

**American Standard**  
**By Jonathan Joy**

*(The time is October, the fall of 2000. Presidential, state and local elections are only one month away. The setting is Ashland, a small city of twenty thousand people in Boyd County, Kentucky. The lights rise on MARCUS WOODARD, 50, a man on fire with gusto and arrogance. He stands behind a lectern delivering a speech in what appears to a political campaign rally.)*

**MARCUS:** This part of Kentucky is often ignored, left out, looked down upon even, when it comes to state politics. I bet sometimes you feel like you don't have a voice at all. I bet some of you feel that your vote doesn't mean a damn thing come November seventh. Well, I'm here to change all that. I want to tell you something, and I want you to listen nice and close. You have a friend in Marcus Woodard. Together we can! Together we can confront our problems and come up with smaller government solutions. Together we can return jobs and economic prosperity to Eastern Kentucky. Together we can restore good old-fashioned Kentucky values to the State Senate! Together we can elect the right man for the job. When you go out to vote next month elect the moral man! The experienced man! The man with the plan! Together we can do it! You and me! Together we can! Thank you for coming out today ladies and gentleman. God bless you!

*(MARCUS waves to the crowd triumphantly. The lights cross fade to another area of the stage, the bar. JOHN BLEVINS, 25, looks like he's lost his best friend. He is seated at the bar with a drink in hand. He is drunk. MASON, 25, the bartender, is wiping down the bar close to JOHN. A pale blue light emanates from a point just beyond audience view. It is the light of a television screen that JOHN watches with a particularly disgusted interest. JOHN swigs down the last of his drink. On the TV, a NEWSCASTER is heard reporting.)*

**NEWSCASTER:** Heading into the last month of the campaign, Republican candidate Marcus Woodard has built a double-digit lead in the polls and appears to be set to finish strong in his race for the State Senate seat of...

*(JOHN is furious. He slams his glass down hard on the bar, where it almost breaks.)*

**JOHN:** Double digit lead? They haven't even polled Morgan County yet. There's nothing out there but yellow dog Democrats. Will you turn that off?

*(MASON turns off the TV. JOHN sulks.)*

Give me another one.

*(JOHN hands his glass to MASON, who begins to fix a drink.)*

What is this bullshit about Kentucky values and electing the moral man? I can't believe people still fall for that. I guess that in Marcus Woodard's world three divorces constitute family values. I've seen the way guys like him work. He's probably got a girl in every county seat from here to Louisville. Kentucky values. These guys make me sick.

**MASON:** Can I ask you something, John?

**JOHN:** *(indicating TV)* They make *me* out to be the idiot, and *this guy*...would you vote for somebody like that?

**MASON:** He's been kicking your ass for some time...

**JOHN:** He is not kicking my ass...

**MASON:** John...

**JOHN:** It's a lot closer than it looks. It is.

**MASON:** Well, I only brought it up because you've been spending a lot of time in here.

**JOHN:** So?

**MASON:** Shouldn't you be out there pounding the pavement, or something?

**JOHN:** I don't need to hear this from you. Not now. What do you know? You wouldn't understand the first thing about how these elections work...

**MASON:** I understand that you're losing, and to most people you seem to be playing the part of the idiot they make you out to be.

**JOHN:** Whose side are you on?

**MASON:** You know what this reminds me of?

**JOHN:** I'm afraid to ask.

**MASON:** It's the cross-country thing all over again.

**JOHN:** Will you stop it with that? We were in high school.

**MASON:** You spent the whole summer training with me and then you go and quit two days before our first race. This election is the same damn thing...

**JOHN:** That was ten years ago, and I had problems with my knee. You never remember that.

**MASON:** You're always raring to start something, but you never finish. November seventh is a month away and you've given up on this election already.

**JOHN:** Fuck off. Give me that drink.

*(He gives JOHN the drink and goes back to wiping down the bar.)*

**MASON:** I'd just rather see somebody other than that asshole up in Frankfurt. I'd rather it be some asshole I kind of like.

*(Long pause.)*

**JOHN:** *(nostalgic)* I remember going to rallies with my Dad when he was in Congress. Everybody loved him. I was the proudest kid in the world. All I ever wanted to do was to help people the way he did. He was a real good guy, you know. They don't make politicians like him anymore. These guys today, it's all razzle-dazzle with them. Somebody like me doesn't stand a chance.

**MASON:** Is he gonna endorse you?

**JOHN:** My dad? I don't know. I wouldn't count on it. He's not exactly thrilled that his "promising young son turned out to be a bleeding heart liberal Democrat". His words, not mine.

**MASON:** He'll come around. Why don't you get out of here? Get some sleep.

**JOHN:** Are you cutting me off?

**MASON:** Yes. Get the hell out of here.

**JOHN:** Can I stay at your place tonight?

**MASON:** No.

**JOHN:** Why not?

**MASON:** I got kids this weekend. You set a bad example for them.

**JOHN:** Excuse me?

**MASON:** You've got to get your shit together. I mean it.

**JOHN:** Fine. You think I don't have anywhere else to stay? There are plenty of people that'll take me in. I'm John Blevins. I'm going to be the next State Senator from the fifty...shit...the fifty...

**MASON:** Seventh?

**JOHN:** Yeah, shit, fifty-seventh district. Fuck you, I knew that. I'll just call one of my girlfriends. Probably keep me up all night if you know what I mean, but hell I'm up for it.

*(JOHN gets up clumsily, and falls hard onto the floor. He gets up quickly and composes himself. Hardly able to hold himself upright, he struggles to put on his jacket. He starts to exit the bar, his back to MASON.)*

I don't need to stay at your place...lots of places I could go. And if I can't find anyplace I'll just sleep in my car. And if you can live knowing that I might be sleeping in my car in the middle of some dark alley somewhere, fine. If you can sleep tonight with that on your mind...

**MASON:** I can live with it if you can.

**JOHN:** Because it might come to that.

**MASON:** Yeah, knowing you, it might.

**JOHN:** Come on, this is the last time, I swear. I'll owe you one.

**MASON:** You owe me a lot already.

**JOHN:** You too, huh? Everyone is turning on me. Fine! There are plenty of ladies that would love to get a call from me at...*(stops, looks at his watch)*...one thirty seven in the morning. Will you put this on my tab?

**MASON:** Sure. You ever plan on paying that tab?

**JOHN:** Yeah, yeah. Float me another month and you won't be sorry. I promise.

**MASON:** Sure.

**JOHN:** One month, you'll see. One month and I'll be living in the lap of luxury. Your old friend is going to make something of himself.

**MASON:** Good night!

*(Lights cross fade from the bar back to the lectern that MARCUS spoke from. MARCUS is sitting DS of the lectern, his feet dangling off the edge of the stage and into the front row of the audience. His triumphant demeanor has melted away and he appears melancholy. His political partner, JOANNA WIGGINS is at his side. She is a stately woman with gray hair, a bit older than MARCUS. She reads a newspaper.)*

**JOANNA:** You see this?

**MARCUS:** I know...ten point lead...

**JOANNA:** You should be more excited.

**MARCUS:** Ten points is nothing. They haven't even polled Morgan County yet. I don't think they've polled Elliot either. It makes me wonder what the hell they're doing up there with my money.

**JOANNA:** What's on your mind?

**MARCUS:** Nothing.

**JOANNA:** Nothing, huh?

**MARCUS:** When the hell is that old man going to make up his mind?

**JOANNA:** Don't worry about that. He is going to endorse you...

**MARCUS:** Damnit, Joanna, I do worry about it. Charlie Blevins' endorsement wins this election. He should have sponsored me by now. It makes me look bad.

**JOANNA:** He's going to sponsor you.

**MARCUS:** If he endorses that no good son of his...

**JOANNA:** He's not going to do that. Blevins is a drunk. I ran into Marge the other night at the Republican Women's fund raiser.

**MARCUS:** Marge?

**JOANNA:** Marge Scott. Her husband slipped you those hundred dollar bills at...

**MARCUS:** Oh, yeah. Good man.

**JOANNA:** She said that her son saw John Blevins sleeping one off in his car behind that old bar on Winchester the other night. Really, Marcus, you've had a lot tougher opponents.

**MARCUS:** Than why the hell hasn't Charlie announced it?

**JOANNA:** He's waiting for the right moment. People are just starting to realize there's an election at all. If he'd endorsed you two weeks ago, they would have forgotten already. Come on, look at these numbers.  
*(indicating newspaper)* You could win it without the endorsement.

**MARCUS:** Do you really believe that?

**JOANNA:** Don't you? What happened to the egotistical, overconfident Marcus Woodard that I used to know?

**MARCUS:** I just have a bad feeling about this.

**JOANNA:** Well stop worrying about it for God's sake.

**MARCUS:** I don't want to think about it anymore. Why don't we get out of here. Maybe grab a bite to eat or something.

**JOANNA:** Don't even think about it.

**MARCUS:** It's a perfectly innocent invitation, Joanna.

**JOANNA:** With you there's no such thing. Sorry, I'm too old and too tired to play along. Unless you have a ring in your pocket, I'm going home. You should too. It's late. Get some rest.

*(JOANNA exits and MARCUS is left alone. He picks up the newspaper she has left behind and opens it to a specific article. He reads, then looks up and stares at the audience. His face ekes out a confident smile. He rises and exits. Blackout. The lights rise on another lectern. This time JOHN is preparing to speak. He looks tattered and nervous. At his side is DONNA DAVIS, a young woman. She is organized and dressed smartly. She hands him a suit jacket.)*

**DONNA:** Put this on.

**JOHN:** Thanks.

**DONNA:** *(straightening his tie)* You look like shit. What were you thinking?

**JOHN:** Don't exaggerate. *(pushing her away)* Stop doing that.

**DONNA:** You're on in one minute.

**JOHN:** Jesus, it's ten o'clock already.

**DONNA:** Your dad wants to talk to you.

**JOHN:** What?

**DONNA:** He called me this morning. He said he wants you to meet him at Marcus Woodard's office after the rally.

**JOHN:** Fuck.

**DONNA:** What?

**JOHN:** Woodard's office. You don't think that's a bad sign?

**DONNA:** John, you don't have an office. He has to meet you somewhere, doesn't he?

**JOHN:** Fuck.

**DONNA:** Don't worry about lunch. He'll have sandwiches or something. Are you okay?

**JOHN:** I think I'm hyperventilating.

**DONNA:** Jesus John, why didn't you take that public speaking class that I told you about?

**JOHN:** Will you cut that shit out. Say something to help me relax.

**DONNA:** You're on.

**JOHN:** Donna...

**DONNA:** I'm serious. You're on...go!

**JOHN:** I'm not ready.

**DONNA:** Knock 'em dead.

*(DONNA exits the stage and takes a seat with the audience. JOHN is apprehensive. He slowly takes his place behind the lectern and adjusts the microphone to his liking. He is noticeably nervous and speaks distractedly.)*

**JOHN:** Good morning.

*(He places his hand in his suit pocket and retrieves a handful of note cards, and with them, accidentally, a pack of cigarettes which he immediately drops on the floor beneath.)*

...shit...excuse me ladies and gentleman...



