY.

MANDY, ANDIE, STOUT:
THE SENATOR IS BRUSHING UP HIS VICTORY SPEECH.

MARGARET, SANDY, STRONG:
BUT VICTORY IS CERTAINLY WAY OUT OF YOUR REACH.

ALL (overlapping lyrics):
WE’RE DEFINITELY POSITIVE, WE’RE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT IT’S A LANDSLIDE.
WE’RE POSITIVELY CERTAIN THAT IT’S GONNA BE A LANDSLIDE.
JACK (speaking) : At this point the election seems to be a tossup. And exit polls are showing a big movement toward what we are calling the “love ticket”: voters selecting Joel Strange for president and Suzanne Fellows for vice president.

MARGARET & STRONG:
WE'RE AHEAD IN COLORADO AND IN UTAH AND NEVADA,
WE ARE PRETTY SURE WE OUGHTA TAKE NEW MEXICO, TOO.

ANDIE & STOUT:
IF ANYONE SHOULD ASK YA, WE ARE SWEEPING THROUGH ALASKA,
AND WE'RE WINNING IN NEBRASKA BY A SLEW.

SANDY & STRONG:
IT'S ONLY FAIR TO WARN YA THAT WE'RE CLAIMING CALIFORNIA,
AND AS SURE AS YOU ARE BORN THE OPPOSITION IS THROUGH.

STOUT & MANDY:
WE'VE REALLY GOT 'EM WORRIED, THEY'VE CONCEDED IN MISSOURI,
AND THE SENATOR IS SURE HE HAS A LANDSLIDE.

MARGARET:
WE'LL GET ANOTHER FOUR YEARS.

ANDIE:
WE'VE GOT A LANDSLIDE.

STRONG:
YOU'LL SOON BE DRYING YOUR TEARS.

MARGARET, SANDY, STRONG:
THE VOTERS IN THE BIBLE BELT ARE PRAYING FOR US.

MANDY, ANDIE, STOUT:
BUT ALL ACROSS THE PLAINS WE'RE LEAVING YOU IN OUR DUST.

ALL (overlapping lyrics) :
WE'RE DEFINITELY POSITIVE, WE'RE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT IT'S A LANDSLIDE.
WE'RE POSITIVELY CERTAIN THAT IT'S GONNA BE A LANDSLIDE.

STRANGE enters, goes to front of stage, and sings over the ‘LANDSLIDE’ music, with chorus members singing first few lines of ‘LANDSLIDE’ in the background, then fading out. SANDY and ANDIE exit, to have time for costume change for wedding scene.)

SUZANNE enters and joins him.)

SUZANNE:
AND SUDDENLY IT SEEMS, IF ONLY IN MY DREAMS,

STRANGE & SUZANNE:
I'M IN COOPER VALLEY, IDAHO.

THE VISIONS OF MY PAST ARE THERE TO GUIDE ME,
DOWN STREETS THAT HAVEN'T CHANGED THROUGH ALL THE YEARS.

STRANGE:
I TURN AND SEE HER STANDING THERE BESIDE ME,

STRANGE & SUZANNE:
AND WHEN I TAKE HER HAND SHE'S REALLY HERE.
AND WHEN HE TAKES MY HAND I'M REALLY HERE.

(Music modulates up.)

STRANGE:
OF ALL THE DISTANT LANDS AND MIGHTY NATIONS,

STRANGE & SUZANNE:
The noble kings and queens I've come to know;
I'D TRADE THEM ALL AWAY, FOR JUST A SINGLE DAY,
BACK IN COOPER VALLEY, IDAHO.

FOR THERE'S NO PLACE THAT I'D RATHER GO,
THAN TO COOPER VALLEY, IDAHO.

('LANDSLIDE' verses come in over last "Idaho", with underlined lines overlapping, and building gradually.)

MARGARET & STRONG:
WE'RE WINNING PENNSYLVANIA AND CONNECTICUT AND MAINE, YOU KNOW WE'VE...

MANDY & STOUT:
WE'VE WON LOUISIANA, ILLINOIS AND INDIANA, THINGS ARE...

MARGARET & STRONG:
THINGS ARE REALLY LOOKING DUCKY IN RHODE ISLAND AND KENTUCKY, AND WE'VE...

MANDY & STOUT:
AND WE'VE REALLY GOT 'EM WORRIED, THEY'VE CONCEDED IN MISSOURI,

ALL:
AND THE PRES-I-IDENT IS SURE THAT'S IT'S A ..
AND THE SEN--A-TOR IS SURE THAT'S IT'S A..

CHRIS (in booth, interrupting): IT'S a tie!!

