

PERUSAL SCRIPT

DO GOOD by Eric Samuelsen



Newport, Maine

© 2003 by Eric Samuelsen
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION:
Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

DO GOOD

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

Script and music copies must be rented from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).

Federal Copyright Law — 17 U.S.C. section 504 — allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 *for each infringement*, plus attorney fees.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights, inquiries may be made to the authors through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS. Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!

The possession of this PERUSAL SCRIPT, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made, license granted and royalty paid before a performance may be given. Copies of this SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be rented from:

LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS
P.O. Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536
www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com
Printed in the United States Of America

THIS NOTICE MUST APPEAR IN ALL PROGRAMS, ON ALL POSTERS AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS AND INTERNET ADVERTISING/WEBPAGES FOR THE PLAY:

“DO GOOD’ is presented through special arrangement with Leicester Bay Theatricals. All authorized materials are also supplied by LBT, www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com”

NOTE: Your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. If we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer — it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals.

ORDER #3285

CAST OF CHARACTERS - 4f 2m

COOPER MCCONNOR, in his early fifties.

ANN, his wife. Early fifties.

BETSY. His youngest daughter. Mid-twenties. She has a baby, **TONY**, who we never see.

MARTHA. His older daughter. Thirty.

TWO UNDECIDED VOTERS, one male and one female, indicated thus: **UV1 and UV2**

also play:

RALPH (UV1)

THE TOOTHBRUSH MAN (UV1)

CLERK (UV2)

CLERK 2 (UV1)

RECEPTIONIST (UV2)

REPORTER 1 (UV2)

REPORTER 2 (UV1)

Multi-location open stage setting with props.

Costumes from the 2000s

DO GOOD by Eric Samuelsen. 4F 2M. Simple settings can be suggested or elaborate. (*Professional, Amateur and Educational groups*) It's what every American wants — to do some good to keep the ship of state from teetering over the edge of the world into oblivion. It's a basic right given in the Constitution. A right to run for any office of the U. S. of A., even the Presidency, is handed to any U.S. born citizen of a certain or older. Connor Cooper, a resident since birth of New Hampshire, is going to do just that. He's taking on the Presidency. Are we all a little naive? A little crazy? Why would any person want to take on the running of this country? This play may be set in the recent past, but it is more timely than ever with each new election year that passes. Can any candidate withstand the vetting of the press or political parties? Does it matter? It is only evident that they hold higher standards than they themselves are capable of reaching. Follow one man's dream of serving the country and the people he loves in *DO GOOD*. It also becomes a comment on the political process, the voters and the press, who will accept anything except the thing that reminds them of themselves. **ORDER #3285**

Eric Samuelsen taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadanton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan-B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric', including productions of six of his plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright.

He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine *The Sugarbeet*. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at *Mormoniconoclast.com*. Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with polymyositis. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

ACT ONE

BETSY: (*Stands nervously in front of the audience. Clears her throat. Sings.*)

“My...

(Much too high. Stops, clears her throat again. Sings.)

“My country ‘tis of thee,

Sweet land of liberty

Of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims pride.

(Tempo becomes increasingly fast.)

From every mountainside, let freedom ring” and so on and so forth. I was twelve years old, it was the Freedom Festival in our community. Fourth of July, and I sang that song, a solo, a cappella, and then a band joined in on the second verse. Scared and excited, and the whole time I could see him, my dad, sitting on the third row. Smiling at me. It’s the last time I remember liking him.

(Enter COOPER MCCONNOR. He looks around, perhaps a bit bewildered.)

November, 1999. Frosty windshield time in this big ol’ country. Election season, the Presidential race only a year away. And the big boys had long ago tossed their hats in the ring.

(Pause. COOPER looks around.)

1999, Dad’s in our living room, brochures on a card table. Three reporters standing by the sofa, eating my Mom’s zucchini bread. A press conference.

(With a gesture, she indicates COOPER.)

COOPER: (*As though answering questions at a press conference.*) Hello. My name is Cooper McConnor. I am here to announce my candidacy for President of the United States of America.

(Pause, listens.)

I am a resident of this town. Lived here all my life. I began working for GE as a production assembler, specializing in hand soldering mostly, surface mounting onto circuit boards. I’m now a foreman slash manager.

(Listens.)

Education. I have a GED and I’ve been working towards a managing degree at University of Phoenix.

(Listens.)

Line assembly supervisor, that’s right.

(Holds out his hands.)

Oh, right. I do have a brochure, which my daughter is passing out to you right now. If you’d like to look that over...?

(Pause.)

It’s got my stands on the, uh, main issues that I think should be addressed. I’m also... if you have any questions?

(Pause.)

Well, the first issue that I am concerned about has to do with high tariffs. I believe in lowering tariffs, to promote free trade, which I think will benefit the economies in countries like Mexico. Because, see, we see a lot of them Mexicans out of the temp agency we mostly hire from, and they’re great workers them people. I think the Mexican people only come to our country to look for jobs, and if there were better jobs for them at home, they’d prefer to stay there. Not that there’s anything wrong with them being in this country too. Some of my best friends are of the Mexican race.

(Pause. Listens.)

Yes, item two, I think back to times when the CIA, the Central Intelligence agency of the United States of America, did things like putting explosives in Castro's cigars and hire Mafia hit men and even spread poison through the air so his beard would fall out, and political assassinations, Trujillo and United Fruit and Vietnam and so on. And here, domestically, as well. I think that's just totally against every principle of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and that would be my first act as President. To restore to people what the CIA and others has taken from them.

(Pause. Listens.)

Very good question. Yes, item number three on my statement. I look at the older people of America, my parents and your parents, and I think we have an obligation to support older people, and so I'm in favor of giving them some extra money to help out with their retirement. And I think we can afford that, given the greatness of our great nation, the greatest... . excuse me?

(Pause. Listens.)

Yes. I guess what I'm talking about is essentially the same thing as Social Security. Yes.

(Pause. Listens.)

Oh, definitely. I am absolutely pro-choice.

(Pause. Listens.)

What's that? Item number...?

(Pause. Listens.)

No, I'm not for that. No, I'm definitely against that.

(Pause. Nods vigorously.)

Yes. Pro-life. No doubt about it.

(Pause. Listens.)

I am pro-life. I just said...

(Pause. Listens.)

I don't see why. I don't see why you can't be in favor of people making choices and also in favor of ...

(Pause.)

I see what you're saying.

(Pause.)

I see what you're saying. And so terms like pro-life and pro-choice actually mean something beyond, other than...

(Pause.)

Uh huh. Well, who could be against...

(Pause.)

Oh. And they'd really do that, back alleys and...

(Pause. Enter ANN, looking worried.)

ANN: Coop?

COOPER: Gosh. That's a really tough issue, isn't it. I'll have to give that one some thought.

(He crosses to a chair. Stands by it, looking out. ANN sees him, crosses to him.)

ANN: There you are.

COOPER: I just couldn't sleep.

