

Political Engagement

By Tim Pullen

Caution: This play contains explicit sex, alcohol abuse, and political views, and I'm not certain which is more offensive.

Cast

Marcus Hampton: Thirty-six year old Lawyer with a new fiancé and a plan to run for Mayor.

George Franklin Butler: Fifty-three year old African American man. The Senator's Butler.

Harriet Summers: Thirty-two years old. Mark's fiancé with a plan to be the first lady.

Amy Bishop: Twenty-eight year old, sultry investigative reporter, aspiring to be a speech writer.

Senator James R. Camerun: Fifty-four Conservative Republican Senator.

Mayor Theodore H. Thurmond: Forty year old, Democratic incumbent Mayor of Crestview.

(If I ever produce or direct this show, I would have someone in a political looking sandwich board or picket sign at the beginning of each scene showing the date. It is a period piece of the not too distant past but its setting- time wise- is important.)

Act One Scene One

Wednesday, July 3rd 1996

Somewhere in Washington D.C. the living room of a wealthy Senator. A door bell rings with the first bars of the Star Spangled Banner, from a window you can see that it's storming outside, which continues throughout the scene with random thunder and lightning. The room contains an exit towards the upstairs, an American flag that takes up most of a wall and a very formal executive desk, one black leather or leather-like couch. Placing of these items and chairs or couches are the directors business, not mine. I do envision using this set or parts there of for all scenes. A butler answers the door)

Mark: I'm sorry to interrupt, I must be lost, I was given this address.

Butler: Mr. Hampton?

Mark: Yes.

Butler: Please come in, we've been expecting you.

Mark: You have? I was supposed to meet someone, I assumed the address would be a hotel or bed and breakfast.

Butler: No, sir. The address is correct, it is a private home.

(The two men enter; the butler has grabbed two bags from Mark. The bags and Mark are dripping from the storm; Mark is wearing a wet rain coat and hat.)

Mark: You don't have to do that, I can carry those.

Butler: As a matter of fact I do have to, it is my job. May I take your coat sir?

Mark: Yes, please. Thank-you very much. I'm supposed to meet Harriet Summers, is she here? She's my girlfriend.

(Harriet enters from up stairs, she instantly begins to fidget with Mark's hair and neck tie)

Harriet: It's fiancée, dear. Marcus you've got to be more accurate. What on earth took you so long? You're dripping wet.

Mark: It's raining.

Harriet: I assumed. Did you really let a little rain slow you down this much?

Mark: I sat out in the cab for half an hour. I thought I had a wrong address, why are we meeting here?

Harriet: I told you I had a surprise for you.

Mark: When you said surprise, I was expecting it to be a romantic get away, or an engagement party, not a weekend at count Dracula's castle.

Harriet: He's only teasing, this house is beautiful.

Mark: For a mortuary maybe.

Harriet: Don't embarrass me Marcus.

Butler: I completely agree with you sir. Are you hungry Mr. Hampton? We saved you a plate; I was just off to get the evening drinks if you'd like me to bring your dinner.

Mark: If it's not too much trouble that sounds wonderful.

Butler: And something to drink?

Mark: Do you have an iced tea or water?

Harriet: Don't be such a wet blanket, have some wine, I am.

Mark: If you insist. Wine please.

Butler: White or red wine?

Harriet: Red **Mark:** White

Harriet: Red is more sophisticated.

Mark: I like the taste of white. I'm really not a big drinker.

Butler: I do have cranberry juice, I could put that in a wine glass. It would look just as sophisticated, but taste much sweeter.

Mark: That sounds like a perfect solution. Thank-you.

Harriet: What are you three?

(Butler exits towards the kitchen)

Mark: I didn't bring a lot of cash, do you have enough to tip him?

Harriet: You don't tip a butler Marcus. Don't you have a butler?

Mark: No, my mother had three children, why would she have to hire a butler? Since when do you call me Marcus? Is this your parents' home? I thought they lived in Wis-

Harriet: We are guests at a United States senator's home.

Mark: This is a senator's home? (He looks around and a moment of realization and terror strikes his face) This is a republican's house, isn't it?

Harriet: Actually yes it is, Senator James Camerun, how did-

Mark: Why did you bring me here? Now I'd rather be at Dracula's, let's go.

Harriet: Marcus Theodore Hampton, don't be so foolish. The Senator happens to be a very good friend of my family. He and my father went to law school together.

Mark: When did you become my mother? You told me politics don't matter to you. I thought you said you didn't take sides?

Harriet: I thought you said you weren't a liberal. How did you know it was a republican's house? (She looks around bemused)

Mark: That feeling of death and power. Democrats usually have bright colors, a light flaky feeling to the décor. I'm critical of both sides. Now

come on, any minute George C. Scott is going to step out in front of that flag and start shooting.

Harriet: Marcus.

Mark: I give up, why am I here?

Harriet: This man is interested in helping your political career.

Mark: Harriet, honey. I'm an independent for a reason; I don't like being lumped in with democrats or republicans. You know that. I've told both you and my mother, if I'm running for mayor I want to be a third party candidate.

Harriet: You know damn well the only thing third party candidates do is take away votes from the democrats, so you might as well be a republican.

Mark: I - Okay, you might have a point.

(Butler enters with food and four glasses of wine three red one cranberry)

Butler: Your dinner sir.

Mark: Thank-you very much – ahh - I'm sorry I didn't catch your name.

Butler: No one does Mr. Hampton (he exits upstairs)

Harriet: Go on and eat before the senator comes down.

Mark: That seems rude.

Harriet: We finished dinner hours ago. You want to make him watch you eat? That's worse.

Mark: Okay, okay. (He eats) this is delicious. I've never had steak like this.

Harriet: I'll ask for the recipe, just eat.

Harriet: Senator Camerun is-

Mark: I know very well who Senator James Camerun is. I've yelled at him on TV several times. He's from my home town, and just for the record I had nothing to do with him being in Washington. My question is why and how is he interested in helping me? I'm running for Mayor in a dinky little town. What makes him care?

Harriet: He thinks you may have potential for bigger and better things.

Mark: What bigger and better things? I don't want to be a senator.

Harriet: How about a president?

Mark: Of this country?

Harriet: Of course.

Mark: God no.

Harriet: And why not?

Mark: No matter what you do half the country is going to hate you, people try to shoot presidents. Did you know that? I've never heard of an assassination of a mayor.

Harriet: I'm sure it's happened, just no one noticed. Look at the big picture here. Their party is in trouble, they need a middle of the road character like you.

Mark: And?

Harriet: I could get the chance to be the first lady.

Mark: That's what this is about?

Harriet: You know I've always wanted to be a first lady. We could have those kids you wanted. Two daughters, well name them Liberty and Justice.

Mark: With those names, they will need the secret service. I'm sorry; if you want the kids, I'm willing. If you need a president, I suggest you head over to the white house, you are better looking than Hillary.

Harriet: You think so? Thank-you. Come on Marcus you got his floors all wet, you're eating a gourmet meal, the least you can do is hear him out.

Mark: I'm going to listen to the man, I'm not rude. Just know that you've wasted our time, the answer is no.

Harriet: Oh, sweetheart. This would mean so much to me, if you just keep an open mind. You could change your mind.

Mark: For you, my mind is open, but I doubt I will.

(The senator and a cute little blonde chick enter, the blond is a high profile reporter for some news station some where)

Senator: Doubt you will what?

Harriet: Ever have a steak this good again. Say hello Marcus.

Mark: Good evening Senator Camerun.

Harriet: Marcus was just commenting on what fantastic steak you serve.

Senator: Welcome Mr. Hampton. I'm glad you're enjoying the meal, the secret is a good cut of fillet then it's marinated twenty-four hours in a mixture of Coca-Cola and worshire sauce. I'm sorry for interrupting your conversation; I was told my evening wine was waiting. This is Ms. Amy Bishop; she's a reporter of sorts.

Amy: I don't know about that, they won't let me write a story, but they do keep me supplied with phones. I'm what you could call a mud slinger. A scoop sleuth. I've become close friends with the Senator here, because I'm retiring from my current line of work.

Senator: She is an aspiring speech writer. Very good at that as well.

Amy: Because I know where to kick, and when to kick it. I play hard, and dirty when necessary.

Senator: Yes, yes she can be, but always fair. Mr. Hampton, always fair. Please don't let us interrupt you enjoying your meal. Your fiancé has been

quite charming, and she's informed me of Presidential plans on your horizon.

Mark: She's just informed me of those too.

Senator: So a run at office isn't in your game plan?

Mark: I can't say no, it's only crossed my mind for two minutes now. I have put my hat in the ring for the Mayor's office back home. I'm a cautious man Senator. I like to know what I'm getting into. I'm thirty-six and just now engaged last week, does that tell you how careful I am?

Harriet: But we've only been dating three months, so he is willing to take risks.

Mark: Okay.

Amy: Harriet why don't we take a look at the senator's rare coin collection. The senator likes quite while his sizing up the prey.

Harriet: Excuse me please, I'll be with Ms. Bishop if you need me. (They exit)

Senator: Running for Mayor of Crestview Virginia, I hear.

Mark: Yes sir. My family has a good deal of history there.

Senator: One of the founding families of the town, correct?

Mark: Yes sir, and your hometown if I'm not mistaken. I've met who I believe to be your brother a few times. Officer Alexander Camerun?

Senator: Yes, yes indeed my younger brother is with the police department down there. Look, I realize, you and I don't agree on many things.

Mark: Politically no, I can't say we do, but I can agree with your taste in steak. If you don't mind my asking, why are you interested in my political career? I would think you would have your plate full with the Senate.

Senator: Launching political careers is a hobby of mine. I consider it community service, like coaching a little league team, without all the snot.

Mark: I am sorry to waste your time, but I don't think I'm a republican candidate. I don't know why she thought-

Senator: Oh, it's not just Ms. Summers that thinks you'd be right for the job. We've done a little research, and you are a man that has the makings of a perfect politician. You seem fairly agreeable.

Mark: I've been disagreeing with your policies for some time now, no offense, but I have some very different ideas. I would hate to have you back a candidate you don't see eye to eye with.

Senator: You seem agreeable, that doesn't mean you have to agree with me. All republicans don't agree either. We just seem to agree. That's why we

have caucuses, whether it's republican or democrat, you're just there to give the appearance of agreeing with each other, strength in numbers you know.

Mark: You keep limiting yourself to two parties. What if you're at an independent gathering?

Senator: I wouldn't know, I've never been to one. What do the three of you talk about?

Mark: (laughs) Point taken, senator.

Senator: Can I be honest with you Mr. Hampton?

Mark: I don't know, you are a U.S. senator. Sorry, that was a pot shot.

Senator: All's fair. You know what they say, if it's not on tape no harm done.

Mark: Is that what they say?

Senator: Ms. Bishop has done a good deal of research on you the past few months.

Mark: Why would she do that?

Senator: You're fiancé contacted me.

Mark: I've only known her a short time. I just proposed last week. When did she call you?

Senator: This was perhaps two months ago. I sent Ms. Bishop to dig up the dirt on you, then she came back with a report. It was after I read this report, that I called Ms. Summers here and decided I needed to speak with you.

Mark: What was it your report said?

Senator: Nothing! Not one damn thing!

Mark: Is that good?

Senator: My boy that's incredible! Amy Bishop is the best investigative journalist in the free world. She's got dirt on the pope, but she's got nothing on you. You've paid your taxes, donated to charities, and worked for the common good of society for fifteen years straight.

Mark: People like me are a dime a dozen. America is filled with hard working honest people.

Senator: Maybe janitors, possibly nurses, other than that no. You graduated the top of your class, you attended all the best schools.

Mark: I attended those schools because of my family's money, not hard work.

Senator: And you're humble!

Mark: That's all? That's why I'm a perfect candidate? Because I haven't broken any laws?

Senator: You're a well educated prosecuting attorney. You've never had a speeding ticket. The last three possibilities I found, we had to disregard because of issues with taxes, pornography, and drug use. By the way if you ever decide to appear in a porno, never use your real name.

Mark: Thank-you for the advice, but if I could make a living as a porn star I doubt I'd go into politics.

