

The Wellstone Project – Sheila Wellstone audition scene

In this scene, Sheila is explaining to her husband Paul, how he needs to give up his campaign for the presidency, due to his deteriorating health.

Paul, I know that this has been a dream of yours – ever since we met on that beach all those years ago. And I know that you're as stubborn as a mule when it comes to giving up on something once you're started. But you heard what the doctor just told us – your health is not what it used to be and it's getting worse. You know you won't be able to hold up to the demands of the campaign – not the way you're used to, not with all of the added traveling and the appearances all over the country. And that's not even talking about what it's going to do to us. I want us to be able to live a long life, and stay as healthy as we can, and your running for president like this.....well, I just think it's a little bit selfish. You've already done a lot for this country as a senator. It's okay to take a break now. We can spend more time with our kids and grandkids – we hardly ever see them as it is.

Oh Paul, I know this is hard on you. But I want you to be there – for me, for all of us, and I'm scared. Maybe that's a little selfish on my part, but I don't want to lose you. You're the love of my life. You always will be.

The Wellstone Project – audition readings: Stephen

In this scene, which occurs at the very beginning of the play, Stephen (Paul's brother) is presiding over the memorial for his brother's funeral, who was tragically killed in a plane crash just a few days before. There is a projection screen set up behind him which shows various photos as he speaks.

Thank you all for being here tonight – for your support – for honoring my brother's life and legacy. (the screen flashes a picture of Paul) It would mean the world to them – Paul, and Sheila (the screen shows a photo of Paul and Sheila together) – to see you all here tonight. I just want to apologize in advance. I never had my brother's knack for public speaking. (laughs nervously). But I always said.....I always said my brother had a way of bringing people together.....sometimes in ways we might not expect. But (the screen flashes a photo of a beach in Maryland) one way or another, it all leads back....to this. The beaches our parents took us to as kids.....I haven't set foot there in years, but I can still see it all like it was yesterday. (he gestures to various parts of the photo) the stand where they used to sell popsicles on hot days. And over there – see? That where I built the biggest sandcastle you'd ever seen....until Paul stepped on it. And....(he hesitates a moment as a young Paul is shown tossing a football to Stephen) Paul. Look at us. Not a care in the world. God, what I wouldn't give.....

It hadn't even been ten years since Paul and Sheila, but it already felt like America had grown up in so many ways. The momentum of the Civil Rights movement was stalled after the deaths of Robert Kennedy and Dr. King, leaving heroes like the Reverend Jesse Jackson, John Lewis and Rosa Parks to carry the torch. For his part, Paul's doctoral dissertation 'Black Militants in the Ghetto – Why They Believe in Violence' earned him his PhD in Political Science in May of 1969. Just three months later, he'd be introducing his own special brand of community activism to Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota.

The Wellstone Project – Jesse Jackson audition scene

Jesse Jackson is speaking at a rally for supporters of ‘Operation Breadbasket’, a program designed to provide assistance to those suffering from hunger. The year is 1969, one year after the Rev. Martin Luther King was killed. His speech is, at times, a church sermon, and a political rally.

Some call you Allah, some Zen Buddha, some Elijah, others the Prince of Peace. Whatever your name, we know that you are the same God, one who does not reign over conflict in the universe. So we come to One who cannot lose a case in court. Our bones are battered, broken and bleached. We want to be the people who bring love to a hate-filled world. (He breaks from the ‘prayer’). America is pluralistic – there is talk about it being a melting pot. The blacks have been pushed down to the bottom of the pot. We are going to come up and be recognized or turn the pot over. If we are going to win we have got to take an issue that is not racial. When we change the race problem into a class fight between the haves and the have-nots, then we are going to have a new ball game.

In this next scene, Jesse Jackson is addressing the 1988 Democratic National Convention

When I look out at this convention, I see the face of America; red, yellow, brown, black and white. We’re all precious in God’s sight – the real rainbow coalition. Wherever you are tonight, you can make it. Hold your head high, stick your chest out. It gets dark sometimes, but the morning comes. You must not surrender! You may or may not get thee, but just know that you’re qualified. And you hold on, and hold out! America will get better and better. Keep hope alive! On tomorrow night and beyond, keep hope alive!

The Wellstone Project – audition script readings

PAUL

In this scene, Paul is introducing himself to his students on the first day of class.

Hello everyone. Welcome to Introduction to Political Science. I hope everyone made it to the right place, or else I'm in the wrong one. (he laughs). Right. Well.....My name is Professor Wellstone, but feel free to call me Paul. Roger here (he gestures towards Roger) will be my teaching assistant this semester, and will be happy to help you with anything if I'm unavailable. Now, since I'm new here on campus and you've never heard of me before, I'll tell you a little bit about myself. Before I came here, I spent a lot of time in the South – I saw the Civil Rights Movement firsthand, seen many of my friends get beaten up and worse. But I've also seen how things can change, and how quickly, when people stand together as one. Politics is not about money or power games or winning for the sake of winning. Politics is about the improvement of people's lives, lessening human suffering, advancing the cause of peace and justice in our country and in the world. That's what this class is all about. For your first homework assignment, I want each of you to identify one issue that hits close to home for you. It can be anything - a pothole outside your house that's been there for years, a broken street light, or something more personal, if you feel comfortable enough to share it. And then, on Wednesday, we'll talk about it and go from there. We'll find out who can do something about it and then we give them hell. It's time you kids take this county by storm.

The Wellstone Project – audition scene – Hillary Clinton

In this scene, Hillary is talking to Sheila Wellstone, who has come to Hillary to get her support for legislation on Violence against Women. Hillary is already one step ahead of her, as she's been working on this kind of legislation as well. At this time, Paul is a U.S. Senator, and Hillary is one of his mentors.

Hi Sheila. Come on in. I'm always happy to make time for politician's wives. You'd be surprised at how few of us try to leverage our husbands to get anything done. So, you want to talk about domestic violence. Every twelve seconds a woman is beaten by her partner or husband. Every year, four thousand women are killed. Many indigenous women who are killed are never even reported as missing or killed. I've been trying to make this an issue for years. It's outrageous. And it's only thanks to women like you that others are even aware that it's a problem. I really admire the work you've been doing in Minnesota and it's time Washington returned the favor. I've been pushing a bill for a while now – the Violence Against Women act. I'm hoping it can really make a difference. I'll have someone in my office send you the text right away along with a breakdown of all the legalese. I want you to read it, share with me your thoughts, and then I want you to sell Paul on it. Your husband's a good man, but I want you to make it clear to him how important this is. If he wants to help us with this, I need to be able to trust him to go all in. Can you get him there?