ANN: I know.

COOPER: That doggone Burger King. All night, the lights, horns blaring. Kids gunning their engines.

ANN: I know.

COOPER: Just couldn't sleep.

ANN: Can I get you something? Tea, hot chocolate?

COOPER: I made myself some tea.

ANN: You ought to sit down.

COOPER: Too sore.

(Looks out.)

Nights like this.

ANN: I know.

COOPER: Overcast like this.

ANN: I remember.

COOPER: They can come out of the clouds. Stealthy, stealthily. Radar, you know, has never...

(His voice trails off.)

ANN: Would you like something to eat, honey? Piece of toast.

COOPER: No, no. If you were going to make one for yourself...

ANN: Some cinnamon toast for each of us.

(She crosses away, mime making toast.)

Martha said the press conference went well.

COOPER: Not very well. I didn't do very well with the abortion issue, I didn't think.

ANN: That one's tough.

COOPER: It sure is. They both sound so reasonable. Choice vs. Life, who could be against either of those things?

ANN: Still, it's a hot button issue. For many voters.

COOPER: I know. I'll have to get a handle on it.

ANN: Well, Martha said you did extremely well.

COOPER: Did she?

ANN: Indeed she did. You looked poised and confident, she said. And the reporters really seemed impressed.

COOPER: They asked lots of questions.

ANN: And there were three reporters there?

COOPER: Three.

ANN: Both local papers. Who else?

COOPER: The campus paper.

ANN: But that's wonderful, Coop! You do so well with young people. I think they'll really come to appreciate your message.

COOPER: She did seem the most interested of the three. The college girl. Young woman, nicely dressed, and she was the only one with a tape recorder I noticed.

ANN: It sounds like you're off to a great start. We're off to a great start.

COOPER: But I didn't get to tell my story. They like that, when the candidate tells their story.

(Pause.)

Did you see the brochures?

ANN: *(Perhaps, a bit grim.)* I did see them.

COOPER: I remember '92. Just those mimeographed sheets...

ANN: Photocopied.

COOPER: Yes. They really didn't look very impressive. And then I misspelled Haiti...

ANN: I remember.

COOPER: But this time, they got my picture in there, and three colors. And it folds over and the way

they've laid it out, every time you fold it out, you come to the deeper issues.

ANN: I understand that's how they do them.

COOPER: It's really a lot more professional.

ANN: I thought so too.

(Pause.)

Did you happen to keep a receipt?

COOPER: I did. It turned out to be just a bit more than I'd thought.

ANN: *(Curious, reasonable.)* How much more?

COOPER: A... hundred and sixty four dollars.

ANN: *(Winces a bit.)* A hundred and sixty four dollars.

COOPER: But I needed them. I really did. I want to make a much better show this time. And I just couldn't be taken very seriously with those mimeographed...

ANN: Photocopied. No. Of course you needed them.

COOPER: Really, I did.

ANN: We'll manage.

COOPER: We have savings.

ANN: I was hoping we could get the roof done this summer.

(Sees how crestfallen he is.)

It's still watertight, it's mostly cosmetic, what we'd want done. It can wait a year.

(A pause. Does she mean it?)

We're fine. Don't worry.

COOPER: A hundred and sixty five...

ANN: This is important. You know I support you in this.

COOPER: I couldn't do it without you.

ANN: I know.

(Across the stage, BETSY kneels by a bed, which has quickly rolled on. A child crying. We never see TONY, but we hear him.)

BETSY: Tony! Honey, it's okay, it's just a bad dream.

COOPER: And they really do look better. With my picture and everything.

ANN: I saw. Here's your toast.

COOPER: Thanks.

BETSY: *(To the audience, as ANN and COOPER exit.)* This is our house, a real nice little house, I've lived in it my whole life, mostly. When I was home. Two bedroom. The smaller one, now, is Mom and Dad's. The larger one, I share with my sister, Martha. Have always shared with Martha, she being the older of us. And coming on two years now, my son, Tony.

MARTHA: *(Stirs, stretches, wakes.)* Everything okay?

BETSY: Just Tony, another bad dream.

(Rocking him.)

Tony, honey, calm yourself.

MARTHA: What time is it?

BETSY: Two something, go back to sleep.

MARTHA: I'm awake. Hey Tony.

(Renewed crying.)

BETSY: Great, now you've woken him all the way up.

(Rocking him vigorously.)

I want you to go to sleep now, Tony!

MARTHA: I'll take him.

BETSY: I got him.

MARTHA: You got classes in the morning.

BETSY: You got work.

MARTHA: It's okay.

BETSY: *(Pause, then giving up.)* You're welcome to try.

MARTHA: Hey, Tony. Come to Aunt Martha, hon. It's okay.

(Rocks him gently.)

BETSY: *Damn* Burger King.

MARTHA: I know.

BETSY: Horn honks, kids yell, car door, anything, he hears it, his eyes just pop wide open. And then I'm up two hours with a screaming brat and school in the morning. It was zoned residential!

MARTHA: Well, Daddy tried to change it, and —

BETSY: Yeah, he tried, stood there in the City Council meeting and told 'em all about him and the ... never mind.

MARTHA: He told what happened to him. That's all.

BETSY: He was fighting a zoning exception! It was no time to go off on some rambling—

MARTHA: It didn't matter.

BETSY: No.

(To audience.)

We both knew how hopeless it had been. Burger King had resources on their side that we couldn't match. And they had a trump card too. They were opposed by my father.

(Back to Martha.)

There'll never be a decent night's sleep ever again for anyone in this house!

MARTHA: I sleep okay.

BETSY: I know you do. Except when my son wakes you in the middle of the night, 'cause-a the Burger King drive-through being right outside...!

(Her voice is raised, TONY cries again.)

Great.

MARTHA: He's only two, Betsy. He dudn't know better.

BETSY: Look, I'll take him if you want.

MARTHA: I don't mind.

BETSY: What about work?

MARTHA: It's a Wednesday tomorrow. Just corn dogs. That's easy, just pop in the oven and out they come.

The kids just love the corn dogs.

BETSY: Don't they get something else, a vegetable or—

MARTHA: Apple sauce, we just open those big cans of it. And the canned peas, we do have to heat 'em of course, and that takes a little while. Course then we gotta scrape 'em off the trays for hours cause nobody likes canned peas.

BETSY: *Hate* canned peas.

MARTHA: Everybody does.

(They laugh quietly together.)

Like Mom and her zucchini.

BETSY: Her breaded zucchini. Blech!

MARTHA: I kinda like zucchini bread, though. With butter. And cream cheese.

BETSY: Sure.

MARTHA: Anyway. We have carrots too.

BETSY: Carrots.

MARTHA: With the corn dogs. But that's so easy with the baby carrots in those sacks. Wednesdays are about my favorite. If it was a Thursday, that wouldn't be so great, huh, Tony. Gotta make those big long trays of lasagna. Start an hour early on Thursdays.

