

HEATHER SMILEY FOR PRESIDENT

A New Musical

Book & Lyrics by Tom Attea

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

HEATHER SMILEY, attractive female Democratic candidate for President

BOB SMILEY, her husband and former Democratic President

GEORGE WORTHINGTON, Senator and then Republican candidate for President

MARTHA WORTHINGTON, his long-suffering wife

GEORGE WORTHINGTON, JR., son of George and Martha Worthington

MARTHA ALBRIGHT, an author and a liberal academic

JAKE NUMERTON, campaign manager for Heather Smiley

ANN HOWE, speech writer for Heather Smiley

JOHN TRAYNOR, campaign manager for Senator Worthington

CHORUS, in various roles:

Candidates

Supporters

Esther, Heather Smiley's housekeeper

Reince Pluribus, Chairman of the Republican National Committee

Debate moderator

Newscaster

Bill Shillelagh, a Fox Network talk-show host

SONGS

ACT I

THE FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT	Heather and Bob
IT'S A LANDSLIDE.....	Chorus
MY NAME IS GEORGE WORTHINGTON.....	George Worthington
WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?.....	George Worthington
DID YOU EVER MEET?.....	Martha Albright & George, Jr.
SIX REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE WE.....	Chorus
AN APOLITICAL ATTRACTION.....	Martha Albright & George, Jr.
WILL GOOD INTENTIONS BE ENOUGH.....	Heather, Bob, Ann, and Jake
STEPPING IN.....	George Worthington and John Traynor

ACT II

I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU!.....	George, Jr.
OH, WHAT A SMILE.....	Chorus
AT PEACE WITH THE PAST.....	Martha
HOW CAN A MAN COMPETE WITH THAT?.....	George Worthington
SAD REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE WE.....	Chorus
MAYBE EVEN FALL IN LOVE.....	George, Jr.
TRUE TO MYSELF.....	Heather Smiley
REPRISES.....	Heather, Bob, & Chorus

SETTINGS

Heather Smiley's living room

Senator Worthington's campaign headquarters

Senator Worthington's bedroom

Senator Worthington's Senate office

Heather Smiley's campaign headquarters

A restaurant

A coffee shop

Sidewalk, night

Debate setups, with chair for moderator

Talk show, desk for host and chair for guest

PRODUCTION NOTES

Time, the present

Sets can be indicated with minimal furniture.

Smiley residence and campaign headquarters, audience left

Worthington campaign headquarters, bedroom, and office, audience right.

Debates and talk show, stage center

Running gags: candidates crossing stage, popping out of closets, or as they otherwise work.

ACT I

SCENE 1

Smiley living room. Heather and Bob, watching the election returns. Bob turns off the TV.

BOB

Dang it! Another Republican landslide.

(turns off the TV)

Now, we lost control of the House and the Senate.

(to Heather)

You're the only hope the Democratic Party has, Heather.

HEATHER

(smiles)

It certainly does look that way, Bob. Now that the mid-terms are over, we should prepare to launch my campaign.

BOB

You're right, darlin'. But let's not be too quick. Once you declare, we'll have to stop makin' paid speeches, and at two to three hundred grand a pop, they sure are helpin' to fatten up your campaign kitty.

HEATHER

You're right, dear. It's nice to know we're not dead broke anymore, isn't it?

BOB

It sure is.

HEATHER

When we launch my campaign, you'll also have to stop raising money for the Smiley Foundation.

BOB

It's gonna be tough, sweetheart. No more paid speeches, no more fund raisin' -- what am I gonna do with myself?

HEATHER

I realize it'll be a challenge, sweetheart. But you know how the Republicans use your fund raising to say we have a conflict of interest, especially when one of your big donors is Vladimir Putin.

BOB

They would resort to usin' that against us.

HEATHER

Don't worry about occupyin' yourself. You can help with my campaign, as long as you remain in the background. You're an awfully big presence, Bob, and you don't want to overshadow me.

BOB

I would never want to do that, dear. I want you to be the President, too.

HEATHER

I know you do, Bob. You've always been a champion of equal rights for women.

BOB

Thanks, dear. The good news is, so far it looks as if you have very little Republican or Democratic competition. So you might have a smooth glide right to the Presidency.

HEATHER

Oh, I can't wait! When you married me, did you ever think one day I'd be the President?

BOB

I never doubted it, dear.

HEATHER

And I never doubted you would be, either, Bob. Imagine!

(sings)

BACK IN THE WHITE HOUSE,
SOON WE'LL BE BACK IN THE WHITE HOUSE,
AND THIS TIME I'LL BE THE PRESIDENT,
THE FIRST FEMALE RESIDENT
WHO'S NOT JUST THE SPOUSE,
BUT THE PRESIDENT.
YES, THE PRESIDENT.

BOB

YOU'LL BE THE FIRST FEMALE RESIDENT
WHO'S THE PRESIDENT,
AND I'LL BE THE FIRST MAN
WHO'S NOT THE PRESIDENT,
BUT THE FIRST MAN
WHO'S JUST ... THE FIRST MAN!

(spoken)

Or is it the first gentleman?

HEATHER

(spoken)

You better be a gentleman.

BOTH

(sing)

WE'LL BE MR. AND MRS. PRESIDENT,
THE FIRST MATES ...

HEATHER

... TO BE PRESIDENT OF ...

BOB

... AND PRESIDENT OF ...

BOTH

THE UNITED STATES!
THE FIRST MATES
TO BE PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES!

HEATHER

OH, I CAN ALREADY SEE
IN MY IMAGINATION
HOW IT WILL BE
AT MY INAUGURATION,
HOW GREAT IT WILL BE
WHEN MILLIONS SEE
ME PLACE MY HAND
ON THE BIBLE AND SWEAR
TO UPHOLD THE LAWS
OF THE LAND.

AND IMAGINE THE THRILL
 OF CALLING ON CAPITOL HILL
 AND WELCOMING HEADS OF STATE
 AS SOMETHING OTHER
 THAN A WIFE AND MOTHER
 OR EVEN SECRETARY OF STATE.

BOB

I'VE BEEN MR. PRESIDENT
 AND WELCOME THE DAY
 WHEN I CAN SAY
 SHE'S MRS. PRESIDENT.

HEATHER

YES, YOU'VE BEEN THE PRESIDENT
 AND WHEN WE RETURN
 TO THE WHITE HOUSE
 IT'LL BE MY TURN
 TO BE THE PRESIDENT,
 THE FIRST FEMALE RESIDENT
 WHO ISN'T JUST THE SPOUSE,
 BUT THE FIRST LADY
 WHO'S THE PRESIDENT!

BOTH

THE FIRST LADY WHO'S THE PRESIDENT!

HEATHER

Since I'm going to be the next President, maybe we should turn the TV back on and watch the rest of the returns.

BOB

You're right, dear. Painful as it is to watch.

SCENE 2

Senator Worthington's election-night headquarters. Speaker's platform with podium upstage. Crowd downstage. Flags waving. Signs: RE-ELECT GEORGE!

SENATOR WORTHINGTON FOR SENATE;
VOTE FOR HONEST GEORGE; GO,
GEORGE, GO!

CHORUS

(cheer goes up)

Yea! Worthington wins! What a great night for Republicans!

(music up; sing)

IT'S A LANDSLIDE, A LANDSLIDE,
A LANDSLIDE VICTORY FOR OUR SIDE!
WE DID EVERYTHING RIGHT
AND TONIGHT'S OUR NIGHT!
TONIGHT'S OUR NIGHT!

REPORTER

(with microphone)

Now that Senator Worthington's Democratic opponent, Dan Hapless, has called to concede the election, we expect the Senator to arrive at his campaign headquarters at any moment to thank his many supporters. Here he is now, with his wife and son. Let's listen.

(Senator Worthington enters, arms raised in victory, followed by his wife, Martha, and son, George, Jr. Supporters ecstatic. He makes his way to the podium, shaking hands and giving hugs. Quiets supporters down)

WORTHINGTON

Thank you! Thank you! I just want to say, I couldn't have done it without myself. Oh, you know me, my friends. Just a little good-natured kiddin'. I know more than anybody else in this great and blessed land that I couldn't have won without every one of you. Tonight's victory is your victory! I'd also like to thank the voters of the great state of Littledumb, who decided once again that I'm the right choice to represent their interests in Washington. Of course, I'd also like to thank my lifelong sweetheart, Martha, for her unfailing support, and my son, George, Jr., who has helped me keep up with the new thinking all across America.

(indicates wife and son; cheers, applause)

GEORGE, JR.

(clapping, whistles; to Martha Albright, the attractive woman beside him, who's taking notes)

What are you doing there?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT
 Making notes for my new book.

GEORGE, JR.
 Oh, an author. What's it called?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT
Duplicity in American Politics.

GEORGE, JR.
 What are you doing here?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT
 Your father is my inspiration.

GEORGE, JR.
 I should have you removed. We'll talk later.

WORTHINGTON
 As you may have noticed, my friends, tonight isn't just a landslide victory for George Worthington. It's a Republican landslide. And you know what that means. We're set to take over the leadership of the Senate and the House. And, thanks to you, I will realize my lifelong dream -- to be the majority leader of the Senate!

(Wild cheering.)

MARTHA ALBRIGHT
 Good grief! He is the very master of mendacity.

GEORGE, JR.
 Careful now, gorgeous. By the way, what's your name?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT
 Martha.

GEORGE, JR.
 (double-take)
 Martha? That's my mother's name, too.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT
 I'm sure we have very little else in common.

WORTHINGTON
 Thank ya! Now, as you know, I'm one politician who stands by his promises, even after he's elected. I said it all along the campaign trail, and I'll say it again.

America can no longer afford the tax and spend policies of the past. Just because we're the richest nation on earth doesn't mean we can afford to have a social conscience -- I mean, overblown social programs.

(Cheers, hoots)

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I'll never understand how anyone with half a brain can vote for him.

GEORGE, JR.

That's because he knows what most voters are thinking and how to speak to it.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

The question is, what are they thinking?

WORTHINGTON

I know I'm speaking for the vast majority of Americans when I say that our most precious heritage is freedom. Constitutionally guaranteed freedoms that are currently being encroached upon by a Democratic President who thinks he knows what ya want more you do and by a Supreme Court that seems to have reincarnated itself as his lap dog. But you know and I know that you don't want big government tellin' ya how to live. You want the American way. The God-given freedom to believe what you want, to stand on your own two feet, make your own way, and enjoy the fruits of your labor -- free from the government ridin' herd on ya. And I'm here to defend those inalienable rights with every breath I take. And I'm not known as a straight-shooter for nothin'. You can believe every blessed word that crosses my lips. When it comes to speakin' the truth, I don't waltz around.

(waltzes around a little; crowd enjoys it;
sings)

MY NAME IS GEORGE WORTHINGTON
SENATOR GEORGE WORTHINGTON,
AND, JUST LIKE GEORGE WASHINGTON,
I ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH
AND HAVE DONE SO SINCE MY YOUTH.

YES, MY NAME IS GEORGE WORTHINGTON
SENATOR GEORGE WORTHINGTON,
AND, JUST LIKE GEORGE WASHINGTON,
I CANNOT TELL A LIE;
I'D NEVER EVEN TRY.