Senator: This candidate obviously fell short in both fields.

Mark: I see.

Senator: You're actually a perfect candidate for both Democrats and us, you're very middle minded. Financially conservative socially liberal, that's why I wanted to speak with you first.

Mark: I do vote based on many issues, not just social or financial. I vote just as middle of the road as I am.

Senator: And how often do your votes count?

Mark: Every vote counts.

Senator: You know what I mean.

Mark: Hardly ever. I did however vote for Clinton.

Senator: He is currently our biggest monkey wrench, from where I stand at any rate. Even I like some of his policies.

Mark: Then we do agree on some things.

Senator: I'm looking for the republican answer to such a man. According to the polls, he is still too liberal for most of the bible belt.

Mark: I am a fan of Thomas Jefferson's separation of church and state idea.

Senator: Jefferson was more of a philosopher than a politician. There really can never be a separation between church and state.

Mark: Why not?

Senator: Demographics, religious people vote. You are a religious man, correct?

Mark: Not as religious as you but I attend church if that's what you mean.

Senator: I've heard it rumored that you're a virgin.

Mark: Why would that be anyone's business? It is true but-

Senator: Never say that out loud again. The virgin rumor will help you with the women's votes, but it will cost you the men. When asked about that you should say "I prefer to keep my private life private".

Mark: Okay, that's true.

Senator: And if you say it with the right, sly grin then the men will think you've got the cowboy cheerleaders in the backroom, and the women will think you're saving yourself for that special someone.

Mark: Thank-you for the angle, but I don't think I'm your man.

Senator: Do you know how these things work? Normally, you assess a candidate on how hard it will be to cover up, how should I put it- discrepancies. With you there really aren't any. Out of curiosity, have you chosen virginity for religious reasons?

Mark: I didn't choose it, it chose me.

Senator: As you say, that's no body's business.

Mark: I just turned thirty-six, I'm a little young for the job.

Senator: Clinton is young, he got the job, but you really never inhaled. Right?

Mark: True, I've never tried.

Senator: Can I at least ask you, where it is we don't meet? What are your big problems with the party? Let's really talk some politics.

Mark: You should never discuss politics or religion with friends, now you've brought up both.

Senator: Lucky for us we aren't friends. You know what I've learned about politics and religion over the years?

Mark: What is that?

Senator: If you don't speak your political views, you might as well not have them. If you must speak your religious views, you're not really religious, you're selling something.

Mark: I like that.

Senator: So let's milk this bull and get down to business.

Mark: Like you said, I disagree with your social issues mainly, I don't side strongly with the Democrats because I am financially conservative.

Senator: Social issues? You're kidding- Is that all?

Mark: Social issues happen to be very important to me. I don't believe government should regulate free will.

Senator: It Can't.

Mark: What?

Senator: If there was a way to control free will, prohibition would've worked. Societies do what they want- whether it's illegal or not. Social issues are the merang on the pie, sure it looks like half the pie, but it has no substance. Pick your poison.

Mark: Excuse me?

Senator: Any topic you disagree with, let's debate it fairly.

Mark: Your stand on Roe vs. Wade. Please don't get me wrong, I do agree that abortion is murder, but I feel that way based on my religion. My

religious feelings also tell me execution as a punishment is murder. Morally, however I object to anyone using their personal religion to make laws for such a diverse country. In the abortion case, the exceptions are the rules. I realize it can be abuse-

Senator: Quit babbling, I disagree with our stand on that too.

Mark: But you campaigned on overturning that decision.

Senator: That's what my supporters believe in, so that's how I roll.

Mark: You're not against abortion?

Senator: I'm not as much against it as you are. Do you realize how much we could save in tax dollars if we offered free abortions for everyone on welfare? And mandatory contraception! But that won't fly with the Catholics, and they are a large demographic, mainly because they're against contraception.

Mark: But, you said once, I think I'm quoting you; "women can misuse it as a method of birth control"

Senator: I believe I did say something to that effect. The part of the statement I omitted was, those are probably women I don't want reproducing anyway. I do have an understanding of genetics Mr. Hampton.

Mark: But you voted-

Senator: I vote knowing damn well we have too many liberals in the house to ever let an overturn occur. If you look closely enough at my record, there were a few times I didn't vote at all. If there was an overturn; I'll burn that bridge when I come to it, but I don't think it's going to happen. Is that your biggest beef?

Mark: But, your speeches? You seem so religious, and against-

Senator: And you seem agreeable.

Mark: Are you an atheist?

Senator: I wouldn't say that. Really, never even ask that again. I will say if I believed there was a hell, I wouldn't be in politics.

Mark: Then why do you even bring up the subject of religion?

Senator: To let the people know I hear them, I know what they want.

Mark: But, what you just told me, you don't really listen to them.

Senator: Did I say listen? No, I said hear. You've got to watch that language. When you were a boy about to go outside on an autumn day, did you grab that jacket because you were cold? Or did you grab the jacket because your mom told you to?

Mark: So, you act religious to shut your supporters up?

Senator: Basically, people like to think your listening to them. It really makes no difference if you actually do. My wife for instance, she always asks me “which shoes should I wear” she knows I don’t care, if she wanted me to care she’d wear her shoes on her tits, then I’d say oh, those high heels give you lift or how about those open toes tonight.

Mark: So you don’t care about you wife’s shoes or religion?

Senator: I don’t give a crap about either one, and they don’t care what I think.

Mark: The shoes?

Senator: All of the above! If I choose the wrong shoe, my wife will just say thank-you then go put on the shoe that she wants. I could explain my stand on abortion till I’m blue in the face, and those people are going to keep believing whatever they want. So in both cases you just agree publicly and you really don’t have to care. I was hoping you were more intense in your religious views.

Mark: I believe in God, but since I have no proof I’m right, I can’t disagree with any one else’s God.

Senator: Still you go to church, that shows something.

Mark: What about people that agree with your actual opinion?

Senator: About what?

Mark: Abortion.

Senator: They vote for the Democrats, I don’t want to take away their votes, I just want to keep my own.

Mark: You want democrats?

Senator: Someone has to stop our stupidity, just like the democrats need us to stop theirs. If one party had all the power, we’d all be screwed.

Mark: Gays?

Senator: Yes, them too, although from what I hear they get screwed more often than most.

Mark: I meant your views on the subject.

Senator: Don’t ask, don’t tell. That’s our new national policy now.

Mark: What about marriage?

Senator: I think it was a horrible idea, but we’re stuck with it.

Mark: I’m asking about marriage rights for gays.

Senator: I don’t mind gays. Why would I want to do that to them?

Mark: What?

Senator: Imagine if the government was completely Muslim or Jewish.

Mark: Okay.

Senator: Suppose Christian marriage wasn't recognized.

Mark: You don't want your own marriage recognized?

Senator: When there's no legal marriage, there's no legal divorce. Why would I want to condemn all the gays to a life like mine?

Mark: I. I never looked at it like that.

Senator: Because you're not married yet. So that's it? The social issues? Fluff, we beat that horse to a pulp every election knowing damn well it's dead. Do you disagree with any major issues?

Mark: What are the major issues?

Senator: Taxes. The two real issues behind all of the bickering between the parties are taxes. Who pays the money and where the money goes, if it weren't for that Teddy Kennedy and I would be out drinking together right now.

Mark: What about education?

Senator: What about it?

Mark: Don't you think funding public schools is vital, getting better paid teachers? Giving them the equipment and training they need to educate every child. Perhaps privatizing the education system, to encourage competition and higher goals.

Senator: It's a good platform, or are you talking about actually doing it?

Mark: Doing it. Actions speak louder than words.

Senator: Not when you're a politician! Words are the game, actions can be suicide. Let me give you a bit of education of your own, right here. All of our government is made up of either right wing freaks or left wing nut jobs, if we start actually educating our population, who the hell will vote for either side? I know, I know what you're going to say the independents! Right? The Middle of the road where common sense hides out.

Mark: The thought came to mind.

Senator: Fine, let's say we get an independent middle of the road government, and we decide to truly educate our population.

Mark: I'm for that.

Senator: Are you really?

Mark: Most of the crime in the country is committed by individuals without proper education.

Senator: That's not at all true. It's just that the smart criminals don't get caught to be part of your statistics. Have you thought about the impact education would have on our economy?

Mark: I'd imagine a good impact.

Senator: The economy would crumble in an instant. Maybe not instantly, but it would take no more than a few years. Capitalism would fall to the ground like an iron curtain.

Mark: Why would you say that?

Senator: Because we freed the slaves.

Mark: Now you want to reinstate slavery?

Senator: No, Hell no. there's no need. Most of your solid white bigots drive tow trucks and hunt most of the time anyway, they don't bother voting. So taking that stand would be fruitless.

Mark: I'm really lost here.

Senator: Try to follow, the subject here is world history. The Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, they all had slaves; varying races, with varying times, each one a healthy viable nation. That's the way the world had worked for thousands upon thousands of years, and the way it works today.

Mark: Today? Slavery works today?

Senator: Say I pulled up to a fast food joint and wanted a fry and cheeseburger.

Mark: Okay.

Senator: Now if that man or woman at that burger place actually had an education they could do the math, figure out they are only getting maybe two cents of the three dollar profit from each burger sold, follow me?

Mark: Yes.

Senator: Now they wouldn't want to do that, they would ask for, I don't know, two dollars profit per burger, since they were the ones doing the actual work, right?

Mark: Right.

Senator: And the employees will be smart enough to figure out they outnumber the management and they are more vital. But that fat corporate executive that sits in his office watching his Newton's balls swing back and fourth doesn't want to make only five hundred thousand a year for all the hard work he puts in looking out his office window. So he'll decide to raise the prices. Now we've got ten dollar burgers and five dollar fries. I don't want to pay that kind of money so I simply stop eating out. Now the burger joint goes out of business, so on and so fourth until capitalism as we know it disappears.

Mark: So you're saying capitalism is based on keeping part of the population ignorant.

Senator: Exactly! Imagine how the beef industry would flop, if we had smart cows.

Mark: Now you're leading people to slaughter?

Senator: Metaphorically, who else will clean my house? Cut my grass? For what I'm willing to pay? If everyone had a decent education, we would all be equals, so then who the hell is going to do any of the work?

Mark: It's scary that makes sense.

Senator: That's why college prices must continue to raise faster than inflation. We've got to keep the real power just out of the reach of the masses.

Mark: That sounds horrible.

Senator: That's why it isn't brought up. The whole process of life is really nothing more than being born and waiting to die, but you can't think of it that way.

Mark: Politics are depressing, aren't they?

Senator: If you go around spouting truth and facts, yes. Life itself is depressing without jazzing it up a bit. I plan to write a tell all book at the end of my career. I'll rat myself out on all my own lies and make a fortune.

Mark: Money isn't everything.

Senator: Would you shut up! I know that, you know that. We've had money our whole lives, we both know sadness still existed.

Mark: But everyone else thinking money can buy happiness is what keeps the workers working, the wheels turning, blah blah blah. As long as everyone thinks money will solve all their problems, everyone will keep working for it. Keep flipping your burgers for minimum wage.

Senator: Now you've got it.

Mark: I got it, but I don't want it. Now I don't want to be in politics at all. I can't stand in front of people and lie to them. Your teasing them, it's like provoking hamsters on wheels.

Senator: Those wheels keep the world spinning, would you prefer anarchy? Lying is like any other art, you're bending facts to create a desired change. This chair, is in reality a tree of some sort, plastic bags from china and the skin of a dead cow. Thanks to the chair maker, I can now perceive it as a beautiful and comfortable place to put my ass. Good can be accomplished through manipulation. It's a tool we use even on ourselves.

Mark: Lying to yourself is different than manipulating masses.

Senator: Do you really think the colonists had it that bad?

Mark: Are you saying our forefathers lied to us?

Senator: The Stamp Tax was really only pennies for most colonists. The one's hardest hit were lawyers, and every dime of the money raised was to support the British troops that were protecting us from the Indians.

Mark: Without representation in parliament.

Senator: We fought a war because of unfair taxes, now two hundred and twenty years later, we still pay unfair taxes, just to someone else. Has it ever occurred to you that manipulation and politics were the same thing?