BETSY: It's just that some nights Tony seems to do better with...

(Stops herself.)

He likes his aunt Martha is all.

MARTHA: *(Tickling, baby-talk.)* And his aunt Martha likes him.

BETSY: Light's on in the living room.

MARTHA: Prolly just Daddy.

(A pause.)

Listen, you go back to sleep. It's okay.

BETSY: I can't.

MARTHA: Sure you can. Me 'n Tony are just fine.

BETSY: I'm gonna have to change him soon.

MARTHA: I can do that.

BETSY: Last time you forget the Desitin.

MARTHA: And you told me not to next time and I won't.

BETSY: I got a test in the morning.

MARTHA: And I got corn dogs. You get your rest.

BETSY: Okay. You sure?

(MARTHA nods.)

Okay, thanks.

(We hear a door shut.)

Dad's going outside.

MARTHA: He'll just sit on the porch for awhile. Rock. Think about things.

BETSY: Like making a laughingstock of his whole family.

MARTHA: I don't think that's what he's thinking, Betsy.

BETSY: It drives me crazy to think of him...

MARTHA: Then don't think about it.

(To TONY, baby talk.)

Grandpa's running for President! Yes he is! Yes he is!

BETSY: He sure is.

MARTHA: You shoulda watched him, Betsy. He did great. I just think he did great.

BETSY: I bet he did. Just like at the City Council meeting. Just like '92.

MARTHA: He did great.

BETSY: At least it's over.

(To the audience.)

He's announced, he'll pass out a few brochures at work, that'll be the end of it. I've seen this before.

MARTHA: He'll want us to be at the mall, like before, with the petitions and stuff.

BETSY: Not for me.

MARTHA: Well, he'll want us both to—

BETSY: You go right ahead.

MARTHA: He'll ask us both to—

BETSY: Martha. I'm not part of this. I'm not.

MARTHA: Well, he'll probably want us both to be.

BETSY: Fine. He's welcome to ask.

(Pause.)

I'm going to bed.

MARTHA: You do that. We'll be just fine.

(Gently, to TONY.)

We'll be just fine.

BETSY: And she rocked Tony to sleep, so placid and easy going. And I lay in bed for another hour and fumed. But you know, what I finally concluded, the thought that made me actually be able to go back to sleep was, again, it's over now. It'll all blow over, now that he's announced. Ha.

(Not laughing, staccato.)

Ha ha ha. Next day.

(Enter, at the other side of the stage, UVI as RALPH, at work. COOPER crosses to him.)

RALPH: Mr. McConnor?

COOPER: *(Crosses to RALPH.)* That's me.

RALPH: *(Shaking hands.)* Ralph Miller, good to meet you.

COOPER: Mr. Miller.

(Sits.)

RALPH: Ralph, please. Can I call you Cooper?

COOPER: I'd prefer that. Or Coop.

RALPH: Listen, Coop. Here's the thing.

(Uncomfortable.)

Oh, help yourself to a Jolly Rancher, keep 'em here for visitors.

COOPER: I always like Jolly Ranchers.

RALPH: Something else we have in common, then!

(He beams for a moment, then looks more uncomfortable.)

BETSY: We got all this from Dad, later on. First thing he told us about was the Jolly Ranchers, how there were yellow ones and red ones and green ones and ...

RALPH: Look, I might as well just come right out and say what this is about. Uh, as head of HR, I have an obligation to look into things that might negatively effect the operation of the plant. You hear what I'm saying? And it came to my attention that you've been passing these around work.

(Hands over a brochure.)

COOPER: Yeah, that's me, you can see my picture and everything.

RALPH: Right. And so... you're running for President.

COOPER: Yes I am.

RALPH: Great, that's great.

COOPER: I need to do this.

RALPH: Of course.

COOPER: I just want to make a difference.

RALPH: Don't we all. The thing is, we happened to be looking at your file. You hear what I'm saying? And it seems that you've done this before. Most recently in 1992.

COOPER: Yeah, I woulda filed in '96 too, but there didn't seem to be much hope.

RALPH: Oh? Why is that?

COOPER: Well, Clinton was the incumbent, and I thought he'd probably win pretty easily. So I thought I should wait 'til the 2000 race.

RALPH: I see.

COOPER: Of course, I didn't know then about all that stuff about him and Miss Lewinsky.

RALPH: No. Right. Who did?

(He chuckles falsely.)

See. Here's the thing. See, I look at you campaigning. And what I say to myself is, is this a disruption of the plant operation? You hear what I'm saying? That's the question I gotta ask myself.

COOPER: Well, I won't campaign inside the plant if you say not to.

RALPH: Oh sure. And you'd say that to me, and you'd mean it, of course, and then you'd be sitting at lunch or something, just chewing the rag over lunch, say, and the subject would get around to politics the way it does. You hear me? You get what I'm saying?

COOPER: I'll be real careful.

RALPH: I'm sure you will, of course. Still...

(He sighs.)

Listen, how's that knee of yours? You had the surgery six months ago?

COOPER: It was in March.

RALPH: Right, last March. Still bothering you?

COOPER: It's a little stiff. Cold nights. It gets a little stiff.

(Enter ANN.)

ANN: Because of your knee?

RALPH: What I'm thinking, we'll put you on something called permanent disability leave. Now, we keep making payments to your pension, and you keep your benefits, and then we average your last three years' salary, and you get eighty percent. You hear what I'm saying?

ANN: Eighty percent.

RALPH: And then, maybe, sometime in the future when your knee stopped acting up on you, we bring you back. Old job, same salary plus cost of living.

COOPER: Well, that's just real nice of you.

ANN: Disability leave. Now, seven months *after* your surgery.

(Exit RALPH.)

COOPER: It's just how they do it. That company, I'm tellin' you, always thinkin' of their employees first.

ANN: (A slight edge.) Yeah, I've noticed. Like the layoffs in '87. In '92, '94...

COOPER: Well, the company really needed to do that, there was a real cash flow problem.

ANN: We've been over this.

COOPER: A leave, though. It's just like a blessing from heaven. Is what I think.

ANN: You just got a pay cut of twenty percent, Coop.

COOPER: But I'm free. I can campaign now.

ANN: *(A pause. Cautiously.)* There is that.

COOPER: I can even meet the filing deadline for New Hampshire. And I can go there, and I can really do it right this time.

ANN: You're going to New Hampshire.

COOPER: It's the most important primary. Those New Hampshire-eans, they wanna meet the candidates, press the flesh, talk to 'em face to face. If my campaign is gonna catch fire, I need a real good showing there.

ANN: For how long?

COOPER: Well, um, it really needs to be for a couple months at least.

ANN: You're going to live in New Hampshire for two months. Living in hotels, I assume. Eating in restaurants.

COOPER: Well, I don't really know anyone in New Hampshire I could stay with.

ANN: By yourself.

COOPER: I was hoping that Martha could come with me. She's real good with, you know, keeping track of money and all.