(Action on stage freezes, and stage lights fade off, leaving just the spot on CHRIS in the news booth. All others exit.)

CHRIS: Well, the results are final, and you're not going to believe this, folks! With only one state left to confirm, the electoral vote was in an exact tie, with 267 votes for each party.
Ironically, that state was Idaho, with the popular total there only separated by a few hundred votes. According to the Idaho election rules, the state’s four electors are all to cast their votes for the winner of the popular vote, which would have undoubtedly required lots of recounts, challenges, etc., etc. But, the electors are not legally required to vote together. So... they decided to split their votes, two for each party. And the final result is 269 electoral votes for Strange & Leach and 269 votes for Meacham & Fellows.

So, you may ask, do we just flip a coin? I’ll read from the Twelfth Amendment of the Constitution (You mean we just had a copy of the Constitution lying around??)

“The person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, and if no person have such majority, then the House of Representatives shall choose the President. The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President, shall be the Vice-President, and if no person have a majority, then the Senate shall choose the Vice-President.”

Since the President’s party has a majority in the House, and the Senator's party holds the Senate, I think this means that the “love ticket” has succeeded, and we will have Joel Strange serve another term as President; with Suzanne Fellows as his Vice-President, and also presumably his wife... and First Lady? (Can I have another drink now?? Let’s make it a double!)

(Spot fades on CHRIS.)

ACT II, SCENE 8 – Hotel ballroom

(MEACHAM is standing back center stage, holding a Bible. LEACH, MARGARET, JACK, MANDY, and CHRIS are seated as the audience. As the song starts, STRANGE enters, followed by STOUT and STRONG, as usual. It should appear that this is just the inauguration.)

“FAITHFUL AND TRUE; RED, WHITE AND BLUE” (All)

STOUT & STRONG:

HAIL TO THE CHIEF, HE’S THE LEADER OF OUR NATION.
HIS VICTORY IS ONE REASON FOR THIS CELEBRATION.
AND THERE’S ANOTHER WHO’LL BE RIGHT BY HIS SIDE.
GREET HER WITH JOYOUSNESS, FOR HERE COMES THE BRIDE.

(As the next part of the song begins, STRANGE, STOUT, STRONG move into a wedding formation, as groom and groomsmen, and MEACHAM moves to the officiant position. Something in the backdrop should move into place to indicate the wedding setting. ANDIE and SANDY come on stage, and step up as matron and bridesmaid. SUZANNE comes down the aisle in a wedding dress. All turn to face the bride.)

MANDY, MARGARET, LEACH, JACK (CHRIS?):

FAITHFUL AND TRUE. RED, WHITE AND BLUE.
YOUR LOVE WILL TRIUMPH AS WE START ANEW.
NOW HERE YOU STAND, JOINED HAND IN HAND.
LEADING THE WAY TO UNITE OUR GREAT LAND.

MEACHAM:
WE ARE GATHERED HERE ON THIS MOST HISTORIC OF OCCASIONS,
TO JOIN THESE TWO OF DIFFERING POLITICAL PERSUASIONS.
YOU MAY ASK IF THERE’S A WAY THIS UNION CAN SUCCEED?
IF IT MAKES OUR COUNTRY STRONGER, IT MAY BE JUST WHAT WE
NEED.

IS THERE ANYONE HERE PRESENT WHO BELIEVES THESE RITES SHOULD
CEASE?
IF THERE IS, THEN SPEAK UP QUICKLY, OR FOR-EV-ER HOLD YOUR
PEACE.

MARGARET (spoken): I just don’t think it’s right for..
LEACH (interrupting): Oh, shut up, Margaret!

AUDIENCE:
WE’LL BE FAITHFUL AND TRUE TO THE RED WHITE AND BLUE,
PLEDGING LOYALTY TO THESE UNITED STATES.
FROM THE OCEANS TO THE PLAIN, ALL ACROSS THIS WIDE DOMAIN,
WE’LL TOGETHER STRIVE TO KEEP OUR NATION GREAT.

MEACHAM:
AND ANOTHER GRAND TRADITION, JUST BEFORE YOUR VOWS ARE
SPOKEN,
IT’S A WELL-ESTABLISHED CUSTOM THAT YOU EACH PROVIDE A TOKEN.
A SYMBOL OF DEVOTION, PLACED UPON YOUR PARTNER’S HAND,
TO DEDICATE YOUR LOVE WITH AN UN-BROK-EN GOLDEN BAND.

TO COMMEMORATE THE SOLEMNNESS THAT THIS OCCASION BRINGS,
I WILL ASK FOR THE ATTENDANTS TO PROVIDE YOUR WED-DING RINGS.