Mark: Things might not be that different, but we get a vote. I can't picture George Washington telling a lie.

Senator: There was no cherry tree! Look it up. Look at the history man, truth was bent. Did it have a bad outcome?

Mark: For the good of one or the good of many?

Senator: What is the good of many? If not the good of a shit load of ones?...Mark? Are you still listening?

Mark: Yes, I'm just processing everything you said.

Senator: You didn't know I was so full of wisdom and insight did you?

Mark: You're full of something, that's certain. I'm too late to enter the race at this point, so you are thinking of the 2000 elections right?

Senator: Exactly! The beauty part is you'd be up against Gore. Any idiot could beat that cardboard cutout.

Mark: What if Clinton isn't re-elected this year?

Senator: I've met our options, he will be.

Mark: Who's the candidate?

Senator: I'm not allowed to release that information yet, but every time I hear his name I think of pineapples.

Mark: Still the lies. This is very unnerving, that you're willing to see things this way.

Senator: All lies are not evil Mark, as a matter of fact, some of them are reasons to get out of bed in the morning. Should we tell every school child the tooth fairy is a fraud? What about Santa Clause?

Mark: Leave Santa out of this!

Senator: I hit a sore spot? You're willing to question God, but not St. Nick?

Mark: Santa always gave me what I asked for.

Senator: Look, when I was a small boy I had a dog. A cute little beagle, his name was Stapleton.

Mark: Stapleton?

Senator: From the hounds of the Baskervilles, an old Sherlock Holmes novel. I loved this dog. We would play everyday after school, he slept at the foot of my bed every night. And one day he was hit by a car.

Mark: I'm sorry to hear that.

Senator: You would be, so anyway. I came home from school and he was lying in the road in front of my house. I scooped him up and ran the half mile to the vet; there was nothing they could do. Walking back home, I noticed I was covered in blood, I hadn't noticed anything but my limp lifeless dog, I didn't see any blood. Years later, my mother told me, the vet had called her that night to see how I was. That dog that I brought in to them was a horrible mangled mess, bones were protruding, skin was gone, some of his trained staff vomited at the sight of it.

Mark: You didn't notice?

Senator: My mind tricked me. It hid the image that I obviously couldn't handle and replaced it with one I could. I've learned in therapy that's a common mental defense to trauma. I was still sad, yes, but I was spared years of nightmares. And why, because my mind lied to me, for my own good.

Mark: So you lie, for the good of the public. At least, your mind lets you think that.

Senator: Everyone's mind protects them. Why do you think all men are born with a horrible sense of size?

Mark: Are we?

Senator: I've got a fourteen year old daughter; do I really want to know what she's getting away with?

Mark: Yes?

Senator: No! How could I sleep at night? Don't you know what fourteen year old girls get away with?

Mark: No, girls weren't interested in me.

Senator: Yes, I forgot. How about aliens? If aliens were in touch with our government, does the public need to know? If area fifty one opened up and pulled a spaceship out of a hanger, and I am not confirming or denying anything with this hypothetical statement. What would happen? Chaos, anarchy, a whole new type of racism and rage. We would destroy ourselves out of fear before we ever knew what happened.

Mark: I think you're right on that one.

Senator: You haven't mentioned gun control, don't you want to debate me one that?

Mark: No, I'm not touching that one.

Senator: Why not?

Mark: For one thing, I support the second amendment. For another, I'm sure you have a gun in easy access right now.

Senator: You are a smart young man. Would you at least consider being a candidate?

Mark: I would still get four years as Mayor. Assuming I'm elected. Four years to think this all through.

Senator: Logistically, only two, then you have to start campaigning. Well maybe one, then we have fundraising. We couldn't find the company doing your fundraising for the Mayoral race.

Mark: I'm not fundraising. I'm paying for that myself.

Senator: Using your own money?

Mark: Yes.

Senator: You have so much to learn.

Mark: Why don't you join me for my Mayoral campaigning at home? Then you can assess my performance, give advice and we'll all see whether or not this is worth it? Harriet does seem to want this; I'm willing to go for a test run.

Senator: Capital Idea! We'll start tomorrow, you and Miss Summers will be my guests at the congressional picnic. (lighting strikes outside)

(Lights out)

Act One Scene Two

(July 4th 1996, The same living room at Senator Camerun's home. Mark Hampton paces back and forth in front of a window, the rain has stopped, the sun is out, but setting. Mark is going through note cards and reading to Butler. Butler is helping him memorize the note cards.)

Mark: Mr. Kelpings, how is the rainforest?

Butler: No! Kelpings doesn't care about the rainforest. Mr. Riggs is the rainforest guy! Kelpings is an oil lobbyist, he'll be the one with a white cowboy hat.

Mark: I'm going to get those two mixed up.

Butler: You won't when you see them, Riggs looks like a tree hugging hippie and Kelpings always reminds me of boss hog on the Duke's of Hazard. Just remember Kelp as in seaweed, natural, rainforest. Riggs as in oil Riggs, then reverse them. Pretend they stole each other's names. They are lobbyists, if they could steal each others names they would.

Mark: Maybe you should be a politician, you know this crap.

Butler: Sorry, serving is where I belong.

Mark: Why? Because you're black?

Butler: No, because my name is Butler, George Franklin Butler the fourth. My Great-great grandfather was a Butler, legend has it that's how we got the name.

Mark: All the men in your family were Butlers?

Butler: No, my grandfather was a cop, got shot at a bank hold up at the age of forty-two. My father was a stock broker, hung himself at forty-five. That's when my momma said boy your great grandfather was the only man in this family to live past fifty, you better be a Butler!

Mark: What is a guy like you doing working for a guy like Camerun?

Butler: Conservatives pay better than liberals, at least if you're a black man.

Mark: Really?

Butler: He's afraid if he doesn't treat me well, I'll slice his throat while he sleeps. Now focus on these names again, and remember no matter who it is, if you're introduced you say I've heard so much about you.

Mark: Can I admit to some of these people I've never heard of them? Is that allowed?

Butler: If they have a tray in their hands or wear an apron.

Mark: So I'm expected to know all seventy-some big wigs?

Butler: You can glaze past details, just know their industry. Riggs is a conservationist, Kelpings is oil, Andrews is health care. The important thing is that they think you've heard of them. If you don't make them feel important they won't like you.

Mark: So the purpose is just to stroke the egos.

Butler: It will save you a great deal of work.

Mark: George. May I call you George?

Butler: Sure thing, Marcus.

Mark: Please, call me Mark. Only my mother calls me Marcus, well Harriet has been calling me that since we got here, but she's not supposed to. Can I ask you a personal question?

Butler: Might not answer, but you can ask.

Mark: You've probably met a lot of senators and congressmen in your time here, is senator Camerun, how do I put this? Are they all like him?

Butler: Oh, no. each one is different. Like snowflakes, and most are white too.

Mark: So there are decent people here in Washington?

Butler: I didn't say that, just different. I worked for senator Rollins from Vermont for a while. He was a democrat, he did at least remember my name, but he was cheap son of bitch.

Mark: Was he honest? With the voters I mean.

Butler: (laughs) Just as honest as Camerun is, he just made different promises he never intended to keep. It don't matter if you're a donkey or an elephant, they both smell just as bad in August.

Mark: Great.

Butler: Now, I'm not saying they don't make honest men here, you really can't ever know that. I've only worked for six of them in my career, and I've only ever seen the nasty underbelly of two of them. So it could be the majority of them are honest, or it could be most of them are smart enough to keep up the act till the help leaves the room.

Mark: I'm in way over my head.

(Harriet enters from upstairs carrying two pair of shoes. Along with Amy who is putting on lipstick and checking herself in a mirror)

Harriet: You don't look ready.

Mark: That's because I'm not.

Harriet: Go change your pants and put on a jacket.

Mark: I'm wearing my jeans. My jackets right there, I'm dressed, I'm just not ready. I'm trying to get familiar with these names.

Harriet: You can't go dressed like that.

Mark: It's a picnic.

Harriet: A congressional picnic, my father never attended these things in jeans.

Mark: In your father's time jeans were cheap, these are eighty dollar jeans- I'm fine.

Harriet: I still think-

Mark: If you wanted to dress me you should've been here earlier, I would've let you.

Amy: You don't want him too formal, he has to relate to the common man. I'll meet you in the car Harriet. (She Exits)

Harriet: I'll be right behind you. You don't look like you slept well.

Mark: I have never been comfortable in someone else's house. I prefer a hotel.

Harriet: That's no reason to be upset.

Mark: The part that I'm upset about is that you weren't willing to join me.

Harriet: We're not married yet, do you know how that looks?

Mark: I offered to get you your own room. You know I can afford two hotel rooms.

Harriet: Marcus that's such a pointless waste of money, the rooms at this place are just as nice as a hotel. Remember, our promise to each other.

Mark: Do we need separate rooms on the honeymoon?

Harriet: Of course, not, we'll be married then. Kiss, kiss. (He goes to kiss her and she turns to give him her cheek.)

Mark: I don't see what's wrong with a real kiss. I don't remember anything in the bible against lip touching.

Harriet: One thing always leads to another; please don't test my will power.

Mark: I respect you, and your religion. I'm sorry, I'm just very nervous about running for Mayor anyway, now I'm going to have these people watching my every move- It's just a lot to process.

Harriet: Get your mind off of your worries, tell me how I look.

Mark: Terrific, a little elegant for a picnic, but you always put the other women to shame.

Harriet: Which pair of shoes do you think go best with this dress?

Mark: I think they both look nice.

Harriet: Yes, but which pair do I wear? Could I get your opinion?

Butler: I like the blue ones.

Harriet: They're both blue! Men! You two don't even know the difference!

Mark: One is open toed with a flat end the other has a pointed tip, I know the difference, but not being a woman I am at a disadvantage to choose which one most suits the picnic situation.

Harriet: That's a fine answer for reporters Mr. President, but I want the truth.

Mark: Really? The truth is I don't care. I could give you my opinion on your bra if you like.

Harriet: Marcus! You're being horrible. And in front of the help!

Mark: It's in front of George, Harriet, this man's name is George. I'm sorry; I was trying to be funny. I'm under a lot of stress here.

Harriet: You thought that was funny?

Mark: Yes, at the time I made myself chuckle. The senator warned me about this shoe debate coming up. Look, I'm trying to remember a million names to a million faces of famous people I've never heard of. The whole idea of running for president was sort of thrown on me. It's not the shoes that are important to me, it's the woman in the shoes.

Butler: Camerun did teach you something.

Mark: Can't we just skip this picnic? Maybe we could go see Independence day, or That new Mel Gibson movie?

Harriet: Mark?

Mark: Finally, now you decide to use my name. Look, this isn't right. This isn't me. When did you contact the senator about me?

Harriet: Are you breaking up with me? Are you calling off our engagement?

Mark: No, that's not what I'm saying, but do I have to be president to be your husband?

Harriet: Are you saying you don't want to run?

Mark: Yes, I want to run, far away. Maybe this isn't this difference I need to be making.

Harriet: You're just jittery because you didn't know your potential until last night.

Mark: I think I'm uneasy because I'm not sure if this is what I really want.

Harriet: Mark; some men are born great, others achieve greatness, then others have greatness thrust upon them.

Mark: More like shoved down their throats. It's not greatness I'm afraid of, it's politics.

Harriet: I know the hard working, dedicated man you are. I can see the potential in you, just like the senator sees. He sees the man that you can be,

just like I do. I'm in love with that man Marcus Hampton. Whatever you decide, I'll be right there with you. (She kisses his forehead and goes to the door) Oh, I almost forgot. I got you a little trinket of my affection. (She pulls a box out of her pocket or purse and hands it to him) Open it.

Mark: But I didn't get you anything.

Harriet: I'm not running for office silly. Open it. (It's a watch)

Mark: It's very nice, I think it's the nicest watch I've ever owned and very patriotic, the capitol and is that an eagle flying around it?

Harriet: The Eagle is on the second hand, the arrows are the hours and the olive branches are the minutes, and listen to the alarm (she pushes the button and you hear the presidential anthem play in small chimes)

Mark: How perfect for the fourth of July. Thank-you.