ANN: Martha's job is an important part of our finances, Coop.

COOPER: I know. But I was thinking I need a campaign manager.

ANN: I see.

COOPER: We do have some savings.

ANN: Some, yes.

COOPER: I can't make a difference if I can't campaign. I mean, really campaign. And now I have a chance to.

ANN: I know.

COOPER: You could come too.

ANN: We're not making ends meet without my salary as it is.

COOPER: I know.

(Enter BETSY.)

ANN: We'll work it out. Don't worry.

BETSY: You're kidding.

COOPER: I couldn't do this without you, honey.

ANN: That's true. But Coop. Two months in New Hampshire.

COOPER: It's gonna be hard for me to win without it.

(COOPER exits.)

BETSY: There's no way.

ANN: Betsy, I need you to do this. He needs you.

BETSY: No.

ANN: He does.

BETSY: *(Under her breath.)* What he needs, is to be locked up—

ANN: Don't finish that sentence.

BETSY: I'm in school, I'm trying to finish my associates', so I can get out of here, a job and in my own apartment. Me and Tony.

ANN: I know.

BETSY: There is absolutely no way I'm going with him, to New Hampshire, hold his hand, maybe even campaign for him...

ANN: For a couple of months, I think you could do it.

BETSY: Well, you're wrong. I can't.

ANN: He says he needs a campaign manager.

BETSY: Great, a campaign manager no less.

ANN: He was talking about Martha.

BETSY: *(A pause.)* Martha's going with him.

ANN: Either way. And there they'd be. Martha and your father. Two months alone in New Hampshire.

BETSY: Well, it's got nothing to do with me.

ANN: Betsy, think about it. I mean, Martha does well...

BETSY: (To audience.) I knew she'd play the Martha card.

(To ANN.)

Martha does great!

ANN: I know.

BETSY: You think Martha can't do things. She can. She's... you should see her with her checkbook.

ANN: But in New Hampshire, it wouldn't be her checkbook. It would be mine.

BETSY: Okay.

ANN: The family's. That's what we're talking about.

BETSY: You tell Martha she can't spend more than a certain amount, and she won't.

ANN: Honey, Martha thinks he's going to win. She believes in him.

BETSY: (A pause.) Well, it's still not my problem.

ANN: It is, though. That's what I've been saying.

BETSY: Why?

ANN: Because I want you to. I want you to manage your father's campaign for president.

BETSY: No.

ANN: Oh, yes.

BETSY: Absolutely not.

(She starts to exit.)

ANN: How are you planning to pay for school next term?

BETSY: (Stops.) What do you mean?

(A pause. Stiffly.)

If I have to, I'll get a job, take a semester off and earn enough for tuition.

ANN: Yes. That's right. You will.

BETSY: No. Way.

ANN: I have it in savings. Your full tuition for the rest of your degree. It's yours.

BETSY: This is not right.

ANN: I'm hiring you, Betsy. And I want you to do a good job.

BETSY: You were saying yourself how we can't afford for him to go.

ANN: But it doesn't matter. He's going to go anyway. We can't stop him.

BETSY: No?

ANN: No.

(Pause.)

He's talking about leaving tomorrow. You'd best think about getting packed.

BETSY: (Watches her go. In a fury.) Argghhhhgghhhhh!

(To audience.)

You ever see those Army commercials? Tough looking young guys riding around in a tank, Be all that You Can Be. That's what I figured, eight years ago. I'd join the army, spend three years seeing the world, and earn money for college on the new GI bill. That was me at eighteen year, a new recruit, doing basic at Fort Bragg. What they don't tell you is you have to finish your three years to get that money. And if you're dishonorably discharged, you don't see a dime.

(She's moving chairs around, two in front and one in back, a car.)

And so I got back, and I put it behind me, and I started again, and things keep happening, and I keep starting again, over and over. And now I'm one semester away! Went to Community College, was thinking about electronics but that was what Dad does, so an associates' in telecommunications

technology. Close enough. One semester. And now instead I gotta go to New Hampshire. To manage my father's campaign. For President. And I'm starting over again, just when I was almost, almost, for the first time in my life, finished with something.

(She sits in the front left seat, COOPER next to her, Martha in back.)

It was a very quiet drive to New Hampshire. Took us three days, and I don't think I said four words. That was fine for Martha. She kept Tony happy, and anyway she doesn't much care if she talks or not. But every once in awhile Dad would talk to me.

COOPER: Everything okay, honey?

BETSY: You asked that before, Dad, everything's fine, I'm just concentrating on driving.

(To audience.)

Hoping we didn't get pulled over and they'd see my license expired.

COOPER: I'll take a shift if you like, honey.

BETSY: I'm fine, I'd just as soon drive.

(To audience.)

He drifts off, thinking about whatever, politics, and next thing you know he's crossing the median strip into heavy traffic. And Martha doesn't know how to drive.

MARTHA: Tony, honey. Look at that. See the doggie? What does a doggie say? That's right. A doggie says woof woof woof. Look at that. See the cow? What does a cow say? That's right! A cow says moo! And there's a horse. What does the horsie say?

BETSY: *(To audience.)* Hours on end. She never gets tired of it, what does the sheep say, what does the pig say. Tony loves it, and it's great that she's so good with him, and I get so I want to find the worst rock station ever and turn it up loud as it gets, but I can't, because it makes him crazy. She shoulda had Tony. No way I should be a mother. No way.

COOPER: Everything okay, honey?

BETSY: You asked that before, Dad. Everything's fine.

(To audience.)

We didn't even know where we were going.

(To COOPER.)

Okay, Dad, we're here. Two miles to the turnoff, where are we going? Concord or Manchester.

MARTHA: New Hampshire.

BETSY: Yeah, we're in New Hampshire, we've been driving in the state for a half hour. Where do you wanna go is my question.

COOPER: I just don't know.

BETSY: Manchester or Concord?

COOPER: Concord, I guess. Or Manchester.

BETSY: You did no research at all on this.

COOPER: The paper's in Manchester. The big one. Union Leader, it's called. The editor's name is, let me see, it's...

BETSY: Manchester then.

COOPER: Maybe. They're not too far from each other.

BETSY: Look, I've gotta turn right here.

MARTHA: *(Baby talk.)* Concord or Manchester. Which do you think, Tony? Concord or—

BETSY: Martha, shut up. Dad, I'm turning right now unless you say not to.

COOPER: Well, I just—

BETSY: We don't turn right now, this road takes us clear into Boston!

COOPER: Concord, then.

BETSY: Here goes.

(She turns abruptly. A horn honks.)

Blow it out your ass, buddy, I signaled!

COOPER: You cut that man off, Betsy.

BETSY: *(Losing it.)* You wanna drive, Dad? You wanna deal with this traffic, in this sleet crap...!

(Another horn.)

Pick a lane buddy!

(She swerves. We hear TONY cry.)

Martha, keep him quiet.

(MARTHA does not respond.)