(ALLISON hands ring to SUZANNE. STOUT and STRONG search pockets
and look at each other.)

STRONG (to STOUT): Don’t you have it?
STOUT (to STRONG): No, you had it!
STRONG (into mouthpiece): All-points bulletin for a missing wedding band. Color: gold Size: seven.

(STRANGE takes ring out of his pocket.)
STRANGE: Never mind. I have it. You left it on the counter in the men’s room!

(Music segues into reprise of “I Believe”.)

STRANGE:
I BELIEVE IN DREAMS. NOW I KNOW THAT WISHES CAN COME TRUE.
SUZANNE:
I’M READY TO SHARE MY LIFE WITH YOU.
STRANGE: 
ONCE UPON A TIME, MANY YEARS AGO, 
OUR LOVE WAS LIKE A BURIED SEED, JUST WAITING THERE TO GROW.

SUZANNE: 
STARTING IN THE PAST, NOW RENEWED TODAY, 
OUR HAPPILY-EVER-AFTERS SOMEHOW FOUND THEIR WAY.

(They exchange rings during instrumental interlude.)

SUZANNE: 
I CAN’T BELIEVE IT’S TRUE.

STRANGE: 
WE'RE STARTING OUT ANEW.

BOTH: 
I PLEDGE MY LOVE TO YOU.

(STRANGE and SUZANNE place their hands on the Bible.)

STRANGE: 
I DO HEREBY CONFIRM, AND DO SOLEMNLY AFFIRM, 
I WILL DEFEND OUR NATION’S LAWS THE BEST I CAN. 
AND WITH YOU BY MY SIDE, AS ADVISOR, FRIEND AND GUIDE, 
SPREAD OUR MESSAGE OF PEACE ACROSS THE LAND.

SUZANNE: 
ON THIS DAY I DO DECLARE, THAT I HONESTLY WILL SWEAR, 
TO KEEP OUR COUNTRY SAFE FROM ENEMY AND Foe. 
AND TO REALIZE OUR VISION, ENDING HATRED AND DIVISION, 
(Gives a hard look to Leach on the next line.) 
SO MY NATIVE LAND WITH LOVE CAN OVERFLOW. 
(LEACH cowers and turns away from her gaze.)

MEACHAM (speaking): By my authority as a United States senator, I now pronounce you husband and wife, until death do you part. And I also declare you to be the leaders of our great country for the next four years. I never thought I would hear, much less say, these words. But.. Mister President, you may kiss the Vice President!

(Spoiler alert: they kiss!)

AUDIENCE: 
WE’LL BE FAITHFUL AND TRUE TO THE RED WHITE AND BLUE, 
PLEDGING LOYALTY TO THESE UNITED STATES. 
FROM THE OCEANS TO THE PLAIN, ALL ACROSS THIS WIDE DOMAIN, 
WE’LL TOGETHER STRIVE TO KEEP OUR NATION GREAT.

(Music modulates up.)

ALL: 
WE WILL SEE THE ROCKET’S GLARE, AND OUR FLAG WILL STILL BE THERE, 
OF THE WAVES OF AMBER GRAIN WE’LL PROUDLY SING.
ALL OUR ARMS WE WILL UNITE, AND ALL ENEMIES WE’LL FIGHT, 
SO ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS CAN LET FREE-DOM RING!

BOWS

“BOWS” (All)

(ALLISON, NADIA & MELISSA, to music of “Equal Pay”. Go to stage right. 
STOUT & STRONG, to music of “Serve and Protect”. Go toward stage left. 
CHRIS & JACK, to news theme music. Go toward stage right. 
MEACHAM, to music of “Filibuster”. Go toward stage left. 
LEACH & MARGARET, to music of “You’ll Always Find A Woman”. (They 
enter in handcuffs. LEACH tries to go toward stage left, and MARGARET 
yanks him back toward stage right.) 
STRANGE & SUZANNE, to music of “Cooper Valley, Idaho”. Stay in center 
stage.)

ALL:

FOR THERE’S NO PLACE THAT I’D RATHER GO, 
THAN TO COOP-ER VAL-LEY, I-DA-HO.

(At the very end of bows, and during applause [hopefully?], CHRIS sneaks 
into the news booth. News music plays briefly.)

CHRIS: We interrupt (pause) these bows, for this update. 81-year-old Edna Wilkins, of 
Sedalia, Missouri, has been released from the hospital, and is fully recovered from her 
injuries. You may recall that she was on a street corner passing out literature for President 
Strange’s campaign on election day, when she was pushed into oncoming traffic by irate 
members of Boy Scout troop 936. (pause) Film at 11.

“FINAL TAG”

(Music “hits”, and fine!)