YOU CAN SEE IT'S TRUE
BY THE WONDERFUL WAY
YOU ALL BELIEVE
WHATEVER I SAY.
HOW CAN THAT BE SO,
YOU MAY WANT TO KNOW?
I JUST MAKE SURE
ALL YOU HEAR FROM ME
IS SOMETHING WITH WHICH
YOU ALREADY AGREE.
HOW CAN THAT BE SO,
YOU MAY WANT TO KNOW?
I ALWAYS PRESENT
MY EVERY THOUGHT
IN WORDS THAT REVEAL
I'M A PATRIOT.
I'M FOR MOTHERHOOD
AND APPLE PIE,
THE COMMON GOOD,
AND THE 4TH OF JULY;
TRUSTIN' IN GOD
AND HIS ONLY SON,
AND GIVIN' MY NOD
TO PACKIN' A GUN.

AND JUST TO SHOW
I MEAN WHAT I TELL
YA, I WEAR THE FLAG
ON MY LAPEL.
AND NOW YOU KNOW
HOW IT CAN BE SO ...

...THAT MY NAME IS GEORGE WORTHINGTON
SENATOR GEORGE WORTHINGTON,
AND, JUST LIKE GEORGE WASHINGTON,
IF I CHOPPED DOWN A CHERRY TREE,
I'D RELY ON MY HONESTY!
JUST LIKE GEORGE WASHINGTON,
I RELY ON MY HONESTY!
RELY ON MY HONESTY!

RELY-LY-LY-LY ON MY HONESTY!

(spoken)

Thank ya! Thank ya all! And God bless America.

(starts to exit)

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

You mean, God help America.

(George, Jr., does a double-take. Reporter comes back with mike)

REPORTER

And there you have it -- Senator Worthington's victory speech. A reiteration of the core promises of his campaign. Short on specifics, but apparently it's a message that has resonated with the voters.

CHORUS

IT'S A LANDSLIDE, A LANDSLIDE,
A LANDSLIDE VICTORY FOR OUR SIDE!
WE DID EVERYTHING RIGHT,
AND TONIGHT'S OUR NIGHT!
TONIGHT'S OUR NIGHT!

SCENE 3

Smiley residence. Heather and Bob Smiley. Doorbell rings.

HEATHER

Esther, can you get the door?

Chorus member enters as Esther. Crossing to door.

ESTHER

Yes, Mrs. Smiley.

HEATHER

It's probably Jake Numberton and Ann Howe. We asked them to come over for an emergency strategy meeting.

ESTHER

Yes, ma'am.

(opens door)

Please, come in.

ANN

Thank you, Esther.

JAKE

Thanks.

Esther closes the door and exits.

HEATHER

(stands)

Thanks for coming over. I know it's late.

JAKE

No problem. We need to talk.

ANN

What an election-night disaster!

HEATHER

Terrible, just terrible.

BOB

(shakes hands)

Good to see ya.

HEATHER

Please, sit down.

All take seats.

JAKE

I saw tonight's results coming. Unlike George Worthington, the numbers really don't waltz around.

ANN

But you have to hand it to him. He never met an unattractive policy he couldn't wrap in the flag.

HEATHER

It's truly upsetting. The Republicans do an incredibly slick job of distracting attention from the policies they really stand for, while we do an incredibly bad job of calling attention to the policies we stand for.

BOB

The only plus I see is, Worthington is so delighted that he'll be the leader of the Senate majority that he's unlikely to become a candidate for President.

JAKE

Let's hope you're right. He'd be the Republican candidate who's least likely to self-destruct.

HEATHER

(smiles)

I hope he stays out, too. I already lost to a Democrat who came out of nowhere. The last thing I need is to lose to a Republican who does it, too.

BOB

I wouldn't be concerned, dear. There's not a single Republican out there -- or, for that matter, another Democrat -- who's nearly as popular as you are.

JAKE

The polls continue to bear that out.

HEATHER

I hope we can keep it that way.

(smiles; hold it as if for a portrait)

Now, can we stop talking about Republicans and concentrate on my campaign?

JAKE

Agreed. We've got a lot of policy recommendations to sort through. At last count, we had over 200 expert advisors.

ANN

We have to sort through the muddle and decide on the most appealing middle.

HEATHER

I want to sound like the passionate advocate of the middle class that I truly am. Oh, and the poor, too.

BOB

(yawns)

I think it's a little late to dig into that mountain of paperwork tonight.

HEATHER

(to Bob)

What if we get started on it right after we play our morning round of golf?

BOB

Sounds good to me.

(swings an imaginary golf club)

JAKE

Before we call it a night, can we just discuss when you should make your candidacy official? Then we'll have a time-frame we have to work in to develop our position on the issues.

HEATHER

I'd like to declare as soon as we all agree it's advisable.

ANN

You don't want to peak too soon.

HEATHER

I know, Ann. But I've been waiting for this opportunity since Bob completed his second term. And, now that I'm not the Secretary of State anymore, I've got plenty of time to campaign.

JAKE

Maybe we can devise an interim activity that counteracts Republican accusations that you're not in touch with the problems of everyday Americans.

HEATHER

Like what, Jake?

BOB

What about getting out among the voters and doin' some kind of local meet 'n' greet?

JAKE

Good thought, Bob.

ANN

I already have a working name for it.

JAKE

What?

ANN

How about a Discovery Tour of America?

HEATHER

Oh, I like that. What do you think, Bob?

BOB

I like it, too. Mind if I tag along?

HEATHER

I'd love it, as long as you wait for me inside the bus.

SCENE 4

Senator Worthington's bedroom. Comes out of the bathroom in his pajamas. His wife is sitting up in bed.

WORTHINGTON

Ain't ya proud of me, Martha? I whooped that Democrat good.

MARTHA

Yes, you did, George. I just wish you could be more forthright with the public.

WORTHINGTON

I'm as forthright as can be, Martha. It's not in my nature to be duplicitous.

(slips into bed and gives her a kiss)

I do, however, at times say one thing when I mean something else.

MARTHA

That does sound less than forthright, George.

WORTHINGTON

Well, maybe so. But, however you describe it, I wouldn't sell the technique short.

MARTHA

But it makes you sound like a hypocrite.

WORTHINGTON

Perhaps it does. But I'm a happy hypocrite.

MARTHA

How can that be, George?

WORTHINGTON

Because I know a fundamental truth. It's the only way on God's green earth that a conservative politician can get the majority of people to vote for him when his actual policies invite the generous support of the wealthy few. Think of it this way. I'm sort of the middle man between the rich and the impoverished. I rely on the wealthy for their support and the impoverished for their votes.

MARTHA

It's a terrible predicament.

WORTHINGTON

It is a bit of a challenge. But, believe me, Martha, I never do outright lie.

MARTHA

At least, ya didn't back when you were still a preacher.

WORTHINGTON

That's exactly the point, Martha. Since I began as a servant of the Lord, I know exactly what a lie is and how to avoid it. And, given my situation, it's not as easy as it sounds.

(sings)

I MUST CONVINCING THE MAJORITY
 THEY OUGHT TO VOTE FOR ME,
 BUT AS A FISCAL CONSERVATIVE,
 MY POLICIES MAY BE CONSTRUED
 TO FAVOR THE WEALTHY.
 SO WHAT ALTERNATIVE
 DO I HAVE BUT TO CONCLUDE
 I MUST BE VERY STEALTHY.

WHEN I'M ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL
 AND A QUESTION MIGHT REVEAL
 THE WAY I ACTUALLY FEEL,
 I MAY TELL A HARMLESS TALE.

OR WHEN I'M IN A DEBATE
 WITH A PROBING CANDIDATE
 AND MUST BE MORE PERSUASIVE,
 I MAY OPT TO BE EVASIVE.

AS YOU CAN SEE,
 I'M RESOURCEFULLY GLIB.
 BUT ACTUALLY
 I NEVER, EVER FIB.
 IN FACT, I'D RESIGN MY SENATE SEAT
 BEFORE I'D BE GUILTY OF DECEIT.

I MAY MISREPRESENT
 AN OCCASIONAL EVENT
 OR AT TIMES EQUIVOCATE
 BUT I NEVER QUITE PREVARICATE.

I MAY INDULGE IN HYPERBOLE,
 OR A SLIGHT INACCURACY,
 BUT IF SOMETHING'S NOT LITERALLY TRUE,
 WHAT ON EARTH CAN I DO?

AS LONG AS I CONVINCED THE MAJORITY
 THEY REALLY OUGHT,
 THEY ABSOLUTELY MUST
 PUT ASIDE ANY RESERVATION WHATEVER
 AND VOTE FOR ME! YES, VOTE FOR ME!

WORTHINGTON

(as he gets back into bed)

Besides, Martha, if by some oversight I ever did tell a lie, it would only be a little white lie.

(kisses her)

After all, what other kind of lie can a white man tell?

MARTHA

Oh, George. I'm ashamed of you. That was an unbecoming thing to say, and you know it.

GEORGE

I was just havin' a little fun, Martha. As you know, I have often surprised my conservative colleagues with my support of bills on behalf of the rights of African-Americans. Growin' up in the South, I saw the evil effects of prejudice, and witnessed my father's own commitment to fight against it. Anyway, there's nobody here but us.

MARTHA

That shouldn't matter one bit. You should be past such jokes by now. Remember, we are all one in the sight of the Lord. And, if you make such jokes in private, you may slip up one day and do it in public. It could be the end of your career. Remember what happened to Paula what's-her-name who had the cookin' show.

WORTHINGTON

You're right, Martha. I'll never do it again.

MARTHA

Thank you, George. I want to think of you as the good man I married. Remember?

GEORGE

Yes, I do. Back then I was the most honest man I ever came across. And you were right there to see where it got me. I couldn't even get elected pastor of a Mega Church.

MARTHA

I remember how sad you were when you were assigned to the tiny storefront church.

GEORGE

The injustice of it all still upsets me. But just look how far comin' to terms with political reality has gotten me.

MARTHA

I appreciate all you've accomplished. But I still like to think of you as the preacher I married.

GEORGE

Whatever makes you happy, Martha.

MARTHA

Thank you, George. I do try to be happy, but sometimes I fret. I want you to go to heaven, so we can be together for eternity.

GEORGE

Oh, don't worry about that. I talk to Jesus all the time, and he has already reserved a place for both of us.

MARTHA

He has?

WORTHINGTON

Yes, dear. In fact, he told me flat out that he'd rather have me in power than some politician who has never devoted even a portion of his life to the ministry, because he knows I want to do the right thing, even if I have to make occasional exceptions.

SCENE 5

Table at a restaurant. George, Jr., is seated. Martha enters.

GEORGE, JR.

You came after all.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I have no idea why.

GEORGE, JR.

Please, have a seat.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

What's on your mind, assuming you have one?

GEORGE, JR.

I thought part of being intelligent is being thoughtful.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I came, didn't I?

GEORGE, JR.

I just want to know why you feel the way you do about my daddy. It breaks my heart to hear the misconceptions that liberals hurl at him.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

The misconceptions may not be located where you think they are.

GEORGE, JR.

I think I know quite well where they're located.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I never debate self-evident truths.

GEORGE, JR.

What makes you so sure you're right about him?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

It's my profession to know what can be known about right from wrong. I'm an ethicist.

GEORGE, JR.

Oh, an academic. I'll bet you're a liberal, too, if not a lefty.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I'm a progressive. I know the first people to be silenced in a totalitarian state are the ones who might have something interesting to say.

GEORGE, JR.

Then you believe in freedom?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Of course. I also believe in sunlight.

GEORGE, JR.

I just don't know how you reconcile that with being a progressive?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

How tough is it to imagine a country that frees its citizens to do their best while it funds social programs that put a secure floor under all of them? Sounds like the basic requirement of a civilized society to me.

GEORGE, JR.

Oh, well, then, would you like a drink?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Thanks. I need one.

(Motions to waiter)

GEORGE, JR.

What would you like? My treat.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I'll pay for my own, thanks. A glass of chardonnay.