Harriet: You're welcome, I knew you'd like it.

Mark: I love you.

Harriet: Me too. Now if you check your new watch you'll see it's time to go. I'll be waiting with Miss Bishop in the car, I'll meet you out there. Try to relax. (She exits)

Mark: (Who is still pondering her words) She's in love with me? Or the man she thinks I can be?

Butler: Didn't quite catch that part. She was talking an awful lot like the senator. You don't like that watch at all do you?

Mark: If I'm that easy to read why didn't she catch it?

Butler: I was looking at you.

Mark: Are you married?

Butler: Twenty-seven years.

Mark: Do you care what shoes she wears?

Butler: Never really look at her feet, those ain't the parts I married her for.

(Lights Out)

Act One Scene Three

(The interior of a broom closet. Mark and Amy are dogging the flashes of reporters as the go inside.)

Mark: How did you do that?

Amy: Disposable camera, with flash. You just aim it at the wall across from you and start flashing. Next thing you know one idiot is trying to find the photo op they missed, then the pack follows suit.

Mark: You're genius.

Amy: I'm just experienced, unlike you.

Mark: So how long do we hide in a broom closet?

Amy: I'm guessing about fifteen minutes; I thought this was an exit. I was off a few doors.

Mark: Could've been worse, it could've been a bathroom.

Amy: Do you even realize how stupid that was?

Mark: I was answering a question, and telling the truth.

Amy: My god, you're proud of your honesty aren't you?

Mark: What do you mean?

Amy: You seem to glow when you get to say some thing no one else wants to speak.

Mark: A luxury tax imposed by the city is the best way to-

Amy: You don't have any other ideas?

Mark: Well, yeah, I do but I haven't done the math or consulted with-

Amy: You know, you can be honest without being stupid.

Mark: Please explain, enlighten me with your experience master of the broom closet.

Amy: It's mistress, thank-you very much. When that reporter asked you how would you balance the city's budget. What you say is: I'm exploring many different ideas at the moment, and until I have the opportunity to meet with the other financial leaders of the city, I'm unwilling to commit to one. See, vague, but honest.

Mark: But you didn't answer the question.

Amy: You're not supposed to, not if you want people to vote for you.

Mark: Of all the other options, a luxury tax really looks like the best. You could impose a tax hike on property tax, but that would affect every one. A luxury tax will only affect those people that have disposable income. They probably won't notice, and they are a minority group.

Amy: That minority group of people with disposable income are the only ones that vote. You find me one waitress at Denny's that gets up early on November fifth to get to the poles before her twelve hour shift and I'll show you big foot.

Mark: You know where Bigfoot is?

Amy: You know that was sarcastic.

Mark: Maybe I am sheltered. Maybe I need more experience. I mean I grew up in a small town, in a big house. I just don't know.

Amy: So you had a big house?

Mark: I lived there 18 years and there are rooms I've never seen.

Amy: So you have no idea what welfare is, do you?

Mark: I do, I have a very good understanding of it. I've never experienced it personally-

Amy: Then why do you want to do away with it?

Mark: If you were listening, I never said that. I said limit and reform. That reporter mis-quoted me.

Amy: Okay, okay so you're willing to bring up putting limits on welfare when you've never been on it?

Mark: The whole system is set up for people to take advantage of us.

Amy: You can't say things like that in public.

Mark: You just told me poor people don't vote.

Amy: They will if you threaten to take their welfare.

Mark: I don't want to take anything away! I want limits on it. Helping people is one thing, letting them steal from you and your country is something else. If you teach a man to fish-

Amy: I'll bet you ten bucks he won't like fish! Or he'll be a vegetarian. I don't disagree with you, but the real problem lies in the fact that parents don't teach their kids values or scruples anymore, with the exception of you. And our government can't play parent to the people.

Mark: Then we should stop loaning our deadbeat kids money they're not going to pay back.

Amy: All I'm saying is don't bring it up, we worked hard and compromised on a decent speech, and you blow it at Q and A, that's not fair to me.

Mark: I'll work on it.

Amy: And hang up that idea of health care reform.

Mark: Why? Every president since-

Amy: And every one of them failed. Did you notice all those nice expensive things in Camerun's house?

Mark: Yes.

Amy: Most of those are gifts from Blue Cross and Atnea. Besides that you can't mess with people that know all those doctors.

Mark: So what if they know doctors?

Amy: They're familiar with anatomy, if you regulate them, they'll just figure out new ways to fuck people. Speaking of which, that's something else I wanted to ask you. This is an awkward question, but luckily I have no tact. Are you really a virgin?

Mark: What does that have to do with anything?

Amy: Just answer the question.

Mark: How did you even hear that?

Amy: Now you evade the question, come on Mr. Honesty, inquiring minds and all.

Mark: I prefer to keep my private life, private.

Amy: Ah, come on.

Mark: Yes. Technically. Senator Camerun told me not to admit that.

Amy: Technically? What does technically mean?

Mark: I thought I was having sex once.

Amy: Thought? Elaborate.

Mark: The way we were positioned on the couch, well the cushions met up right where-

Amy: Stop. Please- (She stifles a laugh)

Mark: She was kind of offended- she left mad.

Amy: I think I'd be offended too. If I were mistaken for a sofa (She laughs then pulls herself together) I'm sorry, give me a minute please.

Mark: That's something else I shouldn't have said.

Amy: I would never admit it. What were you sixteen?

Mark: Twenty-seven.

Amy: That, you shouldn't admit. So you and Harriet haven't-

Mark: No, no. We're waiting for the wedding day. Harriet's family is very religious. She's a catholic girl, went to catholic school-

Amy: Mark, come on. I went to a catholic school too. Trust me she's been with more than furniture.

Mark: Are you implying that she's lying to me?

Amy: I'm- No- she wouldn't do that. Would she?

Mark: I must admit, a few of her stories don't line up.

Amy: Would you buy a car without test driving it first?

Mark: She's not a car.

Amy: How would you know if you've never looked under the hood? I don't mean to offend you or anything.

Mark: I'm not offended, I don't want to wait. Believe me; I don't need a wedding ring for that. I'm just respecting her wishes.

Amy: Mark. If she's the first, and since you're George Washington and honest Abe's love child, she'll then be the only... Do you see what I'm saying?

Mark: You're saying I could spend my life completely unsatisfied and not even know it because I could only compare it to the cushions of a couch, and my own hand. Is that what you're saying? Because that thought has crossed my mind, believe it or not.

Amy: Some things can be left un-said, you need people to shake that hand for election time, (laughs again) I'm sorry, I can't help it.

Mark: Do I have a good hand shake?

Amy: What?

Mark: Shake my hand, is it a good handshake? My father always said you can tell a lot about a man by his handshake. (He holds his hand to be shaken)

Amy: They only thing I can tell by a man's handshake is how frequently he masturbates. (Mark takes his hand away)

Mark: My job doesn't leave me a lot of time to meet anyone. My mother set me up with Harriet. We seem very compatible though. Except I'm not catholic, or republican, or very hyped up about decorating the blue room. I think we like the same music, but she doesn't dance.

Amy: Do you like to dance?

Mark: Don't know, I haven't really done much dancing.

Amy: Have you thought about a prostitute?

Mark: No, who knows what you could catch from a prostitute. I always wanted a real relationship. A gentle and loving- Oh hell yes I've thought about it. Do you know what would happen to a prosecutor at the DA's office that got caught with a prostitute? I've thought about a lot of things in my life, and I'd rather not get caught doing some of them, for that matter I don't even want to know I thought about them.

Amy: Maybe I could arrange something. (She places her hands on his knee)

Mark: Like a bachelor party?

Amy: Something like that. (Amy's phone rings, she answers) Hello? Yes, what is it? Look, Monica, I don't care if you think you have scoop of the century, I'm busy right now. Can I call you back later?

Mark: Friend of yours?

Amy: Some white house intern trying to make a name for herself, I'm sure it's nothing. (She works her hand down his thigh)

Mark: Are you a republican?

Amy: Not at the moment. I'm better than an independent, I go with the flow. I see which way the crowd is going and I get just a little bit a head of them. I like to keep my fingers on the pulse of the nation.

Mark: That isn't where they are right now.

Amy: Thirty six years of pent up male frustration, when that gets released it's going to be something powerful.

Mark: It also means I have one heck of a right hook.

Amy: Funny.

Mark: Miss Bishop, are you attempting to seduce me?

Amy: Why are you too good to be seduced?

Mark: I'm no better than anyone else.

Amy: So you're not too good for it then?

Mark: I've never been seduced before. I'm not sure how I'd feel.

Amy: You feel fine to me.

Mark: I- well- this is pleasant.

Amy: You haven't seen pleasant yet.

Mark: No?

Amy: I don't see any couches in this room, do you?

Mark: No, no furniture what so ever.

Amy: So now where's a girl gotta go to get a seat?

Mark: Are- um. I- (she backs him up to a wall where she can reach the light switch)

Amy: Thirty six years.

Mark: Are you sure we should?

Amy: Why not? We've got five minutes to kill.

(She hits the lights end of that scene)

Act One Scene Four

(George is driving a limo, the darkened glass is up behind him, then a tap is heard on the glass, next a muffled voice)

Mark: George! George! Is that you driving this thing?

Butler: (Rolling down the partition, revealing Mark in the back seat) We have an intercom, that glass is supposed to be sound proof.

Mark: I could tell, I had to scream. Which button is the intercom button?

Butler: I'm not sure, it's on the door. I never ride back there.

Mark: I found the sunroof button, I was going to climb into the cab like Indian Jones, but I decided someone would yell at me for that. Why do I ride alone to these things? Why can't the senator or someone ride with me?

Butler: Are you drunk?

Mark: I don't know, I never drank this much before. What does drunk feel like?

Butler: How much have you been drinking?

Mark: Just a little. Very little. The fridge was filled with all these little bottles.

Butler: How many of those little bottles have you had?

Mark: Six or seventeen. But they were so tiny, they were just a sip. Where's the senator? Where's Harriet?

Butler: The senator is meeting us in Richmond, he had business to attend to. As for your girl, I don't know where she is, why don't you know?

Mark: She doesn't talk to me much, I'm not really sure she likes me. I'm not sure about this.

Butler: Your engagement or the race?

Mark: Yes.

Butler: What made you decide you wanted to be Mayor?

Mark: My mother.

Butler: Your mommy made you?

Mark: No, I- well... first of all, I always wanted to make a difference in the world, you know; leave the planet a little fonder than the way I liked it. Did that make sense to you?

Butler: Yeah, I speak drunk. Why not plant a tree and call it a day?

Mark: Maybe I should. I spend my whole life trying to work honest, and be hard with people. That's backwards. Did you know I never dated past my high school prom, junior year?

Butler: No, I didn't know that.

Mark: Now I'm going to be married. Then forced to run for president of the United States in just four years, and it doesn't feel right. None of it feels right. Harriet doesn't feel right, and I haven't even felt her. I'm like a guppy tossed in to the shark cage, do you know what I mean?

Butler: Sharks have tanks, not cages. But, yes I see where you're coming from. Can I ask you how you met Harriet?

Mark: My Mother.

Butler: Again with your mom? Buddy, you have to take a page from history on this one. In 1776 the colonists finally said shut-up to mother England we are our own nation! Quit bossing us around. Man, everybody has to do that sometimes, on a personal level, with whatever it is holding you down.

Mark: So I have to shoot my Mother? Or just toss her tea in a lake? I don't think she drinks tea.

Butler: You know what I'm saying. A personal revolution could be in order.

Mark: I know, I know. You want a drink? I've got a few little bottles left back here.

Butler: I'm a little busy driving at the moment.

Mark: Oh yeah, This thing is so big I keep forgetting I'm in a car. Can I come up there?

Butler: You want to ride up here?

Mark: If you don't mind.

Butler: Sure thing. (Butler pulls over to stop, but Mark has already climbed over the seat and into the passenger's seat) I thought you were supposed to be working on a speech or- You do realize I was pulling over to let you in the normal way.

Mark: I'm good. I'm good. Wait- I might have to pee. No, no I don't.

Butler: Buckle up. Now why aren't you working on a speech. You have to talk with some union in Richmond tomorrow morning.