*(He leans down to pick them up and his head slams hard into the corner of the lectern. He picks up the cards and begins rearranging them with one hand while the other hand is gripped tightly to his injured head.)*

Oh, God, I think I'm bleeding...

*(DONNA darts from her seat and heads toward JOHN. She is halfway to there when he waves her off. Slowly she returns to her seat.)*

I'm okay...all right...*(composing himself)* I want to thank you all for coming out today...A professor I had in college told me one time you should always open up a speech like this with a joke...so, here goes...what do you call a thousand politicians at the bottom of the Ohio River...a good start...a good...start...

*(JOHN stands speechless with the appearance of a deer caught in headlights. Lights down on him and up on the other lectern. This time it is MARCUS delivering a fiery and passionate speech.)*

**MARCUS:** You want to be represented by someone like yourselves. A person with good old fashioned Kentucky values. You want a man that will stand up for your right to own a gun. You want a man that will fight for your children's right to pray in school. You want a man endorsed glowingly by the Right to Life movement. I'm that man! Smaller government, that's the key, smaller government. I'm the man for the job. Together we can! My name is Marcus Woodard and I want to be your next state senator from the fifty seventh district of the great state of Kentucky. Thank you for coming out today, ladies and gentleman. God bless you.

*(The lights dim on MARCUS and rise again on JOHN. His rally is over and he stands at the lectern. He is disheartened. DONNA sits next to him with her head in her hands. Silence as JOHN flips through his note cards.)*

**JOHN:** I don't think it went that bad. Do you? *(No response.)* Donna? I'm going to take the joke out.

*(Long pause.)*

Oh, come on, it started out kind of rough, but I think I was getting a lot of momentum there at the end, don't you?

**DONNA:** You called them 'old people.'

**JOHN:** What?

**DONNA:** "the importance of a prescription drug plan for old people." Not seniors, or senior citizens, or our maturing American population. Old people.

**JOHN:** I did that?

**DONNA:** You did.

*(Pause.)*

**JOHN:** But other than that it went pretty good, right?

**DONNA:** Yes, John, other than dropping your note cards and cigarettes, using extensive profanity, cracking your head open on the corner of the podium, telling that awful joke, calling them old people and debating with the VFW over whether or not we should have been in 'Nam in the first place, I thought it went fine.

**JOHN:** That sounds pretty bad.

**DONNA:** You should have seen it from out there.

**JOHN:** Don't look so down. Things will turn around. I promise.

**DONNA:** I got involved with this campaign because I thought you were different. I thought, here's this young guy with a lot of enthusiasm and good ideas, and he's not like all of those other politicians I grew up hating. I don't see that guy anymore. I haven't for a while now. I don't know what to think.

**JOHN:** Hey, hey, Donna, I need your help. I need somebody to believe in me...

**DONNA:** You're falling apart. Find someone else to believe in you John.

*(She begins to exit.)*

**JOHN:** Wait, don't run off. Let's go get a bite to eat.

**DONNA:** I have class. I'll see you later.

**JOHN:** Donna...Donna...we're still on for tomorrow, right?

**DONNA:** Don't forget to meet your dad.

*(She exits and JOHN is left alone onstage. Lights fade on him and laughter is heard coming from another area of the stage. As the lights rise MARCUS is chatting with CHARLIE BLEVINS, a dignified man in his mid-sixties. They are sitting in Marcus' office, an untidy little place with files and newspapers tossed everywhere.)*

**MARCUS:** It's good to sit down with you like this. We don't see nearly enough of each other Charlie. It's been too long. I miss those old days.

**CHARLIE:** I don't. I've never been happier in my life. You know what I did today?

**MARCUS:** What?

**CHARLIE:** Not a god-damned thing.

**MARCUS:** That doesn't sound like Charlie Blevins.

**CHARLIE:** Oh, I might go fishing on the weekends or read a good book. I watch a lot of television. It's great. I don't have to be anywhere. I don't have appointments I can't keep with people I don't like. I don't envy you one bit.

*(JOHN appears.)*

John, my boy! Come on in and join the conversation.

**JOHN:** *(reluctant)* Hi, dad.

**CHARLIE:** I was just telling Marcus about the joys of retirement.

**JOHN:** I would have knocked but the door was wide open.

**CHARLIE:** We left it open for you. We weren't sure you'd be able to find the place.

**JOHN:** Yeah, I didn't even know they had offices above the 'We'll cash your check and hold it up to three weeks' place.

**MARCUS:** It beats the backseat of a Chevy Cavalier.

**CHARLIE:** Have a seat son.

*(JOHN and MARCUS stare each other down for a moment, and then JOHN has a seat next to him. There is a long silence and tension between the three.)*

Well, there's no reason to make small talk. The two of you have plenty of work to do. I won't keep you long. I'm glad you could both come on such short notice. I don't need to explain what an important day this is and what a difficult decision I have to make...

*(CHARLIE stops mid-sentence, pauses, and then leans in close. His voice takes on a starkly more serious tone.)*

You both make me want to puke.

*(Both men seem shocked. Pause.)*

**JOHN:** Excuse me?

**CHARLIE:** Look at you both. John, you look like you slept one off in your car last night, and if anything I hear about you is true you probably did. And Marcus you look and sound like a pathetic used car salesman. Is this the future of American politics? You both make me sick.

**MARCUS:** Is...is this about the endorsement, Charlie?

**CHARLIE:** Shut up! You don't deserve my endorsement. And you *(indicating JOHN)* can wipe that smirk off your face because you're not getting it either. My own flesh and blood is a damn Democrat. Do you know how embarrassing that is to me? *(CHARLIE takes a moment to compose himself)* I think you've both lost sight of something. What is the reason you want to serve the public? And don't give me your manufactured horse-shit response that you use on stage. I want to know why you got into this in the first place?

*(No response.)*

It's not all about winning and losing. It's not about coming up with the best one liner about the other guy. It's about the people, boys. Do you remember them? Neither one of you could give two shits about the people. John, I can't figure out for the life of me how you're even in this race.

*(JOHN fumbles in his pockets and retrieves a pack of cigarettes.)*

Put those away!

*(JOHN hurriedly attempts to get rid of them. He accidentally drops the entire pack on the floor. CHARLIE rolls his eyes in frustration.)*

**MARCUS:** How the hell could you not endorse me? All these years I've busted my ass for you and for the party and this is the thanks...

*(CHARLIE gives him a look that stops him dead in his tracks.)*

**CHARLIE:** Here's the deal. You both want my endorsement. Well, you're going to have to earn it and do exactly as I say. Do you understand?

**JOHN & MARCUS:** Sure. Yeah. Anything you say.

**CHARLIE:** Back in my day, I got along with my fellow man. I'm not just talking about the constituents. I'm talking about the guys on the other team – the Democrats. We worked together. We compromised. Together we came up with common sense solutions that worked for the good of the people. Today, politics is such a cesspool of corruption and lies that people don't want anything to do with it. It's pathetic. And the two of you are perfect examples of the problem. You're making a mockery out of the system. So, I have a plan.

*(CHARLIE opens a briefcase and pulls out several folders. He lays them down on the desk and leafs through them as he addresses the men.)*

For the next twenty days, the two of you are going to pool all of your expenses and travel together. I want you both out there in the counties, staging your rallies and meeting the people you want to represent, but you're going to do it together. That's the condition. John, you'll drive. Marcus, you can take care of the hotels. You both split food.

*(Pause. MARCUS bursts out laughing. JOHN is too shocked to move. CHARLIE remains stone-faced. As MARCUS slowly realizes that CHARLIE is serious, the laughing dissipates and his expression turns to horror.)*

**MARCUS:** Are you insane?

**JOHN:** You can't be serious...

**MARCUS:** If you think that I'm going to travel with this...

**JOHN:** There is no way in hell...

**CHARLIE:** You'll do it! John, you can't afford to go out there any other way and you need the votes. Marcus...you get a driver.

**JOHN:** Oh my God!

**CHARLIE:** And you both need my endorsement.

*(CHARLIE again reaches into his briefcase pulls out two more folders and tosses one to each of the men.)*

I've checked your schedules and the plan fits just perfectly with each of your appearances. I double checked to be positive. This is your itinerary. You'll follow it to every specification. I'm warning you now. I'm going to have people watching you and making sure that you're both behaving yourself and sticking to the guidelines I've detailed in those folders. When you get back, I'll decide which one of you has best learned the most valuable lesson of all and I'll hand out my sponsorship accordingly. That candidate will undoubtedly win the election next month, so don't take this lightly. I would ask if you have any questions, but frankly, I don't give a shit if you do or not. You'll figure it out. Now go home and get your stuff packed. You leave tomorrow.

**JOHN:** No! There's no way I'm going through with this.

*(CHARLIE walks out of the room, ignoring his son.)*

**MARCUS:** *(yelling after CHARLIE)* This is bullshit, Charlie. You have completely lost your mind. I won't do it!

*(JOHN and CHARLIE are left in the room alone together. They are both speechless. Long silence.)*

What are you looking at me for? He's your old man.

**JOHN:** Me? You know him a lot better than I do. The two of you practically grew up together. What is he thinking?

**MARCUS:** Yeah, and what was all that he said about the two of us not caring about the people...

**JOHN:** And politics being a cesspool?

*(Long Pause.)*

**MARCUS:** *(teasing)* It would be nice to have a driver, though.

**JOHN:** Don't even think about it. If I thought I had to spend ten minutes alone in a car with you I'd blow my head off. When I think what three weeks would be like...

**MARCUS:** I'm not exactly your biggest fan either you know...

**JOHN:** Well, that settles it...

**MARCUS:** We don't need his endorsement.

**JOHN:** Fuck him!

**MARCUS:** I could spend the next twenty days in Cancun and still beat you...

**JOHN:** I'm going to go talk to him and get this straightened out.

**MARCUS:** You do that.

*(JOHN bolts out of the room. MARCUS is left alone onstage. He is motionless for a few moments and then becomes irate and begins throwing a tantrum. He knocks over a large stack of files from his desk to the floor and then begins to throw papers, pencils, anything he can grab. He is angered beyond the point of controlling himself. Blackout. The lights rise and reveal a cheap, peach decorated hotel room center stage. There is one queen-sized bed, two end tables*

*each with a small lamp, and a mini-fridge. JOHN enters the room, suitcase in hand. He is tired and frustrated. He notices the bed and freezes. MARCUS enters behind with luggage. He looks around the room, disgusted. He walks around JOHN and flops his luggage on the bed. Silence. MARCUS is staring at JOHN, who remains standing, motionless, glaring at the bed.)*

**MARCUS:** What's wrong with you?

**JOHN:** Is this the only bed?

**MARCUS:** Yeah...

**JOHN:** Well, this is awkward.

**MARCUS:** It's all they had left.

*(They are both silent. They look at the bed, then each other.)*

Oh hell, it's a big bed. We'll...