(Waiter arrives and hears her)

GEORGE, JR.

A shot of Jim Beam, straight up. .

(Waiter departs)

GEORGE, JR. (CONT'D)

You're an interesting woman.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Thank you. If only you were an interesting man.

GEORGE, JR.

How thoughtful is that?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

What do you need more than insight? Do you know what this country needs but hardly ever gets? A leader who's worthy of its promise.

GEORGE, JR.

Do you see any redeeming qualities in me at all?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

You're not quite as unattractive as you ought to be.

GEORGE, JR.

Woo-hoo! As a matter of fact, neither are you. I suppose there's no immediate chance that you'd have dinner with me?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

That's the only perceptive thing I've heard you say.

GEORGE, JR.

Oh, come on. Politics isn't everything.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

It is between us.

GEORGE, JR.

But aren't people supposed to overcome their political differences and, ah, find common ground?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I'm sure anything between us would be quite common.

GEORGE, JR.

How inestimably kind.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Sorry, but what else would you expect?

(sings)

I DETEST YOUR POLITICS
AND CAN'T BEAR YOUR FATHER'S TRICKS.

GEORGE, JR.

Ha!

(sings)

I CAN'T STAND YOUR CAUSTIC REMARKS,
AND YOUR BELIEFS SOUND LIKE KARL MARX.

BOTH

DID YOU EVER MEET TWO PEOPLE
LESS LIKELY TO GET ALONG
AND MORE HOPELESS TO IMAGINE
SINGING A SWEET LOVE SONG?

MARTHA

YOUR BELIEFS SHOW YOU'RE FROM A RED STATE,
SO YOUR BRAIN MUST BE IN A DEAD STATE.

GEORGE, JR.

YOUR IDEAS PROVE YOU'RE FROM A BLUE STATE,
SO YOU'RE IN A HAVEN'T-GOT-A-CLUE STATE.

BOTH

DID YOU EVER MEET TWO PEOPLE
LESS LIKELY TO GET ALONG
AND MORE HOPELESS TO IMAGINE
SINGING A SWEET LOVE SONG?

GEORGE, JR.

IT'S OBVIOUS THAT WE
ARE UNLIKELY TO AGREE
ABOUT ANYTHING POLITICAL
WE'RE LIKELY TO FIND
IN EACH OTHER'S MIND.

MARTHA

Undoubtedly.

GEORGE, JR.

YET THERE APPEARS TO BE
SOMETHING BETWEEN YOU AND ME
THAT'S NOT AS CRITICAL
AS WHAT WE FIND
IN EACH OTHER'S MIND.

MARTHA

YES, I CAN ALSO SEE,
WHAT YOU MEAN AND GUARANTEE,
SINCE I'M ANALYTICAL,
IT'S PURELY PHYSICAL
AND UNLIKE THE MIND,
TOTALLY BLIND.

GEORGE, JR.

WHO EVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT
WE'D FIND EACH OTHER HOT?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

BUT WE CAN'T LET OURSELVES BE DISTRACTED
BY THE FACT THAT WE'RE ATTRACTED.

BOTH

DID YOU EVER MEET TWO PEOPLE
LESS LIKELY TO GET ALONG
AND MORE HOPELESS TO IMAGINE
SINGING A SWEET LOVE SONG?

GEORGE, JR.

So how about staying for dinner?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

How about no?

(Gets up to leave; takes last sip of wine)

Thanks.

(goes to leave)

GEORGE, JR.

(gets up; goes after her)

I'll walk you home.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

How fast do you walk?

Why?
 GEORGE, JR.

I'm taking a taxi.
 MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I'll pay for it.
 GEORGE, JR.

You should know better by now, baby. Bye-bye.
 MARTHA ALBRIGHT

SCENE 6

Chorus, dancing out.

SIX REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE WE,
 HERE TO DECLARE OUR CANDIDACY.
 ON MATTERS OF POLICY
 WE GENERALLY AGREE,
 BUT LISTEN CAREFULLY
 AND YOU'RE SURE TO SEE
 WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE FOR ME!
 ON BENDED KNEE,
 HEAR MY PLEA
 AND VOTE FOR ME!
 VOTE FOR ME!
 ME! ME! NO, ME!

(They compete for attention)

SCENE 7

Lights come up on table in roadside eatery. Heather Smiley, sitting with hotdog, which she's having difficulty pretending to like. Members of the chorus are customers.

I'm delighted I could visit with you today.
 HEATHER

Wow! Thank you, Heather.
 CHORUS

HEATHER

As you know, I'm making a discovery tour of America. I want to hear what everyday Americans like you think.

CHORUS

Terrific! Wonderful!

HEATHER

Tell me about the problems you face.

CHORUS

We're broke.

HEATHER

I can relate to that. When Bob and I left the White House, we were broke, too.

CHORUS

Yes, we remember reading that. "Dead broke." But now you're rich.

HEATHER

Well, we are doing much better. But I can never forget what it felt like to go shopping and not be able to afford filet mignon.

CHORUS

Oh, tough. We know what that's like.

HEATHER

I can never forget my roots, either. As you know, I grew up in a middle-class family.

CHORUS

But wasn't the middle-class better off then?

HEATHER

Yes, it was. But we still had to struggle to make ends meet. Tell me about other problems you face.

CHORUS

They all grow out of the same thing. We're broke.

HEATHER

I can understand that. I want you to know that if I'm elected, I'll be the champion of the middle class.

CHORUS

What does that mean?

HEATHER

Well, to begin with, I'm for raising the minimum wage. Nobody should work 40 or more hours a week and still not be able to afford a decent place to live and to put food on the table.

CHORUS

What about being able to buy clothes, too?

HEATHER

Yes, that, too.

CHORUS

What else?

HEATHER

I'm for a tax code that means good, hard-working Americans like you aren't taxed at a higher rate than billionaires who live off capital gains.

CHORUS

Oh, thank you! But how can you get anything passed in Congress if it's controlled by the Republicans?

HEATHER

Good question! That's why I need all of you to vote for me. Then I'll have a mandate for change. And, if enough Democrats can ride in on my wave of popularity, I'll be able to get all my legislation passed.

CHORUS

Really?

HEATHER

Of course. Remember, my husband got some bills passed when he was the President, even when he faced a Republican Congress, and he'll be right there by my side in the White House.

CHORUS

Oh, we remember Bob. He had his heart in the right place. Not only that, but something else. Never mind. Didn't he allow the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act, which stopped banks from making risky bets with our bucks?

HEATHER

Yes, he did, and he regrets that very much. Frankly, I would never have allowed it to be repealed. Don't tell him I said so, but I'm much more liberal than he is.

CHORUS

Oh, really? Hey, that's impressive!

HEATHER

Thank you. I'm my own woman. And remember: thanks to the Democrats, now we have Dodd-Frank.

CHORUS

Great! But those risky bets are what really broke us. First, the banks crashed the economy, and we lost our jobs. But we had to bail them out with our tax dollars. Then, to show their gratitude, they foreclosed on our homes.

HEATHER

It's just terrible. That's why the Democrats enacted Making Homes Affordable.

CHORUS

Are you kidding? How can you afford a home when you're broke?

HEATHER

I can understand that. And I will do everything in my power to rectify matters.

CHORUS

Great to know! Thanks! Can we take a selfie with you?

Take out their smart phones. Snap photos. Heather smiles and smiles.

HEATHER

Wonderful! Wonderful! And thank you for your support!
(shakes hands, turns to leave and leaves
hotdog on plate)

CHORUS

Hey, you forgot your hotdog.

HEATHER

Oh, that's OK. I'm just not hungry.

SCENE 8

Senator Worthington's office.

Hangs up. Phone rings. Picks it up.

WORTHINGTON

Thank you. Send him in.

George, Jr., enters.

WORTHINGTON

Good afternoon, Junior. What can I do for you?

GEORGE, JR.

I'm thinking of going into politics.

WORTHINGTON

I thought you like being an eye surgeon.

GEORGE, JR.

I do. But when I see how many people you're able to connect with, I get inspired to think way past things like cataract removal.

WORTHINGTON

Thank ya, Junior. It's a rare son who will forthrightly compliment his father.

GEORGE, JR.

You earned it, Dad.

WORTHINGTON

What office are you thinkin' of runnin' for?

GEORGE, JR.

Something modest at first. Maybe for state congress.

WORTHINGTON

Why not run for the office of the junior senator from the state of Littledumb? Ever since the current Libertarian holder of that office decided to run for President, he's been attemptin' to broaden his appeal by compromisin' his principles. Most troubling of all, he has twice refused to support bills I have brought to the floor of the Senate.

GEORGE, JR.

I noticed Senator Selfland waverin' on the issues myself.

WORTHINGTON

It has, in fact, been widely noticed. The upshot is, I think he's vulnerable, especially to a run by a Worthington. Imagine us, the senior senator and the junior senator from the proud state of Littledumb.

GEORGE, JR.

I'd really like that, Dad. When should I announce that I'm considering running?

SCENE 9

Smiley residence. Heather, Bob, Ann and Jake.

HEATHER

(puts down newspaper)

I think it's time for me to declare my candidacy.

BOB

I think you're right, dear.

(points to newspaper)

A record number of Republicans have already declared theirs.

JAKE

Everybody knows you're going to run, Heather, and your Discovery Tour has already garnered more attention than any of the Republican candidacies, except, of course, for America's most unelectable candidate, Donald Rump.

ANN

The grass-roots strategy is working very well for you.

HEATHER

I believe I've had enough of my Discovery Tour, especially the food. It's time to move on, especially since Bernie Landers has declared his candidacy. You'd think he'd realize it's my turn to be the President.

JAKE

His socialist platform doesn't stand a chance with moderate and conservative Democrats.

ANN

He hasn't got national name recognition, either.

HEATHER

Please, let's not take those shortcomings for granted. I will never forget how the present Democratic President didn't have my name recognition, either. Have you two made any progress with my campaign slogan?

ANN

We've been working on it.

JAKE

What we need is some big general idea -- something really compelling that won't offend our wealthy donors. We do still have a few.

ANN

I've been thinking that the slogan should include the word "America."

HEATHER

Well, it's hard to argue with the merits of that.

BOB

But what do we say about America?

JAKE

Hey, what if the slogan also has your name in it?

ANN

Makes sense. "Heather, America.; America, Heather."

JAKE

I don't think you need much more. Just a great way to relate the two.

ANN

How about "Heather for America"?

JAKE

Love it. Very efficient and attractive.

BOB

I like it. What do you think, Heather?

HEATHER

(proudly)

"Heather for America?" I like it, too. Do you think it should have an exclamation point?

ANN

(writes it out and looks at it)

I don't think it looks as feminine.

BOB

I prefer a period.

ANN

(writes it out again; holds it up)

HEATHER

I think it looks kind of final. How about no punctuation. Then it will look open-ended, as in “Heather for America” and just watch what happens.

ANN

Great. The slogan will work well in speeches, too. Heather is for this, Heather is for that. Heather is for what America needs now. Heather for America.”

HEATHER

(looks at her cell phone)

Uh-Oh.

BOB

What’s happened?

HEATHER

Bernie Landers just drew a crowd of over 5,000 people to a speech in his home state.

JAKE

Oh, I wouldn’t be concerned about that.

HEATHER

But he’s saying things I should be saying.

JAKE

You never want to go that far left. You’ll lose more votes than you’ll gain. Not to mention big donors.

HEATHER

I’m not sure we need to be overly concerned about big donors anymore. Democratic support by big corporations and Wall Street isn’t what it used to be.