Mark: I can't focus on anything, my conscious is driving me nuts. Maybe my nuts are driving my conscious.

Butler: Maybe you shouldn't be in politics.

Mark: I did the worst thing ever yesterday. I've ever done in my life, well, really it was one of the best things I've ever done, but I feel so horrible about doing it.

Butler: Those are usually the best. Hold on (he rolls up the window partition) I keep that part bugged.

Mark: Really?

Butler: Retirement plan, good for every driver on Capital Hill. Go on, what'd you do?

Mark: Not what, who.

Butler: Okay, who then?

Mark: You may have heard, I was a virgin-

Butler: Really? At thirty five?

Mark: Six.

Butler: Thirty six year old virgin? What's the matter? No ugly fat girls went to your school?

Mark: I went to an all boys academy.

Butler: Damn, running for mayor and still doing the hand jive.

Mark: Now what makes you think I'd do that?

Butler: You're a man, and your breathing.

Mark: Okay. But I'm not anymore.

Butler: A man or breathing?

Mark: Not like a virgin...for the very first time..

Butler: Harriet defrosted?

Mark: No, that's what made me feel so awful. It was Miss Bishop.

Butler: Well, congratulations?

Mark: It's horrible! I don't have any feelings for her other than the fact that she's hot. And I've betrayed my betrothed.

Butler: Betrayed your betrothed? You and Harriet aren't married, she wasn't doing a thing for you, sounds to me like you don't even know if you love her or not.

Mark: No, I don't know, but now I've gone and drugged Amy's feelings into this, and I don't know her at all.

Butler: Don't sweat that part, any feelings that woman had, she's done feeling them.

Mark: You don't think she loves me?

Butler: That woman loves the nation, literally. The Smithsonian isn't the only thing in DC that's open to the public.

Mark: That's a mean thing to say about the woman I bonked. (Giggles) She was a real woman, do you know how long I've waited for that? Not a couch in the room.

Butler: There is a reason she's at the top of her game, she knows who to be on top of. I wonder why she came after a rookie like you.

Mark: She didn't come after me, it was before. There seems to be so much about relationships and politics I just don't know.

Butler: It's not all that complicated, in fact Marriage and politics are a lot a like. All of those campaign promises go out the window a few months into it. Honesty is only used if there's fear of being caught, and you're bound to lose interest in the one you put in office.

Mark: That's a very cynical view of marriage.

Butler: Don't get me wrong Mark, I love my wife, I would never do a thing to hurt her, but sometimes I react out of the fear that she's gonna kick my ass. Sometimes you think things, not speak 'em.

Mark: So it's me. I'm just not cut out for this, marriage or politics. But this is my chance to have it all. Money, power, a beautiful wife.

Butler: That's a far cry from the guy that wanted to make an honest difference.

Mark: Yeah, yes it is. You know being a public defender was stupid, cause I wanted to prosecute more than half the jerks I was defending, then I became a prosecutor and I keep prosecuting the same people over and over again for different things, our justice system doesn't work, our school system doesn't work, this radio doesn't work.

Butler: That's the vent for the AC.

Mark: In that case it's fine.

Butler: You just have to keep your eye on what you want. You can take your time figuring out what that is, but don't let anyone else tell you. Listen to you, not your momma, not your girlfriend and not the guy making twenty-five bucks an hour driving you from town to town, you listen to you.

Mark: That's good advice George. You make twenty -five bucks an hour? Maybe I should be a butler.

George: Nah, it ain't worth it. I gotta clean that leather seat you just peed on.

(End of scene)

(End of Act One, Intermission)

Act Two Scene One

August 10th 1996
The backseat of the limo. It's day and Mark is sleeping under a jacket along the bench, just below the partition. The partition rolls down and we see George from the passengers point of view)

Butler: Mark? Hey Mark! Wake up!

Mark: Is it day again?

Butler: Day of the Governor's Ball, you better get your things, we're here.

Mark: At the Governor's mansion?

Butler: No, at a Marriott, two miles down the road from the governor's mansion.

Mark: Why?

Butler: You can't spend two days sleeping in the back of a limo and expect to hop out and go to the ball Cinderella.

Mark: Does that make you my fairy god mother?

Butler: Boy, I ain't your fairy nothin'. Now get your ass up and grab your stuff. You need to shower, shave and whatever else you need to do to make yourself look human again.

Mark: Maybe I shouldn't have told her.

Butler: Telling your fiancée you had sex with another woman? No I can't say I thought that was one of your better ideas.

Mark: But the truth had to be told.

Butler: Mark, sometimes the truth is just an excuse for lack of an imagination.

Mark: I just. I don't know what to do any more. I'm letting Amy write most of my speeches now, which seems to be working really well, but it's not what I'm saying, it's not even what I'm thinking. Then Harriet.

Butler: She took it that bad?

Mark: No, that's not it at all. She didn't seem hurt, or upset, she seemed annoyed that I told her. You know, I'm beginning to doubt she cares for me at all.

Butler: That rock on her hand, is that the engagement ring you gave her?

Mark: Yeah, why?

Butler: Maybe she doesn't love you.

Mark: Why would you say that?

Butler: That's a ten thousand dollar diamond, hell I'd agree to marry you if you gave me that. But no sex,

Mark: Those are her terms too. Really I only paid eight thousand two-something.

Butler: The big question I have is do you love her?

Mark: Yes. I think, well I was sure of it before she got me involved with Camerun. How do you know? I mean, she's beautiful, she's smart, she laughed at all of my jokes.

Butler: She laughed at all of your jokes?

Mark: Is that bad?

Butler: I've known you a while now, you're not that funny, she's faking something.

Mark: When we first started dating she was so sweet to me, smiled all the time, very agreeable.

Butler: Yeah, she comes off as a very sweet woman, but you gotta watch that. My momma always said "when they're sellin' shit pie, they gotta use a lot of frosting"

Mark: You think she's shit pie?

Butler: I don't know much about her, you've told her my name five times and she's never called me by it. I think she's hiding something. I think, and don't go taking this the wrong way, I think she's more interested in you as a candidate than she is interested in you as a man.

Mark: You know I had the same thought.

Butler: She just may not be what you think she is, that's all I'm sayin'.

Mark: You're right, my mother seems normal too.

Butler: She nuts?

Mark: There's a rumor she had my father killed for his money.

Butler: Do you believe it?

Mark: Her and my older brother are eating though the family fortune like piranha. She lectured me about making my difference and said I needed to get a higher paying position to make a real difference.

Butler: Is that when she told you, you had to run for Mayor?

Mark: That was one of her options. I picked the one she likes the least.

Butler: Then she introduced you to Harriet?

Mark: That was later, she has a Christmas party at the family house every year for her rich friends. Harriet's parent's are somehow friends with my mother.

Butler: You could drop out of this race, just go back to the DA's office, then if Harriet follows you know she loves you, not the politics.

Mark: If I drop out of the Mayoral race I'm not allowed back at the family mansion, my mother said she wouldn't want to see me again if I was a quitter. You know the other day she actually hugged me? She's never done that before.

Butler: Maybe she did kill your dad. Have you ever looked at the case from the DA's place?

Mark: Five times, they never found his body.

Butler: Maybe he just ran away from the bitch.

Mark: There are times I think I would've, you know, if I was him. Maybe that's what I should be doing now.

Butler: It's your life buddy, I can't tell you what to do, but I can tell you, you need a shower. This limo has all leather interior and all I can smell is you.

Mark: Maybe you should be the campaign manager, you seem smarter than the Senator or Miss Bishop.

Butler: Too smart for politics. I'm not telling you what you should do. I'm not your Mother, and I don't think you should listen to what she wants either. I will loan you a bit of wisdom my mommma gave me. A wise man once said, If a man gains everything, but loses himself, what has he really gained? You just think about that.

Act Two Scene Two

(Governor's Mansion: August 10th 1996. Lights go up on an elegant punch bowl perhaps with a fountain is in front of the entrance to the balcony set up on a balcony in the night and French doors opening into a party that is going on inside we can hear murmuring and laughter with violin music from the party, Amy walks onto the balcony pulls out a cigarette and begins to light it. Senator Cameron comes onto the balcony briefly behind her)

Senator: Those things will kill you, you know that don't you?

Amy: No kidding? The surgeon general forgot to put the warning label on living. It should be posted at every maternity ward. Caution: Life, prolonged exposure results in death. (She lights up)

Senator: If this were twenty years ago I'd be out here with you.

Amy: If it were twenty years ago, I wouldn't have to come out here, I could just inhale the second hand smoke from all the blowhards in there.

Senator: I suppose you're right, I think I had my first cigars at one of these things. So what do you think?

Amy: About cigars? I don't care for them much, and I don't put a lot of stock in what Freud says about them. They usually just make me want a cigarette.

Senator: I mean Hampton. What do you think of him? It's been over a month of campaigning and speeches. Am I wasting my time with him? It seems like such a fight.

Amy: He's good. There isn't a question about that, he's smart, and he's got charisma. But someone has to keep his mouth shut. I've done the best I can at trimming him back, but the last two interviews he mentioned that damn flat tax idea of his. If he doesn't start keeping his ideas to himself he'll never be a politician.

Senator: I thought Harriet was going to be in charge of that, but she doesn't seem to have much control over him. Maybe he is too strong of a man.

Amy: He's as easy to train as a Doberman, she's just afraid to touch the leash.

Senator: Miss Bishop, have you by chance been playing with another woman's leash?

Amy: If I didn't give the reigns a tug this hoarse would've been out to pasture three weeks ago.

Senator: What are men to you Miss Bishop? Dogs or Horses?

Amy: The human male is a fascinating creature Senator. Both, and more. On a good day you can sculpt them like clay. On a bad day they can be putty in your hands.

Senator: I doubt in your hands. Are you willing to take over?

Amy: No.

Senator: He's not bad looking, is there something wrong with him?

Amy: He's honest. He's noble, he already confessed everything to Harriet, and she took it like a trouper. He however is still beside himself with guilt. He's a lover, maybe he's not in love with Harriet, or me. But he's in love with love. If I had to sleep with him more than twice I just might fall for the sap myself.

Senator: You've done it twice?

Amy: Just once, but I was hoping to try again tonight during the governor's speech.

Senator: You're kidding.

Amy: Something has to keep me awake.

Senator: Was he really? You know, new to it?

Amy: Oh, yeah.

Senator: With a man, how can you tell?

Amy: He had no idea what I was doing, and he didn't blink at my latex underwear. Any man that had ever seen a woman with her pants off would stop in their tracks when they saw these.

Senator: You're still wearing the same panties?

Amy: Of course not, these are disposable. I've got a box.

Senator: I've got to convince Harriet to take control of this situation.

Amy: Or get a new guy, it's not like you don't have time. What about that guy in Texas?

Senator: He's an idiot, and a raging alcoholic.

Amy: AA works wonders, and you've got the family connection-

Senator: I don't want to give up on Hampton yet. What does Harriet have to do?

Amy: Him. It's that simple.

Senator: She hasn't yet? Their engaged she has a diamond.

Amy: That's what I said.

Senator: Would he buy a car without test driving it?

Amy: Also what I said. If she can wrangle that mouth of his I'm still on this band wagon, but if she can't do her... well-duty-, you will have to move on. You could try money, but I don't think that will work he's too rich. Power,

he's too self righteous. It's going to have to be love that brings him to your side, or at least some reasonable facsimile.

Senator: I'll see what I can do.

Amy: Speak of the devil. (Harriet goes to the punch bowl and gets a glass) I don't want the melodramatic slap or anything, but the Senator needs to speak with you.

Harriet: Why would I slap you?

Amy: You know, out of anger.

Senator: Aren't you angry with her?

Harriet: Why would I? Oh, sleeping with Marcus? I don't mind, we aren't married yet, no papers got wind of it. That's the good thing about sleeping with media people; it usually stays off the front page.

Amy: You really are taking it like a trouper.

Senator: What my dear, are your intensions with our Marcus?

Harriet: I was hoping to marry him, make him a president, fall in love with him, then have two daughters. I'll name them Liberty and Justice.