**JOHN:** We'll what?

**MARCUS:** Well, you know...we'll share it.

**JOHN:** We will?

**MARCUS:** It's all they had left!

**JOHN:** I'm sorry, I must be going fucking insane. I'm in a hotel room in the middle of Mason County with Marcus Woodard, and I could swear that he just told me we were going to be sleeping together.

**MARCUS:** What the hell was I supposed to do? This is the only hotel in Maysville.

**JOHN:** We'll share it. That makes perfect sense.

**MARCUS:** Sure.

**JOHN:** Even in my worst nightmares...



**MARCUS:** Give it a rest! We'll get another room tomorrow. It's late and I'm too tired...

**JOHN:** You're tired?

**MARCUS:** I'm exhausted.

**JOHN:** You slept the whole way.

**MARCUS:** No! I only pretended to sleep so I wouldn't have to talk to you and listen to you go on and on and on...the next three weeks are going to be long enough without...

**JOHN:** You pretended to sleep so you wouldn't have to drive!

**MARCUS:** That's a damn lie!

**JOHN:** I'm not doing all of the driving on this trip...

**MARCUS:** You drive. That's the deal. You drive and I take care of the hotels. You tell me who's getting the short end of the stick? You start paying up for some of the hotels and then maybe I'll do some of the driving...

**JOHN:** This is fine hotel, Marcus. How much is it setting you back? Thirty-five bucks?

**MARCUS:** What do you recommend we do? Do you want to sleep in the car?

**JOHN:** Let me see, would I rather share this room with you or sleep in the car? That's a tough one...

**MARCUS:** Be my guest. I don't care what you do.

**JOHN:** If you had any balls, you would have told my dad what he could do with his deal...

**MARCUS:** You'd like that, wouldn't you? Where were your balls that day? You're here with me. What does that say about you?

*(Long pause. JOHN sits on the bed, with his head in his hands.)*

Who are we kidding? Neither one of us have much room to bargain.  
(Pause) How much you getting from the DNC? (No response) I'll tell if you do.

**JOHN:** (*hesitant*) Not a damn thing. All the money has gone into Gore and the race in Franklin. I'm not a high priority. They're expecting you to win.

**MARCUS:** That's nice.

**JOHN:** What about you?

**MARCUS:** What?

**JOHN:** How much?

**MARCUS:** I don't feel comfortable discussing it.

**JOHN:** You asshole!

**MARCUS:** All right, all right. Nothing. They don't think I need any help to beat you. I've got some private money but nothing from the party.

**JOHN:** You're kidding?

(*MARCUS doesn't answer. He is eyeing JOHN.*)

**MARCUS:** You don't want that side, do you?

**JOHN:** (*defiantly*) Yes. I want this side. Why?

**MARCUS:** It's just that...

**JOHN:** What?

**MARCUS:** I'd like the side closer to the bathroom. I have problems with...

(*JOHN laughs.*)

You little...

**JOHN:** Take it, take it, take it. I don't want you pissing on me in the middle of the night.

*(JOHN re-positions himself on the other side of the bed. He takes his shoes off, and then opens his suitcase and begins rooting through his clothes. MARCUS places his luggage on the opposite end of the bed. He opens it and retrieves a pint of Maker's Mark whiskey, a glass, and a two liter bottle of Coke.)*

Well, well, well, did you bring any clothes on the trip?

**MARCUS:** Shut up! I don't drown myself in the stuff.

**JOHN:** I never touch it.

*(MARCUS scoffs at the remark. He places the items on the end table and begins to fix himself a drink.)*

Are you sure you're secure enough in your masculinity to share a bed with me, Marcus?

**MARCUS:** I don't want to think about it.

*(Silence. Both men are sitting on opposite sides of the bed, JOHN going through his suitcase and MARCUS fixing his drink. MARCUS looks over his shoulder at JOHN.)*

Hey...

**JOHN:** What?

*(Pause.)*

**MARCUS:** I guess we have to make the best of this.

**JOHN:** It looks that way.

*(Pause.)*

**MARCUS:** You want one?

**JOHN:** One what?

**MARCUS:** A drink! I'm offering you a drink.

**JOHN:** Well, usually I wouldn't, but, sure. Why not?

*(MARCUS hands him a glass.)*

**MARCUS:** Here you go...

*(He holds his own glass in the air.)*

Here's to your crazy old man!

**JOHN:** Here, here!

*(They toast glasses. MARCUS begins to take a drink, but JOHN stops him.)*

Here's to our...pact, if you will...and may the best man win.

**MARCUS:** Damn right!

*(Both men stare each other down, clink their glasses together, and then take a long, slow drink. Each man chugs the entire drink while peeking at the other. Neither one wants to be the first to quit. Lights fade on the room. Blackout. Lights come up on a bare center stage. It is the next morning. FAITH CARSON, 24, enters. She is a small town country girl with a big city attitude. She wears a waitress outfit. She addresses someone in the distance.)*

**FAITH:** *(yelling)* I'll be right back...I'm taking my break. Yes, I'm going somewhere else. It's bad enough I have to serve the food. You're not going to make me eat it... don't shush me!

*(As she crosses the stage, JOHN bursts onto the scene, panicked. He has the look of a man that has been dressing hurriedly. He ties his tie and pays no attention to where he is going when he slams directly into FAITH, knocking her to the ground. JOHN almost falls, but he is able to compose himself.)*

**JOHN:** Oh, God! I'm so sorry...

**FAITH:** Jerk!

**JOHN:** No, no. Let me help you up.

*(JOHN leans down to help, but she disregards him and rises on her own.)*

I'm sorry.

**FAITH:** You should pay more attention to where you're going.

**JOHN:** I know. You're right. I wasn't looking. I woke up late. My alarm didn't go off and I'm supposed to be somewhere...soon.

*(FAITH ignores him, instead examining her dress. She notices a large tear. JOHN notices it too.)*

**FAITH:** I just bought this dress, asshole.

**JOHN:** I'll make it up to you. I'll buy you a new one. It's such a nice...dress.

**FAITH:** It is not. It's my waitress uniform. You can stop trying to flatter...

*(JOHN reaches into his pocket and grabs one of his business cards. He hands it to her.)*

**JOHN:** Here, this is my card. It has a number that I can be reached...well, not really...sometimes I can be reached there. You know, I'm staying here for a few days, and I'm going to be in and out of Maysville campaigning for the next few weeks...

**FAITH:** *(reading the card)* Democrat for State Senate?

**JOHN:** I'm John Blevins.

*(He extends a hand. She stares at him blankly for a moment and he puts it away realizing the gesture will not be returned.)*

**FAITH:** *(sarcastically)* Well, it's a pleasure.

*(She walks past him examining the rip in her dress and starts to exit. He jumps in front of her.)*

**JOHN:** And you are?

**FAITH:** I'm Faith.

**JOHN:** I hope you don't hold this against me on Election Day.

**FAITH:** I thought you were late.

**JOHN:** Let me make it up to you. I'll take you out to dinner.

**FAITH:** *(offended)* Are you hitting on me?

**JOHN:** No!

**FAITH:** Is this what you do? You run down a lady on the street so you can ask her out to dinner. Get away from me.

*(She brushes past him a second time, only now, he let's her go.)*

**JOHN:** *(yelling after her)* Could you at least tell me how to get to the War Memorial? Please?

**FAITH:** *(stopping and turning)* Run that way about four blocks, take a left, go up the hill, and the War Memorial is in Armco Park, on you're right.

**JOHN:** Up the hill?

**FAITH:** Yeah?

**JOHN:** How far up the hill?

*(FAITH turns for the last time and walks away.)*

**FAITH:** Watch where you're going!

**JOHN:** Three blocks...four blocks...left...up the hill...right...

*(JOHN looks at his watch and then bolts down the street and off the stage. Lights fade center stage and rise on Marcus' lectern. MARCUS speaks to his crowd in the manner of a spirited and fervent evangelist.)*

**MARCUS:** My opponent doesn't believe your children should be allowed to pray in school. If it were up to John Blevins, God and the Ten Commandments would be expelled from every public school in the state of Kentucky. *(He leans in locking eyes with the audience.)* I support your

child's right to pray. *(applause and cheering)* I do. My opponent will not decry the unborn baby holocaust the way I have. He calls the woman's right to kill her baby a choice. I have been endorsed by the Right to Life movement. He supports the rights of homosexual marriage. I can't believe it either. Do you want an ungodly man like that as your next representative in the State Senate? Or do you want a man of integrity and fairness? You need a man that stands for good old fashioned Kentucky values. I'm Marcus Woodard and I want to be your next State Senator. Together we can!

*(Lights down on MARCUS and up on a lectern. JOHN bursts onto the scene and approaches the lectern, panting and out of breath.)*

**JOHN:** I'm...I'm sorry...I'm sorry I'm late. *(composing himself)* It's good to be back in Maysville. I'm sorry I'm late...but that's a really big hill. You see, I got up this morning and thought I would take a little walk around this beautiful city and I got lost in the wonder and beauty of it...I kind of lost track of time.

*(JOHN reaches into his pocket and a panic expression takes over. He roots around in the pocket vigorously, but there are no note cards to be found.)*

Well, well, well. I'm glad to see you all here today. As I look at all of your faces...I am reminded of what strong and vibrant...senior citizens...make up the Eastern Kentucky landscape. I want to talk to you today about something that will be very important to each and every one of you...drugs...no, no...prescription drugs...health care and a prescription drug plan, Social Security...and many of you have requested action against the smoking ban that will go into effect next year...I'm here for you!

*(Lights down on JOHN and up on Earl's Diner, consisting of a table and two chairs. MARCUS sits at one of the chairs, his head buried in a menu. FAITH appears to take his order.)*

**FAITH:** Can I help you?

**MARCUS:** *(without acknowledging her)* Coffee. Black.

*(FAITH leaves. MARCUS places his menu down and picks up a newspaper, which he skims. Momentarily, FAITH returns with a cup of coffee.)*

That was quick...*(looking up at her)*...Well, well...excuse me. You'll have to pardon my manners. If I'd realized that such a beautiful young lady was waiting on me...

**FAITH:** Save it.

**MARCUS:** Oh, come on, it was a perfectly innocent observation.

**FAITH:** You know what you want to eat?

**MARCUS:** What do you recommend?

**FAITH:** I recommend that you take that menu and...

*(JOHN appears in the audience, walking up the aisle to the stage.)*

**JOHN:** You son of a bitch!

**MARCUS:** Oh, God, what now?

**FAITH:** You know him?

**MARCUS:** Sort of.

*(JOHN is on stage now. He confronts MARCUS at the table.)*

**JOHN:** You son of a...

**MARCUS:** Calm down! What the hell has got into you?

**JOHN:** I was late for my rally today because my alarm clock didn't go off. You wouldn't know anything about that, would you?