BOB

Yes, but we have a special relationship with big donors that other Democrats don’t, especially our friends out in Hollywood and our billionaire friend, George Morose.

HEATHER

All right. But let’s just keep tabs on him.

SCENE 10

George, Jr. and Martha Albright, walking along.
Moonlight.

GEORGE, JR.

I think it's great we found a way to get along.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

It seems that physical attraction has overcome sound judgement.

GEORGE, JR.

Maybe it will grow into something else.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Why?

(sings)

YOU'RE A REPUBLICAN
AND I'M A DEMOCRAT,
BUT WHAT MATTERS MORE IS THAT
I'M A WOMAN AND YOU'RE A MAN.

GEORGE, JR.

SHE'S A WOMAN AND I'M A MAN.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

IT'S AN APOLITICAL ATTRACTION,
JUST A PHYSICAL REACTION,
A SEXUAL SENSATION,
NOT A PARTY AFFILIATION.
BUT, OH, WHAT A SENSATION!

GEORGE, JR.

OH, WHAT A SENSATION!

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

IT'S WAY BEYOND WHAT MAKES
WHAT COLORS WE CALL THE STATES
OR WHETHER I'M A PROGRESSIVE
AND YOU'RE, I'M SURE, REGRESSIVE.

IT'S AN APOLITICAL ATTRACTION,
JUST A PHYSICAL REACTION,
A SEXUAL SENSATION,
NOT A PARTY AFFILIATION.
BUT, OH, WHAT A SENSATION!

GEORGE, JR.

OH, WHAT A SENSATION

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

WILL IT GO ANYWHERE?
I DON'T SEEM TO CARE.
I'M NOT THINKING OF
IF IT LEADS TO LOVE.

I SEE YOU WITH MY EYES
AND MY HEART RATE STARTS TO RISE.
I CAN SAY IT ISN'T SO
BUT MY BODY'S IN THE KNOW.

GEORGE, JR.

I CAN SAY IT ISN'T SO,
BUT MY BODY'S IN THE KNOW.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

IT'S AN APOLITICAL ATTRACTION,
JUST A PHYSICAL REACTION,
A SEXUAL SENSATION,
NOT A PARTY AFFILIATION
BUT, OH, WHAT A SENSATION!

GEORGE, JR.

OH, WHAT A SENSATION!

BOTH

OH, OH, OH, WHAT A SENSATION!

GEORGE, JR.

OK, we'll be two bright people who are helplessly drawn to each other physically. The question is, how helplessly?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I don't believe human ingenuity has yet devised a unit of measurement. Why would you ask?

GEORGE

I have to tell you something that may test the strength of our relationship.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I can't remember a time when you didn't.

GEORGE, JR.

But this may require the kind of perspective I know you're capable of.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Thank you. Spit it out.

GEORGE, JR.

I've decided to go into politics.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

As a conservative Republican, no doubt?

GEORGE, JR.

You want me to break my daddy's heart?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Do you prefer that I break it? How can I possibly be seen with a Republican politician, especially one who's the son of the featured character in my book on duplicity.

GEORGE, JR.

I'm actually going to try to do some good.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Your politics will subvert your efforts. Why not remain an eye surgeon? That I just might be able to make peace with.

GEORGE, JR.

I feel I have a larger calling.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I do, too. With another woman.

GEORGE, JR.

Oh, come on. You're acting as if I've decided to become evil incarnate.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Sounds like a workable description. I thought maybe you heard some of the things I've been saying about social and economic justice?

GEORGE, JR.

I'm not entirely deaf.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I hadn't noticed. Have you decided what office you'll attempt to debase?

GEORGE, JR.

The junior senator from Littledumb.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

How do you propose to defeat the unconscionably self-interested libertarian who currently occupies that office?

GEORGE, JR.

I'll let you know after I study up on the issues.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Are you sure you don't want to run as a Democrat?

GEORGE, JR.

Me, a Democrat? No way.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Me, your girlfriend? No way!

SCENE 11

Campaign headquarters. Heather, Bob, Jake, and Ann. Large Drawing pad on display.

HEATHER

I like my new campaign headquarters.

(to Bob)

Thank you for helping me select it.

BOB

You're welcome. I've learned a lot about Manhattan since we moved to Poughkeepsie.

HEATHER

Yes, you have, dear. Now, to the business at hand. I want to declare my candidacy with a speech that will inspire as many people as possible.

ANN

Happy to work up a draft with the team. We just have to settle on the issues we want to cover. Jake, you've been reviewing the various policy recommendations. What do think?

JAKE

Well, let's go over the possibilities.

(gets up and goes to drawing pad; picks
up Magic Marker)

Let's begin with the basics. We want to position Heather as the leading Democratic candidate.

HEATHER

Sounds right. Let's just make sure I come off as a really credible liberal.

JAKE

Of course, but not too liberal. Remember the bell-shaped curve.

(draws bell shaped curve)

As you know, this graph represents normal distribution, and it applies to far more things than many people realize it does. Let's say it's the Democratic vote. Most of it will go to the candidate in the middle.

(points left)

There are relatively few votes for the candidate who moves too far to the left.

(points right)

Or to the right.

(writes on pad: "The leading Democratic
Candidate"; goes back and underlines
"leading.")

Now, let's list the possible positions you can take. I suggest we divide them into two columns. Safe Positions and Unsafe Positions.

(writes "Safe" and "Unsafe" on the pad)

HEATHER

Let's be clear about what we mean by "Safe" and "Unsafe."

JAKE

Sure. “Safe” means positions that the Democratic base needs to hear you stand for. “Unsafe” means positions that the exceptionally liberal Democratic voters and the Progressive wing of the Party would like you to stand for but that, unfortunately, would move you too far to the left.

(points to left side of bell-shaped curve)

There’s another reason to adhere to positions that keep you in, or as close as possible, to the middle.

(draws an upside-down bell-shaped curve)

HEATHER

What’s that?

BOB

Looks like a bell-shaped curve, turned upside-down.

JAKE

I know. But actually it’s a collection basket. The person who’s positions are in the middle is gonna also get the most donations. Which means we want to stand for all the liberal positions we possibly can without endangering the financial contributions of the wealthy.

BOB

Especially since we’re not gonna be able to make anymore paid speeches.

HEATHER

But we have a much wider donor base than the Republicans. Millions of people are putting their trust in us, including African-Americans, Latinos, and the LGBT community. They expect us to stand for issues that are important to them.

ANN

If I’m going to have what I need to write a stirring speech, we should push the envelope as much as possible.

HEATHER

I agree, especially when it comes to the economy and women’s issues.

JAKE

OK. How about we begin with women’s issues? What do we put here?

HEATHER

That’s easy. Prekindergarten for all, free day care, paid pregnancy leave, reproductive rights, and equal pay for equal work.

JAKE

Hold it. You're going too fast. Prekindergarten for all. Is that Safe or Unsafe?

HEATHER

Can we just put Prekindergarten in the Safe column?

JAKE

"For all" makes it sound a bit like socialism.

HEATHER

At least, put it in a little closer to the Safe column.

JAKE

(writes it in)

Actually, I think most women's issues are going to be pretty safe for you. What if we move on to the economy. Lots of Unsafe material there.

ANN

I have a really Safe one. Equal opportunity -- regardless of race, religion, or sexual orientation.

BOB

You might want to mention there that after I was the president, I opened my first office in Harlem.

HEATHER

Yes, dear, but that was partly because you thought 125th Street was in Mid-Town. How about the 1% should pay their fair share of taxes?

ANN

I can work on a way to soft-pedal it.

HEATHER

I'm sure you can, but do I want to do that?

(sings)

I WANT TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT...

BOB

AND WE ALL WANT YOU TO...

ANN

AS LONG AS WHAT YOU DO...

JAKE

PAYS OFF ON ELECTION NIGHT.

HEATHER

SO OUR TASK
IS TO ASK ...

JAKE

... SINCE WE CAN'T MENTION CERTAIN STUFF ...

ALL

... WILL GOOD INTENTIONS BE ENOUGH?

HEATHER

GOOD INTENTIONS AND A SMILE ...

BOB

... COMBINING TO BEGUILLE ...

ANN

... THE VOTERS, THOUGH WE FIND IT TOUGH ...

JAKE

... EVEN TO MENTION CERTAIN STUFF!

HEATHER

I WANT TO DO WHAT'S BEST

BOB

... FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS AND THE POOR...

ANN

... AS LONG AS WE DON'T CLOSE THE DOOR

JAKE

... TO DONATIONS FROM ALL THE REST.

HEATHER

SO OUR TASK
IS TO ASK ...

JAKE

... SINCE WE CAN'T MENTION CERTAIN STUFF ...

ALL

... WILL GOOD INTENTIONS BE ENOUGH?

HEATHER

GOOD INTENTIONS AND A SMILE ...

BOB

... COMBINING TO BEGUILLE ...

ANN

... THE VOTERS, THOUGH WE FIND IT TOUGH ...

JAKE

... EVEN TO MENTION CERTAIN STUFF!

BOB

I KNOW IT'S HARD TO MAKE PEACE
WILL ALL THE THINGS YOU CAN'T SAY.

ANN

BUT THINK OF ALL THE THINGS
THE REPUBLICANS DON'T SAY.

JAKE

AND REMEMBER HOW YOU'LL FEEL
IF YOU LOSE ON ELECTION DAY.

BOB, ANN, & JAKE

REMEMBER HOW YOU'LL FEEL
IF YOU LOSE ON ELECTION DAY!

HEATHER

I WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING ..

BOB

... YOUR HEART IS IN THE RIGHT PLACE ...

ANN

... BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO LOSE THE RACE ...

JAKE

... TO SOMEONE MORE LEFT OR RIGHT WING.

HEATHER

SO OUR TASK
IS TO ASK ...

JAKE

... SINCE WE CAN'T MENTION CERTAIN STUFF ...

ALL

... WILL GOOD INTENTIONS BE ENOUGH?
WILL GOOD INTENTIONS BE ENOUGH?

SCENE 12

Senator Worthington's office. Female chorus member as his secretary.

FEMALE CHORUS MEMBER

Should I send John Traynor in now?

WORTHINGTON

Please, do.

She exits. John enters with newspaper.

JOHN

Did you see this? Heather Smiley has declared her candidacy -- and on Roosevelt Island

WORTHINGTON

Of course, I saw it, John.

JOHN

It's playing well in the press. Shades of the New Deal.

WORTHINGTON

Where else was she going to do it? Harlem is polarizing. So are Midtown and Downtown. In fact, even Liberty Island is polarizing. The only thing we have on our side is that she did it in New York.

JOHN

You're right. That won't play well in any of the red states.

WORTHINGTON

You mean in the solidly conservative states. Leave the red and blue states up to the press and the pollsters. They don't have to run for office.

JOHN

You wouldn't consider enterin' the race, would you? I mean, for the good of America?

WORTHINGTON

Of course, not. I'm too busy doin' what I'm doin'.

JOHN

Does that mean you'd run if the opportunity were presented to you?

WORTHINGTON

That means I know it don't do any good for the cavalry to come ridin' over the hill to the rescue until the settlers are in a desperate situation. Then there ain't no sweeter sound than that bugle.

JOHN

Well, don't wait too long. I've asked to be the campaign manager for Donald Rump.

WORTHINGTON

What makes you think you can manage him?

JOHN

The desire for gainful employment.

WORTHINGTON

Then there's only one piece of advice I can offer right now. Get the money. But be at the ready in case the calvary needs to come chargin' over the hill.