Senator: The fall in love with him part, that clearly hasn't happened yet, has it?

Harriet: No, I can't honestly say it has, but he's got potential.

Senator: Good lord Harriet. Do you know what you're doing? You can't pick out a man to marry just because he might be president one day.

Harriet: Not many bachelors run. And no divorce happens in mid-term. Granted Jefferson's wife died fairly early on but you can't rely on-

Senator: Harriet, stop. This is absurd. Do you believe this?

Amy: She's got a point, a bachelor really doesn't have a fair chance at it.

Senator: If your father knew what you were doing-

Harriet: He didn't have a problem with my mother doing it. Two marriages later, they both found love.

Senator: We can't make him a candidate without breaking the bronco first. His Ideas are a little too liberal for us and too conservative for the democrats if we were French I'd have a shot, but he needs to be controlled. We don't have to change his mind, just keep his mouth shut on a few subjects.

Harriet: How do you want me to break the bronco, as you put it?

Senator: Just like a cowboy, you have to ride 'em. Then you can start bringing up more conservative views with him. A man his more open to ideas when those ideas are coming from someone that's open to him, if you see what I'm saying.

Harriet: So you're saying if I have sex with him, he'll do what I ask?

Amy: That's how men work, it's like programming a VCR. You have to hold down the right buttons if you want the clock to stop blinking.

Harriet: If that's true, then the first lady is really in charge of the country.

Senator: Look at Hillary, isn't it obvious? It's been that way since the good old days of Henry the eight came to an end. The only way the woman doesn't rule is if you have her beheaded and replaced every few years.

Harriet: I just don't feel that way about him... yet.

Senator: You're not remotely attracted to the man are you?

Harriet: Well, yes. Remotely.

Senator: Then, I'm sorry, this ends here. If I were you I'd call off the wedding too.

Harriet: What does his political career have anything to do with my sex life? Can't you brainwash him yourself?

Senator: He's got money, and he doesn't seem interested in power. He can only be manipulated by love.

Harriet: Love and lust are two different things.

Amy: Men can't tell the difference, it's like colorblindness. Jim, I think it's time to end this charade.

Harriet: End it? No, come on now. I can do my part, Amy seemed to enjoy it, maybe I will too.

Amy: Are you a virgin too?

Harriet: No, I just cooked up that story so I didn't have to jump in bed with him. Just give me one more chance, if I don't get him cooperating by the town hall debate next week, we can all give it up. Deal?

Senator: I think you need psychiatric help, but I need a candidate, it's a deal. He's not a bad looking guy, why aren't you interested?

Harriet: His mother pointed him out at a party of hers, when his mommy points him out- That sends signals.

Senator: Then why did you agree to meet him?

Harriet: It was a party at Mommy's sixty-two room mansion

Amy: That sends signals too.

Senator: So you're going after a family fortune and a run at the white house?

Harriet: Isn't that why your wife married you?

Senator: No, that was a black-mail situation.

Harriet: Black-mail for what?

Senator: I don't have the energy or the money to let anyone else know. You worry about frying your own fish.

Amy: If you're going to do it, you should try here.

Harriet: At the governor's ball? There's a room full of reporters.

Amy: What better to get Mark some front page attention?

Harriet: A scandal? You want me to drag Marcus through a scandal?

Amy: If the worst thing he does is have sex with his fiancée, it won't be all that scandalous. Without any other problems those people that mind will forgive once you're married, and the media will eat it up.

Senator: She knows what she's saying. We have to have some negative story on him, or no one will pay any attention to him.

Amy: Damn, here he comes. I can't let him see us together, that would be awkward, I'll catch up to you later. (she exits)

Harriet: He's probably wondering what happened to me, I should get his punch too.

Senator: All this time? And you told him you went for drinks?

Harriet: He was talking with some union president anyway.
(Mark comes onto the balcony)

Mark: Good evening Senator. Is everything alright Harriet?

Harriet: Oh, fine. I'm sorry I took so long. It's just such a beautiful night. The fireflies are twinkling in the warm night air. I was enjoying them and talking with the senator.

Mark: Talking about me I presume.

Senator: Careful, your ego is showing.

Mark: I'm sorry, was I wrong?

Senator: No, you are correct; I just thought it was out of character for you to acknowledge all eyes were on you.

Mark: I've spent a month feeling nothing but those eyes. Boring into me.

Senator: If you know it, why won't you start acting like it?

Mark: This is one of those things you don't like about me isn't it?

Senator: No, it's nothing about you. Just a few of your subjects you toss out.

Mark: Miss Bishop has done most of my speech writing, I swear I change very little. I've been gaining ground, I know it's slow but-

Senator: The speeches aren't the problem. It's the interviews, and your topics of conversation. Some topics just should be kept quiet.

Mark: Wait, let me guess. The flat tax.

Senator: Good, so you know you're wrong in mentioning it.

Mark: I know you think I'm wrong in mentioning it. I know it cost me the meatpackers union.

Senator: Who cares about the meat packers.

Mark: I do, don't you care about the people that pack your meat?

Senator: I'm not sure we're on the same subject anymore, the point is, cut that loss, get back up on that hoarse and stop saying a word about a flat tax. It's like the Hindenburg, it's been tried before and it goes down in flames.

Mark: But it is the fairest way to balance a budget, maybe even a national budget.

Senator: I don't have a thing against the flat tax. It's the poor that will hate the idea because they'll be paying the same as the rich, the middle class doesn't like the thought of paying that much...

Mark: That much? What do you mean that much? If we all paid the same percent, who could argue?

Senator: Look, Mark. Have you done the math on this? Let's take for the sake of argument 10% of your income is taxed.

Mark: It wouldn't have to be that high, not if-

Senator: I was going for easy math, excuse me let's take 7% then alright? 7% of my salary is roughly eight thousand dollars no maybe nine. Peanuts to me, I give you that. I toss that much away on cheap liquors for dinner party's each year. Now take a middle class family making \$55,000 a year. They would end up paying, carry the two- almost four thousand in taxes. That's a vacation, or a nice Christmas. It's bad for the economy. Then a low income chump bringing in Twenty thousand a year? He'd have to pay one thousand four hundred dollars.

Mark: Which isn't really much at all, most of them pay that much now. It comes out slowly during the year, just like normal, they wouldn't feel it.

Senator: On April 15th or so, they'd see it.

Mark: An even percentage is the most fair way to do it.

Senator: What are you? Communist? Yes, I know that. When will you figure out American's don't want fair, they want what seems best for them. People are happier being middle class when they think they get to stick it to the rich once a year. And the wealthy don't like feeling equal to anyone else. Besides that once it was applied to the federal system it would leave our government with too much capital, we would have beyond a surplus.

Mark: Then the country could be out of debt. Something it looks like we may already be heading for, a debt free nation.

Senator: What the hell do you want that for? Do you like war?

Mark: I'm sorry, I'm not sure I follow you.

Senator: Debt free is great for individuals, but not for a country.

Mark: Are you serious?

Senator: If you owe Visa fifteen thousand, and you're paying them two hundred a month. Then they find out you wear a shirt that says I love MasterCard, what are they going to do?

Mark: Why would I wear a-

Senator: That's beside the point. This is for demonstration purposes only. Point is they can't do a thing to you if they want your two hundred a month, plus of course the interest. They may hate you behind your back, but because they want their money they won't do a thing about it.

Mark: So Visa is like Germany, and France is MasterCard.

Senator: France is more like a dinner's club, but yes that's the general idea.

Mark: What about the deficit that isn't from foreign nations, what if it's to our children?

Senator: That isn't real, we just make that up. We don't use the gold standard anymore.

Mark: There is so much I don't understand about politics, and apparently economics.

Senator: That's why I'm here, to tell you what you don't understand. Just bring me your notes before the debate next week, I'll play devil's advocate and we'll iron out where you need to be clear and where you need to be fuzzy. I'll give you the scoop straight from the horse's mouth.

Mark: I think I need to brush up on my equine anatomy, that seems like it's from the other end.

Senator: That may be, but as long as it smells good enough, voters buy it. I also wanted to ask you, do you play a musical instrument?

Mark: I played the xylophone in the high school band. Why do you ask?

Senator: No reason. It's no saxophone, but we might make it work.

Mark: Could I ask you a question? I wanted your take on something.

Senator: Please.

Mark: If a man gains everything, but loses himself, what does he really gain?

Senator: That's easy you just said it, he gets everything. I'll leave you two kids, be good now. (he exits)

Harriet: We will.

Mark: How about you? Did you want to criticize me?

Harriet: You shouldn't plug that feed the hungry organization at every single appearance.

Mark: I think it's a very nice organization. I didn't know it upset you.

Harriet: Its fine, but you say it at every single appearance, you're beginning to remind me of Bob Barker on the price is right, ending every show with a don't forget to spay or neuter your pet.

Mark: I could end with spay or neuter a homeless person.

Harriet: That would save tax money.

Mark: I'll just stop mentioning it.

Harriet: It's not that big of a deal, that's the only criticism I could come up with.

Mark: If you stop feeding the hungry, then it will only take a few weeks to end world hunger.

Harriet: True, all the hungry would be dead.

Mark: That was heartless. Why did I say that? Why did I think that?

Harriet: You can't control every thought in your head, they can't all be righteous. But you can control what you say. There are quite a few things that shouldn't be said, like who's been sleeping with whom.

Mark: You would've preferred me to lie to you?

Harriet: Not a lie Marcus. An omission of truth, some call it tact.

Mark: In this situation it felt like a lie. As a matter of fact, a lot of things have been feeling like lies recently. Maybe it's time-

Harriet: Mark, I've got to be honest with you. You did that much for me. I'm jealous.

Mark: Jealous?

Harriet: I know, I'm engaged to you, but

Mark: You are? Our engagement is still on? I thought this event would end, everything.

Harriet: It hasn't ended my feelings for you, Mark. I'm sick of being a virgin. I never really wanted to wait for our wedding day. Would you mind?

Mark: I thought you were angry with me? You have every right to be, I'm angry with me.

Harriet: I'm angry with myself, I'm the one that deprived you from physical attention. I practically drove you into the arms of another woman.

Mark: I, I don't know what to say.

Harriet: Do you like this dress? Do you think it would work for our inaugural ball?

Mark: Well it's a summer dress, wouldn't you need something warmer for January?

Harriet: Then I'll save it for an Easter Egg roll, or a Valentine's Day ball, or a I don't know, some kind of Ball.

Mark: After what I did, I didn't think you'd still want my balls, -err to go to the balls with me.

Harriet: My mother was a politicians' wife I knew to expect problems, maybe I it expected so much I wanted it to happen. It's not like you didn't make your advances with me first.

Mark: I didn't make any advances with Ms. Bishop, she, well she kind of made me-

Harriet: Did she rape you?

Mark: No, I wouldn't say that.

Harriet: I didn't think it was possible for a woman to rape a man.

Mark: I don't know that a woman would ever have to.

Harriet: I don't want, to hear any more about it. What else could I expect, after the way I've ignored your needs?

Mark: You shouldn't have to expect that from me. I don't expect that from me. I didn't expect it from me, really I still can't believe it happened.

Harriet: No matter how moral, you are mortal Mark. A mortal man made of flesh and bone, flesh that needs a loving touch, I'm so sorry I made you wait. Can I try to make it up to you? Can I try to win you back?

Mark: I ask for nothing but forgiveness (She kisses him) You don't have to do anything beyond (she kisses him again) Really I don't expect – I'd be thrilled if we could go to a movie tomorrow- (she kisses him)I still wanted to see independence day, where the aliens... (She closes the doors to the interior and kisses him then slides down his body to her knees.) I really don't expect- anything from you- like- uhm. Harriet? Won't your parents mind?

Harriet: You don't have to tell them do you?

Mark: No, I guess not, but they're just inside talking to the Governor. Really, like ten feet a-way

Harriet: Keep an eye out for them would you?

Mark: Sure.

(Lights out end of that scene)

Act Two Scene Three

(September 22nd 1996. Butler is driving, the separation window rolls down and Mark climbs over the seat into the passenger's seat. This time he's holding a full sized bottle of vodka and a can of Hi C.

Butler: You know that's illegal.