**MARCUS:** What are you implying?

**FAITH:** Ah-hem.

**JOHN:** *(noticing FAITH)* Ohhh...hi.

**FAITH:** *(sarcastic)* Hi! How was your day?

**JOHN:** Well, thanks for...



**FAITH:** Why don't the two of you work this out and decide what you want to eat. I'll be back.

*(FAITH leaves.)*

**MARCUS:** You know her?

**JOHN:** We ran into each other this morning just before I was a half hour late for my rally, thanks to you...

**MARCUS:** I don't have the slightest idea...

**JOHN:** Oh, don't give me that. My note cards were missing all of the sudden. I keep them in my right pocket all the time. I didn't realize they were gone until I was on stage...

*(MARCUS laughs.)*

I don't suppose you know anything about them, either.

**MARCUS:** I think it was that girl that was helping you...

**JOHN:** Donna?

**MARCUS:** Yeah...I think it was her that made sure they were in your pocket. You're lost without her, aren't you?

**JOHN:** She left.

**MARCUS:** No shit. That's a surprise.

**JOHN:** Stop! Don't change the subject.

**MARCUS:** Why would I sabotage you? Come on, John, note cards, alarm clock? That's petty stuff. I'm kicking your ass. And I decided something today. You don't bother me anymore. And this arrangement we have doesn't bother me either. It's just going to make me a better man and a better public servant...like all that stuff your dad said...

**JOHN:** You're so full of...

*(FAITH returns.)*

**FAITH:** Okay, third time's the charm.

**JOHN:** I can't apologize enough for this morning.

**FAITH:** Don't worry about it.

**JOHN:** Just give me a fruit salad.

**FAITH:** *(turning to MARCUS)* And you?

**MARCUS:** I think my boy is watching his weight. I'll have the sixteen ounce steak special.

**FAITH:** All right, that's one fat boy, and one fruit.

*(FAITH leaves.)*

**JOHN:** Isn't she something?

**MARCUS:** Huh? Oh, yeah. You should have seen the way she was coming on to me before you got here and screwed it all up.

**JOHN:** Yeah, right.

**MARCUS:** She was.

**JOHN:** I'll bet she was.

**MARCUS:** She was. I think she's into older guys. Too bad for you.

**JOHN:** You didn't see the way she was looking at me this morning. There was definitely a connection. Watch this. Faith!

**MARCUS:** Don't make an ass out of yourself...

*(FAITH re-enters)*

**FAITH:** Yes?

**JOHN:** Umm, could I get a water...too...with the salad.

**FAITH:** Sure. Anything else for our next State Senator?

**MARCUS:** *(staggered)* Wait a minute. Don't jump to any conclusions, sweetheart. I'm his opponent, Marcus Woodard...*(He hands her a card.)*...returning good old fashioned values to politics.

**FAITH:** *(mocking)* Oh, that's nice. *(to JOHN)* What's your angle?

**JOHN:** Are you seeing anyone?

**FAITH:** That's good, but I still don't know who to vote for.

**MARCUS:** You're undecided?

**FAITH:** You could say that.

**JOHN:** This is great. Why don't you come to Morgan County tomorrow? I'm giving a speech at the Democratic Women's Club...

**MARCUS:** I hate to interrupt, but Faith would probably be more interested in hearing me speak at the Chamber of Commerce tomorrow. There will be a lot of important people there. You wouldn't even have to leave Maysville. Can you break free of this place tomorrow?

**FAITH:** Thanks, boys, but I'm not really into politics. If you'll excuse me, I'm going to check on your food.

*(FAITH leaves. There is a long pause as JOHN and MARCUS watch her walk away. They look at each other in disbelief.)*

**MARCUS:** What did she say?

**JOHN:** She's not into politics?

**MARCUS:** Bitch. She's probably one of those pinko-socialist Femi-Nazi's. Maybe she is your type.

**JOHN:** Watch it!

**MARCUS:** Shut up!

**JOHN:** *(looks at his watch)* Shit!

*(JOHN leaps out of his seat.)*

**MARCUS:** What got into you?

**JOHN:** I have to go. I forgot...*(addressing FAITH, who has appeared at the table to refill Marcus's coffee)* Faith!

**FAITH:** Yeah.

**JOHN:** I have to go.

**FAITH:** *(with feigned pity)* Ohhh.

**JOHN:** Could I talk to you...over here...for a moment.

**FAITH:** Sure.

*(She follows him a few steps away from the table.)*

**JOHN:** I have to go. I'm sorry. Could you cancel the fruit?

**FAITH:** No problem.

*(She starts to walk away, but JOHN stops her. He pulls a crumpled flyer out of his pocket and hands it to her.)*

**JOHN:** Wait. I know you're not into politics. This is the rally I was telling you about...maybe if you're not doing anything...I have to go. You know, I'll also be speaking at the Women's Club here in Maysville next Thursday, and at a rally in the park on...

**FAITH:** I'll keep that in mind.

**JOHN:** Well...goodbye.

*(JOHN exits.)*

**FAITH:** *(to herself)* Goodbye, weirdo.

**MARCUS:** Excuse me!

**FAITH:** *(returning to the table)* Yes.

**MARCUS:** If you don't mind could I get some more coffee.

**FAITH:** *(refilling his glass)* Your steak will be out in just a minute.

**MARCUS:** You should sit down and get some rest. I hate to eat alone, and it's emptying out here anyway. What do you think?

**FAITH:** I think you should stop looking at me like that. I'm not on the menu.

*(FAITH walks away, and MARCUS is left at the table alone. He scoffs at her remark, and returns to reading the newspaper. Blackout. Lights up on JOHN's lectern. He is performing slightly better than in the past. He appears a bit more comfortable.)*

**JOHN:** ...at the bottom of the Ohio River? A good start. Thank you. What a great audience. My name is John Blevins. Many of you know that name because of my father, Charlie Blevins. He is a good man, a kind father and a spectacular politician. Some of you that supported him, and many that rallied against him, might be hesitant of voting for me because of my last name. Some people have told me that they're not exactly sure what I stand for...surely a son of Charlie Blevins isn't running as a Democrat. Well...while I look up to my old man, I do differ with him on policy. I assure you that I am my own man, and I do stand for something. I stand for Kentucky! I've been out here for the past week and I've met so many great people, and I've enjoyed living among the beautiful hills of these counties. I hope I can count on you for your vote next month. When my father endorses me in a couple of weeks, look upon that as a vote of confidence in a politician that will not play partisan games. Look at me as a man that will work with Republicans and Democrats alike to better this great state of ours. I stand here for the working man. I want to be your next State Senator for the fifty...seventh district. Don't believe the lies that my opponent...

*(Lights fade on JOHN mid-speech and rise on MARCUS behind his lectern.)*

**MARCUS:** This is a man who openly admits to smoking pot in college. He'll tell you straight to your face that he's for the working man, but to my knowledge he's never had a real job in his life. He's been spoiled by the good life that his daddy's money afforded him. I don't mean to speak disparagingly of the Blevins family. Charlie Blevins was one of our greatest Congressmen. But John Blevins is no Charlie Blevins. I know. I have spent a great deal of time with both of them, and they are as different

as night and day. John Blevins is an immoral man and he doesn't represent the average everyday Kentuckian the way I do. I see great days in our future, my fellow Kentuckians, and I want to lead the way to prosperity. I'll do that for you if you give me your vote on November seventh. Together we can!

*(Blackout. Lights up on hotel room. MARCUS sits in bed reading a newspaper. JOHN enters whistling.)*

**MARCUS:** You're in a good mood.

**JOHN:** What?

**MARCUS:** You get laid?

**JOHN:** Marcus, I'm not going to let you ruin this.

**MARCUS:** Ah-hah. Who was it?

**JOHN:** I did not get laid. That's exactly what I would expect someone like you to say...

**MARCUS:** Someone like me? Well, aren't you high and mighty?

**JOHN:** I've had a good day, and you can't spoil it.

**MARCUS:** You wanna bet? *(indicating the newspaper)* Look at these numbers.

**JOHN:** I don't care. I finally feel like I'm in this thing. I'm connecting with people.

**MARCUS:** *(laughing)* According to this, you're still connecting with nine percent less people than I am.

**JOHN:** Fuck off.

**MARCUS:** Oh, did I spoil your good day.

*(Silence.)*

Where were you? Did you have that women's dinner, or what?

**JOHN:** The Democratic Women's Club...

**MARCUS:** Whatever...

**JOHN:** Guess who was there.

**MARCUS:** A bunch of withered up old hags?

**JOHN:** Very funny.

**MARCUS:** Well?

**JOHN:** Faith.

**MARCUS:** That broad from the diner?

**JOHN:** Yep.

**MARCUS:** I passed her on the street in the pro-life parade two days ago. She flipped me off. Bitch!

**JOHN:** I looked out across a room of hundreds of eager supporters...

**MARCUS:** Hundreds, huh?

**JOHN:** ...and I saw her at the back of the room. Our eyes connected for just a moment. By the time I worked my way back there, she was gone. I knew that she liked me. There was something about that night at the diner. I stopped there this evening, but she wasn't working.

**MARCUS:** I hate to burst your bubble, but Faith was at my rally tonight. She was wearing a tight blue dress. You couldn't miss her. I took her out for a drink afterward. She wasn't working because she was with me.

**JOHN:** You liar.

**MARCUS:** No, I mean it.

**JOHN:** She wouldn't go out with you.

**MARCUS:** She did. I told her I saw her flip me off the other day, and she apologized... said it was all a misunderstanding.

**JOHN:** Bullshit.

**MARCUS:** Are you drunk?

**JOHN:** No!

**MARCUS:** You smell like...

**JOHN:** I am not drunk.

**MARCUS:** Where have you been?

**JOHN:** Nowhere.

**MARCUS:** Bullshit. You smell like whiskey and cigar smoke.

**JOHN:** Hey, if you want to meet the constituents you have to cover all the bases. I got a lot of votes tonight playing pool down at The Mediterranean.

**MARCUS:** The Mediterranean? That's a half hour away.

**JOHN:** Something like that.

**MARCUS:** Well, I would have liked to go. Did you ever think about that?

**JOHN:** No I didn't.

**MARCUS:** I'm stuck in this hotel all damn night, and you're out...

**JOHN:** Are you crazy?

**MARCUS:** I'm calling Charlie...

**JOHN:** Marcus, go fuck yourself.

**MARCUS:** (*getting out of bed*) I'm going out for a walk. I can't stand to be alone with you. This is driving me...

**JOHN:** A few days ago you said this arrangement didn't bother you anymore. You said, (*mockingly*) "it's just going to make me a better man and a better public servant."