(sings)

I'LL BE WORKING IN THE SENATE,
PURSUING CONSERVATIVE GOALS
WITH SUCH DEDICATION THAT I
WILL HARDLY NOTICE THE POLLS.
BUT IF IT LOOKS LIKE A DEMOCRAT MIGHT WIN,
I JUST MIGHT CONSIDER STEPPING IN.

JOHN

I'LL BE WORKING FOR DONALD RUMP,
DEVELOPING AN INTRICATE PLAN
TO CONVINCHE HIM TO CAMPAIGN
LIKE A SOMEWHAT RATIONAL MAN.
BUT IF IT LOOKS AS IF HE MIGHT NOT WIN,
I JUST MIGHT JOIN YOU IF YOU STEP IN.

BOTH

WE'LL BE WATCHING GALLUP AND PEW,
TO SEE HOW ALL THE CANDIDATES DO,
BIDING OUR TIME IN CASE THERE'S A NEED
FOR ME (HIM) TO MOUNT MY (HIS) TRUSTY STEED
AND GO CHARGING OUT OF CAPITOL HILL
TO SAVE THE DAY WITH RHETORICAL SKILL.

WORTHINGTON

BUT FOR NOW LET'S GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS,
YOU TO DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR WHAT'S HIS NAME
AND ME TO ACCOMPLISH WHATEVER I MAY
WHILE I INNOCENTLY PLAY A WAITING GAME.

BOTH

BUT IF IT LOOKS LIKE A DEMOCRAT MIGHT WIN,
I (HE) JUST MIGHT CONSIDER STEPPING IN --
I (HE) JUST MIGHT CONSIDER STEPPING IN!

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

Republican candidates lined up. Names on cards in front of them. Moderator, seated.

MODERATOR

Welcome to the Republican Presidential debate on the Fox Network, where the candidates have the unique opportunity to debate their positions without any holds barred. Now, to begin, starting on my left with Senator Ted Obtuse, tell us the one thing you'd like every American voter to know about you.

TED

Vote for me, not him.

Reaches over and grabs other candidate by his neck and starts to strangle him. Others do the same.

CHRIS

(holds up deck of cards)

Bridge anyone?

CARLY

Takes your hands off me! Or I'll accuse you of debate rape.

MIKE

I gave up my show on Fox for this?

DONALD

I'll pay millions to stop this travesty.

MODERATOR

(gets up and tries to break it up)

Gentlemen, gentlemen, please, act presidential. All of your most likely supporters are watching.

SCENE 2

Democratic debate. Heather and one member of the chorus as Bernie Landers. Moderator in chair, facing them.

MODERATOR

Welcome to the first Democratic debate. To begin, each candidate will make an opening statement. A toss of the coin has determined that Heather Smiley will be the first to speak.

HEATHER

(turns to audience; smiles; holds smile a while)

Having recently served as secretary of state, I believe I have more face-to-face knowledge of international leaders than the other Democratic candidate. On the domestic front, having been the First Lady for eight years, I believe I also have an insider's view of the way one of the most successful Presidents ever got things done in Washington.

MODERATOR

Your turn, Senator Landers.

BERNIE LANDERS

Thank you.

(looks at them both, competing with smiles and chuckles; resolves to be serious)

As you can see, I'm the Democratic candidate who has the courage to be grumpy. I admit that my failure to win an affability contest is fraught with risk. But today we face a multitude of serious issues, and I believe they can best be addressed with a serious demeanor.

She smiles.

BERNIE LANDERS

I am the only Democratic candidate for President with a truly progressive agenda, in fact, an outright socialist agenda. As a result, I'm proposing solutions to the hard questions my opponents pretend don't exist. I have policies that are intended to rectify the hollowing out of the middle class and the urgent needs of the poor. I believe it is scandalous and untenable that the share of wealth owned by the top zero-point-one percent of the population is now nearly equal to the wealth owned by the bottom 90%. There are only two ways to get to a more equitable distribution of wealth. One of them is peaceful and Democratic, and it's the one I stand for. And don't worry about the wealthy. They'll just have to scrape by on a few billion less, the way they managed to when we had a tax code that preserved a prosperous middle class.

Vice President turns to audience and smiles. Heather turns to audience and smiles.

BERNIE LANDERS

(turns to audience)

Unlike the other candidates in this election, I'm not running an election campaign funded by the billionaires' cooperative. So will the millions of voters who believe I stand for the true changes that will solve the economic and social injustice that has eviscerated the American dream for most Americans please support my candidacy by going to bernielanders.com or logging onto my kickstarter campaign.

(frowns)

Heather turns to audience and smiles.

SCENE 3

Unruly Republican candidates enter.

DONALD RUMP

Vote for me because I'm a billionaire. I mean, I'm rich, really rich. So I can pay for my own campaign and not owe political favors to anybody. That's why I can do what's right for America -- and make American great again.

CHORUS

Hold it! We thought America was already great. Somebody's always trying to save the richest and most powerful nation on earth.

DONALD RUMP

Are you kidding? The Chinese are eating our supper and stealing our secrets. The Russians are annexing and aligning themselves with every country this Democratic administration has offended. The Middle East is totally out of control. And you know I plan to build a wall between the U. S. and Mexico.

CHORUS

A wall? Hey, who knows? Maybe Mexicans they're sending our way can't afford ladders.

DONALD RUMP

They can't even afford ropes. Will you just shut up and listen. I can solve all of the problems America faces.

CHORUS

How?

DONALD RUMP

I'll tell you right after I'm elected.

CHORUS

Boo.

MARCO STUDENTE

Hi, Marco Studente here. My father and mother were poor Cuban immigrants, and I haven't lost touch with what it's like to be poor. That's why I hardly ever think of poor people.

(to Donald Rump)

Excuse me. As a wealthy Republican, can you please help me pay off my student debt?

DONALD RUMP

No problem, loser. My father left me millions, and I can leave you millions. All you have to do is drop out of the race and prove I'm you're father.

SCENE 4

Martha Albright and George, Jr., walking along.

GEORGE, JR.

The rich are the ones who create jobs.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Often, they do. But I have not known job-creation to be the consuming passion of trust-fund babies. Do you really still believe in trickle down economics?

GEORGE, JR.

Yes, I do.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

In my circle, it's a metaphor for the wealthy urinating on the poor.

GEORGE, JR.

How can such a beautiful woman say something so unattractive?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I admit it could be expressed more delicately.

GEORGE, JR.

My daddy believes in low taxes and small government.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Will you ever stop thinking like your father and think for yourself? His policies are just an indirect way to defund social programs. It's just more of the war on the poor.

GEORGE, JR.

Do we have to talk about politics on such a lovely night?

(sings)

I DON'T WANT TO TALK
ABOUT ANYTHING.
I JUST WANT TO WALK
HAND IN HAND AND SING
WHAT LOVE SONGS SING
AND SING AND SING.

I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU,
YES, I DO,
I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU,
WITH A LOVE THAT'S TRUE.

I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU,
YOU KNOW I DO,
I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU,
I'LL SING TILL I'M BLUE.

HOW MANY TIMES
DO I HAVE TO SAY
I LOVE YOU, I DO,
IN THE SAME SIMPLE RHYMES?

I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU,,
I REALLY DO,
I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU!
DO YOU LOVE ME, TOO?
SAY YOU LOVE ME, TOO!
SAY YOU LOVE ME, TOO!

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Can you just shut up?

GEORGE, JR.

I can't help it. I know we said it was just physical, but ...

(sings)

I LOVE YOU, BABY,
YOU KNOW I DO!

WOO, WOO, WOO,
 WHO, WHO, WHO,
 YOU, YOU, YOU
 KNOW I DO!

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Given the other things you passionately believe, it may be your only redeeming merit. But I can't allow myself to have an emotional response to you, other than justifiable fury, unless, one of these fine days, you wake up.

GEORGE, JR.

Well, maybe you'll wake up.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I hope to do it as soon as I can manage it.

GEORGE, JR.

You do?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Yes. In a different bed.

SCENE 5

Senator Worthington's office. Chorus as members of Republican National Committee enter, led by Reince Pluribus.

WORTHINGTON

What can I do for you, Reince.

CHAIRMAN PLURIBUS

As the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, I would like to impress upon you the grievous emergency we face. Despite the incredible roster of Republican candidates who are currently running for President --

(to other committee member)

-- how many were there at last count?

SECOND COMMITTEE MEMBER

Twenty-five, Chairman Pluribus. Or one candidate for every two states in the Union.

CHAIRMAN PLURIBUS

It still appears disconcertingly probable that Heather Smiley could become the next President. George, we consulted many of the most influential members of the party, and we're all in agreement, which, as you know, is an extraordinarily rare event. And the one thing we agree on is that there's only one Republican who can get the job done. In short, George, we're askin' you to throw your hat into the ring.

WORTHINGTON

But you know how much I enjoy bein' the majority leader of the Senate.

CHAIRMAN PLURIBUS

How does that compare with bein' the leader of the free world?

WORTHINGTON

Little late for me to enter the race, isn't it?

SECOND COMMITTEE MEMBER

Not if you jump in immediately.

THIRD COMMITTEE MEMBER

All you have to do is go out there and work your magic with the voters.

WORTHINGTON

Well, being the President does run in my family. As you know, my grandfather's uncle's second cousin was the President.

FIRST CHORUS MEMBER

Face it, Senator. All our hopes depend on you.

(sing)

WE'RE ASKING YOU TO RUN,
AS THE ONLY REPUBLICAN
WHO'S GOT THE INSPIRING STYLE
TO BEAT HEATHER SMILEY'S SMILE.

OH, WHAT A SMILE,
OH, SUCH GUILF,
ONLY YOU
CAN OUTDO
HER CUNNING SMILE --
ONLY YOU, ONLY YOU!

NONE OF OUR OTHER CANDIDATES
 CAN CARRY ENOUGH OF THE STATES
 TO AVOID LOSING BY A MILE,
 AND ALL BECAUSE OF HER SMILE.

OH, WHAT A SMILE,
 OH, SUCH GUILF,
 ONLY YOU
 CAN OUTDO
 HER CUNNING SMILE --
 ONLY YOU, ONLY YOU!

YOU ALONE KNOW HOW TO PRESENT
 OUR SMALL-GOVERNMENT IDEALS
 WITH SUCH PATRIOTIC APPEALS
 YOU'LL BECOME THE PRESIDENT.

WE BEG YOU, PLEASE, DON'T WAIT
 UNTIL YOU ENTER TOO LATE
 TO CONVINC THE RANK AND FILE
 TO VOTE FOR YOU, NOT THAT SMILE.

OH, WHAT A SMILE,
 OH, SUCH GUILF,
 ONLY YOU
 CAN OUTDO
 HER CUNNING SMILE --
 ONLY YOU, ONLY YOU!
 CAN OUTDO
 HER GODDAM SMILE!

WORTHINGTON

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I am truly flattered by your very persuasive invitation. I shall talk my possible candidacy over with my wife tonight. But let me also say, Chairman Pluribus. If I decide my candidacy is a moral imperative to save the nation from the Democrats, I will make myself available.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Great! Wonderful, George.

CHAIRMAN PLURIBUS

We look forward to havin' you in the race -- and to bein' at your presidential inauguration.

Senator Worthington leads them to the door.

WORTHINGTON

I'll have an answer for you in the morning.

Closes door. Then crosses to desk and picks up phone. Dials.

WORTHINGTON

(into phone)

Interestin' news, John. Can you get over here right away? I need you for a for a campaign strategy meetin'? You guessed it. See ya shortly.

(hangs up; dials again)

Hello, Martha.

Lights come up on Martha, at home, on the phone.

MARTHA

Hello, dear.

WORTHINGTON

Well, it finally happened. I got a visit from Rience Pluribus, the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, along with a number of other leading members. They have requested that I run for the office of the President.