Mark: Oh yeah, I'm sorry. (He buckles his seat belt) So how have you been?

Butler: I mean the booze, it's illegal to have an open bottle of booze up here.

Mark: Sorry. (he takes a swig of each then tosses them in the back) Oh, I'm really sorry, you don't have to clean that up do you?

Butler: No, this one's a rental. The senator didn't want you in his after that last trip. Where did you get the big bottle?

Mark: Swiped it from the gala. The clean up crew was taking them, it was an open bar.

Butler: Are you becoming an alcoholic? Or a thief?

Mark: Maybe both, I've needed a hobby.

Butler: Ladies man isn't enough?

Mark: You've seen the story?

Butler: Who hasn't?

Mark: I really didn't think she liked me that much.

Butler: The prude little ice queen thawed.

Mark: That prude little ice queen is actually a slushy, a dirty wild flavor slushy.

Butler: You know there are some things I don't want to know. Now what, do you feel guilty about this time?

Mark: Vodka kills guilt pretty quick, I'm learning. I spent my life as a virgin. The second I got into politics, everyone wants to screw me. Even girl reporters are starting to flirt with me now, since that story broke. Guys are patting me on the back, I've got friends everywhere. I should've run for class president.

Butler: I thought you went to an all boys school.

Mark: We had hot girl teachers.

Butler: Damn, Mr. Smith spends a month in DC and we get him laid and turn him into an alcoholic thief. Jimmy Stewart would be proud.

Mark: That sounded sarcastic.

Butler: It was. You do know what they're doing don't you?

Mark: What whose doing?

Butler: Those women, Miss Bishop and Harriet.

Mark: A lot of moaning.

Butler: Besides that! I mean what they're trying to do to you. I'd bet a months salary the Senator is behind it.

Mark: I didn't see him there. Granted I was only paying attention to-

Butler: They're reining you in.

Mark: Huh?

Butler: You're too liberal to run as a republican.

Mark: Too smart to be a Democrat.

Butler: You have to choose a team before you're allowed to play the game. Most people would cave with the temptation of money or power, but those things don't work on you, which leaves love.

Mark: Love. I love love.

Butler: I noticed, and the senator knows it too. That's why they're using you're feelings to get control of you buddy. It's your Achilles heel, your heart.

Mark: That isn't the organ they've been messing with.

Butler: You know what I mean, their playing on your emotions.

Mark: They're turning me to the dark side? Like Vader wants to do to Luke?

Butler: If you can relate to that, sure.

Mark: By taking control of my light saber and-

Butler: Giving you sex, so you'll stop bringing up all that shit they don't want to hear.

Mark: I think you're right. They say every man has his price. Wow, I'm cheap. My price is a cheap floozy.

Butler: I don't think anyone uses that word anymore.

Mark: Cheap? Okay, frugal.

Butler: You haven't given much thought to that what does a man gain thing, have you?

Mark: As a matter of fact I'm constantly giving thought about that. That's why I keep drinking in limos, and on planes, did you know you can get drinks on planes?

Butler: Yeah, I knew.

Mark: What I gain, by losing myself is Sex, and free limo rides and friends. I've never had a lot of friends. Now, all of a sudden people seem to like me, and all I had to do was stop being me.

Butler: I liked you better before these people got to you.

Mark: Me too.

Butler: Do you mean that?

Mark: Yes! I liked me better the old way, but everyone else seems to like me better now. So I can be happy with myself and lonely or I can hate myself and have money and sex and power and sex and friends and sex. Did you know I'm now leading Thurmond in the poles by seventeen percent?

Butler: You got the people voting for you, when you wouldn't vote for yourself.

Mark: Now you see why I like drinking?

Butler: You'd better get some sleep, you've got that town hall debate in three days, and aren't you supposed to be writing a speech?

Mark: I stopped writing those things, Amy takes over anyway. I like the president we have now, and he's a Democrat.

Butler: I agree with you.

Mark: If they make me a republican, can I still vote for him in November?

Butler: I'm pretty sure you can.

Mark: But if Clinton ends up with two terms and keeps doing the great job he has been doing, won't the country not want a republican?

Butler: Don't you worry, they'll find something he does wrong. If they don't find anything wrong with his policies or his cabinet they'll attack his character.

Mark: But that has nothing to do with president-ing. For all I know Abraham Lincoln was an asshole. That doesn't mean he wasn't a good president.

Butler: Yeah, I've met George Bush, and he's a really nice guy.

Mark: But a lousy president. Let's attack Iraq! Oh we've almost got Saddam! Oh forget it it's hot, and I got sand in my shorts. Let's go home. You know he couldn't finish that war because in order to pay for it we'd have to raise taxes, but his lips said no, no new taxes. Have to listen to those lips. Wouldn't be prudent not to.

Butler: Someday we're going to have to finish that mother of all wars.

Mark: Only if you find a president dumber than him. Only a moron would send troops back there now. I don't think I love her.

Butler: What the hell are we talking about now?

Mark: Harriet. I don't love her, I don't think. We don't really get along, and Ms. Bishop is better than her at- you know- things.

Butler: That's not a fair judgment. No one has more practice than Ms. Bishop.

Mark: And now that I've had sex, I don't feel like I had any control of the situation. I really didn't understand what Ms. Bishop was doing at first, then a few times it felt you know Morally wrong to have sex with Harriet, but I just, I don't know it's like I'm under some sort of vodo.

Butler: I'm pretty sure that's the way it is for all of us.

Mark: It's like, they touch me and my brain stops functioning.

Butler: That's because the blood flow leaves your brain.

Mark: Where does it- oh, okay. Maybe that's right. Was that what happened with Helen of Troy? Was that how her faced launched a thousand ships.

Butler: I got no doubt two armies went to war over a woman, but somehow I think it was more than a face that launched those ships.

Mark: So they want me to launch the ships? Climb into my Trojan hoarse, speaking of which, could you show me how to-

Butler: Stop.

Mark: I didn't have sex ed in school, and my father disappeared when I was sixteen. I don't know how-

Butler: There is no way you're taking this conversation anywhere I want to follow, so just shut-up. I like you Mark, I do, but the Senator is right about one thing, everybody does not need to know every thing. If you gotta speak honestly all the time, then sometimes you just gotta shut the hell up.

Mark: Okay, sorry.

Butler: It's Okay.

Mark: Now I feel awkward.

Butler: Not as awkward as you would've felt if I didn't shut you up.

Mark: I'm stupid for doing this.

Butler: Getting drunk every time you get in the car?

Mark: No, for getting married and going into politics. Or going into politics and getting married, I can't figure out which came first.

Butler: I thought you wanted to get married?

Mark: I do, but I want a woman, that I love.

Butler: That's a smart way to do it.

Mark: Do I love Harriet? I don't even like the name Harriet, it starts with hairy and I don't like hairy women. You know she's worried about getting a dress for the inaugural ball, but she hasn't even mentioned a wedding dress? Maybe she just wanted to marry me because I might be president.

Butler: That would be really nuts.

Mark: Wouldn't it? No woman would do that, would they? I can't think straight about anything anymore.

Butler: You just need a good night's sleep and a new perspective on the situation.

Mark: Maybe you're right. What's your wife's name?

Butler: Honey.

Mark: Really? That's her name? or that's what you call her?

Butler: Her real name is Honey, cause her momma said one day when you're married your husband is gonna call you honey all the time, so that might as well be your name, and so that's what she named her.

Mark: That's sweet. Senator Camerun has a wife and a kid doesn't he?

Butler: Sure does.

Mark: Why come I've never met them?

Butler: I don't think the kid is biologically his, but don't quote me on that. And his wife hates him. The only reason they stay married is because he likes the catholic vote.

(Mark passes out and snores)

(End of that Scene)

Act Two Scene Four

(Evening of Friday October 5th 1996. Back stage at the Town hall Debate. There is a (color is of no preference) curtain back drop, a small make up table with mirror and a few folding chairs set up. George sits in a chair, Mark paces back and forth across the room. As the scene continues we can hear an audience gather at the other side of the curtain)

Butler: You gonna sit down? You're making me sea sick.

Mark: Sorry, must be nervous.

Butler: You'll be fine.

Senator: (He enters with Amy and Harriet.) Alright, just take a look at- Why is he pacing? He looks like a caged Tiger.

Harriet: Marcus? What's wrong? You're sweating.

Butler: Nerves.

Harriet: You've spoken at fifty-eight different meetings and press conferences, you can handle this.

Mark: I've never had to debate the issues before, not with someone that actually knows what he's talking about. Are you keeping count?

Senator: You've debated me several times.

Mark: I know, but I actually agree with some of the things Mayor Thurmond says. He could catch me off guard.

Amy: Impossible.

Mark: Thank-you all for the votes of confidence, but I'm still a little nervous.

Senator: It's not a vote of confidence, it really is impossible. (he hands Mark an envelope) These are the questions the mediator is going to present tonight. There's absolutely no way Thurmond is going to catch you off guard.

Mark: I thought the candidates weren't allowed-

Amy: Shut up Mark, the candidates aren't allowed, the press however, has certain friends in certain places. If this envelope were say, carelessly left on your dressing table, perhaps you wouldn't know what it was, and you'd take a look. By mistake of course.

Senator: Accidents do happen.

Harriet: While you're, you know, gathering your thoughts. We were heading back to the limo for a quick drink. Could I bring you something to calm your nerves?

Mark: Scotch, on the rocks, hold the rocks.

Amy: George? Anything for you?

Butler: I'm happy with the cola, thanks.

Harriet: We'll be right back sweetie. (she kisses him) I know you can do this, you're going to be great. (The trio exit, leaving George and Mark. Mark nervously flips the envelope over on the table, George starts laughing)

Mark: What?

Butler: When I first met you, I had to pour cranberry juice in a wine glass, because you didn't drink. Now, you're asking for scotch without blinking an eye.

Mark: I still don't like red wine, but I get the point. I have become a bit of a lush, haven't I?

Butler: Among other things. No offense meant of course, sir.

Mark: No, there's offense, and I deserve it. Why did you call me sir? You don't call me sir.

Butler: You used to be the kind of guy that didn't like being called sir, but I see that's about to change, sir.

Mark: No, no it's not. I'm not a cheat, I know this is wrong.

Butler: Yet you stand there flipping that envelope hoping it will catch some corner some how and open as if by divine intervention.

Mark: That's not why, here (He hands it to George)

Butler: I don't want to be caught with this damn thing. (he puts it back on the table)

Mark: I certainly don't want it, I'm ashamed they even brought it to me. I don't know why Harriet would think that I'd- (He stops himself in thought, and sits)

Butler: You Okay?

Mark: Do you have a lighter?

Butler: No. I think Miss Bishop has one. Why, are you going to take up smoking now too?

Mark: No, I want to burn this (he rips the envelope into several pieces and tosses them in a trash can.) I'll have to burn it later.

Butler: The Senator isn't gonna like that.

Mark: Neither is Harriet, but I don't care what they like. If a man loses himself everything's worthless, the friends aren't really his, the votes don't matter, the sex, well sex is never worthless no matter who you're pretending to be. But, still he gains nothing. A man has nothing if not himself! (Mark walks across the stage, Butler follows)

Butler: You have been thinking about that. Where are you going?

Mark: Mr. Mayor, excuse me please. (Mayor Thurmond appears from the wings, eating a doughnut) May I speak to you a moment?

Teddy: Me?

Butler: What the hell are you up to now?

Teddy: Mr. Hampton?

Mark: Please call me Mark, Mayor Thurmond, it's an honor to meet you sir. Could you spare some time to speak with me?

Teddy: I suppose.

Mark: This is my friend George Butler, he works for Senator Camerun.

Butler: How's it going mister mayor?

Teddy: Aren't you the same Marcus Hampton about to debate me? The man that's running against me for office?

Mark: Well, yeah, but I really wanted to speak with you about a few things, you know get your perspective on things.

Teddy: What's your angle?

Mark: I don't have an angle sir, I know it sounds strange but I was tossed into this so quickly.

Teddy: It's not often a republican asks my opinion.

Mark: I'm not a republican, I'm an independent. I'm just in bed with a republican, so to speak.