COOPER: Honey...

BETSY: I'm getting you to New Hampshire, Dad. That's what you wanted, right?

(A longish pause. TONY cries.)

You cut that out right now, Tony, or you will regret it, pal.

(To audience.)

Oh, it was just a swell drive. Just swell.

(To COOPER.)

Okay, Dad. Concord exit. Where are we staying?

COOPER: I saw a sign for a Budget Inn.

BETSY: Which exit?

COOPER: Well, I didn't catch the, uh...

BETSY: Which exit!?

COOPER: Well...

BETSY: Okay, look, I'm taking this exit, okay? Right here, and we'll stay the first place that's open.

(TONY cries.)

Shut him up, Martha, and I mean now.

(To audience.)

What we didn't know was that hotels, in New Hampshire, book very quickly during primary season. The George W. Bush campaign had one whole hotel, just for them. The Bill Bradley people were sharing a Ramada wing with the Pat Buchanan campaign. Everywhere we went, it was the same story. No room in the inn.

(To COOPER.)

Okay. Motel Six. Another try.

COOPER: That's just fine, honey.

(She stands up, crosses to a 'counter.' UV2 is at the counter, reading a magazine.)

Excuse me, I'm—

UV2/CLERK: No vacancies.

BETSY: I saw your sign.

UV2/CLERK: Then why'd you come in?

BETSY: *(Being very patient.)* I just wondered if you knew of any motel in town that has a vacancy.

UV2/CLERK: They don't do me no favors, I don't do them none.

(She returns to her magazine.)

BETSY: *(Stands for a moment, fuming.)* Well, thanks for nothing, bitch.

(To audience.)

This was the fifth place I'd tried.

(She crosses back to the car.)

Dad, there is no place in this whole freaking town—

COOPER: There's the Budget Inn.

BETSY: Where?

COOPER: Right over there.

BETSY: Dad...

COOPER: See the sign, just through those trees?

BETSY: *(Looks. Resigned.)* Fine. Budget Inn, great.

(She sits again. To audience.)

I'd pretty much resigned myself to sleeping in the car all night. In twenty-eight degree weather. And cops, I could see it now, Dad's campaign beginning with an arrest for vagrancy. I needed to try something.

(To clerk. Briskly.)

Hi. I'm the campaign manager for the McConnor campaign, and our advance people were supposed to set this up.

UV1/CLERK: That's McConnor?

(He looks through book.)

BETSY: Yes. Just one room, for tonight.

UV1/CLERK: Continuing.

BETSY: Possibly.

UV1/CLERK: They screwed up, betcha anything.

BETSY: I beg pardon?

UV1/CLERK: Your advance people. They screwed it up.

BETSY: It's entirely possible.

UV1/CLERK: Advance people for Libby Dole set up three events for her first week and a half, I'm totally not kidding, three. She ended up handing out flyers at the mall in Manchester for four days straight. McConnor?

BETSY: That's right.

UV1/CLERK: Donkey or Elephant?

BETSY: What? Oh, Republican.

UV1/CLERK: McConnor, McConnor, can't quite place the name. California?

BETSY: *(Smoothly lying.)* That's right, House district, uh, twenty-eight.

UV1/CLERK: Running from the House, huh? Getting some name recognition for oh-four?

BETSY: Something like that.

UV1/CLERK: Maybe even a cabinet post?

BETSY: You never know.

UV1/CLERK: Dubya or McCain?

BETSY: I'm sorry...?

UV1/CLERK: You think Dubya? McCain?

(Smirk.)

Dole?

BETSY: Dole...

(Going with it.)

Not even.

UV1/CLERK: Remember her husband's campaign? Mr. Viagra? I actually met him in '96, get this, he was holding a pen in his right hand so he wouldn't have to shake hands with anyone.

BETSY: I believe it.

UV1/CLERK: No kidding. Well, he's what, 97 this year. And now she's running, and the only thing you can think of is, 'we've seen the ads, lady, we know what you've been doin'.

(Laughs snarkily.)

BETSY: Sure.

UV1/CLERK: So, comes down to Bush or McCain. Whaddya think?

BETSY: Either way. Is fine with us. We'd just like to get noticed.

UV1/CLERK: Well, you're in the right place.

(Closes the book.)

We are booked tonight, but I think I can get you a room. It's past ten; I think that one Keyes room is a cancellation.

BETSY: I appreciate it.

UV1/CLERK: I assume your candidate will be flying in tomorrow?

BETSY: No, he's out in the...

(Catches herself.)

Iowa cornfields.

UV1/CLERK: Duh.

BETSY: He's coming in Friday.

UV1/CLERK: Well, you can have the one room tonight, and then we'll see.

BETSY: That'll be fine.

(Writing him a check.)

UV1/CLERK: That's a personal check.

BETSY: So it is.

UV1/CLERK: You're not going to charge the room to the campaign?

BETSY: They'll reimburse me.

UV1/CLERK: *(Skeptical.)* Uh huh. Understand, miss, I will report violations. I know the FEC rules. Backwards and forwards.

BETSY: Of course.

UV1/CLERK: That's not even a California bank that's drawn on—

BETSY: I'll take responsibility.

(Takes the key.)

Thanks for the room.

(Crosses to the car. To audience.)

Jeemanee. And now I get to pass Dad off as a Congressman from California.

(To COOPER.)

They've got a room.

COOPER: Great.

BETSY: Two seventeen, it's around back.

COOPER: Not so fast, I'm here to talk to people. Where's that desk clerk?

BETSY: You don't need to talk to him.

COOPER: He's a voter. I should—

BETSY: He's for Ralph Nader. I asked.

COOPER: Nader?

BETSY: Die-hard.

COOPER: Nader's running?

BETSY: Come on, Dad. Let's find that room.

COOPER: Did you give him a brochure?

BETSY: In the morning.

(To MARTHA.)

How's my baby?

MARTHA: Sound asleep. Like an angel.

BETSY: Let me take him.

MARTHA: Okay.

(BETSY mimes picking up TONY, carrying him.)

BETSY: *(To audience.)* He's so beautiful when he's asleep. Little pouty lips, hair in that cowlick.

MARTHA: *(Miming opening a trunk.)* I'll get the luggage.

BETSY: *(To audience.)* And Martha had already forgiven me. Yelling at her. And everything; I'm such a bitch sometimes. I just wanna slap 'em both, and sometimes I even do, blow my stack and lash out, and a few minutes later, they've forgotten, forgiven. I don't deserve either of them.

(She has carried TONY to the room, MARTHA following. They enter. Look around.)

It's got a bed, a TV, a phone, and a shower, it'll do. Where's Dad?

MARTHA: Said he was going to talk to the desk clerk.

BETSY: Great. Oh, great.

(Lays TONY down.)

MARTHA: You take the bed. You and Tony.

BETSY: Where will you sleep?

MARTHA: That little sofa'll be fine.

BETSY: It's just a love seat, Martha.