MARTHA

Oh, that's wonderful, George. Congratulations!

WORTHINGTON

Thank ya, Martha. Of course, I'd never put us through the ordeal of a presidential campaign without your approval.

MARTHA

OK. I don't approve.

WORTHINGTON

How can you say that, Martha? The party needs me to run. Or else Heather Smiley could become the next President.

MARTHA

I understand how upset that prospect would make you, George. I was just testing your honesty. But I'll be watching to see if you can win without such a dreadful amount of sayin' one thing and meanin' something else.

WORTHINGTON

I must do what my unique abilities enable, Martha.

MARTHA

But aren't ya afraid of what the Lord thinks about all your prevaricatin'?

WORTHINGTON

Not at all. I have already talked with Jesus about it, and he told me to do whatever is necessary to win. He wants me to be the President and lead the country in the paths of righteousness.

MARTHA

I'm glad to hear that, dear. I've never really had your ability to talk to Jesus myself, but I can understand how he'd like to have a former pastor in power. But so I can explain it to my friends, what exactly do you mean by "leading the country in the paths of righteousness"?

WORTHINGTON

That's easy. I mean, leadin' it more to the right. See ya for supper.

Hangs up. Phone rings.

WORTHINGTON

Send him in.

(John enters.)

JOHN

Fill me in, Senator!

WORTHINGTON

I have been asked enter the race for the Presidency by Reince Pluribus and other leading members of the Republican National Committee. .

JOHN

Great news! And overdue, too.

WORTHINGTON

Do you suppose I might persuade you to give up your current lucrative position as the campaign manager for Donald Rump?

JOHN

No problem. No matter how much I prep him, he goes out and says something that insults one block of voters or another. So, naturally, he doesn't have a prayer.

WORTHINGTON

That's where I come in. I've got all the prayers I need.

JOHN

And then some, George. We have to move quickly, though. You're late into the race.

WORTHINGTON

When the calvary comes over the hill to save the day, it's always late in the game.

JOHN

Right. By the way, Carl Stove is cookin' up some tough ways to attack Heather Smiley.

WORTHINGTON

That's because he ain't quite as smart as people take him to be. Only a fool would attack a woman, because it will build sympathy for her. In addition, I am convinced that Stove's way of doin' things just casts the party in a bad light. The person who wins is gonna be for things people need to hear, not against her.

JOHN

Insightful, as usual, Senator. Let's get to it. First, we need a campaign slogan that really resonates with conservative voters and reaches out to the few independents left.

WORTHINGTON

Let's not be too quick to leave out Democrats who might be vulnerable to the right approach.

JOHN

If anybody can persuade 'em, it's you.

WORTHINGTON

Thanks, John. Now, let's talk strategy. One thing you know for certain is that this nation is currently divided against itself. Naturally, all the other candidates, Republicans and Democrats, may not admit it, but they've written off half the electorate. So the first person who seems to be unaware of the division and forthrightly appeals to the entire electorate is gonna have an advantage.

JOHN

But how can we do that, with the two sides so at odds? The divide between the red states and the blue states is wider than ever.

WORTHINGTON

First off, as I've mentioned before, let's stop usin' those terms. The whole concept of red states and blue states is foolishly divisive. As you know, I made that point repeatedly on the talk show I used to have on Fox.

JOHN

But how are you going to appeal to both sides?

WORTHINGTON

By sayin' things that the majority of Americans will agree with.

JOHN

How is that possible?

WORTHINGTON

How else? Eloquent appeals to patriotism that leave out policy details.

JOHN

But the reporters are sure to point out you're short on specifics.

WORTHINGTON

Let 'em have a field day. Specifics couldn't get Santa Claus elected to run a toy factory. Only an irrelevant percentage of voters gives a damn about them. I can't get into too much detail, any more than the Democrats can explain how they plan to get their campaign promises through Congress. Now, lets ask ourselves the key question. What is the biggest source of pain that Americans are dealing with?

JOHN

I'd say it's still jobs.

WORTHINGTON

Of course, it's still jobs.

JOHN

How about this slogan? "Worthington means work."

WORTHINGTON

Has a memorable ring to it, but we need something with more punch -- a truly compelling generality. Naturally, we'll also want to keep Smiley's slogan in mind, "Heather for America," so we can do it one better.

JOHN

Very smart, Senator.

WORTHINGTON

Thank ya. Now, along those lines, how about this? “George for American jobs.”

JOHN

Wait a minute. I’m supposed to be the campaign manager.

WORTHINGTON

I know, but right now, I’m on a roll. I have it! “Vote for American Jobs.”

JOHN

Great! We just put your name above it real big.

WORTHINGTON

You bet.

(confidentially)

Ya see, I ain’t as dumb as I sound. But I like liberals to think I am. Then when the time is right, I let them know I ain’t so damn dumb after all.

JOHN

I don’t know anybody in his right mind who think’s you’re dumb, Senator. But how do we defend advocatin’ American jobs to our corporate donors. It could make them think we’re against free trade.

WORTHINGTON

That’s easy. “Vote for American jobs” can be interpreted in a variety of ways.

JOHN

It can?

WORTHINGTON

Of course, it can. When the occasion requires, it could mean “Vote for American jobs to be shipped overseas.”

JOHN

Clever, George.

WORTHINGTON

Thank ya. It’s my stock in trade. My only real concern is, do you think the donor base is tapped out or still available for yet one more Republican candidate?

JOHN

For anybody else, George, yes. But for you? Hey, come on. To begin with, you’re a favorite candidate of the Broke brothers. Want me to feel them out on it?

WORTHINGTON

Well, you might just do that. I'll stand by in case they'd like to talk.

JOHN

(takes out cell; looks up number; dials)

Hello. May I speak with Rick, Dick, or Nick? It's John Traynor, calling on behalf of Senator Worthington. Thank you.... Hello, there, gentlemen.

(hand over phone; to Worthington)

Great! Got all three of 'em.

(back to phone)

I've heard you mention, with increasing urgency, that you'd like to see Senator Worthington run for President. Well, hold onto your corporate logos. He has decided to declare.

(hand over phone)

They are ecstatic. Rick says he loves it, Dick says he thinks it would be fantastic, and Nick says not to worry about funding. You'll have all you need.

(back on phone)

Great, just great, gentlemen. Sure, let me see if I can get him on the line.

(pauses; hands phone to Worthington)

WORTHINGTON

(waits a while before he speaks)

Good afternoon, my good friends... Yes, I agree, her persistent lead in the polls is extremely worrisome... You bet. We'll let you know about important developments. And you can expect a lot of 'em. Bye for now.

(hangs up; hand over phone)

I'll tell ya, money is a wonderful enabler. Make some more fund-raisin' calls. Remember, Jeb Cushy started out with over 100 million.

JOHN

Will do. Meanwhile, you might want to practice your smile. You've got some stiff competition.

WORTHINGTON

I've got a lot more goin' for me than just a smile. I've got my way with the voters. And, as an ex-preacher, I've got Jesus ridin' shotgun.

SCENE 6

Jeb Cushy enters.

JEB CUSHY

My father was the President, my brother ...

(chokes on the words)

... was the President, and now it's my turn. Besides, I'm the most solid candidate of the bunch. My positions never waver.

CHORUS

You mean like how Medicare has to go? Didn't you read it's on more solid ground since the Affordable Care Act? Maybe his positions never waver because he never updates his information.

Donald Rump crosses the stage.

DONALD RUMP

Donald Rump here. I know how to create more American jobs. First, we deport all the illegal immigrants and their children. Then we ban legal and illegal immigration. Enough of this nonsense about "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." Vote for America for Americans, wherever you came from, as long as you're already here.

FIRST CHORUS MEMBER

(Spanish accent)

Excuse me, Signor Rump. How do you suppose your position is going to go over with the Latino community?

SECOND CHORUS MEMBER

Or the Asian community.

THIRD CHORUS MEMBER

Or the Indian community.

FOURTH CHORUS MEMBER

Or Russian cab drivers?

Ben Larson enters.

BEN

Hello, Ben Larson. I'm a retired neurosurgeon, transitioning to politics. If you don't know why you should vote for me, I can change your mind. It's a relatively simple procedure.

Ted Obtuse enters.

TED

Ted Obtuse again. We need the smallest possible Federal Government, because the government can't do anything right. I know, because I'm part of it.

SCENE 7

Worthington bedroom. George in bed, reading.
Martha enters in nightgown.

MARTHA

Oh, George, I'm so proud of you! I can almost make peace with everything that's happened to us.

sings)

I COULD DWELL ON HOW THINGS MIGHT HAVE
BEEN
IF YOU'D MADE SOME DIFFERENT CHOICES
AND OBSESS ABOUT HOW I MIGHT CONTROL
A FEW OF YOUR INNER VOICES.
BUT I TRY TO APPRECIATE THE PRESENT,
WHICH AT TIMES LIKE THIS CAN BE SO PLEASANT
I CAN, AT LAST,
MAKE PEACE WITH THE PAST.

SOMETIMES I THINK ABOUT MY OWN PAST
AND REGRET A FEW DECISIONS
SO MUCH I GET UPSET WITH MYSELF
AND WISH I COULD MAKE SOME REVISIONS.
BUT I TRY TO APPRECIATE THE PRESENT,
WHICH AT TIMES LIKE THIS CAN BE SO PLEASANT
I CAN, AT LAST,
MAKE PEACE WITH THE PAST.

I DECIDED EVERY EVENT IS LIKE
THE CREST OF A WAVE THAT'S RIDING
ON EVERY EVENT IN OUR PAST,
AND HAD I THE POWER OF DECIDING
TO CHANGE EVEN ONE EVENT THAT'S IN
THE WAVE THIS MOMENT MIGHT NEVER HAVE
BEEN --
THIS HAPPY MOMENT MIGHT NEVER HAVE BEEN.

SO WHEN I THINK ABOUT OUR LIVES,
 THOUGH I FIND SOME THINGS DISTRESSING,
 I DON'T LET THEM GET THE BEST OF ME,
 BUT CAN SEE OUR LIVES AS A BLESSING.
 YES, I APPRECIATE THE PRESENT,
 WHICH AT TIMES LIKE THIS CAN BE SO PLEASANT
 I CAN, AT LAST,
 MAKE PEACE WITH THE PAST,
 AT LAST, I CAN
 MAKE PEACE WITH THE PAST.

WORTHINGTON

That's very sweet, Martha. I appreciate the present, too. Oh, do I ever appreciate it!
 Just imagine! Me as the President and you as the First Lady. Praise the Lord and pass the
 ammunition!

SCENE 8

Smiley residence. Bob is on the phone.

BOB

Thank you, Prince Abdullah. I can't tell you how much I appreciate your generous gift.
 My charity will allocate it wisely and, if ya don't mind, I'll be back in touch next year.

Heather enters.

BOB (CONT'D)

Oops, gotta go now. My wife just got home from a hard day of campaigning.
 (ends call)
 Good evening, sweetheart. How did the day go?

HEATHER

Wonderful! But my cheeks are sore.

BOB

Again?

HEATHER

Yes. It happens every time I have to smile for more than eight hours straight.

BOB

Funny, it never happens to me. I just get hoarse from talkin' for hours.

HEATHER

You haven't been raising money for your charity again, have you?

BOB

I'm sorry. I got a callback from Abdullah Moolah. How could I ignore it?

HEATHER

You want me to be the President, too, don't you?

BOB

Yes, I do, dear.

HEATHER

Thank you. It's only fair. You got to be the President, and now it's my turn.

BOB

I agree 100 percent.