**MARCUS:** Go to hell!



**JOHN:** Oh, did I ruin your good mood?

*(MARCUS begins to leave as JOHN rolls over in bed to go to sleep. MARCUS carefully and delicately steps back toward the bed, stops at the end table on JOHN's side, takes his alarm clock in his hand, and turns off the alarm.)*

**MARCUS:** *(to himself)* I'd hate it if you over slept tomorrow.

**JOHN:** Did you say something?

**MARCUS:** No.

*(Blackout. Lights up on the diner. MARCUS and JOHN are seated at the table having dinner.)*

**JOHN:** These people need good jobs. They want their kids to go to good schools. That's what's important to them...

**MARCUS:** Jesus, haven't I taught you anything. People don't care about jobs and schools. Not here. That's big city stuff.

**JOHN:** I can't believe I even agreed to meet you here. I can't talk sensibly to you...

**MARCUS:** Three things. They care about three things and three things only: guns, abortion, and prayer in schools.

**JOHN:** I don't want to talk about this anymore.

**MARCUS:** Of course you don't. You know that you're wrong.

**JOHN:** And what are the chances of us getting a room with two beds in it? Would that be too much to ask? You said one night. Tonight will make nine. I'm beginning to think you like...

**MARCUS:** I told you I'm working on it...

**JOHN:** You're working on saving as much money as you can...

**MARCUS:** We're in Olive Hill tomorrow. I have two separate rooms booked. Are you happy now?

**JOHN:** Yes. Thank you.

**MARCUS:** Three things, John.

**JOHN:** Oh, God.

**MARCUS:** No, make that four.

**JOHN:** This should be good.

**MARCUS:** Character. They want a man of good moral fiber.

**JOHN:** I don't whether to laugh or vomit.

**MARCUS:** I represent the people. I don't want to change them into something that they're not.

*(FAITH enters. She is not wearing her waitress outfit. She is dressed in jeans and a t-shirt. She walks briskly past the table pretending not to notice the men.)*

**JOHN:** Faith!

**FAITH:** *(disappointed at being noticed)* Oh, hi. Well, what are the chances...

**MARCUS:** There's not a lot of restaurants in town, you know.

**JOHN:** You're not working tonight.

**FAITH:** I came in to get my check. It was nice seeing...

**JOHN:** Can we ask you a few questions?

**MARCUS:** What are you doing?

**JOHN:** Just a few questions? Hear me out.

**FAITH:** *(hesitant)* Okay, why not?

**JOHN:** Great.

**FAITH:** If either of you ask me out, I'm leaving.

**JOHN:** Faith, as a resident of these fine hills...

**FAITH:** Yes.

**JOHN:** What are you most concerned about from your government?

**FAITH:** Oh, God.

**MARCUS:** Why are you doing this?

**JOHN:** I'm proving a point.

**FAITH:** Okay, I'll play along. What do I want from the government? *(Pause.)* Well, I guess you could say I don't want a damn thing from the government. I want you all to stay as far out of my life as possible.

**MARCUS:** There you go! Smaller government. That's the fifth thing. I was just about to mention that when you came along.

**FAITH:** No, Marcus. Staying out of my life includes staying away from my body and minding your own business concerning any decisions I make about what I do with it. It includes keeping your nose out of my private affairs. It includes minding your own business if I want to smoke a joint after work...

**JOHN:** See! I like the sound of this. Keep talking. Tell him how it is.

**FAITH:** *(to JOHN)* It also includes having some of my paycheck left after some fat cat Democrat has raised taxes again.

*(MARCUS laughs.)*

**MARCUS:** This is fun. This is the first good idea you've had, boy. Okay, my turn. I have a question.

**FAITH:** I really don't feel like discussing this anymore. Do you know why? Neither one of you is really interested in the answers I have to your questions. It's both of your pathetic attempts to engage someone else in a conversation on your favorite topic – yourselves. Don't you ever talk about anything else? When was the last time you went to the movies?

*(Silence. JOHN and MARCUS look at one another and shrug.)*

That's what I thought. A concert? A play? A baseball game? Not to be seen shaking hands and kissing babies, but just to sit back and relax.

*(No answer.)*

When was the last time either of you were doing anything other than promoting yourselves and your agenda? You are supposed to represent the people, but you're really not anything like the people. You'll spend your entire lives crammed into little offices, poring through documents, or better yet, having someone do it for you, making decisions that will affect the people that you represent. And at the end of the day, it doesn't really matter whether it's a positive or negative affect. What really matters is to try to get it all done by five o'clock so you can hit the bar in time for happy hour and flirt with the cute young interns. And why do you do it? Because you love the power. You love the feeling of being important. You live off the excitement of beating the other fucking political party like you were playing a goddamned football game or something and don't even get me started on the homosexual overtones in that. Then, every couple of years you'll come back out here and try to convince all of us dumb country bumpkins that you've done great things for the state of Kentucky, especially our part of the state, but you can do so much more if we just give you two more years. And then, of course, after you win we'll never see you again. You two are no different. And you wonder why people don't vote. You wonder why we hate politicians? Well, there you go. I hope that answers any subsequent questions you may have had.

*(Silence.)*

What do you know? You're both speechless. If anyone had told me it would have been possible in a million years I never would have guessed it. Good night, boys.

*(She starts to exit, then turns to them one last time.)*

And stop sending me gifts, both of you. You don't know anything about women, either.

*(FAITH exits. Long pause. JOHN and MARCUS are completely stone faced.)*

**MARCUS:** Bitch!

**JOHN:** I think I'm in love.

*(Blackout. Lights up on JOHN at his lectern. Standing at his side is BERTIE LOU MULLINS, an elderly woman with a smile on her face and a blank look in her eyes.)*

**BERTIE LOU:** Hello...hello ladies and gentleman. *(She taps the microphone.)* Is this working? *(Pause.)* Can you hear me in the back? In the back? Can you...you can. All right. It's time to get started if you all want to take your seats. *(Pause.)* Wasn't that pot-roast good? I thought it was delicious. Is everyone ready? We have some old business to clear up before we bring out our guest. The Democratic Women's Club is still looking for a new Vice President. If anyone wants to volunteer you just have to see Bertie Lou *(indicating herself)* sometime before November 13. I'm expecting volunteers. Don't make me come after you. *(Pause.)* Can you all hear me? *(Pause.)* Good. I'd also like to thank the good people at Ponderosa for donating this lovely banquet space. They're a good bunch of Democrats, they are. Not like those bastards at Shoney's. We have a real treat in store for you all today and I'm not talking about the cobbler. Our very own Democratic State Senate candidate is with us. He's going to say a few words before we have dessert. Everyone put your hands together and give him a nice warm welcome. Here's John Blevins.

*(BERTIE LOU exits.)*

**JOHN:** It's great to be here in Olive Hill...

*(Lights up on MARCUS, standing at his lectern. The lights remain up on JOHN and he continues to give his speech, though the audience cannot hear him. A voice is heard offstage introducing MARCUS.)*

**VOICE:** Ladies and gentleman put your hands together and welcome your Republican candidate for State Senate, Marcus Woodard!

*(Applause. The following dialogue is spoken with rapid fire enthusiasm, each line almost overlapping the one before.)*

**MARCUS:** Good evening ladies and gentleman. I want to sincerely thank the wonderful citizens of Olive Hill for opening their arms and welcoming me to this fine city...

**JOHN:** I want to begin today by talking about what is important in Eastern Kentucky...

**MARCUS:** In less than two weeks you will go to the polls and vote...

**JOHN:** A vote for John Blevins is a vote for improved health care, a vote for a prescription drug plan for the elderly, a vote...

**MARCUS:** ...for your second amendment rights, a vote against big tax and spend government...

**JOHN:** ...for the future of our youth and finding a way to bring jobs to the area so our young people don't have to leave in droves...

**MARCUS:** ...elect a man of integrity, a man of good moral fiber...

**JOHN:** I'm not sure what his definition of good moral fiber and integrity is ladies and gentleman, but...

**MARCUS:** ...A drunkard, a pothead...

**JOHN:** ...three divorces...

**MARCUS:** ...a man with a bankrupt business in his past...

**JOHN & MARCUS:** ...don't let him fool you...

*(Lights up on FAITH in the diner. She sits with a newspaper open across the table in front of her.)*

**FAITH:** Can you believe this shit?

**MARCUS:** ...with his talk about jobs and education. Ask him specifics about his welfare to work program and increased teacher salaries and see if he has any. Oh, he talks a good game but you want a man with substance behind the talk...

**FAITH:** *(again, directed offstage)* I'm on a break. *(Pause.)* No, I will not come back early.

**JOHN:** Ask him about his voting record with the unions...

**MARCUS:** I worked with Charlie Blevins in the good old days. Some of you probably remember those days. Next week, when Charlie endorses me, I want you to take that as a sign of confidence in Marcus Woodard. Together we can return to those good old days...

**FAITH:** I'm reading the paper. Leave me alone. What am I reading? What am I reading? It may as well be the comics...

**JOHN:** I want to talk to you and I will listen. I will listen to your concerns and I will work with you to find answers.

**FAITH:** Get this Earl, John has been endorsed by the teachers and steel workers...

**MARCUS:** ...and I have the endorsement of the Right to Life Society and the National Rifle Association...

**FAITH:** ...and the tobacco farmers. *(Pause.)* What? *(Pause.)* I'm not going to vote. I just think it's interesting is all. *(Pause.)* Well it is. It's sad all the same, but you've got to admit it's interesting. Who do you think will win?

**JOHN:** My name is John Blevins and I want to be your next State Senator. You and I will present a United Front against our problems and come up with lasting solutions that matter...

**FAITH:** No, I mean if you had to pick one. *(Pause.)* If you absolutely had to pick one who would it be? *(Pause.)* I still have five more minutes, damnit! *(to herself)* God, I hate this place.

**MARCUS:** Together we can! Together we will! Thank you, thank you, thank you.

**JOHN:** Get out and vote November seventh. Talk to your neighbors, your friends, and tell them that a vote for John Blevins is a vote for the prosperity of Eastern Kentucky.

**FAITH:** Earl, I need tomorrow off. *(Pause.)* I have to go somewhere. *(Pause.)* Olive Hill. *(Pause.)* Yes, Olive Hill. *(Pause.)* It's none of your business what for. Cyndi will cover for me.

**MARCUS:** Thank you ladies and gentlemen!

**JOHN:** Thank you all!

**FAITH:** Thanks, Earl.

*(Blackout. Lights up on a different hotel room. It appears the same as before, but now there is a small cot in the room and a television directly in front of the bed. JOHN and MARCUS are both seated on the edge of the bed. They are glaring a television set, laughing. Each man has a drink in hand. They are watching a pornographic movie.)*

**MARCUS:** ...that's Eastern Kentucky for you. Yesterday, I met a guy named Skeeter. Skeeter couldn't read or write, and he damned sure didn't want anything to do with me. I tried to explain the election to him, but he said he don't vote.