MARTHA: I don't need much room.

BETSY: Martha...

MARTHA: You and Tony take the bed.

(Enter COOPER.)

COOPER: I talked to the clerk and he said he'd bring up a cot.

BETSY: Dad...

COOPER: He seemed to think I was some sort of Congressman. Isn't that something?

BETSY: What did you say?

COOPER: Oh, I set him straight. Gave him a brochure.

(He starts to unpack.)

BETSY: Dad...

COOPER: Honey, I know you're just trying to help, and I appreciate everything you've done, driving the whole way and all. But we shouldn't try to pretend to be something we're not. And I'm not a Republican. Don't hold with what they stand for, turnin' people out on the streets.

BETSY: You're right. I won't do it again.

COOPER: That's my girl. Well, I need to use the facilities, and when the cot gets here, that's where I'll bed down. Betsy, you and Tony take the bed. That'll be fine.

(Looks around.)

It's a real nice room. I'm grateful.

(He exits.)

BETSY: (To herself.) Bet they kick us out tomorrow.

MARTHA: What's that?

BETSY: Nothing. Good night.

(Quick kiss on the cheek.)

Love you. Sorry.

MARTHA: For what.

BETSY: Nothing. Forget it.

(To audience.)

And of course, she did. I don't deserve her. Anyway, we didn't have to spend the night in the car.

(MARTHA and COOPER stretch in bed. BETSY lies down.)

COOPER: Good morning, daughters. Looks like a great day to campaign.

MARTHA: Morning, Daddy.

(To BETSY.)

How's my little guy?

BETSY: Still asleep, keep it down.

COOPER: So, campaign manager. What's on the schedule for today?

(Pause, as BETSY realizes they're looking at her.)

BETSY: I don't know.

COOPER: Well, I think perhaps we should call a press conference, don't you think? Let folks know we're here.

MARTHA: That's a real good idea.

COOPER: I'd rather not canvass door to door. I suspect New Hampshireans have grown weary of such interruptions.

MARTHA: There's a lot of houses in this town.

COOPER: Indeed there are. Service clubs, that's a good place to start. Speaking engagements.

MARTHA: *(Writing it all down.)* Service clubs...

COOPER: Elks, Moose, Shriners...

MARTHA: *(Concentrating.)* Elks.

COOPER: But that's down the line. We need to do something. Make a splash. A big campaign event. Get us noticed.

(They all think very hard.)

MARTHA: We could fly in on a balloon. If we had a balloon.

COOPER: That's the idea. That's the kind of thing.

(More deep thought.)

MARTHA: We could drive in a truck with a speaker. Like in that Michael J. Fox movie.

COOPER: Maybe...

MARTHA: Or we could... wait, what if we had a dinner, and invited people to come to the dinner and get something to eat and meanwhile you'd give a speech.

COOPER: We could even ask them to make a contribution to our campaign.

BETSY: What would we serve them? How would we pay for it?

(Another pause.)

COOPER: Does anyone else have any ideas?

BETSY: Yes.

(They look at her.)

We go to the mall in Manchester. It's indoors, and there's room for Tony to run around. And we hand out

brochures.

(To audience.)

And that's what we ended up doing. That, it turned out, was our big campaign event.

(UV1 and UV2 take turns walking past COOPER, as he tries to engage them in conversation.)

Dad's approach to potential voters, it turned out, hardly varied at all.

COOPER: Hello. I'm sorry to bother you. My name is Cooper McConnor, and I'm running for President of the United States of America. Are you aware that the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States of America is...

(UV1 pushes past him.)

Thank you for your time.

(To UV2)

Madame. I'm sorry to bother you. My name is Cooper McConnor, and I'm running for President of the United States of America... Thank you for your time.

(UV1)

Sir. I'm sorry to bother you... Thank you for your...

(UV2)

Madame. I'm sorry to bother you. My name is Cooper McConnor, and I'm running for President of the United States of America. Are you aware that the Central Intelligence Agency...

BETSY: Sometimes, he'd try a different issue.

COOPER: *(To UV1)* One of the main things I'm concerned about, which I will change if I'm elected President of the United States of America, is tariff policy. I believe that lowering the tariff will... thank you for your time.

BETSY: Always starting with an apology and ending with a thank you. Say this about my Dad, he has manners. Martha was great too.

MARTHA: My name is Martha McConnor, and my father, the man over there...no not the one in the running shoes. The other one, with the brochures. Anyway, he's running for President of the United States of America...

BETSY: Most folks didn't stick around long enough for either of 'em to give 'em a brochure. Which was good, because we didn't have very many, and couldn't afford to print more.

COOPER: *(To UV2.)* My name is Cooper McConnor, and I'm running for President of the United States of America. And... thank you for your time...

BETSY: I watched 'em as long as I could.

(Steps away.)

Fortunately, we were in a mall. Tony loves to run, and I could just let him go, further and further from the action. We just wandered for awhile. There was a video game arcade at the other end. I played a little Mortal Kombat, but that's hard with a two year old. Further down, there was a B. Dalton's. I bought a paperback, sat on a bench and read it, in between jumping up and heading Tony away from trouble. Found a McDonalds, and bought myself a Big Mac, and fed Tony a jar of baby food. And changed him in the lady's room. Wandered back down to where Dad and Martha were.

COOPER: *(With UV2)* Cooper McConnor. I'm running for President of the United States of America, and I'm...

BETSY: Tony kinda wanted to head that way. He does love Martha. But fortunately there was this store that sold, like, knick-nacky things, and they were bright and shiny, and distracted him. And that got us away again. I don't think Dad or Martha saw us. Found another bench and read a little more. And finally Tony conked. I put him in the stroller, and went down by the movie theaters. Bought a ticket, and got in to see

the last half of a Bruce Willis movie, then talked the usher into letting me watch it from the beginning, and got most of the way through it. Tony woke up ten minutes before the end, but that was okay 'cause I'd already seen how it ended. Wandered out, and there was Martha, just in front of the lobby.

MARTHA: *(To UV 1)* My name is Martha McConnor, and my father is running for President of...
(She stops and stares at BETSY.)

BETSY: Hey, Marth.

UV1: Yes?

(MARTHA doesn't respond.)

Look, you have a brochure or something...?

MARTHA: Here you are.

(UV1 pushes past her.)

Betsy, did you go see a movie?

BETSY: Maybe I did.

MARTHA: Why?

BETSY: It's something to do. I had to keep track of Tony, remember?

MARTHA: That's an R-rated movie. You took Tony to see an R-rated movie.

BETSY: He was asleep.

MARTHA: I thought we were helping Dad campaign.

BETSY: No, you were. I was watching Tony.

MARTHA: Okay.

BETSY: I can't do two things at once.

MARTHA: Okay.

BETSY: Come on. Let's find Dad.

MARTHA: I'm getting hungry.

BETSY: Did you get any lunch?

MARTHA: I don't think so.

BETSY: No.