HEATHER

Then please stop once and for all. Or I'm going to lock you in the closet till the election is over. And absolutely no more paid speeches, either. You didn't book any today, did you?

BOB

Only one -- and way off in Grand Rapids.

HEATHER

But you promised.

BOB

I know, dear. But they offered \$500,000 for just one itty-bitty speech?

HEATHER

Oh, my, that is a good fee. Maybe you can take a rain check until after the election.

BOB

But what can I do with myself if I can't raise money for my charity or make paid speeches?

HEATHER

You can prepare to make history as the first First Man.

BOB

I'm not sure where to begin.

HEATHER

I'd make a list of constructive activities that don't require Congressional approval. For instance, you could advocate healthy eating by sharing your vegan diet with preschoolers?

BOB

I'm not sure how many of them would be interested. I don't think many preschoolers have had a heart attack. But don't worry. When we're back in the White House, I'll find ways to occupy myself.

SCENE 9

Worthington at podium. Sign behind him. "Vote for American jobs. George Worthington for President."
Chorus as supporters. Martha beside and behind him.

WORTHINGTON

As you know, my fellow Americans, I recently achieved my lifelong dream when I became majority speaker of the Senate. But today we live in unusually challenging times. The polls show that America is in grave danger of bein' subjected to another four to eight years of Democratic tax and spend policies. But what America needs now is more jobs, more of the good, high-payin' jobs the unrivaled economy of the greatest nation on earth is capable of producin' when its potential to produce them is freed from government interference. Therefore, I have decided to answer the call of my country and my fellow Americans in every state of this great Union and declare my candidacy for President of the United States.

(chorus cheers)

From today on, you can be certain of one thing in this Presidential election. When ya vote for George Worthington, you ...

(points to sign)

"Vote for American jobs" Thank you. And when I see ya on the campaign trail, I hope to hug your hand and shake your baby!

(realizes his misstatement)

SCENE 10

Smiley campaign headquarters. Jake enters with tablet.

JAKE

(holds up tablet)

The latest polls just came in from Gallup and Pew.

HEATHER

How am I doing?

JAKE

You're still comfortably ahead of Bernie Landers, but George Worthinton has pulled unexpectedly close to you among likely voters.

ANN

In such a short time? But everything he's saying is either patriotic persiflage or typical Republican obfuscation.

JAKE

Obviously. But somehow the voters seems to like the way he manages to say it.

HEATHER

I can't stand it. I want to be the President.

BOB

(from closet)

Can I come out yet?

HEATHER

No!

BOB

(with phone)

But it's Vladirmir Putin again. He insists on being able to contribute to your campaign.

HEATHER

(to Jake)

Putin can't stop playing chess with himself. Bob, do you realize how politically incorrect it would be even to consider such a donation?

BOB

I know. But I didn't want to turn him down without askin' you.

HEATHER

Thank you. Now, please, get back in the closet till the election is over!

BOB

But I'm hungry.

HEATHER

I'll have Esther make you a salad as soon as we finish.

BOB

Don't forget the bean sprouts.

HEATHER

I'll remind her.

(locks door; to Jake)

I have an idea. What if we close down my campaign headquarters, and I run the campaign from home?

JAKE

Why?

HEATHER

I think women will identify with it. Lots of them work from home.

SCENE 11

Worthington's office. John comes in.

JOHN

Good news, Senator. You're already ranked number one among Republican candidates -- and you're neck and neck with Heather Smiley.

WORTHINGTON

Not bad for one month on the campaign trail.

JOHN

But she's pulling out all the stops to stay ahead. As you know, she announced that she's going to campaign from home.

WORTHINGTON

Pretty damn clever of her, I'll tell ya that.

(sings)

IMAGINE A CANDIDATE
FOR PRESIDENT WHO WOULD DARE
TO CONDUCT HER CAMPAIGN FROM HOME
AND THINK SOMEHOW IT'S FAIR.

I CAN SEE HER NOW, CAMPAIGNING
WHILE SITS THERE ENTERTAINING
LADY FRIENDS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD,
WHO CAN'T WAIT TO SAY HOW GOOD
SHE IS RIGHT OFF THE BAT.
AND HOW CAN A MAN COMPETE WITH THAT?

SHE'LL BE LOUNGING WITH A BOOK,
WHICH SHE LOOKS UP FROM TO SPEAK,
OR PEEKING IN A POT TO TWEAK
A DINNER SHE'S PRETENDING TO COOK,
WHILE SHE MENTIONS THE MEAL'S LOW-FAT.
AND HOW CAN A MAN COMPETE WITH THAT?

WHY CAN'T SHE SIMPLY HAVE
A CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS,
AND BE SEEN, WORKING ALONG
WITH HER DEDICATED SUPPORTERS
LIKE ALL OTHER CANDIDATES
SINCE THE FIRST GREEK CITY STATES?

IT 'S JUST NOT FAIR TO COURT THE FEMALE VOTE
BY BEHAVING IN A WAY MANY WOMEN WILL NOTE
IS PRECISELY HOW THEY BEHAVE, SO THEY CAN'T
WAIT
TO HAND HER ALL THEIR VOTES ON A SILVER
PLATE.
OH, HOW CAN A MAN NOT LAMENT IT
AND LONG FOR A LAW TO PREVENT IT?

I CAN SEE HER ATTEMPT TO STITCH
 ON A BUTTON WHILE MAKING A PITCH
 OR APPEAR TO BE CASUALLY TALKING
 TO VOTERS WHILE SHE'S WALKING
 THROUGH HER HOUSE, PETTING HER CAT.
 NOW, HOW CAN A MAN COMPLETE WITH THAT?
 HOW IN GOD'S NAME CAN A MAN COMPETE WITH
 THAT?

WORTHINGTON

(snaps fingers)

I just figured out a way to make light of it.

JOHN

How?

WORTHINGTON

By asking, "How big a commitment is it when she's out on the campaign trail 99% of the time?"

(phone rings; picks up)

Tell him I'm out of the office.

(hangs up)

It's the President.

JOHN

You don't want to speak with him?

WORTHINGTON

I can't even stand to play golf with him anymore.

SCENE 12

Chorus enters.

CHORUS

(sings)

SAD REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE WE,
 HERE TO WITHDRAW OUR CANDIDACY.
 ON THIS ONE POLICY
 WE GENERALLY AGREE.

WE LISTENED CAREFULLY
 AND WE CAN SEE
 NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE
 WILL VOTE FOR ME,
 NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE,
 EVEN WHEN I PLEA
 ON BENDED KNEE,
 WILL VOTE FOR ME.
 NOT FOR ME,
 NOT ME, NOT ME, NO, NOT FOR ME!

SCENE 13

Republican convention. Chorus. Stage right. Burst into cheers. Flags waving. Worthington signs aloft: "Vote for American Jobs!" "Worthington for President!"

REPORTER

Senator Worthington has just won the required number of delegates to become the Republican nominee for President.

Cheers. Hoots. Chants.

WORTHINGTON

Thank you. Thank you for selecting me to be your candidate for the office of President of the United States. And now onward to the presidency -- and more American jobs!

Chorus crosses to other side of stage. Picks up other signs. Cheers. Flags waving. Heather Smiley signs aloft: "Heather for America!" "Make it a Twofer!" "Women for Heather!" "The First Woman President."

SCENE 14

REPORTER

It's official! Former Secretary of State Heather Smiley has just become the Democratic nominee for President.

Heather is on stage, smiling and waving; Bob peeks out from the side of the stage and waves, smiling.

HEATHER

Thank you! Thank you! I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be your nominee for President. I'm for you -- every one of you. "Heather for America!" all the way!

SCENE 15

Martha Albright and George, Jr., having a bite.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I've arrived at a major decision. I'm going to campaign on behalf of Heather Smiley.

GEORGE, JR.

You think she can -- when she's running against my father?

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

Especially because she is.

GEORGE, JR.

Well, I'm going to do all I can to help my daddy get elected.

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

I wouldn't expect anything else, although one day you might grow up enough to call him your dad. Or maybe even your father. If you like, we can refrain from dating during the election.

GEORGE, JR.

I'd miss you.

MARTHA

I didn't say it was a necessity.

GEORGE, JR.

Good. What would you like for dinner?

MARTHA

Can we still stand to sit across the table from each other?

GEORGE, JR.

Oh, come on, Martha.

(sings)

IF YOU THINK ABOUT
HOW MANY THINGS
WE DISAGREE ABOUT,
I THINK YOU'LL SEE
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY OUT.

WE CAN ARGUE ABOUT
THE NOMINEE
WE GUARANTEE
WINS THE PRESIDENCY
TILL WE STAMP OUR FEET AND SHOUT.

WE CAN DISPUTE ABOUT
THE ECONOMY
AND TO WHAT DEGREE
IT SHOULD BE FREE
TILL WE STAGE A WRESTLING BOUT.

OR WE CAN RISE ABOVE
THEM ALL,
AND STILL BE FRIENDS
OR MAYBE EVEN FALL
IN LOVE.

OF COURSE, WE CAN QUARREL ABOUT
SOCIETY
AND WHAT WE EACH SEE
ITS VALUES SHOULD BE
TILL WE JUST SULK AND POUT.

WE CAN EVEN QUIBBLE ABOUT
TOPICS AS TINY
AS THE EMCEE
WE WATCH ON TV
TILL WE PUNCH EACH OTHER OUT.

OR WE CAN RISE ABOVE
THEM ALL
AND STILL BE FRIENDS
AND MAYBE EVEN FALL
IN LOVE,
HEY, MAYBE EVEN FALL
IN LOVE.

SCENE 16

Smiley living room.

HEATHER

I can't believe Worthington has pulled ahead of me in the polls.

JAKE

He is, without a doubt, the best prevaricator in Republican history.

ANN

You mean, in political history. The king of the right wing.

HEATHER

We've got to do something to stop this nonsense.

Bob opens closet door.

BOB

Can I come out now?

HEATHER

No!

BOB

But maybe I can help.

HEATHER

Will you please get back in the closet!

BOB

Oh, all right.

(goes back in closet and closes door)

HEATHER

I know what I'm going to do. In our final debate, I'm going to do something I've been afraid to do until now.

JAKE

What's that?

HEATHER

I'm going to say what I really believe.

JAKE

That's all quite commendable. But it could be extremely dangerous.

HEATHER

Not as dangerous as continuing to avoid the "unsafe" issues.

Bob opens closet.

BOB

I agree.

HEATHER

Thank you. And get back in there!

(sings)

I DON'T WANT TO LOOK TO THE SIDE ANYMORE
AND WORRY ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I VEER
TOO FAR TO THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT BUT TO SAY
EXACTLY WHAT I THINK WITHOUT FEAR.
I WANT TO BE
TRUE TO MYSELF,
FINALLY,
TRUE TO MYSELF.
WHETHER I WIN OR LOSE
I WANT TO CHOOSE
TO BE TRUE TO MYSELF,
FINALLY,
TRUE TO MYSELF.

I WANT TO LOOK STRAIGHT DOWN INSIDE MYSELF
AND SEE THE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS THERE
AND THEN TO LOOK STRAIGHT OUT AND GIVE
VOICE

TO ALL THE THINGS ABOUT WHICH I CARE.

I WANT TO BE
TRUE TO MYSELF,
FINALLY,
TRUE TO MYSELF.
WHETHER I WIN OR LOSE
I WANT TO CHOOSE
TO BE TRUE TO MYSELF,
FINALLY,
TRUE TO MYSELF.