**JOHN:** That's a shame.

*(They both burst out laughing. It is apparent that they are very drunk. They stop and watch the movie, stone-faced. The drunken stupor has melted away some of their animosity, if only for the time being.)*

**MARCUS:** She looks like a girl I used to know.

**JOHN:** Really?

**MARCUS:** Melba Fankle. The love of my life.

**JOHN:** You knew a girl that looked like that and her name was Melba Fankle?

**MARCUS:** Yeah.

**JOHN:** *(indicating TV)* Did you ever do that to Melba Fankle?

**MARCUS:** All the time. She was a wildcat.

**JOHN:** You liar.

**MARCUS:** I've been around the block a few times.

**JOHN:** I don't doubt that.



**MARCUS:** Hey, are you sure the names of these movies don't show up on the bill?

**JOHN:** (*laughing*) No, actually they do. I was lying to you earlier when I said that it wouldn't show up. (*He laughs more. MARCUS doesn't.*)

**MARCUS:** (*upset*) What was that?

**JOHN:** (*glaring at TV*) Huh?

**MARCUS:** The bill. What was that you said...

**JOHN:** Oh, come on. It's a joke.

**MARCUS:** A joke.

**JOHN:** Yeah, lighten up.

**MARCUS:** Lighten up! That's easy for you to say. I'm the one that has to go down there in the morning and pay for the damn thing...

**JOHN:** Don't do this, Marcus. We've been getting along so much better than...

**MARCUS:** You've been lying a lot lately, you sleazy little prick...

**JOHN:** (*serious*) Look who's talking...

**MARCUS:** (*belligerent, getting in John's face*) It's two divorces not three, and I don't think my relationship history has anything to do with my stand on family values...

**JOHN:** Get out of my face.

**MARCUS:** Two divorces, not three.

**JOHN:** While we're clearing the air, what the hell does smoking a joint have to do with anything...

**MARCUS:** People should know if they're going to elect a pot-head...

**JOHN:** That was six years ago...

**MARCUS:** Pothead!

**JOHN:** Marcus, knock that shit off. And get out (*pushing him away*) of my face.

**MARCUS:** (*pushing him back*) I can't believe you even brought up my divorces. That's personal you son of a bitch.

**JOHN:** Personal?

**MARCUS:** Yeah!

**JOHN:** Personal? You think I'm the one that's pulled our personal lives into this...

**MARCUS:** Damn right you have, you hypocrite.

*(John darts back to the end table and retrieves a newspaper. He opens it and throws it at Marcus.)*

**JOHN:** No Marcus, "personal" is a campaign ad with a John Blevins cartoon smoking a joint and pick pocketing a group of senior citizens...

**MARCUS:** You deserved it you pinko! It wasn't harsh enough if you ask me.

**JOHN:** (*pointing his index finger into Marcus' chest*) People see through you for the phony you really are. They don't believe this shit.

**MARCUS:** (*pushing John back*) Listen here, boy. I've been easy on you because you're Charlie's son and we're suppose to make it look like we're getting' along fine out here, but you put your hands on me one more time...

**JOHN:** And (*pushing him*) what?

**MARCUS:** Don't make me kick your ass.

**JOHN:** Ohhhh, I'm scared. Don't threaten me again please. I don't want you to kick my...

**MARCUS:** Shut up!

**JOHN:** Fuck you!

*(MARCUS grabs JOHN and gets him in a headlock. JOHN gets out by punching MARCUS hard in the kidneys. Neither man is a good fighter, but they manage to scuffle all around the room. In the process, they break a lamp and a mirror. The fight moves in front of the bed and JOHN is on top of MARCUS, choking him. All of the sudden MARCUS punches him in the stomach and JOHN freezes. He begins to gag and looks like he may puke. He takes his hands off MARCUS, and rises, barreling offstage to the bathroom. MARCUS sits up, touching his hand to his face. His nose is bleeding. JOHN is heard offstage puking. Silence. MARCUS is sitting on the bed with his face in his hands. He looks up. Silence.)*

**MARCUS:** *(to himself)* I'm sorry, kid.

*(JOHN re-enters. He looks sick. He walks through the room and to the cot, ignoring MARCUS. Silence.)*

No, you take the bed tonight. It's your night.

*(JOHN doesn't speak. He simply trades places with MARCUS, and settles into the bed. MARCUS is solemn. He sits on the cot and stares at JOHN in the bed.)*

Barbara used to baby-sit you. You probably don't remember that. I forgot all about it. It was back when the two of us were still...never could have expected this. I'm sorry, John. John...

*(John turns out the one remaining lamp, and the room is dark.)*

I really did turn your alarm off. It was just a joke...like the movie thing...I don't mean to be an asshole. It's just kind of my nature. It runs with the territory. You've got a hell of a mouth on yourself, too, that's for sure. Anyway, my point is...

**JOHN:** Marcus...

**MARCUS:** Yeah.

**JOHN:** Shut up.

**MARCUS:** Okay.

*(Lights out. The sound of an alarm clock is heard. The lights rise on MARCUS asleep on the cot. It is the next morning. He sits up, groggily gets out of bed and walks offstage presumably toward the bathroom. He is gone only an instant when he returns to the room. Confused, he notices that JOHN is not in bed. A note has been left on JOHN's pillow. MARCUS crosses to the bed, picks up the note and reads it. After a few moments, he looks up. He appears sad, but the moment passes and a smile comes over his face. He picks up the phone and begins dialing frantically. )*

**MARCUS:** Charlie Blevins, please...

*(Blackout. Lights up on the diner. JOHN is seated, FAITH standing over him.)*

**FAITH:** I haven't seen much of you lately.

**JOHN:** *(downhearted)* No. We've been out in Morgan County. Spent a bit of time in Elliot, too. I just came back to Maysville to tie up some loose ends at the courthouse. I thought I'd stop in and see if you were working.

**FAITH:** I'm always working.

**JOHN:** Did you miss me?

**FAITH:** It hasn't been quite as exciting without you boys around, that's for sure.

**JOHN:** I can imagine.

**FAITH:** Where is the old guy?

**JOHN:** I don't care.

**FAITH:** It seems like you would know...

**JOHN:** I quit.

**FAITH:** You what?

**JOHN:** I quit the race.

**FAITH:** What the hell are you talking about?

**JOHN:** Faith, everything you said about us was true. I can't stand this anymore.

**FAITH:** So he says nasty things about you. I thought that was what politics is all about.

**JOHN:** He's running an ad in Daily News that shows me with a drink in my hand and my tongue hanging out of my mouth and do you know what it says?

**FAITH:** Don't let this skirt chasing alcoholic get your guns.

**JOHN:** You've seen it.

**FAITH:** It's kind of funny.

**JOHN:** It's humiliating.

**FAITH:** You've said some pretty bad things about him.

**JOHN:** Nothing like that!

**FAITH:** I've been watching the two of you. Don't put on that innocent act for me.

**JOHN:** It's not all Marcus. It's everything about politics. All that stuff you said, and everything my dad said. You were both right. It just took me a while to figure it out. It's all about is winning... and it's not for the people...it's for ourselves or the party or the power or something, but it damn sure isn't for the people.

**FAITH:** I've seen you knocking on doors and talking to people. You got into this because you wanted to help people, same as your dad. Do you deny that?

**JOHN:** I don't know why the hell I got myself into this.

**FAITH:** People out here like you. I'm not sure what it is, but they like you. Sure, you're kind of screwed up but so are they, and you kind of remind them of themselves that way. Listen, I meant everything I said to you and Marcus, but maybe it's time to get someone in office who feels the way you do. Maybe you could change things. Hell, I might even vote for you.

**JOHN:** I don't want to hear that right now, Faith. I'm out. And I don't care if I never see Marcus again.

**FAITH:** Oh, yeah. What are you going to do?

**JOHN:** I don't know. I've always thought about moving to Alaska and working on one of those big boats that they fish on.

**FAITH:** You mean a fishing boat?

**JOHN:** Yeah, a fishing boat.

**FAITH:** Are you sure about this?

**JOHN:** I've never been more sure of anything in my life.

**FAITH:** You really quit?

**JOHN:** I really quit.

*(Blackout. Lights rise on the office. CHARLIE sits at the table scribbling furiously in his checkbook. FAITH enters, tossing her waitress uniform to the floor.)*

**FAITH:** I guess I won't need this anymore.

**CHARLIE:** No, you won't.

**FAITH:** I hate being a waitress, Charlie.

**CHARLIE:** I don't want you to feel unappreciated, Faith. You've done a hell of a job.

**FAITH:** *(sits down)* I don't get it.

**CHARLIE:** What?

**FAITH:** This whole thing. I don't know how you could have expected...you're a Republican. I thought you guys stuck together. Why did you even give John a chance? You could have endorsed Marcus weeks ago.

**CHARLIE:** It's complicated.

**FAITH:** Try me.

**CHARLIE:** I didn't think either one of them...I thought maybe they would learn a lesson...I don't know what I thought. Politics is a lot different today.

**FAITH:** *(disbelieving)* Really?

**CHARLIE:** Maybe it's just me that's different.

**FAITH:** Better late than never.

**CHARLIE:** *(handing her a check)* Congratulations, you've earned it.

**FAITH:** This is more than we agreed on. Not that I'm complaining.

**CHARLIE:** I know the past couple of weeks have been rough. They never suspected, did they?

**FAITH:** Are you kidding?

**CHARLIE:** Perfect woman for the job. I told them. I'll have people watching you and making sure you're behaving yourselves. I should have known it would go in one ear and out the other.

**FAITH:** Are you going to endorse Marcus?

**CHARLIE:** Doesn't matter much what I do now, does it?

**FAITH:** Well, thank you. If you ever need anything, forget you know me, all right?

**CHARLIE:** I appreciate it, Faith.

*(FAITH rises and begins to leave. CHARLIE stops her.)*

He was coming around wasn't he?

**FAITH:** I thought he was beginning to do great. I told him I was even going to vote for him...and I might have. I've never voted. I think you're all a bunch of assholes. I don't know exactly what happened. He didn't fill me in with all the details. It couldn't have been any picnic living with Marcus...

*(At that moment, MARCUS bursts into the room. He struts around, cockily to address CHARLIE, then addresses FAITH.)*

**MARCUS:** I heard my name. Faith. You can't stop thinking about me, can you? It's all right. You don't have to pretend anymore. I know it all. Charlie picked him a perfect spy, didn't you Charlie? I suppose you told him I was on my best behavior, Faith. I hope my continued rejections of the advances you made against me didn't taint your report to Charlie. I had too much work to do fool around...

**FAITH:** Marcus, kiss my fuckin' grits.

**MARCUS:** Right, right. So, Mr. Blevins, I guess you'll be making that endorsement soon. One less candidate to choose from. Hmmm. Who will it be?

*(CHARLIE is unresponsive. FAITH is sneaking out of the room. Silence.)*

Charlie? Oh, I know your endorsement doesn't carry as much weight now as before. That's all right. I know which way you were leaning. You still want to be on board, don't you? The Woodard train is heading for Frankfurt. It would sure look good for you if you were with me. What do you think?