(Uncomfortable.)

Me neither. I bet Dad's starved too.

MARTHA: What are we gonna do tonight?

BETSY: Go back to the motel, I guess.

MARTHA: About campaigning.

BETSY: I don't know, Marth. We'll think of something.

(To audience.)

I just hate lying to Martha. I just hate it.

(Enter COOPER.)

Hey, Dad.

COOPER: Hi, honey.

MARTHA: Look, Daddy. I've got lots of brochures left. We could do this again tomorrow.

COOPER: We'll have to ask our campaign manager.

BETSY: Hmm? Oh, yeah. Sounds good to me.

(To audience.)

I was actually more worried about our room. We'd only gotten it for one night, and we were way past check-out time. I was concerned we'd find our stuff out in the snow.

(To UV1/DESK CLERK.)

Hi.

(Turning on the charm.)

Listen, I want to apologize for my little ... deception. Telling you my Dad was a Congressman.

UV1/CLERK: No problem.

BETSY: I didn't lie completely. He is running for President.

UV1/CLERK: I read his materials.

BETSY: And we are serious about this. Private citizens do run for President. Like whatshisname, Ross Perot.

UV1/CLERK: Ross Perot is a billionaire.

BETSY: Which means there's room for someone who isn't a billionaire.

UV1/CLERK: Fair enough.

BETSY: The thing is, I was wondering about the room.

UV1/CLERK: What about it?

BETSY: I was wondering if we could negotiate a weekly rate.

UV1/CLERK: We don't do that.

BETSY: Ever? Under any circumstances?

UV1/CLERK: Not ever.

BETSY: But let's just talk hypothetically. If you were to offer us a weekly rate of, say, seventy...

UV1/CLERK: I'm not going to do this.

BETSY: Come on. You know us, we're no trouble. We're nice.

UV1/CLERK: How nice?

BETSY: *(Short pause. Change of tone, seductively.)* How nice do you want me to be? Hypothetically?

UV1/CLERK: I live in the motel. Room 102.

BETSY: That's just around the corner?

UV1/CLERK: Across from the pool.

BETSY: Well, if we were staying here...

UV1/CLERK: Yes?

BETSY: I'd think you'd find that I can be very nice.

UV1/CLERK: How nice?

BETSY: *(Smiles.)* Your weekly rate is seventy?

UV1/CLERK: No way.

BETSY: Seventy five...

UV1/CLERK: Try double that.

BETSY: Eighty.

UV1/CLERK: One twenty.

BETSY: One hundred even.

UV1/CLERK: One ten.

BETSY: One hundred.

UV1/CLERK: Hypothetically. Right?

BETSY: Of course.

UV1/CLERK: *(Pause.)* When?

BETSY: What do you mean?

UV1/CLERK: When? Would you be nice to me?

BETSY: It would be very inconvenient right now.

UV1/CLERK: Oh?

BETSY: It's a bad time of the month.

UV1/CLERK: I getcha.

BETSY: But soon. We have a deal?

UV1/CLERK: Okay, a hundred dollars a week.

BETSY: Eighty.

UV1/CLERK: I thought we settled this.

BETSY: That was all hypothetical.

UV1/CLERK: Wait a minute...

BETSY: How nice do you want me to be?

(Pause.)

UV1/CLERK: Okay. Eighty.

BETSY: Okay, I'm making out a check for three hundred and twenty dollars. That pays up for one whole month from today.

UV1/CLERK: And then, say, end of this week...?

BETSY: I'll surprise you. Just wait. Room 102?

UV1/CLERK: I'll give you a key. You can come in whenever you want to.

BETSY: Perfect.

(As she's leaving.)

Until then.

(Blows him a kiss. To audience.)

You find out what the other person wants, and you promise it to them without ever quite committing yourself, and in the meantime, you've gotten what you want from them. I think maybe I'm learning something about politics after all. In the meantime, room two-seventeen, Budget Inn in Concord became our campaign headquarters. And the only thing it cost me was a month's worth of avoiding the creep that works the front desk. Not a bad deal.

(We see COOPER, in the room, counting brochures.)

COOPER: Betsy? Honey?

BETSY: Yeah, what is it, Dad?

COOPER: I don't think we gave away many brochures today. I'm counting, and—

BETSY: Dad, you were there all day.

COOPER: I know.

BETSY: You talked to people all day.

COOPER: How many did you give away?

BETSY: My whole stack.

COOPER: Did you take a stack?

BETSY: *(Lying smoothly.)* Of course.

COOPER: I didn't see you.

BETSY: Well, I did, and I gave 'em all away.

MARTHA: Betsy...

(BETSY shoots her a warning look.)

COOPER: Then this count makes even less sense.

BETSY: Look, it was a good day, Dad. The campaign's off to a great start.

COOPER: Tomorrow we need to contact that paper, the Union-Leader. We need to call a press conference.

BETSY: I'm on it, first thing tomorrow.

COOPER: What else, do you think? What else should we do?

BETSY: I think back to the mall. Great place to meet people, that mall.

COOPER: I just wish more people would take the brochure.

BETSY: Good night, Dad.

MARTHA: How do you do it, Betsy?

BETSY: What do you mean?

MARTHA: You did better at giving away your brochures than we did. It looks like. What do you do different?

BETSY: *(With a long look at MARTHA.)* It was Tony. He's so cute, people were willing to stop and talk to me about him. And one thing led to another.

(COOPER nods.)

COOPER: Right. That makes sense.

BETSY: See you in the morning.

(To audience.)

You may have noticed, actually, that my sister Martha's not the sharpest knife in the drawer. But she can surprise you. She can be very shrewd, especially when it comes to me. She knows I goofed away the whole day. But she also won't tell Dad. We have an understanding, Martha and I.

(Crosses to phone. MARTHA and COOPER are asleep.)

Mom and I, too.

(Whispering on the phone. ANN appears on the other side of the stage, also with a phone.)

Mom?

ANN: Betsy. How's New Hampshire?

BETSY: Snowy and cold. But we're settled. I got a good weekly rate on the motel, and we're keeping costs down.

ANN: How about the brochures?

BETSY: We're okay. So far.

ANN: Good. Another box of them just showed up here. He apparently ordered 'em just before you left. Four hundred bucks worth.

BETSY: Can you ship 'em to us here?

ANN: I'd rather return 'em.

BETSY: Mom, I think we'd better have 'em.

ANN: If you say so.

BETSY: Dad and Martha can't possibly stay as bad at this as they are right now. Sooner or later, we're gonna need more.

ANN: I'll send 'em on. How's Tony?

BETSY: He's doing great. Big adventure for him.

ANN: I wish I could be there.

BETSY: Me too.

(Pause.)

They have so many ideas, you know. To get noticed. Martha wanted to have him fly in in a hot air balloon.

ANN: *(Laughing.)* Perfect.

BETSY: And Dad wants to give speeches. Elks club, American Legion.

ANN: He wants to tell the story.