I KNOW IT'S RISKY
BUT WHAT CAN I SAY.
I'M DETERMINED TO DO IT,
COME WHAT MAY.
AND DON'T TRY TO PERSUADE ME
NOT TO DO IT.
THERE'S NO WAY TO DISSUADE ME.
I'M COMMITTED TO IT.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL WIN THE ELECTION OR NOT.
BUT I KNOW ONE THING FOR CERTAIN.
I DON'T WANT THE FINAL CURTAIN
TO COME DOWN AND KNOW I WITHHELD WHAT I
THOUGHT.
I WANT TO BE
TRUE TO MYSELF,
FINALLY,
TRUE TO MYSELF.
WHETHER I WIN OR LOSE
I WANT TO CHOOSE
TO BE TRUE TO MYSELF,
FINALLY,
TRUE TO MYSELF --

COME WHAT MAY
ON ELECTION DAY,
TRUE TO MYSELF!

JAKE

OK. Let's go over the points you'd like to make, and we'll have Ann and her team write something up.

HEATHER

Thank you. But I'm thinking of saying things you wouldn't dare mention.

SCENE 17

Debate. Heather and George. Moderator in front of them. No one else present.

MODERATOR

We have now arrived at the conclusion of the last Presidential debate. At this time, I'd like to invite each candidate to make a closing statement. It's the Republican candidate's turn to go first.

WORTHINGTON

My fellow Americans, at the end of this final debate, I want to draw a clear distinction between myself and the Democratic candidate. First, I'd like reiterate what you don't need in your next President. You don't need another Democrat, because you don't need a bloated federal government taxin' you to death and trashin' your Constitutionally guaranteed freedoms. Now, I'll tell ya what ya need from your next President. Jobs, jobs, jobs, and more good, high-payin' American jobs. That's what the greatest economy in the world can deliver, and I know how to deliver that economy. Thank you for your vote and God bless America.

MODERATOR

Thank you, Senator Worthington. And now we turn to Heather Smiley.

HEATHER

Thank you, Roger. Tonight is my last chance to speak with you, and I think it's time for one of us to do something politicians are not often commended for. I want to tell the truth, even if I offend some of the people who have supported my candidacy.

(holds up hands)

So look, no written speech. Just me, Heather. When Senator Worthington says he's for smaller government and against so-called tax and spend policies, exactly what does he mean? What does his American way actually look like? He means the freedom to vote for the land of the haves and have-nots, instead of the land of what America ought to be. He means the freedom, in the richest nation on earth, for millions of Americans not to be able to afford health care.

He means the freedom to grow old without social security, so you can starve or lose your home. He means the freedom to make billions and be taxed at a lower rate than a secretary. The freedom to take a job that doesn't even pay the minimum wage. The freedom for school children from poor families to go without lunch. The freedom not to be able to afford college or the freedom to be saddled with debilitating student debt. The freedom for women with unwanted pregnancies to seek help in back alleys and bleed to death. The freedom to pretend that global warming isn't happening. The freedom to refuse to have your child vaccinated and watch him or her grow ill with a dreadful disease and infect other school children. The freedom to watch America's roads and bridges continue to crumble, because your government doesn't have the funds to repair them. Trains with tracks that aren't in good repair, and airports that can't handle air traffic safely without long delays. The freedom to lose your job without adequate unemployment benefits to see you and your family through till you land another job. The freedom to watch your air and water continue to be polluted. The freedom to tell some Americans you don't approve of their lifestyle, so they can't enjoy the same rights as any other couple. The freedom to deny immigrants a fair chance at citizenship, as if it were American when it's anything but what made this great melting pot great. The freedom to watch your national parks fall into disrepair. These are the freedoms he offers you as the American way. Now, here are the freedoms I stand for. It's the freedom to do your best but to know the price of freedom is to set aside enough economic value to take care of the members of American society who need help at any stage of their lives. It's the freedom to live in a land where everybody has the same chance at life. Yes, some of us will do better than others, but the high achievers will pay taxes at a rate that enables a civilized society, not a society where they can't even enjoy their success without fear. The freedom to welcome all immigrants who want to become productive Americans. The freedom to enjoy the full rights of American citizenship, regardless of your race, religion, or sexual orientation. The freedom to live in a country where corporations share their profits with their workers, not just stash them overseas or dole them out to shareholders. The freedom to live in a country that creates jobs because the middle class can afford to buy things and create demand. This is my American way, and I urge you to vote for it. Thank you.

WORTHINGTON

(turns and looks behind him)

Excuse me, Mrs. Smiley. I don't see what candidate you're talking about. I appreciate her frustration at fallin' behind me in the polls, but I don't believe there is ever a justification for an outburst peppered with falsifications about my position on the issues, especially to misrepresent something I stand for as precious as freedom and the true American way. You have violated the trust of the American public, and I trust the voters know me better than to be influenced by such a desperation tactic and will disregard it as unworthy of a candidate for the Presidency of the United States.

HEATHER

I know the truth hurts. All I have done is say it.

MODERATOR

Thank you, both.

(turns to audience)

You heard it for yourself. In the final moments of this final debate, Heather Smiley took off the gloves. The question remains, will enough voters be influenced by what she has said? Remember to vote, and good night.

SCENE 18

Worthington's office.

JOHN

Bad news, George. A snap-poll says she won the debate. She's gone from five points behind to just two points behind.

WORTHINGTON

I believe that's another way of sayin' I'm still two points ahead. But, frankly I'd rather have a more comfortable lead. Thankfully, I have a way to reclaim it. I just received an invitation to appear on tonight's Bill Shillelagh Show.

JOHN

On election eve? Why risk going a major public appearance when you're in the lead?

WORTHINGTON

What risk? I'm a Fox favorite, and it's an opportunity my Democratic opponent would never be offered.

SCENE 19

Smiley living room.

HEATHER

I am so glad this campaign is over. Frankly, I'm exhausted.

BOB

(opens closet)

Can I come out now?

HEATHER

I suppose. We can watch the returns tomorrow night.

Jake comes hurrying in.

JAKE

I just read that Worthington is going on the Bill Shillelagh Show tonight.

BOB
(looks at watch)

It's on now, isn't it?

JAKE
Yes.

HEATHER
I don't think I can stand to watch it.

JAKE
I can always go to a bar and watch.

HEATHER
(covers eyes)
All right. Turn it on.

SCENE 20

Fox Network. Bill Shillelagh Show. Senator
Worthington is being interviewed by Shillelagh.
John is watching from the wings.

BILL SHILLELAGH
Well, Senator, thankfully, you survived Heather Smiley's inexcusable and totally
erroneous onslaught at the end of last night's Presidential debate.

WORTHINGTON
Thank you. I think American voters are smart enough to see through her false accusations
and not let her tirade talk them out of the countless American jobs my policies can
deliver.

BILL SHILLELAGH
Apparently, they are. You're still ahead in the polls.

WORTHINGTON
Yes, thanks to the voters, I appear to be holding my lead.

BILL SHILLELAGH
What did you think when she lost her cool?

WORTHINGTON
Well, apparently she sees things differently than you and I and the vast majority of
Americans. I thought her outburst was quite divisive, when my goal is to unite America.

BILL SHILLELAGH

I think you can just blow her off. I don't think the voters are going to be fooled by her twisted, socialist version of the so-called American way. But the Democrats are desperate. Senator, I believe you're going to hand the Republicans the win they need. Congratulations!

WORTHINGTON

Thank ya, Bill. But I don't think it's just Republicans who need jobs. I think it's out-of-work Democrats, too.

BILL SHILLELAGH

The question is, do most unemployed Democrats even want jobs, or just to live off the federal government and taxpayer dollars?

WORTHINGTON

Well, Bill, I believe every American who's out of work would like a good, high-paying job -- Democrats and Republicans.

(rises and shakes his hand)

Good night, Bill.

BILL SHILLELAGH

(shakes the Senator's hand)

Good night, Senator. And thanks for being on the show tonight.

Senator Worthington gets up and goes to leave.
When he reaches the side, John greets him.

JOHN

You did great, Senator.

WORTHINGTON

Thank you, John. But, to tell you the truth, Bill Shillelagh is a divisive jackass. I can only hope the loudmouth ignoramus didn't offend too many Democrats who are considerin' votin' for me.

JOHN

(suddenly anxious; sotto voce)

Your mike is still on.

(takes off mike; cups in hand)

WORTHINGTON

Ya mean he heard me?

Lights go up on Smiley living room.

JAKE

Did you hear that?

ANN

I can't believe it!

BILL SHILLELAGH

(sarcastically)

I guess the Senator doesn't admire me quite as much as I thought he did. I almost feel like recommending that you vote for the former First Lady. But, of course, only a true ignoramus would advocate that.

(looks off camera)

Senator Worthinton, I will vote for you, but I will never, ever invite you back on my show! Even if you do become the President!

Smiley living room.

BOB

You may have just gotten the break you needed, Heather.

HEATHER

Yea! If I win, I couldn't have done it without him.

SCENE 21

Election night. Same setup. One side: Worthington, Martha, John and Scott watching the returns. Other side: Heather, Bob, Jake and Ann, watching the returns.

HEATHER

The returns are a real nail-biter.

JAKE

Well, once again, the way Florida goes, so goes the election.

ANN

I never thought it would be this close.

BOB

Down to the wire. Oops, lets listen. I think they're about to call Florida.

HEATHER

Oh, dear me. I can't stand the suspense.

NEWSCASTER

Ladies and gentlemen, we're now in a position to call Florida. And we're calling it for Heather Smiley.

Reaction.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

What a remarkable turn of events. Heather Smiley has come from behind and CNN is calling the election. We predict that she will become the next President of the United States -- and, if the votes keep going her way, she just might win by a landslide.

HEATHER

Whoopie! I'm the President!

BOB

Congratulations, dear.

JAKE

The way the returns are going, you might even get a Democratic Congress.

HEATHER

Oh, I love it. Just love it!

(sings)

BACK IN THE WHITE HOUSE,
SOON WE'LL BE BACK IN THE WHITE HOUSE
AND THIS TIME I'LL BE THE PRESIDENT,
THE FIRST FEMALE RESIDENT
WHO'S NOT JUST THE SPOUSE,
BUT THE PRESIDENT.
YES, THE PRESIDENT.

BOB

YOU'LL BE THE FIRST FEMALE RESIDENT
WHO'S THE PRESIDENT,
AND I'LL BE THE FIRST MAN
WHO'S NOT THE PRESIDENT,
BUT THE FIRST MAN
WHO'S JUST ... THE FIRST MAN!

BOTH

WE'LL BE MR. AND MRS. PRESIDENT,
THE FIRST MATES ...

HEATHER

... TO BE PRESIDENT OF ...

BOB

... AND PRESIDENT OF ...

BOTH

THE UNITED STATES!
THE FIRST MATES
TO BE PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES!

SCENE 22

MARTHA ALBRIGHT

She won! The first woman President!

GEORGE, JR.

It seems that way, so far.

MARTHA

Oh, come on. Aren't you the one who said love is bigger than politics? If you haven't forgotten, I might be able to agree with you.

GEORGE, JR.

As long as you put it that way, maybe I can get used to it. But I do feel sorry for my poor daddy.

SCENE 23

WORTHINGTON

See what happens when you tell the truth, Martha? Lost the election -- and very likely control of the Senate, too.

MARTHA

I'm sorry, George. But if ya had to lose, telling the truth was the right way to do it.

Chorus comes dancing out.

CHORUS

(sings)

IT'S A LANDSLIDE, A LANDSLIDE
A LANDSLIDE VICTORY FOR OUR SIDE!
WE DID EVERYTHING RIGHT
AND TONIGHT'S OUR NIGHT!
TONIGHT'S OUR NIGHT!

THE END