**CHARLIE:** *(coldly)* I'm going to make a speech tomorrow after the debate. You'll know then what I think.

**MARCUS:** All right. Sounds good. Should be some debate, huh?

**CHARLIE:** Should be. I thought it was interesting that you were still going through with it.

**MARCUS:** I never miss an opportunity to speak directly to the people. You know that about me.

*(MARCUS looks around the room. He realizes FAITH is gone.)*

**MARCUS:** Charlie, don't believe a word she says. She had a thing for John. It's natural she's going to take his side. I was a perfect gentleman. I realize now what you were trying to do. Get some of the old Woodard charm to rub off on your boy. It was a good idea. I tried to show him the ropes.



**CHARLIE:** Marcus...

**MARCUS:** He's got some problems, though. He's a good boy, but I think this turned out for the better, don't you? Charlie?

*(Lights out. Patriotic music plays through a brief interlude. Lights rise on MARCUS standing at his lectern. He exudes the triumphant confidence of his upcoming victory. It is the night of the only scheduled debate between candidates and MARCUS is onstage alone. He addresses questions from a MODERATOR that is heard but not seen.)*

That is an excellent question, sir. Perhaps my opponent would like to address that...

*(MARCUS gestures to the empty lectern across the stage. Silence. MARCUS howls with laughter.)*

Maybe not. I no longer have an opponent, do I? I thought there would at least be some crazy Libertarian candidate here.

*(He laughs at his own joke, then pauses, and puts on a serious face.)*

Jobs, jobs, jobs. Together we can bring back jobs to Eastern Kentucky. I'll work for you. Together we can do it. But jobs aren't all we need. We need a man of integrity, with a strong moral fiber, and a dedication to family values in our State Senate. We need Marcus Woodard. Together we can.

*(Long pause.)*

**MODERATOR:** With all due respect, I'd like to repeat the question, Mr. Woodard. Your former opponent accused you of stirring up emotions rather than appealing to intellect. Is this a fair criticism of the way you've run your campaign?

**MARCUS:** Well...no...I would like to address that directly...

**MODERATOR:** If you could do that, we only have time for...

**MARCUS:** I'm trying to answer your question if you'll stop interrupting me...you asked about the campaign and I would like to address that concern...that you spoke of...

*(During the latter part of this exchange, JOHN has appeared onstage behind the other lectern. The lights rise on him.)*

**JOHN:** So would I.

*(JOHN is nicely dressed, clean cut. MARCUS is visibly shaken.)*

I'm sorry I'm late. I would like to address that question.

**MARCUS:** Wait a minute! Wait a minute!

**JOHN:** Mr. Woodard, I believe you had a chance to answer. Now all I ask for is the same respect during my response that I gave to you...

**MARCUS:** You weren't here! You're not in this race!

**JOHN:** If I'm not mistaken, it appears that I'm more popular out of the race than when I was in it, if the poll in this mornings' Independent is correct. I'd like a chance to address that if you'll give me a chance.

**MODERATOR:** Go on, Mr. Blevins.

**MARCUS:** Go on? This isn't fair.

**JOHN:** Please, Marcus. I just want to explain myself. Ladies and gentleman here in the hall and listening or watching at home...I would like to apologize...for wasting your time. There are a lot of things I've said throughout the course of this campaign that I would like to take back. I said a great deal about my opponent, and even if those things are true, I should have been talking about the issues that matter to the people of Kentucky. And as far as I can see there are five issues that matter most to the people. Guns, abortion, prayer in schools, character, and smaller government.

**MARCUS:** What?

**JOHN:** I'd like to address each of those tonight and clear up a few things that have been said about me in regard to those issues. Maybe I can make it clear why I feel the way I do. But first, I want to say something. It's easy when you're running for office to only think about winning and what you can do to shake your opponent up. I've had a lot of time to think the past few days. I should have spent more time talking about my own plan, my agenda. If you'll give me a chance, that's what I'd like to do tonight. There's still six days before you go out and vote. It's not too late to make the right choice. All I ask is that you hear me out and then make up your own mind.

**MARCUS:** Those are my five things...what you said about all the...

**JOHN:** Issues?

**MARCUS:** Yeah, that people care about most...you stole those from me...

**JOHN:** Oh, Marcus.

**MODERATOR:** Gentleman, we need to move on.

**JOHN:** Certainly.

**MODERATOR:** Mr. Blevins, are we to understand that you are re-entering the race?

**JOHN:** Yes, I am.

**MARCUS:** Could we take a short break?

*(BERTIE LOU MULLINS has appeared in the crowd. She stands among the audience members and reprimands MARCUS.)*

**BERTIE LOU:** Don't let him take a break. You can't squirm out of this one, Woodard.

**MODERATOR:** Ma'am, please.

**BERTIE LOU:** You shut up now and listen to me. That's the problem with all of you. You don't listen to us. Now I have something to say. John, it's good to see you back in the race. When I heard you dropped out I was furious with you...

**JOHN:** I'm sorry...

**BERTIE LOU:** Now be quiet and listen. It's about time we had some young people like yourself take some initiative for once. I have a grandson named Dean. He's about your age. He doesn't do anything but sit around the house and play video games. He's a real shithead. So many young people don't even vote, and here you are working so hard for us. You keep up the good work. We're all pulling for you. You'll get Elliot County, that's for sure.

*(JOANNA, who is also in the audience, stands up and addresses BERTIE LOU.)*

**JOANNA:** Are you done? Because if you are I would like to hear what the candidates have to say...

**BERTIE LOU:** Oh, you'll know when I'm done.

**JOANNA:** What is that suppose to mean?

**MODERATOR:** I'd like to take a short break and restore order in here. Ladies and gentleman if you will please refrain from outbursts for the remainder of the debate it would be greatly appreciated. Let's take five.

*(JOHN and MARCUS eye each other from across the stage. MARCUS is fuming, JOHN smug. MARCUS looks at the crowd and smiles. He walks slowly to JOHN and extends his hand to shake it. JOHN returns to gesture. As they shake hands, MARCUS pulls JOHN close to him. Both smile and wave to the crowd.)*

**MARCUS:** *(whispering)* You won't get away with this you son of a bitch.

**JOHN:** I think I just did.

*(Blackout. Patriotic music plays while lights slowly rise on CHARLIE standing center stage. He pauses and then addresses the audience.)*

**CHARLIE:** I am here to make my endorsement for the State Senate seat in contention between John Blevins and Marcus Woodard. I saw an old friend of mine this morning and he asked me, "How could you possibly go

against your own party, Charlie?” I thought about that for a second, as I have laid in bed awake and thought of it many times. How can I go against the Republican Party that has served me well. The party that I believe holds conservative values that lie at the heart of most American people. I can’t. At the same time, how can I not endorse my son, my own flesh and blood. Am I not confident enough in the way that I raised him to know that he can carry on the Blevins tradition no matter what political party he belongs? Is it about political parties? Is it about family? It’s not, or it shouldn’t be. I am going to endorse the candidate that I believe will work the hardest for the people of Kentucky. I am going to vote for the candidate that will work together with other members of the Senate. I am going to sponsor the candidate that I believe has learned a little something about himself and about the people in these past few weeks. I’m going to endorse my son John Blevins. And when you go out to the polls tomorrow, I think you should do the same. Ladies and gentleman, John Blevins.

*(Lights up on JOHN’s lectern. He waves and smiles at the crowd.)*

**JOHN:** Thank you, thank you. Tomorrow is the big day...

*(Lights up on MARCUS at the other lectern.)*

**MARCUS:** He’s gone completely out of his mind. You know it. I know it. Endorsing a man with no political experience...

**JOHN:** I know I don’t have a lot of experience, but I think that is just what we need in Frankfort to root out the corruption left behind by a generation of career politicians. Tomorrow begins a new wave of youthful energy sweeping through the ranks of state government...

**MARCUS:** I want you to go to the polls tomorrow and vote with your hearts, not because of the rantings of a has-been politician who’s completely lost touch with the people that he used to represent. A vote for Marcus Woodard is a vote for good old fashioned conservative values. It’s a vote for experience, integrity, fairness, and prosperity. It’s a vote for the Republican Party and everything it stands for. Your vote is a vote for lower taxes and smaller government. Vote for me! Together we can! Together we will!

**JOHN:** Go home tonight and call a friend or a neighbor and get one more vote for John Blevins. Each and every one of your voices is important in this election. If you believe what the polls tell you than it’s going to be a

close one. Get out there and vote. If anyone has questions, I would be glad to answer...

*(Blackout. Scene shifts to election night. Onstage the Blevins party (JOHN, MASON) has gathered at the bar from Act I. It is sparsely decorated with red, white and blue streamers. John is writing. The Woodard party (MARCUS, JOANNA) is represented at MARCUS' office, also from Act I. As the lights rise, JOHN is seated at the bar listening attentively to a small radio, MASON standing closely. MARCUS, also equipped with radio, is seated behind his desk. JOANNA is pacing the room.)*

**MASON:** Anything new?

**JOHN:** Last report was still to close to call.

**MASON:** You want a drink?

**JOHN:** No.

**MASON:** Hey, lighten up. You've done a hell of a job. If the people can't see that then screw 'em. What are you doing?

**JOHN:** Nothing.

**MASON:** *(grabbing the paper)* Let me see that.

**JOHN:** Damnit, Mason.

**MASON:** You've written a concession speech. What the hell is wrong with you? Have you at least written a victory speech?

**MARCUS:** Just tell me if this sounds too pompous...

**JOANNA:** What is that?

**MARCUS:** It's the speech I'm going to make tonight after I win.

**JOANNA:** It sounds too pompous...

**MARCUS:** I haven't said anything yet.

**JOHN:** Yes, I have a victory speech just in case.

**MASON:** Good. Why don't you have a drink?

**JOHN:** You have any coffee back there?

**MASON:** Sure. Coffee.

**JOHN:** I haven't slept in three nights. I think I'm beginning to hallucinate. For ten minutes I tried to convince a telephone poll to get out and vote.

**MASON:** Where's your dad?

**JOHN:** He's out trying to get some last minute votes. A lot of people forget altogether about the election. Some can't get out their house to go to the polls.

**MASON:** That's nice of him.

**JOHN:** Yeah, I'm surprised like hell he's doing it. I didn't think he'd endorse either one of us.

**MASON:** Well, he must see something in you I don't.

**JOHN:** Shut up.

**MARCUS:** What the hell is taking so long?

**JOANNA:** Calm down. Polls just closed in Boyd County.

**MARCUS:** They've been closed everywhere else for over an hour.

**JOANNA:** No, everyone closes at the same time now.

**MARCUS:** Well, what is taking so long?

**JOANNA:** Don't you want to go downstairs. There's a room full of people that came to support you. How does it look for you to be all locked up in your office? You should be down there talking to them.