BETSY: I know. And I can't let him.

ANN: I wish I could help, sweetie. I feel for you.

BETSY: I'll manage. Love you Mom.

ANN: Love you too, honey. Good luck.

BETSY: And that was the routine for days. We'd go to the mall, hang out. Dad and Martha decided they wanted Tony with them. Since I did so much better with the brochures than they did. Which meant...
(*Big smile.*)

Mostly, I was on my own!

COOPER: (*To UV1*) Sir? I'm sorry to bother you. My name is Cooper McConnor, and I'm running for President of the United States of America...

MARTHA: (*To UV2*) Madame? My father is Cooper McConnor, and he's running for President of the United States of... no, Tony, get away from that. Excuse me...
(*UV2 leaves.*)

BETSY: I did make sure I took a stack of brochures, where Martha could see me. And I gave 'em away, too.
(*To UV1*)

Brochure?

(*UV1 takes it distractedly, balls it up as he walks off.*)

Gave mine away, usually, in about forty five minutes. By which time, I was around the corner from where Martha and Dad could see me. And I'd enjoy another very pleasant day in the Manchester Mall. Some shopping, another good book, a Meg Ryan movie one day, a George Clooney movie the next. And all the while, Martha and Dad took care of Tony. And hardly gave away a single pamphlet. This campaigning stuff isn't bad at all. Mornings, Dad would bug me a bit. He could tell his campaign wasn't exactly setting New Hampshire on fire. And I was, after all, his campaign manager.

COOPER: Betsy. Have you had any success with that press conference? The Manchester Union-Leader is the name of the paper.

BETSY: I've called 'em, they have not returned my calls.
(*To audience.*)

And I had. And they hadn't. I talked to the same lady each time; I'm sure her job at the paper was specifically to deal with nutbags like me. In the paper they also listed events. Dole speaking at the Armory, Bush appearing at a high school, Lamar Alexander basically everywhere. I'd make my calls—hey, you just hosted John McCain. You interested in Cooper McConnor? They never were. And so, back to the mall. Christmas came and went, and we were well into January.

(*Back with COOPER and MARTHA.*)

So, how'd you do?

MARTHA: Pretty good.

COOPER: (*Counting his brochures.*) Not too bad.

BETSY: (*Leaning over the stroller.*) And how's my little guy?

MARTHA: He was great.

COOPER: He kept getting into things.

MARTHA: (*Fondly.*) He's so busy.

BETSY: Well, who's up for dinner?

COOPER: We have to eat fast. I talked to one fellow for quite awhile. He was very interested. He said that there was a Republican rally tonight, at the VFW building.

BETSY: But you're not a Republican.

COOPER: No, I don't hold with some of their beliefs. But he said I could come if I wanted, and it would be a chance to meet some voters.

MARTHA: It sounds like a good thing.

BETSY: Sure, whatever.

(To audience.)

Dad would do that a bit, hang around at open events and pass out brochures. I'd hang around, keep him out of trouble, while Martha stayed at the motel with Tony. I got to shake Al Gore's hand, even. As well as everyone else's. There were some very weird people who came to those events, too, let me tell you. One guy who came dressed as a toothbrush, I'm totally not kidding.

(To MARTHA and COOPER.)

There's a Shoney's, I think, couple blocks from here.

(They gather stuff up, start to exit. To audience.)

So another day gone by, right? Except, get this. As we were leaving the mall, Dad suddenly had to find a men's room. Turning point in the election, would you believe it?

(To MARTHA.)

Things go better with the brochures?

MARTHA: A little bit. You did better. I saw.

BETSY: Yeah, not bad.

(She leans over.)

Tony, come on. Hang in there kid, five minutes to din-din.

(UV2 approaches.)

UV2/REPORTER: Excuse me, can I take just a second of your time?

MARTHA: Sure.

UV2/REPORTER: I'm with the Union- Leader, we're doing a little mall survey regarding the presidential race. Are you residents of New Hampshire?

MARTHA: Yes, we are.

BETSY: Marth, come on, we're not...

MARTHA: I'm supporting Cooper McConnor for President of the United States of America.

UV2/REPORTER: Cooper... don't believe I've heard of him.

MARTHA: Cooper McConnor. For President of the United States of America.

UV2/REPORTER: McConnor, got it. How about you, ma'am?

BETSY: *(To audience.)* And I was bored, maybe. Careless, perhaps.

(To REPORTER.)

Me too.

UV2/REPORTER: Cooper McConnor?

MARTHA: He's our Da—

BETSY: *(Quickly.)* We got this pamphlet, read it. We're both convinced, we were just talking about it.

UV2/REPORTER: McConnor. Where's he from?

BETSY: Here, you can see for yourself.

UV2/REPORTER: Thanks.

BETSY: Look, I'll get the car, Marth. Get Dad, meet me by the door with him and Tony in five.

MARTHA: Okay.

(She exits. UV1 enters, as a second REPORTER.)

UV1/SECOND REPORTER: You done?

UV2/REPORTER: We only got about two hundred.

UV1/SECOND REPORTER: That's good enough.

UV2/REPORTER: Kind of a small sample.

UV1/SECOND REPORTER: It's a puff piece, who cares, I'm hungry.

UV2/REPORTER: I think we should give it another hour or—

UV1/SECOND REPORTER: Geez, you got to be kidding. Look, we got two hundred, we'll just multiply by two.

UV2/REPORTER: I don't think that's—

UV1/SECOND REPORTER: How hard is this?

(Grabs her tally sheet, marks it.)

Look, okay, McConnor, two votes, let's make it four...

UV2/REPORTER: Give that back!

UV1/SECOND REPORTER: Buchanan, let's see, five, ten, fifteen, seventeen, so we make it—

UV2/REPORTER: I mean it!

(She takes back the tally sheet.)

Jerk.

UV1/SECOND REPORTER: Can we get out of here? Please?

UV2/REPORTER: I can't believe you just—

UV1/SECOND REPORTER: Come on!

(Takes her hand, they exit.)

BETSY: And that, friends, is how, the next morning at breakfast...

(COOPER sits, reading a newspaper.)

COOPER: *(Suddenly sits up.)* My... goodness heavens. Goodness heavens. Martha, Betsy.

BETSY: What is it?

COOPER: Goodness heavens. Look. Look look. Union-Leader, official presidential poll. Cooper McConnor.

(In shock.)

I'm at two percent.

BETSY: You're kidding.

(MARTHA runs over.)

MARTHA: Oh, Daddy. Oh my goodness.

(Phone rings.)

BETSY: McConnor for President. Yeah. That's me.

(Pause.)

Yeah? No kidding.

(Pause.)

He'd be honored and delighted.

(Hangs up.)

Dad. That was the Union-Leader.

COOPER: The press conference.

BETSY: Better. They're sponsoring a debate. And you're invited.

(Shock all around. End ACT ONE.)

ACT TWO

ACT TWO HAS 19 PAGES