Teddy: Been in bed with a few of them, or so I've read.

Mark: Yes, I'm reminded of that every time I stand in line at the super market.

Teddy: You should know I've done my homework on you, you've been working with the DA's office since college, right? You're the one that said I spent too much money on frivolous projects?

Mark: I believe what I said was, I think I could budget the city's money better and cut out a few frivolous projects.

Teddy: Isn't that what I said?

Mark: You left out the think part. That's a very important word. I don't know, I used to never claim to know anything. I know what the public knows, but I don't know what deals have to be made, and since I'm not you, really maybe I couldn't do your job any better than you could. Maybe I shouldn't even be wasting your time debating you.

Teddy: Is he serious?

Butler: Yeah. Senator Camerun and his zombie pack are attempting to line this poor sap up as a republican candidate for the presidency.

Teddy: The party already announced Dole Kemp as the ticket.

Mark: For 2000. They don't think Dole has a shot.

Teddy: Wow, for once I agree with Camerun. Anyone that keeps referring to himself in the third person, that's not someone Theodore Thurmond is gonna vote for, no sir ree.

Butler: That was pretty good, he was doing a Dole impression.

Mark: I got it. Look, Mr. mayor-

Teddy: Please, call me Teddy.

Mark: Thank-you, Teddy. I'm in the dark about a lot that's going on here. Can you shed some light my way?

Teddy: I'll share a bit, but only if you promise to take down your campaign signs on sixth street.

Mark: Consider it done.

Teddy: Really? That easy?

Mark: I don't even see why we have those signs. They don't change people's minds. All they do is piss off your neighbors.

Teddy: Some people vote based on which signs they see more of.

Mark: Are those the types of people we really want voting?

Teddy: That depends on who's signs they see more of, doesn't it?

Mark: If they don't understand the issues fully then how can they choose a leader?

Teddy: You don't understand the issues fully and you're running for mayor.

Butler: He's got you there.

Teddy: Hell son, I don't understand the issues fully, and I've been up to my ears in them for three years and eight months now. It's a complex world you're getting into here. Now what do you want me to explain?

Mark: Could we start with what I think is frivolous spending?

Teddy: Sure. I've got a tape recorder going for this conversation, just so you know.

Mark: Um, okay. There were two subdivisions that were re-paved twice last fiscal year for pot holes, yet school teachers were passed up for raises. Could you explain how that was overlooked?

Teddy: It wasn't, first off those subdivisions needed re-paving, it's a high end neighborhood and there was a sink hole we didn't know about. Secondly, if you divided up that two hundred thousand we spent on that paving project and give it to every school teacher in the city, it will average out to a quarter an hour raise. Which they would take as a slap in the face, I

don't want the school teachers picketing my office, so I choose not to slap them in the face.

Mark: Okay, how about the flowers?

Teddy: You want me to give school teachers flowers?

Mark: You spent, one moment please. (He looks in a note pad)

Teddy: He keeps notes?

Butler: Yeah, can I have a pastry? We don't have a pastry table over on the Republican side.

Teddy: Sure. You guys didn't get the good table because the democrats are in power now.

Mark: Here it is, you spent fifteen thousand planting flowers at elementary schools. That's nice and all, but what does that teach the children?

Butler: They learn how flowers grow.

Mark: Terrific for a nation of florists, but that's hardly the world market.

Teddy: (pulling the tape recorder out of his chest pocket) I don't think I'll need this any more. That was an earth day thing, I do that to keep the hippies and the gays happy.

Mark: How does that keep homosexuals happy?

Teddy: They like seeing pansies everywhere.

(Teddy and George giggle, Mark just looks over at George)

Butler: Sorry, I found it funny.

Mark: Funny for some guys sitting around a bar, maybe. But this man happens to be a civic leader, one which I might add had the support of the gay community he just made fun of.

Teddy: You're not recording this conversation are you?

Mark: No, I would never do anything like that.

Teddy: Then you shouldn't be in politics. Look, did your mom ever yell at you to grab a jacket on a spring day?

Mark: To shut them up? You too! Are you friends with Senator Cameron?

Teddy: Never meet him in person, why?

Mark: You're two of the same creatures.

Teddy: We are both politicians, if that's what you mean.

Mark: Both lying, conniving manipulative self serving arrogant jerks.

Butler: That's what he just said.

Teddy: I don't see myself as arrogant.

Mark: Okay, the fire fighters. You spent eighty thousand dumping money into new fire trucks, while the old ones were still running. Yet, you passed up the needs of the county hospital.

Teddy: We've got private run hospitals in the area, and I would never dump money into the medical field like that.

Mark: Why not?

Teddy: Doctors are all wealthy, they're going to vote republican anyway, for the tax breaks.

Mark: You sponsored Shakespeare in the park, but didn't do anything to improve the local food bank.

Teddy: Actors generally vote democratic, homeless starving people usually don't vote at all.

Mark: Do you believe in abortion rights?

Teddy: Not personally. I don't like it if that's what you mean, but I'm certainly not going to pass any laws against it, that would cost me votes, you know I'm a democrat right? Personally yes, I think abortion is wrong. There are other methods of contraception.

Mark: What about rape?

Teddy: Of course that should stay illegal.

(Mark is exasperated in defeat at this point)

Teddy: You okay son? Have a cheese Danish, they're incredible.

Butler: Shall we hop in the limo and ride up to New York? I'll show you a Macy's Santa that's really a drunken ex-con. Or are you done being disillusioned for tonight?

(Harriet enters, with Mark's scotch)

Mark: So you don't care about the people either do you?

Teddy: Of course I care about the people, if they aren't happy, I won't get re-elected. Do you understand how this works?

Harriet: Your drink dear (handing him his scotch) What are you doing? Teddy, how've you been?

Teddy: That's mayor Thurmond now a days. How've you been Harriet?

Mark: You two know each other? Wait how did you know where I was?

Harriet: That watch I gave you has a tracking device.

Mark: How sweet. And how do you know the mayor?

Teddy: I was a student teacher for her civics class, first year of college.

Harriet: Those were good times. Hey did you end up marrying that Margret girl?

Teddy: No, things didn't quiet work out. I ended up going into the world of politics you know making that difference we talked so much about.

Harriet: What are you doing talking with your opponent before the debate?

Mark: Getting a new perspective.

Amy: (Entering with Camerun) And getting yourself in trouble.

Senator: Only if this gets out dear, Mayor Thurmond I'm Senator James Camerun.

Teddy: Please, call me Teddy.

Senator: Jim, pleasure meeting you.

Teddy: Have a pastry.

Butler: He's not eating, and this is good stuff.

Amy: The Republicans didn't get a sweet table.

Senator: Republicans aren't sweet people. It takes a democrat to truly appreciate that light flaky, cream filled stuff.

Teddy: What's on your side? Jerky made of baby seals? Tough, seasoned and bad for the environment? Your candidate seems to be having a few moral issues with the political field.

Senator: I know. I wouldn't say he was my candidate, more of a potential candidate.

Mark: I wouldn't say I was anyone's anything. Maybe there isn't the room for spending cuts, like I thought. Maybe this whole thing was a mistake.

Teddy: I'm sure once you do away with welfare there will be plenty of room in the budget.

Mark: I don't want to do away with welfare. That was a mis-quote! How long can one mis-quote follow me?

Senator: Months.

Teddy: Sometimes years.

Mark: I should sue that reporter for slander.

Amy: Mark, that's just journalism. Face it people are generally lazy, it takes less time to read a half-truth than a whole story. So it sells more papers.

Teddy: Look, son. You've worked as a prosecutor for ten years now, right. Do you think the criminal justice system works?

Mark: No! I keep prosecuting the same people for the same things, that's why I thought I could make more of a difference as a politician. Prison doesn't rehabilitate any of the real criminals. Maybe you could test some programs-

Teddy: Calm down and listen to me son. When you send the bad guys to jail, you get a few of them off our streets.

Mark: For six months to a few years depending on good behavior.

Teddy: And for those six months or a few years there are a few less crooks on the loose.

Mark: There are still others we haven't caught.

Teddy: But imagine how many more would be out at once if there were no jails? The police would be even more out numbered than they already are. You're buying time, for the cops to catch other robbers and giving the people of Crestview the chance to sleep easy knowing the chances of them being shot for their money is at least a lower percent than it would be if there was no justice system at all.

Mark: Okay, I can see that works. It's far from a perfect system, but it does something.

Teddy: Hot damn! Then you understand politics. It ain't a perfect system. It's tedious and confusing and far more damn complicated then it needs to be. But it keeps us from killing each other, it keeps the power out of any one man's hands, and it makes this the greatest nation in the world.

Mark: That's not saying much for the world.

Senator: Probably not, but it's still the best we've got. I think you've cleared that up for him. I never thought I'd thank a Democrat for clearing anything up.

Mark: Senator, why don't you run for president yourself?

Senator: Are you kidding? People try to shot presidents.

Teddy: And no matter what you do half the country hates you.

Mark: Do you see? You don't have an assassination of a mayor.

Teddy: Actually, yes that has happened. Carter H. Harrison, the mayor of Chicago, then-

Mark: Sorry, I hadn't heard of it.

Amy: I still don't care. Can we get back to the debate?

Mark: The mayor won't need to debate anything. I thank you senator for that incredible steak dinner and all those lovely limo rides. Harriet, and Amy I thank you both for lovely rides as well. Mr. Mayor, thank you so much for your insight. It is now perfectly clear to me, that I am not cut out to be a politician.

Harriet: Mark, you don't mean that. You can't possibly drop out of the mayoral race, not now.

Mark: Why do say that?

Harriet: Your mother said she would dis-own you.

Mark: Good, it's about time people stopped trying to own me. You can have this back, Uncle Sam has been wondering what time it is, ever since you stole his watch.

Harriet: Does this mean our engagement is off?

Mark: Oh yes.

Senator: Don't sell yourself short, you have what it takes to make it in Washington.

Mark: I'm not selling myself short, and I take that as an insult. I don't want what it takes to make it in Washington. You can keep it. Do you want to know what I have learned about politics the past few months? I've learned they're all out to screw you, one way or another. Granted, I had fun with that. But I would have a lot more fun with a woman that cared about me, not my potential. Which is why I would like to take my hat, and my hand out of their prospective rings. I knew very early on in my childhood, that I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to leave this world a slightly better place than it was when I got here. I was confused for a while. I thought that making the laws for the freest country in the world, standing up for the people, and serving my nation was the only way I could make a real difference. I was wrong. We have an army of politicians, so I will not join the never ending swarm of good intentions, and mis-directions, instead I choose to be an honest powerless man. That is an army I feel is dwindling, as a nation, we need every honest person we can get. Maybe one day, when honesty is not a rare commodity, when helping and respecting your neighbor is as valuable as helping yourself and your own beliefs, maybe then this country will finally live up to the dreams our forefathers died for. – Until then I'll leave it to the voters to wade through the lies and twisted truths of all of the parties, and all of the bureaucracy, and I'll hope like they do, that one day it will all make sense. Good night. (He exits, George and Amy stand up and clap as the other three sit there dumbfounded)

Amy: He is a good speaker.

George: I'd vote for him.

Amy: Did you want the number for that guy in Texas?

Senator: No thank-you Miss Bishop. Your friend Mr. Murdoch called me, he wants to hire me on his team for that new station he's starting. The pay sounds good.

Amy: That's a news channel, isn't it? You're not a reporter.

Senator: No, he wants me as an advisor. He needs a fair and balanced view of the world of politics.

Teddy: Miss Bishop? Are you the Miss Bishop, Amy Bishop that's been writing Hampton's speeches?

Amy: That I am.

Teddy: Very impressive work, would you consider working for my campaign?

Amy: I just lost my candidate. You willing to talk some real numbers?

Teddy: Sure, I have free range in the budget now.

Harriet: I just lost my fiancée.

Senator: I'm so sorry dear, are you going to be all right?

Harriet: Yeah, I'll get over it. So Teddy, have you been seeing anyone special?

Teddy: No, I've been fairly busy, but my plans tonight just opened up if you'd like to grab a drink.

(Lights out)

Remember every vote counts, unless you're in Florida.

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