**MARCUS:** I will. Just give me a minute. Joanna...

**JOANNA:** Yes?

**MARCUS:** Thanks for all your help. I appreciate it.

**JOANNA:** That's means a lot, Marcus. Especially coming from you.

**MARCUS:** What does that mean?

**JOANNA:** I'm going down to mingle. You want to join me?

**MARCUS:** I'm going to wait for them to announce. I'll be down then.

*(CHARLIE and FAITH enter the bar.)*

**JOHN:** That's a pretty date you have there, dad. How much did you have to pay her?

*(FAITH slaps JOHN hard.)*

**CHARLIE:** Didn't I teach you how to talk to a lady, son?

**JOHN:** *(hurt, holding his hand to his face)* No.

**CHARLIE:** Mason, how are you?

**MASON:** What'll you have, sir.

**CHARLIE:** Can I get a glass of water?

**MASON:** Sure. Anything for you darling?

**FAITH:** Gin and tonic.

**MASON:** Finally, someone is gonna have a drink.

**FAITH:** I'm sorry, John.

**JOHN:** I was only kidding.

**FAITH:** I know. I didn't mean to hit you that hard.

**JOHN:** What are you doing here?

**FAITH:** I've been helping your dad today.



**JOHN:** You were? He didn't mention anything about it.

**CHARLIE:** Turns out Faith is a hell of a politico. You should thank her. She got you a lot of votes today.

**JOHN:** Thanks. I don't know what to say.

**FAITH:** No need. There is something you could do for me.

**JOHN:** What's that?

**FAITH:** Seems to me that you'll need an assistant up in Frankfurt...a moral compass...someone to keep your priorities in line.

**JOHN:** I suppose you know someone who'd be interested.

**FAITH:** I'm only bringing it up as a suggestion. You do what you want to do. By the way, you were great the other night...the debate...I'd given up on you.

**JOHN:** You saw it?

**FAITH:** I saw it. You were great. A bit to sentimental...a little obvious...nothing we can't work on.

**JOHN:** Can I ask you something?

**FAITH:** Sure.

**JOHN:** How much of that was really you...in that diner...how did you...

**FAITH:** John, it was all really me. With Faith Carson, what you see is what you get. Hey, I like that.

**CHARLIE:** You better watch out. You might be running against her in two years.

**FAITH:** Anyway, apart from the whole waitress thing, that was me. I'm sorry I had to trick you boys like that. It was all for good reason.

**JOHN:** Faith, I have to talk to you about something else.

**FAITH:** Okay...

**JOHN:** I...look...I didn't mean to come on too strong...I just think that you and I could...

**FAITH:** John, wait...

**JOHN:** No, hear me out. I think you are an amazing woman and I've always felt this connection between the two of us. I really care about you...

*(MASON sweeps by and gives FAITH a kiss and a drink.)*

**MASON:** Here you go, honey.

**JOHN:** *(shocked)* This is hands down the worst day of my life and I haven't even lost yet.

**FAITH:** John...

**JOHN:** I can't believe this.

**FAITH:** John, I will go anywhere in the world with you if you can tell me something...what's my last name? I just told...

**JOHN:** I know it. I know it.

**MASON:** Carson.

**FAITH:** What's my favorite movie?

**MASON:** Strangers on a Train.

**JOHN:** Damnit.

**FAITH:** Quick...can you tell me what color my eyes are?

**JOHN:** Umm...

**CHARLIE:** Brown!

**MASON:** A warm golden brown with flecks of green when the light hits them.

**JOHN:** Oh, shut the fuck up!

**FAITH:** John, you've been trying to go out with me for the last month and you don't know anything about me. What's more you don't know anything about yourself. You're going to have a hard enough time figuring yourself out without having a woman like me involved.

**MARCUS:** It's time! It's time!

*(DONNA enters.)*

**DONNA:** John, what the hell are you all doing? Turn that radio up. They're about to announce.

**RADIO ANNOUNCER:** ...it appears that George W. Bush will easily win Kentucky's eleven electoral votes and stays ahead of Al Gore in the race for the presidency that is at this time too close to call. In local news...with over ninety percent of the precincts reporting...in the race for State Senate District number seventy five Marcus Woodard will win the seat by the slimmest of margins...

*(MARCUS leaps out of his seat in celebration. The bar is silent with disappointment.)*

**MARCUS:** Light em up boys and girls! There's a new State Senator and you're looking right at him. I'm coming down...

*(Long pause.)*

**MASON:** I don't believe this...

**JOHN:** I do. It was too little too late. If I hadn't dropped out...

**FAITH:** John, don't do that to...

**JOHN:** ...or if you'd endorsed me sooner...

**CHARLIE:** What the hell are you saying?

**JOHN:** The slimmest of margins. What do you think that means?

**FAITH:** Both of you, stop it.

**MASON:** They said with over ninety percent. Maybe with the other ten...

**JOHN:** It doesn't usually work that way, Mason.

*(Silence.)*

I'm leaving. Thank you all for everything. I appreciate it.

**CHARLIE:** John...

**JOHN:** I have a concession speech written do you all want to hear it...

*(Lights up on MARCUS at his lectern.)*

**MARCUS:** I thank you all! You've made the right decision. Together we can! Together we will! I'm Marcus Woodard. You're new State Senator!

**JOHN:** I've learned a lot about myself over the past few weeks. I've learned a lot about politics. Maybe it doesn't matter which one of us you elected today. After all, when it comes down to it we're all really the same. I suppose that's why I dropped out in the first place. I suppose I got back in the race because I thought I could change things. I thought I could make a difference. If that's even a possible in politics today. Or maybe I just missed seeing my name in the headlines. I want to thank everyone that voted for me. I want to wish Marcus Woodard all the luck in the world. And I would like to remind him of one thing that I needed to be reminded of. It's not about the race or the party or the power. It's about the people. I want to thank all of the people that have been so kind to me these weeks. I only wished I had realized this weeks and not days ago. I only hope I'm a better man for it. Good night. *(Pause.)* Give me a beer, Mason.

**MASON:** Coming right up.

*(Lights out. Music plays through brief scene change. The lights rise on the bar. All of the decorations are gone. It is the next day.*

*JOHN is sitting at the bar, depressed and drinking heavily. MASON is standing behind the bar washing glasses. The scene is identical to the one at the bar at the beginning of the play.)*

**JOHN:** Give me another one.

**MASON:** John...

**JOHN:** Oh, come on, just give me one more.

**MASON:** *(Pause, fixing drink)* You want to talk about it?

**JOHN:** No. *(Pause.)* Thanks, though.

**MASON:** This one's on me.

**JOHN:** I won't have you taking pity on me.

**MASON:** All right, you pay.

**JOHN:** Huh?

**MASON:** I'll put it on your tab.

**JOHN:** Wait a minute.

*(FAITH rushes into the bar, out of breath.)*

**FAITH:** I might have known I'd find you here.

**JOHN:** Faith! Have a drink.

**FAITH:** Charlie and I have been looking for you.

**JOHN:** Calm down.

**FAITH:** I will not calm down. Turn on the TV.

**JOHN:** No, it's nothing but Woodard strutting his stuff and talking about all the good things he's going to do...

**FAITH:** Mason, turn on the TV!

**MASON:** What, did Gore win after all?

**FAITH:** No...well maybe...forget about it...John might have.

**JOHN:** What?

**FAITH:** It's all over the news.

*(MASON races to the television, turns it on. All three gaze at the screen. The local news is reporting. The NEWSCASTER and SKEETER are heard from offstage.)*

**NEWSCASTER:** This man, known to his friends as Skeeter...

**JOHN:** Where do I know him from?

**FAITH:** Shhh!

**NEWSCASTER:** ...found the ballot box while...bathing in the Lewis River...

**SKEETER:** I was in the water, and this box come falling from the sky. It came lessin' ten feet away from killing me.

**NEWSCASTER:** Did it appear that the ballot box was thrown from a truck moving across the bridge just above you?

**SKEETER:** Well, now, it mighten a' been. Just came falling from the sky. Damn near killed me.

**MASON:** What the hell is going on?

**FAITH:** Listen.

**NEWSCASTER:** If you're just joining us, a missing ballot box was reported at the main polling location in Maysville late last night. The ballot box may contain uncounted votes from last night's State Senate election which was decided by only an almost indistinguishable margin. Additionally the box is believed to contain votes from heavily Democratic Wolfe County...

*(Lights slowly rise on MARCUS. He sits in his office and listens to the same report on the radio. His face is a pained mixture of anger and fear.)*

...if all of this proves true than the Woodard camp may have celebrated too soon. John Blevins won Wolfe County with over eighty percent of the vote, while losing the State Senate election by only a few dozen votes. It certainly is a confusing election year, both on the national level with presidential race still too close to call and even here in our little neck of the woods...

**MARCUS:** Joanna! Joanna!

**JOHN:** Oh, my God!

**FAITH:** Can you believe it?

**MASON:** This is incredible.

**MARCUS:** (*screaming*) Joanna, what the hell does this mean?

**FAITH:** You have to come downtown with me. Your father wants to talk to you.

**JOHN:** When will they know?

**FAITH:** They're counting the ballots now.

**MARCUS:** Joanna!

*(Lights out. Music plays. Lights rise on JOHN's lectern. He speaks with great enthusiasm and gratitude. The stage picture should duplicate that of the opening scene inserting JOHN into MARCUS' position.)*

**JOHN:** I have just been informed that with the uncounted ballots...the Blevins campaign will win the election by fifteen votes. (*cheering and applause from the Blevins camp that now surrounds him*) There is a recount that has been ordered by Mr. Woodard, but we believe that in the end the vote will stand and if that is the case...well then, I guess you're looking at your new State Senator from Eastern Kentucky. (*cheering*) It seems hard to believe, I know. I want to thank my father Charlie Blevins and Faith Carson, both of whom will be joining me in Frankfurt to keep me on the straight and narrow. I want to thank all of the people who voted for me. I sincerely appreciate it. And for those that didn't, I want you to know that I will work together with the other side...I've learned my lesson. I will make you proud, Kentucky. I will serve...

*(Lights rise on Marcus' office. Joanna reclines behind the desk. Marcus is pacing. They are listening to John's speech on the radio.)*

**MARCUS:** This is good stuff. The honesty angle this kid has is really good. He tricked everyone. We can do that. We can pretend to be honest and keep apologizing to people for all the bad stuff we did. And we can do it even better than him. There's another campaign in two years, Joanna. We're going to be there and this time we'll wipe the floor with John Blevins. Once the people see that he can't govern his way out of a paper bag they'll be begging me to run. What do you think? Joanna? Are you asleep? Damnit, Joanna, wake up. This is important.

**JOHN:** And to Marcus Woodard...

**MARCUS:** What did he say about me? What the hell did that son of a bitch say about me?

**JOHN:** I want you all to have confidence in John Blevins. This is the beginning of a new day in state politics.

**MARCUS:** No it isn't. This is the same old same old. The same bullshit I'd be saying if I'd won.

**JOHN:** A new voice in Frankfurt. Your voice. Thank you again! (*to himself*) I need a drink.

*(Cheering. Blackout.)*

THE END

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